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The Role of Faith in God in Administrative Decision-Making: a Descriptive Multiple Case Study of Three African-American Christian Women Administrators of American Higher Education

Nancy Ann Link
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THE ROLE OF FAITH IN GOD IN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING: A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Nancy Ann Link
June 2000
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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN GOD IN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING: A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Chair: Hinsdale Bernard
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: THE ROLE OF FAITH IN GOD IN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING: A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Name of researcher: Nancy Ann Link

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Date completed: June 2000

Problem

Faith in God is a phenomenon that is difficult to define. Yet, it can be seen as an attitude of complete trust in God. As Proctor (1995) stated, faith in God is believing that there is a purpose and a power (called God) available to each of us, giving us an "inexhaustible source of evergreen inspiration" (p. xvii). Therefore, this study focused on how faith in God impacted administrative decision-making practices of three African-American Christian women administrators of higher education.

Method

To achieve the purpose of this study, the literature was reviewed to identify
existing theories. This descriptive multiple case study approach examined the impact of
religious faith on the decision-making practices of three African-American Christian
women administrators of higher education. Case study techniques used were interviews,
observations, note-taking, reviewing existent documents, etc. to gain an understanding of
what the observed world was actually like. Different kinds of questions and analyses,
derived from Spradley’s (1979) developmental research sequence, were also used to
enhance the method of analyzing and interpreting the data.

Findings and Conclusions

Throughout this study, numerous attributes or values such as love, honesty, peace,
joy, hope, intuition, etc. were engendered by faith in God. These attributes reflected
anthropological, psychological, and sociological factors, thereby suggesting three
theoretical models (to help understand faith-informed decisions): Fowler’s stages of faith,
Erikson’s theory of human development; and the biblical model (Heb 11 and 1 Cor 13).

According to the findings, it was the practice of the three Christian administrators
in this study to ask God for help when making decisions, particularly administrative
decisions. Because of their experiences, stories, and viewpoints, it was evident that their
profession of faith in God was practiced overtly. The study revealed that religious faith
was used as a practical approach to problem solving, conflict resolution, and decision-
making practices in the lives of these administrators. Finally, the study showed that faith
in God has given these Christian women strength of character to make faith-informed
administrative decisions, which is the ability to use the qualities of the spiritual life
intermingled with expertise and gifts from God for the good of the organization.
Dedicated to Jesus,
the "Author and Finisher" of my faith!
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No research of this intensity could ever be humanly feasible without God’s guidance and the decisive influence of individuals who are scholarly, knowledgeable, keen, and perceptive. In the words of Crouch (1971),

Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus. I’ve learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon His Word. I thank God for the mountains, and I thank Him for the valleys, and I thank Him for the storms He’s brought me through. For if I’d never had a problem, I wouldn’t know that God could solve them, I wouldn’t know what faith in God could do. (p. 170)

Yes, I sincerely thank God for equipping me with the strength and courage needed to finish this research project.

Many persons deserve my sincerest appreciation. To my son, Phillip R. Link, who provided loving kindness, laughter, inspiration, and encouragement, and daily endured the struggles and sacrificial hours, thank you from the bottom of my heart. My heartfelt love and gratitude is forever extended to both my mother, Ethel B. Mason, and my great aunt, Nancy J. Knight, whose love, support, nurturing, prayers, and encouragement throughout my years extend far beyond 100%. To my sisters, Daphne Bryant, Arleen Hickson, and Sondra Link-Rance, and my brothers, Aaron R. Link and Arnold R. Link, thanks, from a heart of love, for believing in me. To those who encouraged me to pursue doctoral studies: Joseph and Gwendolyn Coleman, Ted and Elsie Jackson, Dorothy Simmons-Thompson, and Wallace R. Randall, thank you so much. Mere words cannot express the
depth of appreciation and sincere gratitude for my advisors at Andrews: Dr. Hinsdale Bernard, Dr. Lyndon Furst, Dr. William H. Green, and the late Dr. Bernard M. Lall.

My greatest respect and gratitude is extended to Dr. Hinsdale Bernard, my advisor and dissertation chair, whose help, prayers, and acts of kindness will forever be cherished, remembered, and appreciated. This project has earnestly been a collaborative effort, and I will forever be grateful to my dissertation committee members: Dr. Hinsdale Bernard (Chair), Dr. Lenore Brantley, Dr. Elvin Gabriel, and Dr. William H. Green, whose prayers, research skills, understanding, guidance, advice, and teleconferencing inspired and strengthened me to complete this qualitative study.

Thanks to Dr. William H. Green and Dr. Shirley Freed who guided me through the process of understanding qualitative research. To Dr. Jaspine Bilima, thank you for helping me to better understand the proposal component of research. To Anna Piskozub, thank you for your intense interest, prayers, and organizational skills, which inspired me to always put my best foot forward, particularly in regard to this qualitative study on the role of faith in God in administrative decision-making. To the wonderful Christian women administrators of this study: Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary, as well as the two Christian women of the pilot study. I praise God for you and your stories that paved the way for this descriptive multiple case study.

In the spirit of agape love, thanks to my Christian family, circle of friends, and prayer partners for gifts of love and understanding: Jaspine and Rose Bilima; S. Peter and Joanne Campbell; Peggie Ncube; Bruce Michael Evans; Michael Adeniyi; Philip Mainda; Bonginkosi “BZ” Zvandasara; Sheri and Jim Bollin; Edna Anderson; Mearrie Mae Battle,
Mildred McGrath; Michelle Colter; Paul Carter; Frederick G. Rhodes; Mae Calloway; D. Malikha Calloway; Maxisure Garrett; Nicole Garrett; Castillia and Antoinette “Toni” McNeil; Irline Gray; Eva Mae Hill; Drucella Laguda; Paul and Erica Ramtahal; Jon and Kellie Frazier; Donnett Blake; Donna Small; Andrea King; Desiree “Desi” Dunomes; Barrington “Barry” Smith; Edmond and Edna Francois; Gladys Ridout; Helen Hughes; Jerry and Lisa Robbins; Andrew “Andy” and Ruby Brown; Stephanie Gibson; D. Denyce Hinton; Linda Singletary; Clarence and Odell Ingram; Katherine Bady; Marzuq and Laura Rahmaad; Reginald and Lena Wise; Lewis and Lucretia Hollins; Vera McCoy; Connie Mitchell; Herman Posey, Jr.; Alma VanHorn; James and P. Renene “Pixie” Price; Sharon Ribbon; Wally and Marie Lyder; Leon and Robbie L. Roberts; Ruthven and Lyris Roy; Elizabeth “Betty” Sims; Calvin and Robin Tait; Gregory E. Williams; J. D. Williams; Ruby L. Young; Frances B. Young; Gladoria “Gladys” Young; and many other family members and friends too numerous to list.

To my world church family, I earnestly thank you and praise God for your continued love and prayers. To Edna Francois, I thank you with every fiber of my existence for your prayers, encouragement, helpfulness, and long hours of typing and transcribing. Finally, a sincere thank you is extended to Bonnie Proctor for her absolute professionalism in editing this document. To God be the glory—for this work is indeed a synergistic effort!
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

This descriptive qualitative case study sought to compare the viewpoints of three African-American Christian women college administrators on the part that faith in God played in their administrative decision-making practices. I investigated how religious faith was connected to their administrative decision-making and how faith in God was linked to the sequence of events that led into their careers as college administrators.

During the fall of 1996, while taking a research class at Andrews University, I became interested in studying women leaders. My professor assigned me the task of researching the top 50 women CEOs, presidents, and/or chairs of major corporations in America. About 20% of these leaders responded. In this research, my aim was to find out the motivating factors behind the success of these business women. One of the questions I asked was: What is the role of faith in your administrative decision-making process? Some responses to this question were: (1) I try to live by the Golden Rule; (2) faith is very important; and (3) faith plays an important role. You need to trust in people and in the system. Though I did not ask these leaders specifically about faith in God, some of their responses—which related to religious faith—sparked my curiosity in pursuing this study.
In this study, I have taken a look at faith-informed decision-making and described this concept from the viewpoints of three African-American Christian women administrators of higher education. I used the biblical models of Heb 11 (the faith chapter) and 1 Cor 13 (the love chapter), Erikson's theory of the life cycle, and Fowler's theoretical model of the stages of faith to guide this research. In addition, this multiple case study is buttressed with anthropological, psychological, and sociological factors, thereby suggesting theoretical models for understanding faith-informed decisions.

In order to better understand the concept of faith-informed decision-making, the literature was reviewed for empirical studies that were related to this study. When faith was linked with decisions and empirical, no studies were revealed. An ERIC search (with no limit) using faith, decisions, and quantitative as descriptors yielded 2 records. Only 1 of the 2 records seemed to be remotely related to this study (Fenzel & Leary, 1997).

The research revealed that many colleges and universities are using a service-learning paradigm to structure service learning experiences for their students to reinforce and elevate the understanding of course work (Fenzel & Leary, 1997). These researchers undertook two studies at a parochial college to address the benefits to students who perform service as part of their curricular studies. In the first study, 28 students in a course with a service component were compared to 28 students in a course without service learning. In the second study, 134 students in 6 classes completed questionnaires about service experience. According to the findings, students in the service component of the first study did not report greater gains in attitude toward personal and social responsibility. However, they did seem to have more compassion toward the
disadvantaged, more commitment to community work, and an increased belief that they could make a difference.

The second study showed that service affects students, and the kinds of effects depend, partially, on the amount—not necessarily the kinds—of service experiences. Results from these studies suggested that college courses that include reflection (service learning) as a central feature stimulate students’ thinking about issues of justice and faith and can effect student decisions about postgraduate plans (Fenzel & Leary, 1997).

Another study that emerged in the literature explored the sense in which faith in God was connected to superior general health (Sloan, Bagiella, & Powell, 1999). These researchers presented a comprehensive examination of the empirical evidence and ethical issues involved in claims for a faith-medicine connection. They noted that:

79% of Americans report that they believe that spiritual faith can aid recovery. 63% believed that physicians should discuss faith in God with their patients, 48% want their doctors to pray with them, and 25% reported using prayer as part of their therapy. Nearly 40 U.S. medical schools offer courses on religion, spirituality, and health. Of 296 physicians at a meeting of the American Academy of Family Physicians, 99% said they believe that prayer by one person can actually help someone else recover from an illness. (p. 664)

In Bauman’s (1999) study of faith in God, outlined were numerous effects of religious faith on the health and well-being of an individual. As she noted, researchers have found that religious involvement promotes better health because it includes the following seven characteristics:

1. A close-knit Christian community is important in relieving stress during life’s crises.

2. Forgiveness—receiving and imparting—can decrease the risk of heart disease and
other illnesses.

3. Inner peace evolves around a higher power (God), Who gives purpose and meaning to life, thereby minimizing anxiety.

4. Beauty—something about admiring colorful windows, listening to inspirational music, and even watching a sunrise may be marvelous for the mind, body, and soul.

5. Relaxation, prayer, and meditation have all been shown to reduce stress and tension, which in turn reduce disease.

6. Rules—individuals who have a strong faith in God are more likely to practice healthy habits because of religious doctrine. Therefore, they are less likely to become involved in promiscuity, drunkenness, or smoking.

7. Altruism—research shows that life satisfaction is enhanced and depression decreases when people do regular volunteer work (Bauman, 1999, pp. 2-3).

According to Carl Thoresen, M.D., professor of education, psychology, and psychiatry at Stanford University in California, more than 200 studies show a consistent, positive relationship between people who are more religiously involved and the positive indicators of health. A sampling revealed:

Researchers asked 232 heart-surgery patients, ages 55 or older, about their religious commitment. Six months after surgery, all the patients who had described themselves as being ‘deeply religious’ were still alive, while 9 percent of the rest had died. Researchers tracked mortality rates and worship-service attendance of 6,928 people in California for 28 years. People who attended religious services at least once a week had 36 percent lower mortality rates than those who attended services less frequently. Another study found that former drug addicts were more likely to stay off drugs and continue to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings if they had strong religious beliefs. The evidence is so convincing that more than 40 of the 130 medical schools in this country now include courses on spirituality. (Bauman, 1999, p. 2)
What Is Faith?

Faith is sometimes difficult to define because of its intangible nature. It was seen in a clearer light when I viewed it from the apostle Paul's biblical account: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. . . . By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Heb 11:1, 3 New International Version). According to Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia (1993-1995), religious faith can also be seen as "an attitude of the entire self, including both will and intellect, directed toward . . . a divine being."

What is faith? To answer this question, Richards (1971) briefly discussed Archimedes, the Greek geometrician from Syracuse who said, "Give me a lever long enough, and a place to put it on, and I will move the world" (p. 5). This scholar pointed out that there is such a lever, and it is called faith. He suggested that the place to put this faith is called God, and the power that can swing that lever is called mankind, a term which encompasses the whole human race.

As I think about everyday life, it is actually a life of what Upham (1984) refers to as natural faith. Natural faith is exhibited in various ways, and some of these ways are: boarding an airplane, talking on the telephone, combing one's hair, watching television, eating, laughing, standing, sitting, etc. In other words, one might say that natural faith arises naturally.

Let us take a look at the postal system. We have enough natural faith in the postal workers to permit them to deliver our mail all over the world while we go about business.
as usual. We place our lives in the government’s hands with mortgage payments, social
security checks, child support documents, monthly bills, legal documents, distance learning
packets, dissertation drafts to committee members, etc. All of this is done because of
one’s natural faith or trust in the postal system and modern technology’s skill and
judgment.

In fact, none of us would dare to step out of our houses each morning, lay down to
sleep at night, ride a bicycle, or drive a motorized vehicle without faith. Certainly, I would
not accept a check from my employer without faith that I would be able to cash it at a
financial institution. Therefore, without faith, living would become severely burdensome
and hopelessly difficult. According to Upham (1984), natural faith arises naturally on its
appropriate occasions and is sustained by the operation of natural causes. On the other
hand, religious faith, according to this writer, may be seen as a state of mind, the same
with that of natural faith from a psychological standpoint. However, religious faith differs
from natural faith in the particulars, which is to say that it is directed to a divine
being—God (p. 27), and it may possibly lead to a life transformation (Koop, 1988) in a
manner that informs decision-making propensities.

As Upham (1984) stated, if we survive by such unswerving natural faith in each
other, there surely must be some rational foundation for putting faith in God in regard to
issues relevant to our spiritual health. According to this scholar, the question arises: Is it
wise to separate faith from reason and call it blind only when we talk of an individual’s
relationship to God? He stated that the concept of religious faith closely parallels the
concept of natural faith or faith we have in one another because it is based on a common
element—trust. To have faith in God is to believe Him, take Him at His Word, and believe that He is ready, willing, and capable to fulfill His promises. Ultimately, in an individual’s relationship with God, as with each other, this kind of faith provokes (stirs) action, which can be called obedience. Paul, one of the mighty expositors of the teachings of Jesus Christ, made it plain in Heb 11:6 (NKJV) when he said, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

This study focused on faith in a divine being, specifically faith in God, not in just an idea. This is in line with my definition of religious faith because, in this study, as previously stated, I focused on how faith in God played a role in the administrative decision-making practices of Christian administrators of higher education. From the perspectives of Black women administrators of higher education, the underlying definition that was used in this study was faith or belief in a divine being, God.

As I thought about an operational definition of faith as it related to this study, two questions came to mind: How does religious faith connect to an administrator’s behavior, and what are some values present in the lives of Christian administrators that impact their decision-making practices? Koop (1988) posited, as did the apostle Paul in his biblical writings (Gal 5:23 NKJV), that authentic Christianity brings values such as love, joy, peace, patience, meekness, courage, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This author also pointed out that people who have accepted the Christian faith behave accordingly and are thoroughly transformed. As the case studies unfold, these are values which might seem to be evident in the lives of the Christian
administrators in this study.

In commenting on faith in God, Vanderhorst (1997) said.

When you don't exercise faith, your mind gives you a hundred reasons why you can't heal. Faith opens your mind to creative suggestions and solutions. . . . You must also be willing to work through denial, procrastination, and fear. The scripture says, 'faith without works is dead (James 2:17, 20).’ Faith is not enough if there is no working plan of action to address and resolve the challenges. . . . I'm talking about rolling up your . . . sleeves and getting down to some serious business that requires work. (Vanderhorst, 1997, p. 9)

Though this scholar scripted his comments on faith relationship to the family, these statements are seen as very applicable to this study because of religious faith's potential connection to the decision-making practices of Christian administrators of higher education.

Statement of the Problem

In her 1994 study, Korniejczuk discussed the fact that there is an abundance of literature advocating the integration of religious faith and learning at every level of education (p. 147). There also have been developmental programs in the area of faith (Dykstra & Parks, 1986; Knowles et al., 1982; Selmanovic, 1996). However, no study has been done on the role of faith in God in the administrative decision-making practices among African-American women administrators in institutions of higher education.

Johnson and McCluskey (1997) discussed the role that faith in God played in the lives of a wide range of African-American men, and narratives were used to describe how these Black men used a variety of formats to make their points. These researchers provided a forum for five men to discuss their anger, anxiety, hopes, fears, and solutions,
which demonstrated how faith in God could be an antedote to emotions. Therefore, a study such as the present one, which deals with religious faith’s role in administrative decision-making, is needed to gain a clearer understanding of how faith in God might be linked to religious values as well as human emotions.

As I consider the fact that no study has been done on this topic, it is important to ask some questions: How does faith in God connect to an administrator’s decision-making practices? How does faith in God connect to the decision-making practices of the women in this study? How powerful is religious faith’s connection to cultural background, education, family, and friends? How is faith in God linked to the sequence of events that led three Black Christian women to becoming administrators of higher education? What are the ways that three selected Christian women administrators of higher education daily increase or strengthen their religious faith as they make routine administrative decisions?

Two other questions that frame the statement of the problem are: What are some values (principles) present in the lives of Christian administrators that inform their decision-making practices? What attributes or values such as love, joy, honesty, peace, courage, patience, kindness, etc. do faith in God engender that could reflect anthropological, psychological, and sociological factors, thereby suggesting theoretical models for understanding faith-informed decisions? All seven of these questions serve as research questions in this study and were addressed as the study unfolded.

Definitions of Relevant Terms

There is a need to define and clarify the following terms in regard to their use in
the context of this study

**Administrative Decisions:** Those decisions directly related to an administrator's daily administrative duties, i.e., budgetary, policy, programming, student life (activities), etc.

**Faith-informed Decisions:** Those decisions made based on one's faith in a divine being, God, i.e., praying, studying the Bible, planning to go to heaven, obeying God's Ten Commandments, etc. Faith-informed decisions are divinely inspired by God and sometimes can be considered as rational or even irrational decisions. However, rational or irrational decisions (See Genesis 22) are not necessarily faith-informed decisions.

**Rational (or natural) Decisions:** Routine decisions or those decisions which deal with all kinds of reasoning. Rational decisions manifest themselves in all kinds of daily decisions, i.e., listening to music, bathing, talking to family and friends, smiling, etc.

**Rationale for the Study**

In my preliminary research done in the fall of 1996 on women in corporate America, only a few were African-American women leaders. My interest in studying the role of faith as it related to decision-making for African-American Christian women administrators was sparked because none of the African-American women leaders responded to my research. I believe that these women understood the question and the kind of response I sought. Yet, because of reasons unknown to me, they did not respond. In my research, the responses from the leaders who responded helped to strengthen my personal conviction that somehow, somewhere, some administrators in higher education
might be making administrative decisions based on faith in God.

According to Spitzer and Evans (1997), the implication of any value on any individual decision is difficult to determine without some discussion (p. 212), which this study will attempt to provide. Although the initial research on women leaders did not deal directly with the topic of faith in God, my curiosity was aroused because of the information (regarding the connection of faith in God to their decision-making practices) that I received from some of the women executives who responded. Therefore, I became interested in completing a qualitative study focusing on the African-American woman's viewpoint on faith in God as it related to her administrative decision-making practices in higher education.

In this study, viewpoints and stories were elicited from three administrators presently holding office. I believe that the viewpoints, stories, and experiences of the administrators in this study may be helpful in gaining an understanding of higher educational administration to both the novice and seasoned administrator regarding faith's connection to administrative decision-making. Furthermore, it might provide an added dimension to decision-making—possibly causing these Christian administrators to feel that faith in God empowers them.

The following questions and more emerged as the study unfolded. How can faith in God be related to administrative decision-making practices by African-American Christian women administrators of higher education? How does faith in God play a role in the sequence of events that led up to becoming administrators in American institutions of higher education? In what ways is the definition of faith in God shaped by cultural
background, family and friends, and education?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare the viewpoints of three African-American Christian women college administrators on the part faith in God played in their administrative decision-making practices. I proposed to examine how religious faith was linked to their administrative decision-making practices and how faith in God, for each of these women, played an important role in the sequence of events which led them to become administrators.

**Reasons for the Study**

There are two reasons for this study. Foremost, it will increase the store of research and knowledge on this topic because of the paucity of the literature to date on religious faith’s role in administrative decision-making. The next reason evolves around the role of faith in God and the role of the church in the lives of African-American people, particularly African-American women. Culturally, faith in God, as demonstrated through church attendance and Christian fellowship, is a common thread running through the Black community, particularly in the lives of Black women, who have traditionally comprised a large percentage of the church.

**Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How does faith in God connect to an administrator’s decision-making practices?
2. How does faith in God connect to the decision-making practices of three African-American Christian women administrators in American institutions of higher education?

3. How powerful is religious faith's connection to cultural background, education, family, and friends?

4. How is faith in God linked to the sequence of events that led three Black Christian women to becoming administrators of higher education?

5. What are the ways that three selected Christian women administrators of higher education daily increase or strengthen their faith in God as they make routine administrative decisions?

6. What are some values (principles) present in the lives of Christian administrators that inform their decision-making practices?

7. What attributes or values (i.e., love, joy, peace, courage, patience, kindness, etc.) do faith in God engender that could reflect anthropological, psychological, and sociological factors, thereby suggesting theoretical models for understanding faith-informed decisions?

**Importance of the Study**

This study is important for various reasons. First, it may suggest what happens in institutions of higher education when faith in God plays a role in the administrator's decision-making practices. Second, it may show religious faith's relationship to the decision-making practices of administrators of higher education as seen from their own
perspectives. Next, the study may suggest that further research be done on the applicability of the findings to college administrators.

Methodology and Sources

This study was descriptive, using selected ethnographic tools, i.e., interviews, observations, tape recorder, field work notebooks, etc. Qualitative methodologies were used in this study such as the ethnographic interview, observation, and participant observation (Spradley, 1979, 1980). Because this study relied heavily on using data from administrators of higher education on the role of faith in God in their administrative decision-making practices, it is important to understand that “using data rather than getting data is the more critical and more difficult task in qualitative research” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 397).

Research strategies encompassed under the term qualitative, as it relates to this study, have similar characteristics. The characteristics that follow have been identified by Wolcott (1994) as they relate to my study.

1. In ethnography . . . you learn something (“collect some data”), then you try to make sense out of it (“analysis”), then you go back and see if the interpretation makes sense in light of new experience (“collect more data”), then you refine your interpretation (“more analysis”), and so on. The process is dialectic, not linear (Agar, 1980, p. 9). . . .

2. Description addresses the question, “What is going on here?” Data consist of observations made by the researcher and/or reported to the researcher by others.

3. Analysis addresses the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them—in short, how things work. In terms of stated objectives, analysis also may be employed evaluatively to address questions of why a system is not working or how it might be made to work “better.”

4. Interpretation addresses processual questions of meanings and contexts: “What does it all mean?” “What is to be made of it all?” (pp. 11-12)
According to Spradley (1979), "ethnography is the work of describing a culture. The essential core of this activity aims at understanding another way of life from the native point of view... his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (p. 3). My study is one of a descriptive nature and used some ethnographic tools, i.e., interviews, observations, field notes, etc. The aim of this study was to understand the African-American Christian woman administrator of higher education in relation to how faith was linked to her decision-making practices.

As Eisner (1998) stated, "I know of no 'method' for the conduct of qualitative inquiry in general... There is no codified body of procedures that will tell someone how to produce a perceptive, insightful, or illuminating study of the educational world" (p. 169). Pertinent to this study on faith and decision-making in higher education are the following reasons for the "paucity of methodological prescriptions... related to the nature of qualitative inquiry..." as stated by this researcher.

1. . . . Qualitative inquiry places a high premium on the idiosyncratic, on the exploitation of the researcher's unique strengths, rather than on standardization and uniformity. Hence, investigators... who engage in that craft called field work will do things in ways that makes sense to them, given the problem in which they are interested, the aptitude they possess, and the context in which they work.
2. . . . All forms are influenced by style, and since style is personal, an inevitable personal dimension enters into qualitative work—a dimension that conventional research methodology typically tries to minimize. In qualitative inquiry, personal stylistic features are neither liabilities nor elements that are easily replicable. Qualitative inquirers confer their own signature on their work. (Eisner, 1998, 169-170)

According to Eisner (1998), data sources may include the history of a school or community since it is likely to enhance a researcher's ability to interpret what is seen. Such data can be obtained from skimming the newspaper as well as speaking with
"oldtimers who know the history of the situation" (p. 82). I used these techniques as well as interviews and observations in this study.

This study's data were collected over a time span of 6 months. I used multiple methods of collecting data, a strategy that researchers refer to as triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Mathison, 1988; Merriam, 1988). The methodological triangulation of this study combined different methods such as recorded interviews, observations, participant observations, physical evidence, member checks, and documentaries to study the same phenomenon (Merriam, 1988, p. 69). According to Denzin (1970), the reason for this strategic approach is that "the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (p. 301).

The phase of data collection took place between October 1998 and March 1999. During this time frame, I collected data mostly through the field techniques of 21 ethnographic interviews, observations, participant observations, friendly conversations via telephone and face-to-face, and documents such as newspapers, pamphlets, campus flyers, and letters. It is important to note here that the ethnographic interview shares many features with the friendly conversation (Spradley, 1979, p. 58). This scholar also emphasized that it "is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (Spradley, 1979, p. 58).

Staying in the field for 6 months of interviewing, participant observation, telephonic communication, e-mail, etc., I learned a great deal about the role of faith in
God in the decision-making processes of the three key informants in this study. It is my hope that you, the reader of this study, will also learn a great deal about this study’s topic.

**Outline of the Chapters**

Chapter 1 sets the stage for this study on the role of faith in administrative decision-making practices of three African-American Christian women administrators of institutions of higher education in America. This chapter defines faith, states the problem of this study, and shares the rationale, purpose, and reasons for the study. In addition, it outlines several research questions, discusses the study’s importance, and defines relevant terminology. Also outlined is the methodology employed in conducting this descriptive multiple case study. Lastly, the number of chapters and contents are mentioned.

Chapter 2 of this study presents a review of the related literature regarding faith-informed decisions. Among the literature reviewed are moral leadership and ethical issues as they relate to decision-making. Research was also found and reported on regarding reasons for faith in God as well as reasons for lack of faith in God. The literature review, as seen in this chapter, showed different attributes of faith-informed decision-makers such as honesty, love, intuition, hope, etc.

The theory of administrative decision-making (Halpin, 1967; Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Simon, 1976) is also explained in this chapter. Furthermore, the biblical models of Heb 11 (the faith chapter) and 1 Cor 13 (the love chapter) as well as the theoretical models of the stages of faith as theorized by James Fowler and the stages of the life cycle as theorized by Erik Erikson have been used to set the stage for this study, guide the
research, and to establish connections between possible attributes of Christian administrators and sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Chapter 2 concludes by examining the concept of storytelling and the specific topic of the storytellers.

In chapter 3, the methodology used in this study is outlined. This chapter includes the research design, role of the researcher, the selection of case studies, the data collection schedule and methods, and the interview process. In addition, the tool of observation is presented. Discussed also are the domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and theme analysis. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the three descriptive case studies that were conducted to give a thick, rich description of the realistic context in which the phenomenon occurred. The foundation of the case studies was data collected through interviews and observations.

In chapter 7, I have recorded the analysis that was completed across cases to address the research questions in the study, i.e., How is religious faith used by administrators of higher education in administrative decision-making practices? What are the results of making faith-informed decisions? What are the administrative categories influenced by faith in God? In addition, Fowler's theoretical model of the stages of faith is used to establish the linkages between sociological, psychological, and anthropological factors and attributes of faith-informed decision-makers (the informants in this study).

Chapter 8 concludes the study with the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. This chapter remarks on implications for the fields of African-American studies, educational administration, and religious education. Finally, there are implications for future research on this study's topic.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Initial efforts to review available literature on the concept of faith in administrative decision-making among African-American women college administrators were not encouraging because of the limited amount of literature when using these descriptors: faith, decision-making, African-American, women, administrators, and college presidents. In addition to being very limited, the literature using these descriptors was not closely related to my topic because none of the literature dealt directly with the topic of religious faith's relationship to administrative decision-making in higher education. Therefore, the scarcity of information found on this topic indicates the need for studies of this nature.

As the literature review progressed, the topic of this study was expanded to include descriptors that were well represented in the literature, i.e., beliefs, faith, decision-making, administrators, women, college presidents, and higher education as well as faith and sociology, faith and psychology, and faith and anthropology. Searches using these combined or linked descriptors were done to assure that relevant elements of this study's topic were included.

A search of EBSCO, Education Abstracts, PsycFirst (OCLC), Periodical Abstracts...
(OCLC), Dissertation Abstracts, Geobase, FasDoc, Book Review Digest, World Cat (OCLC), and InfoTrac General Reference Center Gold (GPIP) revealed no available information on the topic of the role of faith in administrative decision-making among African-American women college administrators. However, the search revealed an abundance of information in the separate areas of faith, sociology, psychology, anthropology, belief, decision-making, administrators, women, college presidents, and higher education. Consequently, I continued linking these areas to avoid losing sight of my research topic on faith's role in administrative decision-making among selected African-American women college administrators.

The literature also was linked using such sub-topics as faith, beliefs, decision-making, college administrators, college presidents, and higher education. Faith was initially linked with the two other descriptors, decision-making and college presidents, without success. Therefore, instead of using faith as a descriptor, I used beliefs with decision-making, college presidents, and/or higher education in the database search process (Houston, 1995, p. 115). Early searches of University Microfilms International (UMI) Dissertation Abstracts (dissertations through 1992) yielded only a few studies on potentially similar topics that were not easily accessible. More recent UMI Dissertation Abstracts (1993-1998) searches spanned related similar topics in greater abundance.

Library card catalogs and vertical files also were used extensively. The library at Andrews University, Howard University (via internet), other college and university libraries nationwide (using Inter-Library Loan "ILL" services), and the internet (using web databases and search engines) were all useful in providing a foundation for this study.
Many works were perused to gain a global perspective on the research topic. Research-oriented organizations were also contacted for data on the study’s topic: American Association of University Women (AAUW); National Association for Educational Opportunities in Higher Education (NAFEO); Andrews University Reference Department; etc.

The review of the literature on faith was very extensive, revealing 974 records through a search of ERIC. I made the decision to limit my search to 5 years (1993-1998) to focus on the more recent literature related to my research topic. I also limited my search to 5 years for a more manageable number of records. The results yielded 198 records—with 7 records related to faith and decision-making, faith and higher education, or faith and research (Anderson, 1994; Crain & Seymour, 1996; Elliott, 1994; Penzenstadler, 1996; Phipps, 1995; Smith, 1996; Willimon, 1997).

When faith was linked with higher education, the literature dealt with: How faith impacts people’s lives, how faith becomes a factor in the daily lives of people, how faith controls a person’s sense of values, etc. (Anderson, 1994; Penzenstadler, 1996, Proctor, 1995; Wolfe, 1998). The ERIC search yielded 69 records using the descriptors faith and higher education. These descriptors came close to giving me literature related to faith and decision-making as it related to areas other than higher education (Anderson, 1994; Hackney, 1994; Penzenstadler, 1996). Using the separate descriptors faith and decision-making, the ERIC search yielded two relevant records when searched over a 5 year period (Ackerman, Donaldson, & Van Der Bogert, 1996; Taymans, 1996). I limited the search to 5 years because over 9000 records were revealed when there was no limit placed on the
Another ERIC search using the descriptors African-American women and college presidents revealed five records. Three of these records were related to this study (Benjamin, 1997; Dickey, 1996; Phelps, Taber, & Smith, 1996). The Dissertation Abstracts Online search revealed some available literature using the combined descriptors higher education, beliefs, and decision-making such as Gentle, 1997; Reiten, 1992; and Walsh, 1994. The Book Review Digest disclosed relevant literature using the combined descriptors college presidents and decision-making (Rohfeld, 1992; Schwehn & Gaffney, 1993). Finally, InfoTrac General Reference Center Gold (GPIP) revealed applicable literature when the combination of the following descriptors was used: faith and sociology; faith and psychology; and faith and anthropology.

One of the theories that were used to guide the research was Erikson's Model of the Life Cycle (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). Erikson's approach to the study of faith is appropriate because it identifies the stages in the development of the human life cycle. According to Fowler and Lovin (1980), these stages follow a similarly invariable order and are harmoniously combined with the structural stages at numerous points. As these researchers stated, "Erikson's stages are a psychosocial description of certain maturational challenges that must be met by all people in the course of their lives" (p. 23). Any study on the role of faith in decision-making practices or simply the development of religious faith in human lives should also recognize Fowler's stages in the development of faith. Therefore, an explanation of Fowler and Erikson's theoretical models is included in a later
section of chapter 2.

**Moral Leadership and Faith in God**

According to Proctor (1995), despite the pall of suspicion and fear that moves throughout society, enough faith in God remains among all of us to generate a soaring national quest for a new kind of human paradigm in which all the diverse people of America can participate (p. xxi). As pointed out by Associated Press political writer, Fournier (1999), Vice President Al Gore, as he began his drive for the presidency on June 16, 1999, articulated this new kind of human paradigm, which he referred to as a promise of moral leadership. This political writer also emphasized that in “using phrases such as ‘moral leadership’ and ‘values and faith and family,’ Gore appears to be distinguishing himself” from other political leaders, whose characters have been smudged in scandalous events (pp. 1a, 11a).

Felzenberg (1998) pointed out that nothing could excite vigorous debate between former presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson more than the charge that the other was better able to assert moral leadership. According to this scholar, both of these former chief executive officers were men of strong faith in God, whose devotion to duty convicted them that they were in the right and gave them the strength to decisively carry on. This scholar further stated that faith in God has been the underlying factor with most successful American presidents, which is a strong indication of the role that faith might have in the lives of administrators of higher education.

The literature revealed that former presidents Abraham Lincoln and Franklin...
Roosevelt, as they presided over America during the worst of times, each in his own special way, came to terms with God and the special purpose He had for this nation (Felzenberg, 1998). This writer reiterated what Lincoln said in his second inaugural speech that, as much as he sought an end to the Civil War, if God willed it to continue “until all the wealth piled by the bondman’s 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, the judgements of the Lord remain true and righteous altogether” (pp. 22-25). He further asserted that Lincoln’s faith in God gave him the strength to decide against Southern offers to exchange peace for retraction of the Emancipation Proclamation, the document signed by Lincoln on January 1, 1863, which outlawed slavery in the United States of America.

As Robert Kennedy (1925-1968) once observed, moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle. Andrew Jackson’s (1767-1865) adage was that one man in the right makes a majority. Yet, in response to Jackson’s adage, New Jersey Representative Chris Smith stated that “one man in the right, with God on his side, makes a majority” (Felzenberg, 1998, p. 22). Just as this scholar looked at political leaders who allowed faith in God to influence their administrative decision-making practices, this study looked at three Christian women who likewise allowed faith in God to inform their administrative decision-making practices. It is my hope that this study will help others to understand the connection of faith in God to administrative decision-making practices, particularly in the realms of higher educational administration.

Having researched the concept of moral leadership, Bogotch et al. (1998) took an
in-depth look at the moral conception of urban practices and policies. According to these scholars, recent attention has also focused on moral conceptions of educational administration. They added that it is not enough that administrators bring their own personal and religious values, morality, and justice to institutions of learning, but that these learning institutions as well as educational systems need to be moral centers as well (Bogotch et al., 1998).

**Ethical Issues and Administrative Decision-Making**

Maddix (1999) defined ethics as finding its roots in the Greek word, *ethos*, which means a notion of character permeated with values that determine the identity and good or bad of an individual or group. Peak (1995) asserted that people, particularly individuals in administrative positions, whose activities raise ethical questions share one attribute: poor decision-making skills. According to this scholar, if their judgment is so flawed that they cannot even manage their own conduct, then, in his opinion, they have no business managing the conduct of others.

According to Kidder (1995), ethical issues are no longer about what is right and what is wrong. As this writer noted, we must increasingly choose between two things that are right, such as doing all we can to save lives or allowing people to die with dignity. As this scholar speculated about the 21st century, a simple question emerged: “What’s coming?” In response to this question, the following remark was made.

That will depend in large part on our responses to the world around us. What’s coming, unfortunately, may be a resurgent morality of relativism, in which core values fall into cynical disrepute and cold-blooded self-will finally drives out all vestiges of honesty, love, fairness, and respect. (Kidder, 1995, p. 32)
This author further expounded on the question, “What’s coming?” by saying, “On the other hand, what’s coming may be a new morality of mindfulness, in which the light of ethical reason and intuition dispels shadows, builds firm conclusions, and leads to goodness, worth, and dignity” (Kidder, 1995, p. 32).

Gray (1996) voiced five rationalizations why administrators make bad ethical decisions. First, bad ethical decisions are made because of an administrator’s tendency to rationalize his actions. An administrator, particularly a Christian administrator, may believe that her decision is actually lawful and ethical. Next, one might also attempt to justify one’s decisions by invoking the organization’s best interests. An interesting reason pointed out by this scholar is that administrators may believe that their action will remain undiscovered. Finally, Gray (1996) stated that administrators might believe in the propriety of cutting corners to achieve a specific goal.

As Baker (1993) declared, individuals, particularly leaders in any organization, cannot be one kind of person at work or play and a different kind of person at home or in church. This scholar also mentioned that one’s consistent adherence to high ethical standards in business and private life will help secure the firmest foundation for success—one’s self-respect and the key to the Kingdom of God (p. 211). As I think about the administrators in this study, a statement by Baker (1993) that seems to be relevant (because of each administrator’s stand for Christianity in her life) is, “If he or she (as an administrator) is firmly determined to conduct the business of the organization on the highest possible ethical standards, others will follow because that is what is expected of all employees” (p. 211).
Reasons for Faith in God

People, particularly those in administrative positions, use faith in God for different reasons, under varied circumstances, and for specific purposes. Coffey (1999) reported that she has faith in God because of a sense of being accompanied or an assurance of God's companionship through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. She also noted that prayer is a reason for her faith in God because "in prayer we learn both how wondrous we are and how desperate we need God. . . . What we hear in prayer from God is: Keep trying" (p. 37).

According to Gerrish (1999), another reason for having faith in God is a matter of plain observation. According to this writer, God gives us faith through His Word, the Bible. As the apostle Paul penned, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:17). An interesting point made by Begley (1999) was that scientific discovery has led to faith in God for some scientists. It was also pointed out by this researcher that if there was a minute shift in the constants of nature such as the charge of an electron or the mass of a proton, atoms would not hold together and life would not be supported. Because of facts like these, this writer also mentioned that some former atheist scientists are being led to accept the concept of faith in God, and likewise, scientific discoveries are enhancing many Christians' appreciation of the complexities of nature.

Still other researchers have found similar and additional factors which give reason for having faith in God (Goode, 1998; McBrien, 1995; Pacheco, 1984). Goode (1998), in an interview with Patrick Glynn (once an intellectual nihilist), shared two reasons, which follow, for Glynn's restoration of faith in God.
Reading about the near-death experiences of people who had visions of the next world and learning about the large volume of research proving the mental and physical benefits of religious faith helped restore Glynn's belief in the existence of the soul. (Goode, 1998, p. 31)

In the explanation that follows, he gave the other reason that was important in the restoration of Glynn's faith:

Also important in the restoration of Glynn's faith was the so-called anthropic principle, a discovery of physics and cosmology that argues that the scientific laws that allowed the development of human life were present in the universe from the very beginning of creation, otherwise life could not have developed as it has. It is a discovery, Glynn argues, that destroys the notion of a random, accidental universe that has been at the core of the scientific world view for two centuries and replaces it with a science that must recognize that there is intelligent order and plan in creation, that God exists... There's a lot of scientific evidence that we are wired as humans almost down to our biology to believe in God [and] to behave according to the commandments that are common to almost all the great religious traditions. And this parallels the physical universe which seems to have been designed to produce us. (Goode, 1998, pp. 31-32)

As Glynn's interview was concluded, an interesting comment was made by this interviewee.

It is exciting. It's a very nice period to be in. There are a lot of very positive indications that people are turning back to faith, despite the clouds of cynicism and scandal. The polls, whatever they indicate about public life, also indicate people are becoming more traditionally moral in their private lives. We are going to be constructing the 21st century picture of what the universe is, and that picture will include spirituality and God. (Goode, 1998, p. 33)

McBrien (1995) suggested that religious faith can provide a foundation for direction and meaning in a Christian's life. He further posited that such a base provides a strength that no reason or analysis can break, and faith in God can enrich everyday life.

As revealed by Pacheco (1984) in a study on Christian families acting on what they believe, reasons for having faith in God were: helping people is more important than the
pursuit of riches and power, and suffering must not be ignored; actions are acts of compassion and love grounded fundamentally in one's religious faith; and love for God—in the firm belief that as a Christian, one is in the world to serve God through service to their fellow human beings. As one thinks about these reasons noted by Pacheco (1984), the biblical text comes to mind, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

Reasons for Lack of Faith in God

According to research, reasons have also been given for a person's lack of faith in God (Adler, 1997; Novella & Bloomberg, 1999). Adler (1997) discussed the story of the late, famed scientist, Carl Sagan. As he pointed out, Sagan was a renowned sceptic and agnostic, who, during his lifetime, refused to have faith in anything, particularly God, unless there was physical evidence to support it. According to this writer, even as Sagan faced death at age 62, he did not change his lifelong philosophy.

Another reason for lack of faith in God, as revealed by the literature, was scientific skepticism. Novella and Bloomberg (1999) indicated that scientific skepticism dealt with claims that can be tested, such as those found in the fringes of science. They argued that claims that cannot be tested are outside the realms of science. These scholars argued that there is no distinction between believing in leprechauns, alien abductions, ESP, reincarnation, or the existence of God—for each of these phenomena equally lacks objective evidence. In the words of Novella and Bloomberg (1999),
An individual who professes personal faith in God and does not try to justify that faith with scientific evidence for the existence of God is stepping into the turf of science and as such, would have to be subjected to skepticism. (p. 44)

As Pazameta (1999) declared, "Faith often tips the balance in favor of the scientific hypotheses, but this means stepping off the path of science and into a quagmire of logical fallacies and mutable ad hoc assumptions: Pseudoscience" (p. 37). This scholar defines pseudoscience as occurring when scientific principles and religious beliefs are combined.

Another scholar, Gould (1999), exclaimed that creationism (where the Bible is literally true and everything was created in 6 days; the earth is only a few thousand years old; and evolution must therefore be false): is a local and parochial movement, powerful only in the United States among Western nations and prevalent only among the few sectors of American Protestantism that choose to read the Bible as an inerrant document, literally true in every jot and tittle. (p. 55)

There are still other scholars who have given reasons for people's lack of faith in God (Garvey, 1995, 1996; Michnik, 1994). Michnik (1994) reasoned that "faith in a world without God, a world ruled by enlightened intellect, designed in a laboratory and cleansed of religion – such a faith is utopian and dangerous – utopian because there is not historical evidence to support this belief" (p. 18). Garvey (1995) mentioned doubt as a hindrance to faith in God. Though his argument seemed like a reason for lack of faith in God, Garvey's (1996) example of Pascal's wager seems to serve as a reason for having faith in God. According to his research, doubt and faith go together, and as he said, 'Doubt is like Pascal's wager.' In Garvey's (1996) words:

If you refuse to accept Christianity, assuming it to be false, and you live as desires dictate, then you lose eternity if Christianity is true. If you accept Christianity,
even if Christianity is false, you will have given up comparatively little, but if Christianity is true, you have gained eternal life. As a bet, it makes sense to accept Christianity. (p. 9)

As Begley (1999) expounded,

It is little wonder that people of faith resent science: by reducing the miracle of life to a series of biochemical reactions, by explaining Creation as a hiccup in space-time, science seems to undermine belief, render existence meaningless, and rob the world of spiritual wonder. (p. 42)

Still another reason for one’s lack of faith in God is fear (Taylor, 1998). Yet, as Taylor (1998) dealt with the subject of letting go and letting God, she maintained that “fear is faith in false evidence—in the illusion of random hazards and chaos rather than in the reality of divine order” (p. 69). This writer added that fear blinds us to the truth and suggested that one must fight fearfulness and take the challenge to keep striving for excellence, expecting only the best. In her words:

Practice giving way to the Holy Spirit in the small things that happen to you each day. Practice putting your faith in the Words, ‘Thy Will be done.’ Then say with the psalmist, ‘Though the earth do change, I shall not be moved.’ (p. 69)

Attributes of Faith-Informed Decision-Makers

A vital question that emerges in this study is: What attributes do faith in God engender that distinguish the resulting decision from routine decisions? As I continued to review the literature, some attributes of faith-informed decision-makers surfaced such as honesty, consistency, coherence, reciprocity, intuition, love, courage, etc.

Honesty

In speaking on honesty as an attribute of faith-informed decision-makers, Van
Wart (1996) paraphrased Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) by saying that good government needs honest people who are encouraged to remain honest. In agreement with this scholar, one can say that institutions of higher education, public or parochial, also need honest administrators who are encouraged to maintain their honesty, particularly in administrative decision-making practices. Another interesting point made by this writer is that in nearly every study on the subject of values, honesty is first on the list. Why? As he penned, if people are not honest, no possibility of valid community exists, and all other values (such as love, peace, joy, patience, meekness, courage, etc.) remain a mystery to be discovered by observation.

According to Van Wart (1996):

Other related core values must be shared if a culture of trust is to exist in organizations. Important core values are consistency, coherence, and reciprocity. Consistency here means a reasoned attempt to act from principle rather than from whim. . . . Coherence means a reasoned attempt to connect principles to examples of those principles and to make them as harmonious as possible. Reciprocity means a reasoned attempt to act toward others as you would have them act toward you under similar conditions. (p. 528)

When these four attributes are in place, a high-trust culture is established which can be seen as characterized by high performance times (Katzenbach & Smith. 1993) and organization (Allen, 1998).

Love

Love is another attribute of faith-informed decision-makers that surfaced in the research. Maddix (1999) reminded the reader of an old saying that our basic stance in life is either one of fear or love. If love moves us, particularly in decision-making practices, he
asserted that there is an openness, a feeling of ease, and a willingness to explore different choices without falling prey to the unknown. Other researchers have also suggested love as a characteristic of faith-informed decision-makers, and the phenomenology of love has many denotations as well as connotations in earlier and more recent literature (Bridges, 1987; Gratton, 1982; Lubich, 1989; Maas, 1989; Smith, 1949). Yet, a check of the Greek reveals two different terms for love, which Jesus used when He questioned Simon Peter.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, you know all things; You know that I love You.’ (John 21:15-17, NKJV)

Bridges (1987) shared how Jesus used the verb agapao or agape in His first two questions to Simon Peter and the verb phileo in His third question. As pointed out by this scholar, connotative of the term agapao is the concept of a deep-seated, genuine, earnest, sincere, intimate, selfless, divine love for another. On the other hand, according to this writer, the term phileo suggests mainly emotional stimulation and closeness, implying fondness, strong friendship, or delighted affection for the love object (pp. 25-26). Bridges (1987) further added that most theologians see the change of terms in this context as very noteworthy, whereas the New International Version translates agapao here as ‘truly love’ and phileo as simply ‘love’ (p. 26).

In earlier literature, Smith (1949) sees love as “Immortal Love—that’s God” in whom the weary shall find rest, the lonely of heart shall come home, doors are flung open

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for the wanderer, and many shall find the Father and know His face (p. 16). Smith (1949) proposed that as mankind yearns for God's immortal love, "In the midst of his Superman, Rocket-to-the-Moon, Lena-the-Hyena civilization, he is suddenly brought face to face with the imperative for finding an intelligent, harmonizing, tension-resolving, purposive, power-giving faith" (p. 16).

Upham (1984) identified love as being in any and every being that has the capacity of loving. In other words, Upham (1984) emphasized that a benevolent affection will arise or increase, and decline according to its own laws of origin and progress. If we have a right perspective of the subject, according to this researcher, it is one of the laws of its origin, that love always rests upon faith as its basis. "If we have faith in God, then our affections, either in whole or in part, will take a different direction, attaching themselves to God as their object, and being more or less strong, according to the degree of our faith" (Upham, 1984, p. 15).

Murray (1984) referred to love as perfect love which evolves around keeping God's Word, loving the brethren, God abiding in us, being as He is, and casting out fear. For Gratton (1982), the "hidden, often unconscious but nevertheless motivating, dynamics of the heart, this inner drive of love, is always at work" (p. 7). Froom (1956) took a rapid survey of the Bible testimony as to the personality of the Holy Spirit and discovered that one of the personal qualities ascribed to the Holy Spirit is love (p. 46). As he observed, the Holy Spirit is not the Power of blindness but a Person who loves with affection of the most tender nature.

Wilson (1986) commented that love must become our lifestyle based on three
prerequisites, i.e., persistence, the quality of love we are willing to commit ourselves to, and a decision about which world we will live in. As this author stated, this lifestyle of love “is to be our witness to the world of the great love God has for us” (Wilson, 1986, p. 68). According to Buckley and Sharp (1987), genuine love is not self-centered, but it is outgoing and interested in developing personal relationships—with other people and with God. As these two writers pointed out, from a biblical perspective, we should love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and we must also love our neighbors as ourselves—as Christ has loved us (Luke 10:25-37, John 13:34).

In the words of Buckley and Sharp (1987), “It demands an inner decision to accept the same relationships to God and others that shaped Christ’s human life and to live in accordance with these relations as children of God and as brothers and sisters to one another” (p. 24). These scholars said that through human love for God, we respond to His love, and we reach human fulfillment. “Human beings are essentially social; and we grow and better ourselves by interacting with others in the community” (p. 47). Douglass (1991) noted,

Those living demonstrators of faith working through love (Galatians 5:6) will silence the mouth of all who depreciate God’s law, His mercy, His justice. Such lives of faith will be the glory that completes the Gospel Commission—the light of truth that gives credibility to the Word of Truth. (Douglass, 1991, p. 96)

According to Nichol (1957), from a religious perspective, the first chapter of Corinthians should be read every day. Based on the writings of E. G. White (1827-1915), Nichol (1957) exclaimed:

Read this chapter every day. The Lord desires me to call the attention of His
people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless. (p. 1091)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13, NKJV)

**Intuition**

As explained by Khatri and Ng (2000), there is something that is present in all decisions but hardly ever discussed and perhaps poorly understood, and it is called intuition. These two writers stressed that intuition is founded upon a solid and complete grasp of the details of the business and experience in relating to people. Although these researchers view intuition as critical for effective decision-making, there is little in the way of applied research on the topic (Khatri & Ng, 2000; Kidder, 1995; Miller, 1999; Vogel, 1997).

Khari and Ng (2000) surveyed senior managers of companies representing...
computer banking and utility industries in the United States of America. Their findings revealed that the intuition processes are used often in organizational decision-making. The findings of their study on intuitiveness suggest that intuition needs to be used cautiously and less often in a stable and moderately unstable environment, but more often in a highly unstable context.

According to Burke and Miller (1999), making administrative decisions by intuition is increasingly viewed as an alternative approach in today’s business environment, and one might agree that the same theory could apply to educational environments. They also added that intuition may be beneficial in certain situations and sometimes may be the primary decision approach available. As Vogel (1997) probed into the role of intuition in decision-making practices, her study suggested that intuitiveness plays a crucial role and is an important attribute in people’s ability to make smart decisions. She emphasized that when the ability of intuition is gone, an individual, particularly an administrator, has no early warning system to guide their reasoning, and in the face of uncertainty, he or she has difficulty making any decision at all. As Kidder (1995) articulated, “We’ll survive where reason moderates the clash of values and intuition schools our decision-making” (p. 32).

As the research shows, intuition can be viewed as an attribute of faith-informed decision-makers. As noted by Burke and Miller’s (1999) comment, researchers have conceptualized intuition as a sixth sense, a paranormal power, a gut instinct, an evaluative effect, an accumulation of experience, and an innate personality attribute. In Gratton’s (1982) words, “Without an intuitive leap of the heart in the direction of ambiguity, without an abandoning of self-centered security measures, without some risk, we find it impossible
to grow in relationship with the God who was trusted by Jesus” (p. 203).

**Hope**

Hope emerges as still another attribute of administrators who make decisions based on faith in God. Sherman (1969) stated that the meaning of hope cannot be seized as an isolated element but must be seen in connection with other phenomena such as “time, future, anxiety, and courage” (p. 19). He explained that to live this earthly life, we are constantly faced with potentiality hidden by the future, and we respond in anxiety as well as in courage. Furthermore, he posited that when hope’s connection with freedom is considered, an individual can face possibilities to alter the present situation or to change the status quo. This author pointed out that “without this sense of freedom, there could be no hope” and declared that “hope can inhabit only the one who believes that the future is not a fateful repetition of the past or an extension of the present suffering or void” (Sherman, 1969, p. 17).

Hope takes place during “epics of deliverance” (Proctor, 1995, p. 4) when people, especially believers, are “able to interpret their own inexplicable situation and give themselves reasons to stay alive” (p. 4). As Proctor (1995) reflected to the days of hope for the enslaved African-American, he announced that, in their passion, most African-American slaves allowed their dreams and hope to be “nurtured with prayer and watered with the briny tears shed by generations” (p. 5).

Kropf (1990) made the point that if union with an invisible God who is love is the only true object of our faith, it is only through God’s love, as he has first loved us, that
faith in God or hope for ourselves is possible. Kropf (1990) mentioned that he has "always found it particularly difficult to distinguish between faith and hope" (p. 28). He wrote that as one reads the scriptural definition of faith (written in Heb 11:1) as "the substance of things hoped for," it does not seem to make the matter clear. This scholar reiterated the fact that, in today's times, it has been said over and over again that when faced with doubt, hope has replaced faith as the major expression of religious consciousness.

Rohrer (1996) suggested that many young, inexperienced administrators buckle when confronted with tough decisions. This writer further stated that often the administrator will simply follow the instructions of higher authorities—though it is only through experience and courage that an administrator, particularly a Christian administrator, can hope to make good decisions.

The Theory of Administrative Decision-Making

An important question which emerges in this study is: What is decision-making? According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), "the decision-making process is a cycle of events that includes the identification and diagnosis of a difficulty, the reflective development of a plan to alleviate the difficulty, the initiation of the plan, and the appraisal of its success" (p. 268).

Decision-making is one of the key concepts in this study. The position I have taken in this study is that the task of decision-making pervades the entire administrative organization (Simon, 1976). In earlier literature, decision-making is seen as not only the
chief function in the sense that is it the most important function, as some scholars have suggested, but it is central in that all other roles of administration can best be explained or understood in terms of the decision-making process (Halpin, 1967, p. 122).

Scholars recognized that decision-making is the nucleus or heart of organizational structure and the process of administration (Halpin, 1967; Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Simon, 1976). As Hoy and Miskel (1996) recalled, Herbert Simon (1947) was the first to introduce the administrative model of decision-making to provide a more accurate description of the way administrators both do and should make organizational decisions. Simon (1976) pointed out that a common theory of administration must incorporate theorems that will warrant effective action.

A model that might warrant effective action is the model for shared decision-making, a strategy that was sometimes used by the informants in this study. It is an approach that suggests that participation in decision-making (shared decision-making) should depend on the nature of the problem and the situation. Coch and French (1948) conducted a study on the effects of participation in decision-making. Through the use of field experiments at Harwood Manufacturing, three groups were studied: A, B, and C.

The findings revealed that in the no participation group, A, production did not improve, and absenteeism, employee turnover, and grievances increased. In the groups with some participation, B and C, production increased by extremely high levels, and employee turnover, grievances, and absenteeism were quite limited. "The results of the experiment demonstrated the positive outcomes of participation" (Hoy & Miskel, 1991, p. 396).
I believe that faith-informed decision-making has its place with shared decision-making. "In order to maximize the positive contributions of shared decision-making ... the administrator might need to answer the following paraphrased questions:" (Hoy & Miskel, 1991, p. 328) Under what conditions should family members and friends be involved in my administrative decision-making practices? To what extent and how should they be involved? How should the decision-making group be composed? What role is most effective for the administrator?

As Hoy and Miskel (1996) reflected on Simon's (1976) words, they reiterated that "A general theory of administration must include principles of organization that will insure correct decision-making, just as it must include principles that will insure effective action" (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 266).

**The Development of Religious Faith**

Whether an individual views faith as the core of existence for mankind as many religious scholars such as Fowler and Lovin (1980) do, or whether an individual views love as the core category as another religious scholar such as Lee (1990) does, the fact emerges that faith is an extremely important concept in religion. Because of its critically important role, faith in God certainly deserves the kind of consideration which is at once inclusive, intellectually penetrating, and incessant (Lee, 1990). A theoretical model which helps explain why anyone, particularly a Christian administrator of higher education, would allow faith in God to inform her administrative decision-making practices is Fowler's Model of the Stages of Faith (Fowler & Lovin, 1980).
Fowler’s Theoretical Model of the Stages of Faith

An interesting approach to the study of faith is to identify the stages in the development of faith. According to Fowler and Lovin (1980), these stages follow a similarly invariable order and are harmoniously combined with the structural stages at numerous points. Any discussion on the role of faith in decision-making practices or simply the development of religious faith in human lives should recognize the stages in the development of faith which follow.

Stage 0. Undifferentiated Faith: Fowler sees the infant as unconsciously forming a disposition toward his world during a pre-conceptual, largely pre-linguistic stage. Trust, courage, hope, and love are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies, and deprivations in the environment. Though really a pre-stage, and largely inaccessible to empirical inquiry of the kind we pursue, the quality of mutuality and the strength of trust, autonomy, hope, and courage (or their opposites) developed in this phase underlie (or undermine) all that comes later in the development of faith (Fowler & Lovin, 1980, p. 24).

The passage to stage 1 starts with the convergence of language and thought, giving immediate accessibility to the symbols used in verbal communication and ceremonial play.

Stage 1. Intuitive-Projective Faith: Imagination and mimicking are distinguishing characteristics of Stage 1. A youngster can be overwhelmingly and perpetually swayed by the emotions, temperaments, disposition, deeds, words, or examples of faith seen in the lives of primal adults. Fowler describes this as the stage of first self-awareness. Concrete
operational thinking is the emerging factor underlying the shift to stage 2. At the core of the transition is the youngster's increasing concern to *know* how things are and to make clear for himself or herself the bases of distinctions between what is actual rather than imaginary.

*Stage 2. Mythic-Literal Faith:* In stage 2, a sense of belonging is embraced by individuals. People begin to gladly, eagerly, and willingly accept for themselves the legends or stories, convictions or beliefs, and celebrations that symbolize being a part of their communities. This stage is seen as the faith stage of the school child although its structures are sometimes found dominant in adolescents and in adults. The absolute clashing or contradictory nature of stories leads to serious thought on meanings. Shifting to formal operational thought makes such serious thought feasible and needed. For example, contentions between authoritative stories such as Genesis on creation versus the theory of evolution must be confronted.

*Stage 3. Synthetic-Conventional Faith:* A person's experiential knowledge of the world now spreads beyond the family circle. Numerous spheres suddenly demand consideration, i.e., family, school or work, friends, peers, colleagues, neighbors, worldly associates, mass media, and possibly religion. Elements that contribute to the breakdown of stage 3 and for readiness for transition may include one or more of the following: serious controversies or opposition between highly regarded sources of authority; strikingly noticeable changes, by officially sanctioned leaders, of policies, procedures, or practices previously regarded as hallowed, consecrated, and unbreakable (i.e., in the Catholic Church—altering the Mass from Latin to the vernacular, or no longer requiring
Friday as a day for abstinence from meat, etc.); encountering viewpoints or experiences that lead to earnest reflection on how one’s faith and values have formed and become different; and how relative they are to an individual’s specific group or origin, education, or past experience.

Stage 4. Individuative-Reflective Faith: It is very critical moving from stage 3 to stage 4 because the late adolescent or adult must begin to earnestly embrace the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and outlooks. Reflections from a childhood of yesteryear, impressions and energies from deep within the soul, and a nagging sense of the emptiness and meaningless of gone yesterdays, troubled todays, and unknown tomorrows signify readiness for something new. “Disillusionment with one’s compromises, and recognition that life is more complex than stage 4’s logic of clear distinctions and abstract concepts can comprehend, press one toward a dialectical and multi-leveled approach to life-truth” (Fowler & Lovin, 1980, p. 29).

Stage 5. Paradoxical-Consolidative Faith: As Fowler and Lovin (1980) exclaimed, “This stage involves the integration into self and outlook of much that was suppressed or evaded in the interest of stage 4’s self-certainty and conscious cognitive and affective adaptation to reality” (p. 29). According to these scholars, symbolic power reunites with conceptual meaning. Individuals must seriously reclaim and rework their past. From deep within, one must be open to impressions of the soul. In stage 5, it is vital to understand and recognize one’s social unconscious—the legendary stories, valued icons, and biases built deeply into the self-system by reason of one’s upbringing within a given society, religious tradition, culture, etc. “But this stage remains divided. It lives and acts
between an untransformed world and a transforming vision and loyalties. In some few cases this division yields to the call of the radical actualization that we call stage 6" (Fowler & Lovin, 1980, p. 30).

**Stage 6. Universalizing Faith:** This is a stage of transcendental rarity. People best described by stage 6 have created an ultimate environment of faith in which they are totally immersed. Encompassed within their spirit is a totally fulfilled and developed human community. Because universalizers create regions of freedom from the economic, ideological, political, religious, and social chains we place and keep on human futurity, in a sense, they are seen as contagious. The authors pointed out that many persons in this stage die at the hands of those whom they hope to change and are more honored and revered after death than during their lives. Such rare individuals may be seen as having a special grace that makes them more radiant, more luminous, more modest, and even more human than the rest of us. Universalizers love life yet refuse to tightly hold on to it.

Those rare individuals in stage 6 “are ready for fellowship with persons at any of the other stages and from any other faith tradition” (Fowler & Lovin, 1980, p. 31).

Research also showed optimal parallels of Fowler’s faith stages and Erikson’s psychosocial stages.

A reflective examination of these parallels suggests that during the rapid revolutions in cognitive, psychosocial, and physical growth that occur during the years from birth to twenty-two . . . we recognize four different structural stages of faith. Not all children experience these faith stage transitions on this time schedule; some arrest or proceed more slowly, and it is not too unusual to find an adult whose faith outlook is best described by the structures of Stage 2 . . . . The time from seventeen to twenty-two . . . . corresponds with what appears to be the optimal time for beginning a transition from the Synthetic-Conventional toward the Individuative-Reflective stage of faith. For a variety of reasons many persons
make the physical and psychosocial transition into adulthood without undergoing the reconstructive work of a faith stage change... In sum, for some adults Synthetic-Conventional faith becomes a stable, equilibrated, lifelong structural style. For others it gives way, in the early adult era, to an Individuative-Reflective style. (Knowles et al., 1982, pp. 195-196)

**Erikson’s Theory of the Life Cycle**

As outlined by Knowles et al. (1982), Erikson’s 8 stages of the life cycle (psychosocial stages) can be divided into 4 eras, which emerge from Daniel Levinson’s division of the life cycle. Erikson’s psychosocial stages that are paralleled with Levinson’s Era of Infancy, Childhood and Adolescence are:

1. Trust vs. Mistrust
2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
3. Initiative vs. Guilt
4. Industry vs. Inferiority
5. Identity vs. Role Confusion.

Erikson’s stage that parallels with Levinson’s First Adult Era is:

6. Intimacy vs. Isolation.

The psychosocial stage paralleled with the Middle Adult Era is:


Finally, the stage of the life cycle that parallels with Levinson’s Late Adult Era is:

8. Integrity vs. Despair (Knowles et al., 1982, p. 195).

As an integrated theory, Clayton (1975) used Erikson’s theory of human development as it applies to aged individuals and concluded that most individuals seek
foreclosure after adolescence, never reaching Erikson’s last stage of the life cycle. The literature revealed other researchers who commented on Erikson’s life, the experience of growing old, and his reflections on the life cycle and his theory of human development (Carroll, 2000; Coles, 2000; Edmondson, 1990; Woodward, 1994).

Carroll (2000) reviewed Coles’s (2000) book, *The Erik Erikson Reader*, which dealt with some of Erikson’s major works. As Carroll (2000) stated, Erikson studied the experiences of childhood in different societies and drew on history and biography, as well as psychoanalysis. I believed that Erikson did this in order to examine how people find their way to an adult identity and responsibility. As it applies to this study, Erikson’s theory (as well as Fowler’s theory) was chosen to guide the research (Hoy & Miskel, 1996) on how a Christian administrator’s faith in God was connected to their decision-making practices, particularly during the sequence of events (stages of the life cycle) leading them up to becoming administrators of higher education.

As Woodward (1994) reflected on Erikson’s life cycle, he said that Erikson’s most famous work remains as his theoretical model of the human life cycle. Woodward (1994) described Erikson’s theory as “a kind of mosaic of human development in which body, mind, and social milieu merge in the dynamic process of forming one’s identity” (p. 1).

In his research, Edmondson (1990) discussed Wolfe’s (1990) book, *Serving the Ageless Market*, which warned people against using phrases such as senior, elderly, or aging. According to Edmondson (1990), Wolfe (1990) believed that these terms could be inaccurate and possibly lead to misjudgments of potential markets (consumers) that cause expensive mistakes. Furthermore, Edmondson (1990) pointed out how Wolfe (1990)
emphasized how wise it would be to base one's understanding of age on a system synthesizing Erik Erikson's theoretical model that corresponds with the human life span. As a part of his three-stage model, Edmondson (1990) said that Wolfe (1990) described aged adults as accepting an anti-materialistic state where spiritual experiences are sought.

According to Creswell (1994), writing a theory into a qualitative study is difficult because there is no standard phraseology or guidelines regarding placement. This scholar also shared some principles that a qualitative researcher should observe when using theory:

(a) Employ it in a manner consistent with the type of qualitative design, (b) use it inductively so that it does not become something to test, but rather to develop and be shaped through the process of research, (c) create a visual model of the theory as it emerges, and (d) if used at the end of the study, compare and contrast it with other theories. (Creswell, 1994, p. 101)

Just as other researchers have used Erikson's theory to guide their research, I have also used his theory "to develop and be shaped through the process of research" (Creswell, 1994, p. 101). In regard to this study on faith's impact on decision-making practices, Erikson's theoretical model raises the question as to whether Christian administrators of higher education succeed in reaching the stage Erikson referred to as transcendental rarity (stage 6), in which these adults have created a decisive atmosphere of religious faith in which they are totally encompassed (Fowler & Lovin, 1980).

**Sociological Factors of Faith in God**

As the study of human social relations, sociology is concerned with all group activities—economic, social, political, and religious. It is widely recognized that the family,
a primary agent of socialization in societies (David, 1999), has a strong impact in the lives of Christian administrators of higher education. According to Lemmel (1998), personal epiphanies and the love of God and Jesus Christ are meant to be shared with others in the community no matter how difficult it is to convey religious or other experiences.

Literature suggests that it is important to continuously extend Christian faith to family, friends, and all members of the community (Anderson, 1998; Lehrer, 1998; Luti, 1998). Anderson (1998) emphasized the importance of continuing to extend Christian faith to all members of the community. On a similar note, Luti (1998) commented that the value of biblical Scripture has in its message help for us to remember that, as individuals, we are part of a larger community and morally and mutually responsible to each other.

In an interview with sociologist William Julius Wilson, Lehrer (1998) realized that although Wilson, the interviewee, believed in the role of strong government activism, the interviewee stressed the part that private business as well as faith-based organizations can play in revitalizing troubled urban areas in America. To better understand sociological aspects of faith, particularly as related to this study, Fowler’s model (Fowler & Lovin, 1980) pointed out (in stage 3) that a person’s experiential knowledge of the world now spreads beyond the family circle. As Fowler’s model shows, other sources suddenly demand consideration, i.e., school mates, friends, peers, colleagues, neighbors, worldly associates, mass media, and possibly religion.

The Influence of Family, Friends, and the Community

Much of the literature on sociological research focused on the role of family,
friends, religious groups, and individuals in changing negative social behavior. For example, Anderson (1998) referred to the family as “a funny institution” (p. 607). This scholar further explained that what is funny is that in a culture in which having choices is viewed as a God-given right, we have such strong ties to people we do not choose. For example, Anderson (1998) mentioned that who our family is goes beyond our control and choosing. As she said, “They are simply God’s gift to us. We accept this as a part of life that gives us both pain and pleasure” (p. 607).

Research also points out that the Christian community is often called the family of faith for we call ourselves brothers and sisters in Christ bound together by the water of baptism (Anderson, 1998). As this scholar stated, this means we must love each other, practice hospitality, speak words of forgiveness, perform acts of kindness and mercy—simply get along (p. 607). As one reflects on the sociological factors of family and friends, the words of Solomon, as found in Scripture, come to mind. “A man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov 18:24).

Miller (1999) found that religious groups were instrumental in raising money and mobilizing volunteers for social services, and there’s a connection between faith and civic duty. Lehrer (1998), in an Insight interview with sociologist William Julius Wilson on faith and the urban poor, discussed faith-based organizations as being an answer to the problems of joblessness and social collapse afflicting the inner-city. As Wilson stated in the interview,

If you have religious leaders who are not only concerned about moral issues, but
also are concerned about the social organization of neighborhoods, then they can ultimately reduce problems like crime and drugs. I’m finally convinced these organizations can play a major role in rebuilding our inner cities. I say it’s possible because I’ve seen it done in the local areas (as cited in Lehrer, 1998, p. 21).

Psychological Factors of Faith in God

As the study of mental (emotional) health, psychology is also concerned with all group activities, particularly religious, as this study suggests. Research has shown that maintaining a strong sense of spirituality or faith can aid in improved health and longer life (Bauman, 1999). As Fowler’s theory of the stages of faith (Fowler & Lovin, 1980) is considered in relation to psychological aspects of faith, stage 4 of the theory points out that an adult must begin to earnestly embrace the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and outlooks. In Fowler’s belief, reflections from childhood as well as impressions and energies from deep within the soul signify readiness for something new, a stage he referred to as individuative-reflective faith.

Advantages of Making Decisions Based on Faith in God

Literature on the advantages of making decisions based on faith in God was encouraging (Bauman, 1999; Bower, 1998; Johnston, 1994). Johnston (1994) shared a biblical approach to making tough decisions on the farm and in one’s life. As Johnston (1994) said, “To make decisions by faith—such as whether to acquire more land—we should be asking these questions of God: Do you really want me to do this? Which farm? Am I prepared? How should I go about it?” (p. 5). This Christian farmer and professional speaker declared that he is certain of two things: People want to know the will of God,
and they are sometimes confused about it. He believes the basis for knowing the will of God is the same as making a good decision, and one must believe that God is at work in them. As recorded in biblical writings, “It is God who works in you to will and do what pleases Him” (Phil 2:13).

As Bower (1998) studied the relationship of religious faith and mood improvement in depressed older adults, his research indicated that religious faith seems to speed up recovery for mild to moderate depression. In other words, this researcher saw faith in God as a balm for depression. Bower (1998) mentioned that, according to medical experts, in a group of adults over 60 who suffered from depression as well as other physical ailments, those who cited strong religious convictions or firm faith in God achieved remarkable mood improvements in the shortest time span. The researchers also found that highly religious individuals who showed the quickest recovery from depression were also those people who had the most severe medical problems (Bower, 1998).

“Religious faith may provide such persons with a sense of hope that things will turn out all right regardless of their problems and thus foster greater motivation to achieve emotional recovery” (Bower, 1998, p. 247).

According to Bauman (1999), research reveals that a strong sense of spirituality keeps people alive longer, keeps their marriages stronger, keeps them mentally balanced, off of drugs, out of jail, and out of hospitals. This researcher also mentioned that a strong faith in God can make a person happier and healthier, and religious involvement promotes these individual benefits because it includes: a close-knit community; forgiveness; inner peace; beauty; relaxation; prayer and meditation; and altruism—doing good deeds (p. 86).
More advantages of faith-informed decisions (from the perspectives of the informants) are further discussed in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

**Anthropological Factors of Faith in God**

Anthropology, the study of physical and cultural development, racial characteristics, and social customs and beliefs of mankind, surfaced extensively in the literature. According to Buckley and Chapman (1996), anthropology was a dominant paradigm throughout the 19th and the first few decades of the 20th centuries, and anthropologists were quite often the only scholars taking any interest in the obscure societies that they studied; therefore, holistic study came naturally to them. As I reviewed the literature on cultural anthropology, which is one of the foundations of this study, a comment made by Buckley and Chapman (1996) regarding cultural anthropologists was found:

There were no other scholars, no demarcation of disciplines to warn them of this or that activity or body of knowledge. It became entirely normal for anthropologists to study... religious rituals... that related to kinship patterns... that related to political life... that related to language that related to religious rituals. (pp. 1-2)

Research showed that the core of ethnography or anthropological fieldwork is concerned with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand (Spradley, 1979).

In every society, people make constant use of these complex meaning systems to organize their behavior, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live. These systems of meaning constitute their culture, and ethnography always implies a theory of culture. (Spradley, 1979, p. 5)

According to Strong (1997), Christian leaders who take their spiritual vigor to the
streets, sweatshops, institutions of learning, and church halls of America are characterized as exhibiting "holistic faith" (p. 70). This scholar examined the lives and works of early 19th- and 20th-century religious figures, and he believes that the stories of these religious leaders who married faith and social action can encourage others to "walk in the spirit" (Gal 5:13-16) by "achieving inward renewal and outward action" (Strong, 1997, p. 70).

Still, other research showed politicians (such as Al Gore and George W. Bush) favoring increased government reliance on the social welfare services of faith-based organizations according to Hacker (1999) and Allen (2000).

As one reflects upon Fowler's theoretical model of faith, one might be able to see that the anthropologist (as he or she studies different cultures), from deep within, must be open to impressions of the soul (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). In stage 5 of Fowler's model, it is vital to understand and recognize one's social unconscious—the legendary stories, valued icons, and biases built deeply into the self-system by reason of one's upbringing within a given society, religious tradition, culture, etc. (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). This understanding and social recognition of one's social unconscious may help anthropologists to reflect on the true nature of their work in order to preserve integrity (Williams, 1995).

**Photography's Connection to Anthropology**

As one researcher looked back, she viewed 19th-century anthropology as an easy and slow-moving target in the politically aware 1990s and anthropological photography as obscuring the soul and essence of human subjects (Williams, 1995). She further expressed that anthropological photography portrays human beings in the light of becoming
commodities rather than the focus of thoughtful study (p. 32). However, as this study unfolds, the analysis of the anthropological photographs should reflect on the true nature of my "work in order to preserve integrity" (Williams, 1995, p. 1).

The Concept of Storytelling

Storytelling, a very expressive form of language, is a very important part of this study. As Spradley (1979) reminded us, language occupies such a large part of human experience that most of us take it for granted. As this scholar said, we listen to people talking, and we talk to others ourselves. As an ethnographic tool, language, particularly storytelling, structures our field notes and enters into every analysis and insight. Therefore, I found it necessary to review the literature on the concept of storytelling because of its entry "into every phase of the research process" (Spradley, 1979, p. 17).

An ERIC search using the descriptor storytelling revealed over 1000 records when no limitations were set. However, when I limited the search to 5 years, 1994-1999, only 301 records were found. Henegar (1998) made a connection between the techniques of storytelling and historical incidents. He pointed out that many fables, tall tales, and legends are inspired by historical events. This scholar also provided an exercise for students and educators to develop their own stories.

Marine (1998) discussed several approaches to character education and formation in Christian schools, which included the storytelling approach and its application to social justice. In her narrative on storytelling and apprenticeship, Gannon-Cook (1998) examined how culture and community are transmitted through storytelling and
apprenticeship. This scholar’s study revealed that storytelling teaches important lessons to students, and other ancient customs such as apprenticeships are also possible remedies for issues confronting contemporary educators.

In an ERIC search using the descriptors storytelling, Black, and higher education, only one study was found. In this study, Wimberly (1996) examined the ways in which African-Americans connect personal stories with biblical and cultural stories to decide future life directions. This scholar maintained that these activities help individuals develop a spirituality of hope. Wimberly (1996) also stated that these activities restore relational contexts for storytelling and story listening in an era where these contexts have almost disappeared.

The Storytellers: Black Christian Women Administrators of Higher Education

Some research has been done in the area of African-American women administrators of higher education (Freeman, 1993; Rusher, 1996; Welch, 1992), but not in the specific area of the role of faith in administrative decision-making practices. These three researchers used multi-method approaches to examine the experiences and characteristics of Black women in higher education.

After ordering Freeman’s (1993) dissertation through Andrews University’s interlibrary loan, I phoned this researcher and spoke with her during the summer of 1998. She shared with me some aspects of how she collected data for her study on Black women presidents of higher education in America, i.e., data collection (interviews) done by telephone. She discussed sending letters to the 25 Black women college/university
presidents and expressed her satisfaction with the 17 administrators (presidents) who responded and participated in her study. She also gave me contact information on the National Association For Educational Opportunities in Higher Education (NAFEO), the agency she contacted for potential informants for her study. Freeman's (1993) study examined, analyzed, and theoretically integrated institutional, structural, and psychological factors that characterized African-American women faculty and/or administrators in higher education.

Rusher's (1996) study focused on identifying internal and external human capital factors which impacted recruitment, retention, and promotion patterns of African-American women administrators. The findings of this study revealed internal and external factors affecting recruitment, retention, and promotions of administrators. Internal factors were currently having a mentor, report of engaging in networking, belonging to a support group, number of years in higher education, and educational preparation. On the other hand, external factors were socializing with non-African-American administrators, community support, number of individuals supervised, colored glass ceiling, present position, and administrative power and responsibilities.

In addition, Welch's (1992) study focused on minority women in higher education, i.e., African-Americans, Hispanics, Females in the Third World, and Chinese women. The findings revealed several commonalities in the themes of these women in higher education, i.e., sensitization to cultural differences, networking, support, mentoring, marginal individuals, and social responsibilities. Findings in Welch's study also revealed little in the literature that discussed minority women in higher education. Finally, the authors (a team
of 14 scholars) remarked repetitively that few ethnic minority women can be found in higher education.

An ERIC search with no limitations on years revealed 717 records using the descriptors Black women in higher education, with several of these records dealing directly with the study of Black women administrators in higher education (Benjamin, 1997; Castanell & Tarule, 1997; Chenoweth, Stephens, & Evelyn, 1998; Smith, 1998). Chenoweth et al. (1998) delved into telling the stories of five Black women presidents of higher education. Smith (1998) profiled two African-American women deans of family and consumer science who worked to obtain accreditation for their programs at historically Black institutions of higher learning. Benjamin (1997) included 30 essays by Black women college administrators and faculty. These essays explained the thematic issues of identity, power, and change. She also examined the impact of racism and sexism in institutions of higher education. In another study by Castenell and Tarule (1997), the issue of minority and female deans in colleges of education was examined. The stories of the current thinking by this group of administrators were also re-told by these researchers.

Many more studies can be cited to validate the persuasiveness and effectiveness of storytelling as the World Wide Web database and card catalog searches revealed. According to Torrence (1998), an internationally acclaimed storyteller, storytelling has a long cherished role in the passing on of information, wisdom, and tradition from generation to generation.
Summary

Administrators are regularly confronted with conflicting priorities and perplexing dilemmas (Ackerman et al., 1996). Furthermore, every scientific advancement, according to the atheist of modern times, signifies simply another strike against faith in God, particularly for Christian administrators of higher education. On the other hand, faith in God, according to Proctor (1995) is a unique characteristic of one's total existence which portrays itself as the fresh air that was breathed throughout the days of youth, and it has followed throughout endless days and nights.

It can be understood, as Stackhouse (1998) noted, that having faith in God is very much like putting faith in a lover for a lifetime, “which is why the Old and New Testaments frequently picture God’s relationship to His people in terms of engagement and marriage” (p. 169). It must also be understood that life for human beings means trusting (having faith), and that individual, particularly that Christian administrator, who embraces wisdom is the one who does not search for certainty, but instead searches for “adequate reason to believe the best alternative available” (Stackhouse, 1998, p. 170).

This chapter has examined faith in God from numerous views. Among these views are moral leadership’s connection to faith in God and ethical issues and administrative decision-making. Other topics discussed in this chapter include reasons for faith in God as well as reasons for lack of faith in God. The literature review showed different attributes of faith-informed decision-makers such as honesty, love, intuition, hope, etc. Though there are numerous decision-making approaches, the theory of administrative decision-making was explained in this chapter to set the stage for this study.
Erikson's theoretical model of the life cycle and Fowler's theory of the stages of faith were used to establish connections between possible attributes of Christian administrators and sociology, psychology, and anthropology. The biblical model of Heb 11, which is referred to as the faith chapter, and 1 Cor 13, referred to as the love chapter, were also used to set the stage and guide the research for this qualitative study. I concluded this chapter by examining the concept of storytelling and the specific topic of the storytellers. Thus, this study sought to gain an understanding of religious faith's connection to the administrative decision-making practices of Christian administrators of higher education. The process through which I conducted the research is provided in chapter 3.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Design

Creswell (1994) stated that "those who conduct qualitative research ... are faced with many possibilities of design drawn from disciplinary fields of anthropology, psychology, social psychology, sociology, and education" (pp. 144-145). In this study, "I have emphasized approaches (factors) drawn from sociology (grounded theory), anthropology (ethnography), psychology (phenomenology) ... and many social sciences (case studies)" (Creswell, 1994, pp. 146-147).

The main focus of this study was to describe how faith in God connected to the decision-making practices of Black Christian women administrators of institutions of higher education and why these Christian administrators used religious faith the way they did. In other words, the study focuses on their stories, viewpoints, and experiences, and discusses how faith in God is linked to their administrative decision-making practices. The research pointed out that, generally, "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 1994, p. 1).
Selection of Case Studies

In consideration of the fact that interpretive case studies in education are characterized by rich, thick descriptions that present a detailed account of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). I have chosen this type of research design to present information about concepts in higher education where little research has been conducted. In addition, this study may form a database for future comparison and theory building (Merriam, 1988, p. 27).

According to Higgerson and Rehwaldt (1993), case studies “are a valuable learning resource because they present the texture and particularity of the concrete. They are far closer than theories to the untidiness of the immediate situation, but distant enough to be free of actual consequences” (p. ix). An opinionated view given by these scholars is that “case studies are forgiving, for no one’s career turns on the decision proposed, there are no damaging outcomes, and one is not burdened by confidences” (Higgerson & Rehwaldt, 1993, p. ix).

The literature on religious faith, administrative decision-making, God, and Black women of higher education stimulated my thought processes to move forward with this case study research (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Jones, 1995; Lampe, 1970; Proctor, 1995; Simon, 1976; Upham, 1984; Welch, 1992). In earlier literature, Lampe (1970) elaborated on four lectures, which dealt with the phenomenon of Christian belief (or faith). The four topics dealt with by this scholar were: believing, the God of Jesus, the God of the Christians, and praying—topics that informants in this study also spoke about.

In other literature on faith, Upham (1984, p. 2) reminded us that all people have
faith, yet it cannot be stated as a fact that everybody has religious faith. This scholar pointed out that everyone has faith in something; however, not everyone has faith in God.

In addition, he stressed that it is proper, therefore, to make a distinction, and to differentiate between faith in God and natural faith, which is discussed in chapter 1.

Proctor (1995), in referring to faith in God, helped in unfolding the pages of this study by declaring that the faith that piloted the emancipated slaves of yesteryear remains the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, a biblical phrase coined by the Apostle Paul in Heb 11:1.

As stated in chapter 2, this study, as it relates to administrative decision-making, is given affirmation by Simon's (1976) statement, which reminds us that the task of decision-making pervades the entire administrative organization. He further stated that a general theory of administration must include principles of organization that will insure correct decision-making, just as it must include principles that will insure effective action. Hoy and Miskell's (1996) 5-step plan, The Decision-Making Process: An Action Cycle, includes five principles of organization: recognizing and defining the problem or issue, analyzing the difficulties in the existing situation; establishing criteria for a satisfactory solution; developing a plan or strategy for action; and initiating the plan of action. This 5-step plan is seen as applicable to this study because it sets the stage for a conceptual framework and future work on the topic, which deals with faith-informed decision-making in circles of higher educational administration.
The Role of the Researcher

In this qualitative study, the role that I embraced, as the researcher, was that of the listener and observer, which impacted many of the decisions that I had to make about research design and methodology. Certainly, I did not come into the research arena with all the information necessary to solve any given problem, but I was able to recognize and to ask the important questions that needed to be answered. As Higgerson and Rehwaldt (1993) pointed out, "Critical thinking skills are the combination of knowing the questions to ask, using the information assembled, applying the appropriate communication and management skills, and making decisions with clarity and vision" (p. iii). According to these scholars, studying real cases, in a group setting or individually, will improve a researcher's ability to think critically, and this study was no exception. My critical thinking skills were tremendously improved. It is hoped that this study will provide an opportunity for all of us to encounter, study, and consider the role of faith in God in administrative decision-making practices in higher education in America.

Dissatisfied in finding precious human energy and intellect untouched and underutilized, Jones (1995) made it her ambition to help empower people in all levels of administration—inspiring them to take a close look at the divine excellence in themselves and in those whom they serve. As researcher, I identify with this view because I believe that this study might possibly help empower people in all levels of administration, particularly in the realms of higher education.

In dealing with perspectives on minority women in higher education, Welch
(1992) helped me to realize the importance of this study when she stated: "Of particular interest to me is the social responsibility that women in higher education have to their sisters (and brothers). This social responsibility is to assist them in accessing education and higher education as well as impacting their own social and political environments" (p. x). In this study, it is the hope of the researcher "that the issues discussed . . . will begin to create understanding and dialogue about women who are an ethnic minority in higher education" (Welch, 1992, p. x).

**Data Collection Schedule**

Data were collected over a time span of 6 months as I used multiple methods of collecting data, a process called triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Eisner, 1998; Mathison, 1988; Merriam, 1988). As Eisner pointed out,

Structural corroboration is the term I use to describe the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion. In many evaluation circles it is called *triangulation* (Webb et al., 1966; Mathison, 1988). For a study to be structurally corroborated, one needs to put together a constellation of bits and pieces of evidence that substantiate the conclusions one wants to draw. In the field of law, circumstantial evidence can be used to convict someone of a crime for which there was no eyewitness. The test is one of reasonable doubt; where there is no basis for reasonable doubt, the verdict is regarded as justifiable. (Eisner, 1998, p. 55)

The methodological triangulation of this study combined different methods such as interviews, observations (passive participation), participant observations (active participation or participating with the administrators in some situations that make up their work and leisure lives), physical evidence, member checks, and documentaries (news...
articles, campus flyers/programs constructed by participants, and policy manuals) to study the same phenomenon (Merriam, 1988, p. 69). According to Denzin (1970), the reason for this approach is that "the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (p. 301).

The phase of data collection took place between October 1998 and March 1999. During this time period, I collected data mostly through the field techniques of 21 ethnographic interviews; observations; participant observations; documents such as newspapers, pamphlets, campus flyers, and letters; and friendly conversation. According to Spradley (1979), ethnographic interviews share many features with conversations, and "it is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (p. 58). Staying in the field for 6 months of data collection, I learned a great deal about the role of faith in God in the decision-making practices of the three key informants in this study.

Data Collection Methods

The interview was the primary method of data collection used throughout this research. As I previously mentioned, observations and reviewing documents were secondary methods of collecting data. Before each interview session, a prayer was said, which each informant consented to. I then shared the purpose of the interviews and my reasons for using the tape recorder, which was used judiciously and with each informant's
consent. I explained that the purpose of our interview sessions was to get the informants' experiences, stories, and viewpoints as African-American Christian women administrators of higher education. I further stated that I wanted to know what role faith in God played in their administrative decision-making practices.

The tape recorder was used during each interview session. I agree with Fetterman's (1989) statement that "tape recorders effectively capture long verbatim quotations essential to good fieldwork, while the ethnographer maintains a natural conversational flow" (p. 81). Furthermore, I used the tapes repeatedly for purposes of analyzation. Words that I had sometimes missed during an interview was heard when I listened to tape. The 21 tape-recorded interviews that were conducted followed Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence.

The following strategies were integral parts of the interview process used to collect data: asking descriptive questions; making domain analyses and getting member checks; asking structural questions; making taxonomic analyses and getting member checks; asking contrast questions; making componential analyses; getting member checks; and developing cultural themes.

12-Step Developmental Research Sequence

The specific methodology that I incorporated in this study was Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence. Briefly mentioned in the introduction of chapter 1, the explanation of this 12-step developmental research sequence follows.

The first step was locating key informants. According to Spradley (1979), though
almost anyone can become an informant, not everyone makes a good informant. To ensure having a good informant, I spoke with each potential informant via telephone and was assured by each administrator that she met the criteria for this study. In addition, each potential informant indicated their interest in beginning the study immediately because of time constraints in their schedules. As I listened to what these women said, particularly during the interview process, I was led to a research focus on domains like ways to increase faith, kinds of administrative decisions, kinds of faith, and steps in becoming an administrator.

In this study, letters and consent forms (see Appendix A) were to be mailed (or faxed) to the administrators who met all the criteria for this study (see criteria on p. 60 of this chapter as well as at bottom of consent form). Interestingly, the first three potential informants I spoke with all said, “Yes, I’d love to be a part of your study!” In addition, they all stated that I did not need to mail them the consent form because they would sign the form as well as read the letter when I arrived for our first interview. Step 2 dealt with interviewing the informants. In this step, data were gathered using in-depth face-to-face interviews. A total of 21 interviews were conducted with the three key informants of the study for the purpose of investigating the higher education administrators’ decision-making approaches.

In step 3, an ethnographic record was made for each participant in this study. Objectives under consideration follow: (1) setting up a fieldwork notebook; and (2) contacting informants and arranging for the first interview. The ethnographic records consist of “field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else which
documents the cultural scene under study” (Spradley, 1979, p. 69).

Step 4 in the developmental research sequence was **asking descriptive questions**. Descriptive questions elicit a sample of an informant’s speech. An example might be as follows. “I’ve never been inside a college president’s (dean’s, provost’s, vice-president’s, etc.) office, so I don’t have much of an idea of what it’s like. Could you take me through your office and tell me what it’s like? What would I see if I went into your office and walked around?” “Expanding descriptive questions not only gives informants time to think, but it says, *Tell me as much as you can, in great detail*” (Spradley, 1979, p. 86).

In step 5, I began to **analyze the ethnographic interviews**. In this step, the data began to take shape through analyzation because data analysis is on-going (once the researcher begins to collect data) in ethnographic research (Spradley, 1979). I began the ethnographic analysis, which Spradley (1979) defined as “a search for parts of a culture, the relationships among the parts, and their relationships to the whole” (p. 142). I then began a domain analysis by making a preliminary domain search. This enabled me to discover questions to ask in future interviews and led me to find out what things meant to the informants.

In step 6, **making a domain analysis**, several objectives were carried out, and they are as follows: (1) understanding the nature of ethnographic analysis; (2) identifying the steps in constructing a domain analysis; (3) performing a domain analysis on collected data; and (4) introducing structural questions into the interview.

Step 7 focused on the principles for **asking structural questions**. “Structural questions need to be adapted to each individual informant, meshed with other kinds of
questions, and skillfully repeated over and over again” (Spradley, 1979, p. 120).

Step 8 delved into making a taxonomic analysis. In this step, a tentative focus for in-depth analysis was selected. Because an in-depth analysis for the cultural scene of higher educational administration would take years (Spradley, 1979, p. 133), for this study, I used a surface analysis of the cultural meaning system. A surface analysis was implemented in this study because it allowed me to “identify some cultural themes and gain many insights” (Spradley, 1979, p. 133) into the decision-making practices of Christian women of higher educational administration. According to Spradley (1979), the researcher “could write an ethnographic description that would be a translation, one that showed outsiders the cultural meanings . . . known” (p. 133) to the informants of a given study.

For each of the informants of this study, a folk taxonomy was constructed for one or more of the cultural symbols (domains) by following the steps for doing taxonomic analysis (pp. 144-154). In this study, taxonomic analysis led to finding subsets and the relationships among these subsets. As Spradley (1979) articulated, the goal throughout the analyzing process remains the same: “to grasp the cultural meanings by tracing all the relationships among the symbols of a culture” (p. 154).

In step 9, contrast questions were helpful in understanding the major discovery principles in the study of cultural meaning. This study might help foster ways to discover contrasts (or differences) among cultural symbols. For example, consider the following excerpt from this study: “I was asked to come to the team as a person who could work with the social system competencies that deal with the family, and the sociological issues
and social psychology kinds of things—culture and that kind of thing. So, I am that person who is working with the students around social systems and leadership.” Although the word ‘person’ appears twice in this excerpt, it has a few other symbolic meanings that are difficult to miss, i.e. team, family, culture, and students. As Spradley (1979, p. 158) asked, “How do we interpret these meanings?” I interpreted the meanings by making reference to the contrast sets each usage of the word person belonged to. I examined uses of the term person by asking structural questions (examples follow) to find contrasts among the cultural symbols (terms or domains):

1. What are some other phrases you might use when saying I was asked to come to the team as a person?

2. What are some other kinds of persons that social systems competencies deal with besides the family?

3. What are some other ways you would refer to yourself besides person who could work with social system competencies, person who could work with sociological issues, person who could work with culture and that kind of thing, person that is working with the students, etc.?

In step 10, a componential analysis was done. According to Spradley (1979), the componential analysis is a methodical search for the attributes (components of meaning) associated with cultural symbols. In this study, as I discovered contrasts among the members of a category, the contrasts were thought of “as the attributes or components of meaning for any term” (Spradley, 1979, p. 174). For example, a family and students are both kinds of people (persons). Yet, each of these folk terms has acquired meanings for
people that are not revealed by this similarity. When contrasted, it is discovered that a family consists of people related to each other biologically, by marriage, or by adoption. On the other hand, students, according to Stein (1980), are people formally engaged in learning, especially one enrolled in an institution of secondary or higher education. So, when the informant said, “I am that person that is working with the students around social systems and leadership,” this folk term carries the component of meaning that they belong to a family. It can be concluded that students have the attribute of belonging to a family.

Step 11 is discovering cultural themes. In this study, I sought to discover what the nature of cultural themes were and how they could be utilized to give a holistic view of a higher education administrator’s culture from the viewpoints of three selected women.

Finally, step 12 involved writing the ethnography or cultural description. It is important to note that additional communication, called member checks, was needed to fill gaps in the data. In order to write up the ethnography, I followed the following steps: locating informants willing to participate in this study; sharing letters and consent forms with each informant (see Appendix A); gathering data through interviews, observations, telephone calls, e-mail, newspaper articles, campus flyers, and student letters; compiling fieldwork notebooks (which includes separate descriptions of each cultural setting); transcribing the data (600 pages approximately); analyzing and interpreting the data; and writing up the final report.

“Rather than studying people, ethnography” has been chosen for this study because it “means learning from people” (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). This researcher also shares how this “means asking questions, eating strange foods, learning a new language, watching
ceremonies, taking field notes, washing clothes, writing letters home, tracing genealogies, observing play, interviewing informants, and hundreds of other things” (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). During this study, I did ask many questions, interviewed the informants, ate lunch with an informant, watched a Native American ceremony at one of the cultural settings, compiled several fieldwork journals, toured the three campuses on my leisure time (writing descriptions), and began a prayer journal.

Descriptive studies were developed of three African-American Christian women administrators of higher education—from different American colleges and/or universities. The strategy of purposive sampling was used, and administrators were chosen from a list of African-American college and university presidents ordered from the National Association for Educational Opportunities in Higher Education (NAFEO), various faculty information directories from American colleges and universities, and the Human Resources Departments in the varied institutions of higher education.

For this study, potential informants were selected based on their response to the study’s criteria (see Appendix A—consent form). My intentions were to mail or fax the letter and consent form (see Appendix A) to the three participants in this study. However, all three of the participants expressed a high level of interest in participating in the study, and they each told me via telephone to bring the letter and consent form with me to their first interview. At that time, they all said that they would read the letter and sign the consent form. In addition, each of the three administrators (Department Chair—Ellysha; Assistant to the President—Mary; and Director of Student Life—Victoria) desired to get started with the interviews immediately to share their stories, and so we did.
Interestingly, the first three women whom I asked to be a part of this study all said, "Yes, I’d love to be a part of your study!" Once the research process began, 6 to 10 interviews were used to gather the administrators’ viewpoints, stories, and experiential knowledge on faith in God as it related to their administrative decision-making practices. As an end result, I met with the three informants for seven recorded interviews each, which totaled 21. In addition, we communicated via telephone and e-mail for confirmation of data, re-scheduling of appointments, and clarification of relevant information, i.e., pseudonyms, transcriptions, descriptions, etc.

I also conducted a pilot study with administrators of higher education who were identified as excellent informants on the subject of my study. One of the informants in the pilot study was not African-American. Yet, she desired to participate in the pilot study because of this study’s applicability across cultural lines and her faith-informed decision-making practices. The pilot study helped me to avoid assumptions about ethnicity. Therefore, when potential informants were contacted, I asked each of them if they met the criteria, i.e., African-American female by birth or naturalization. Christian administrator of higher education, believed that faith in God was played a role in their administrative decision-making practices, and willingness to participate in this study.

Findings depend heavily on how the final report is analyzed, organized, and interpreted. A comparison of the ethnographic interviews will assist readers of this work to envision what occurs on a college or university campus when Christian administrators allow faith in God to play an important role in their decision-making processes. Individual readers may start to “see things happening, perhaps feel things felt by the actors in this...
situation. Instead of being told what people know, how they generate behavior from this knowledge, and how they interpret things” (Spradley, 1979, p. 210), the reader is shown “cultural knowledge in action” (p. 210).

A cross-data analysis was conducted to see if there were recurring or common themes revealed in the study. These themes are discussed under “Theme Analysis” (chapter 3). In addition, cultural themes are dealt with in chapters 4, 5, and 6, and reiterated in the summary of the study. Triangulation of the data proved to be very helpful because of the strength that it gives to internal and external validity. Finally, other kinds of information were used in “re-framing the narrative voice” (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997), i.e., poetry, photography, graphic depictions, etc.

Data Compilation

The data from the interviews, observations, participant observations, descriptions, field notes, documents, condensed accounts, expanded accounts, analysis, cultural inventory, and interpretations were compiled into three volumes, which are referred to as Fieldwork Journals. Volume 1 includes all the data from Ellysha, my first key informant. Volume 2 includes all the data from my second key informant, Victoria. Finally, Volume 3 consists of all the data from Mary, my third key informant.

In addition to compiling data in the three volumes or fieldwork journals, I used the strategy of card sorting. For example, after I had collected a list of the different administrative categories or areas in which faith in God informed the administrator’s decision-making practices, I wrote the terms on cards. Then, I gave the cards to an
informant and asked, "Which of these are the same kinds of categories?" Spradley (1979) noted that

If you have collected a number terms that appear to go in the same domain, writing them on cards and asking informants to sort out the ones which are all the same kind of thing quickly leads to finding the boundary [some folk terms belong inside the domain and others belong outside the domain as determined by an informant] of a folk domain. (p. 131)

I found it useful to write cover terms on a card with one color and included terms on a card with another color. As new included terms were discovered during an interview, I wrote it on another card and placed it beneath the cover term. This gave the administrators in this study a visual sense of the relationships among the folk terms and themes I was investigating, and this strategy enabled them to cooperate more fully with me.

Structural questions all function to explore the organization of an informant's cultural knowledge. They lead the ethnographer to discover and verify the presence of folk domains, cover terms for these domains, and the included terms. By using structural questions, the ethnographer does not need to impose analytic categories to organize the data from interviews or participant observation. Ethnography is more than finding out what people know; it also involves discovering how people have organized that knowledge. (Spradley, 1979, p. 131)

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (1988), data collection and analysis should be a simultaneous procedure in qualitative research (p. 123). Goetz and LeCompte (1984) remind us that it is the timing and integration of data analysis with other tasks that distinguish qualitative research from traditional positivistic research. The data must be analyzed as they are collected, otherwise, the researcher would not know what questions
to ask, what strategy to implement, or where to look.

Surely, analysis becomes more intensified "once all the data are in, even though analysis is an ongoing operation" (Merriam, 1988, p. 123). Merriam (1988) pointed out that when to conduct a literature review has been an issue of controversy (p. 63). Glaser (1978) declared that the literature review in qualitative research should take place after the total data collection process and data analysis is almost finished. Yet, I decided to adhere to the Wolcott's (1990) recommendations that "in our descriptive and analytic accounts, the most appropriate place for examining the literature seems to me to be in consort with the analysis of new data" (p. 17).

As I stepped into the final stage of data analysis, reconfiguration began to take shape. I needed to reconfigure (analyze and interpret) all field notes, various reports, papers, tape recordings, transcriptions, narrative descriptions, and photographs. The reason for this process was to construct a general depiction of how a system operates from "myriad minute details and preliminary conclusions. This phase can be the most creative step of ethnographic research . . . the researcher synthesizes ideas and often makes logical leaps that lead to useful insights" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 21). According to this scholar, such unexpected insights are often the result of allowing the mind to wander and seriously consider unusual combinations of thoughts.

The researcher must of course backtrack to see whether the data will support these new ideas or invalidate them, but will rarely achieve them through linear, methodical work alone. Conventional hard work sets the stage for these moments, but flexible thinking and what appear to be random associations are catalysts that make them happen. (Fetterman, 1989, p. 21)

In this study, four types of ethnographic analysis were used, i.e., domain analysis;
taxonomic analysis; componential analysis; and theme analysis. Together with the numerous kinds of ethnographic questions, a single purpose underlies each of these analytic strategies: “to uncover the system of cultural meanings that people [administrators in this study] use” (Spradley, 1979, p. 94)

Using a Domain Analysis

As Spradley (1979) explained, domain analysis involves a search for the larger units of cultural knowledge called domains. When I used the domain analysis in this study, I searched for cultural symbols that were included in larger categories or domains by virtue of some similarity. The first element in the structure of a domain is a cover term, which is a name for a category of cultural knowledge. Person, for example, is a cover term in the English language for an extensive category of knowledge, i.e., Christian, God, family, administrator, student, colleague, self, friend, lover, spouse, etc. In this study, faith decisions is a cover term for many scenarios that this study’s Christian participants are faced with in their administrative settings on a daily basis. According to Spradley (1979), in “any sample of language collected through an ethnographic interview there will be numerous cover terms” (p. 100).

The second feature of a domain analysis is all domains have two or more included terms. These are folk terms that are an integral part of the category of knowledge named by the cover terms. In one’s search for domains, it may often be noticed that a participant would use distinctly different terms in a similar way, which suggested they may be included terms (Spradley, 1979, p. 100). For example, one of the informants might say,
We were served guava puree, papaya nectar, mango shakes, and ginger ale at the faculty brunch on Thursday. The usage suggests that guava puree, papaya nectar, mango shakes, and ginger ale might all go together as included terms in some domain. As a researcher, one could group these terms together as members of a domain and verify this by asking, “Are these all kinds of drinks?”

A single semantic relationship is the third element of all domains. When the decision is made to connect two folk categories, this connection is referred to as a semantic relationship. Usually, all simple meanings seem to be based on dual concepts with a semantic relationship. In regard to this study, a non-religious scholar might ask, “What is a Christian?” and I may define it by saying, “A Christian is a kind of person,” or “A Christian is a kind of religious or spiritual person.” In each instance, the term to be defined (Christian) has been linked or connected by a semantic relation (is a kind of) to the term person and religious or spiritual person. Certainly, as Spradley (1979) also pointed out, “the cultural knowledge of every society is made up of many such domains” (p. 101).

The final feature of the domain analysis is the boundary. According to Spradley (1979), the boundary usually goes unnoticed until the informant makes a comment such as, “No, she’s not a friend. She’s a student” (p. 101). This shows that the “informant has called attention to the fact that some folk terms belong inside the domain and others belong outside the domain. The decision as to whether a term is a member of one domain or another must always be made by native informants” (Spradley, 1979, p. 101).
The Truth of the Taxonomic Analysis

What is the truth of the taxonomic analysis? The truth of the taxonomic analysis involves searching for the internal structure of domains which leads me or any given qualitative researcher to identify contrast sets. After four interviews, in which I asked both descriptive and structural questions, I was able to elicit an increasing body of cultural knowledge and information. Combined with the domain analysis, these questions began to untangle the meaning system of the cultural scene in culturally familiar terms.

Accomplishing the task of complete and exhaustive study, even for a somewhat limited cultural scene, would take years of intensified research. Therefore, in this part of the study, I want to discuss how I limited the scope of research through the use of the taxonomic analysis, which involves eight steps of finding subsets and their relationships.

"Like a domain, a folk taxonomy is a set of categories organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship" (Spradley, 1979, p. 137). Step 1 of the taxonomic analysis involved beginning with a domain for which I had the most information. We all have many folk taxonomies stored in our memory banks, and we use them daily. For example, I stop at a department store to buy a tape recorder, and without thinking I begin to use my folk taxonomy, kinds of tape recorders. Let us say I want to buy the latest model of Toshiba. The audiovisual shelves are overflowing with many different brands of tape recorders. As I skim their exteriors, I notice that some are Casio, others are Sony, and still others are made by Panasonic (all kinds of tape recorders). I notice a Toshiba Walkman and begin to look in that section for other Toshiba recorders. In this study, folk taxonomies were used in the same way for kinds of people, categories of administrative
decisions, kinds of experiences, etc. Certainly, an individual may use folk taxonomies for kinds of food, drinks, houses, cars, and an unlimited number of other things.

There is only one distinction between a taxonomy and a domain. Instead of showing the relationships between two or more folk terms such as found in the domain analysis, the taxonomy shows the relationships among all the folk terms in a domain. A taxonomy reveals subsets of folk terms and the way these subsets are related to the domain as a whole. I reviewed my field notes and proceeded in asking structural questions about kinds of people in the daily lives of these Christian administrators of higher education.

Each of the three informants conveyed that many kinds of people were integral parts of their lives as well as very instrumental in regard to their decision-making practices. According to each participant in this study, God, family, friends, students, and colleagues were very important to them. “Taxonomic analysis always begins with a domain such as this, even though the list may be incomplete” (Spradley, 1979, p. 144). (See Table 1.)

Step 2 of the taxonomic analysis dealt with identifying the appropriate substitution frame for analysis, in which I identified only the relationship between the cover term (kinds of people) and a single set of included terms (the specific people). In order to divide up this set of people and find out how these included terms are organized into subsets, I used a substitution frame which follows. Because substitution frames become the main instrument for all the analysis that follows, “it is very important to work out such a frame
TABLE 1
FOLK TERMS OF KINDS OF PEOPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These are tough decisions. I spent time not sleeping . . . and I got all the way through my doctorate. I refused to do homework on Saturday nights because I decided that this was family time (Vol. 1, interview #3, p. 5).</td>
<td>My parents are wonderful. They are my support base. and they know me. I can pick up the phone and call them anytime. Although I may be overreacting, my parents always put me back to the Bible. They pray for me, and I don’t want to take them for granted (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 6).</td>
<td>We have always been a practicing family. The introduction of this notion of God was introduced to us by the church. As a result, I went to Christian schools all my life. We see Christ as someone Who is very visible in our lives (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These are people who are important in my life: my husband, children, family, friends . . . These take a good deal of my time (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 8).</td>
<td>I see my parents as among the blessings for which I constantly give God praise. I really am blessed. My family and friends keep me focused and are most important outside my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I wouldn’t trade this for anything in the world. My family and friends, that’s my support. This college is what I do, not who I am. I love it. The Lord has given me every opportunity here, but this is what it’s all about – my friends and family keep me grounded (Vol. 2, interview #2, pp. 13-14).</td>
<td>I’m a middle child, the youngest of the oldest and the oldest of the youngest, so I had to figure life out from both ends of the spectrum. I always wanted to know . . . how does God speak to me. and how can I best fit in the community where I can grow? So . . . it’s a normal position for me to be in because I am very people oriented (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My husband can ask questions or steer things to make me think. He helps to stimulate my thinking on spiritual issues and other things. He is very caring, a people person. He loves people. He works with the girls, our children. He is a real father to them (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 14).</td>
<td></td>
<td>My father is spiritual, a bread winner, and wise. My mother is functional, car-crazed, likes cars, she is very functional, a quiet, strong, strict Black woman (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 27).</td>
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Table 1—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I surround myself with Black women who boost my self-esteem, who help to enhance me, and I can keep moving. We go to brunch, we laugh, talk, &amp; eat. We pray for each other. Mostly we have fun and enjoy each other’s company (Vol. 1. interview #3. p. 6).</td>
<td>This is my pastor and his wife. I think of them as my family because they are my main support. I love my family dearly. I think they are wonderful, and I think I can truly say that I will give my life for any member of my family (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 16).</td>
<td>My sisters are all mothers. They are all good mothers and are all hard working. My brothers, one is a high school religion teacher, and my brother, ‘K’, teaches music. There is another brother who is a retired army sergeant. My brothers are all very handsome. They are all very kind. We are from a very strong family (Vol. 3. interview #5. p. 27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father was a state farmer. My mom’s the sweetest person on earth. My mom is 15 years older than I am. That means she was 15 years old when she had me, but she was married to my dad. She and my dad have been married 60 years, which is wonderful. My mother is a very thoughtful person who loves the Lord dearly. (Vol. 1. interview 7. pp. 3-4).</td>
<td>I get a lot of joy out of seeing my parents with their two grandchildren. I am glad my brother got married to give them that (p. 16).</td>
<td>My family and many of the people I work with are my friends. I also see Jesus as my friend. I am a people person. I know that God is still very present in my life, and I have no choice but to share that with other people (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 1).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
carefully for the domain” (Spradley, 1979, p. 145) that will be analyzed in any given study.

In this study, each of the informants continually voiced her thoughts on believers (or Christians), which is why I have used the term in the semantic relationship in the following list.

1. Domain: Kinds of People
2. Semantic relationship: Believers (are kinds of) people.
3. Underlying semantic relationship: \( X \) (is a kind of) \( Y \).
4. Substitution frame: _____ (is a kind of) _____.

Step 3 in the taxonomic analysis meant searching for possible subsets among the included terms. An important question to ask is, “Do any of the included terms fit the blank spaces of this relationship?” According to Spradley (1979), it is sometimes helpful to verbalize the relationship to determine whether the fit is appropriate. An examination of Table 2 may reveal other possibilities for domains and semantic relationships that emerged during this study.

Certainly, I can make additions to this list by reviewing field notes and past interviews. For instance, Ellysha commented during an interview, “So, I became the school’s psychology coordinator and the assistant chair of the department within a year. For the next school year, I had two administrative divisions, and I held those two positions until the chair resigned. I was then appointed as chair.” From such a statement we can make a tentative inference that _____chair_____ (is a kind of) _____administrator_____.

On the other hand, when I asked Mary about ways to be successful as a Christian, she
### TABLE 2

SUBSTITUTION FRAME DATA FOR TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brunch is the cross between breakfast and lunch. There is a group of us, and when one of us feels the need, we’ll call the rest of us and say, “It’s time.” I think there’s nothing like women affirming other women. It’s good to hear that from a man, but I think it’s just wonderful for women to affirm other women and to talk to other women (Vol. 1, interview #3, pp. 5-6).</td>
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</table>

We affirm each other. Sometimes, we’ll bring cards and read them to each other. We tell each other how good they look, how nice they are. We talk about our strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes we talk about problems we’d like to get help with. We talk about things we’d like to have on the prayer list of the group (p. 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to succeed, you have to have a support group, a network of believers, and that’s why e-mail is a nice thing (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 4).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I don’t have a husband. I don’t have children. So I need their support. As a single person, I don’t isolate myself. . . . That’s why the Bible says do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. We need that Christian fellowship. So I hang out with my family—mother, father, brother, sister. Then I have men and women in my life—married and single. To know that people love you and are there for you, it’s just lovely. So, if they agree, they tell me. If they don’t agree, they tell me just the same. . . . I really praise the Lord for them. They are wonderful in their diversity, in their personality (pp. 7-8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advocates can help you become a part of the larger community, but it has to be a one on one thing. It is like a seed that’s growing into the soils of your system. I’m fortunate in that my Christianity can be expressed in my role in Campus Ministries. The way Christ lived, and his passion for unbelievers. If we follow His way, it can lead to success (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 4).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Christianity, in my mind, is the key to being successful. Being a follower of the life of Christ. You follow His way to be successful. So Christianity, from my experience, is the key to understanding oneself and to come to terms with what Christ wants me to do—whether I’m president of a college, or whatever the same principle applies (p. 4). . . . I know when I retire I will have a Retreat House where people can come and learn about God. How do I know that will happen? Because that’s what I want to do. It’s not that I think about it all the time, but as I look back, God planted the seed (p. 14). |
pointed out in the interview that, “Christianity . . . is the key to being successful, being a follower of the life of Christ.” From this comment we can tentatively conclude that a Christian is a kind of follower of the life of Christ.

Step 4 entailed searching “for larger, more inclusive domains that might include as a subset the one you are analyzing” (Spradley, 1979, p. 146). I used Spradley’s strategy of searching for larger, more inclusive domains by reviewing field notes (transcriptions) and interview data as well as attempting to recall unrecorded data. As I think about a more inclusive domain for kinds of people in the lives of higher education administrators, I vividly remember how precious students were in the lives of each of these administrators of higher education. I also recall the strength and courage that family, friends, and colleagues bring to these Christian women administrators who allow faith in God to daily direct their decision-making practices.

Step 5 involved constructing a tentative taxonomy, i.e., a box diagram, a set of lines and nodes, or an outline of possible subsets among included terms. Step 6 dealt with the formulation of structural questions to verify taxonomic relationships and elicit new terms. Conducting additional structural questions was the basis of Step 7. Finally, in Step 8, completed taxonomies were done.

The Components of the Componential Analysis

Componential analysis involves a search for the attributes or components of meaning that signify dissimilarities among cultural symbols in a domain. For example, family and friends are both kinds of people. Up to this point in this study, my emphasis
has been on their similarity. In other words, both family and friends are related by being included in the set, \textit{kinds of people}. But each of these folk terms has acquired meanings for administrators of higher education "that are not revealed by this similarity" (Spradley, 1979, p. 174). When compared, I discovered that the family consists of any person closely related by blood such as parents, children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters, or the spouse and in-laws of the informants. On the other hand, a friend was seen to be a person attached to any given informant by feelings of closeness, affirmation, personal regard, sisterhood, and brotherhood.

An extensive amount of data or information was collected during the interviews, observations, descriptions, etc. It is natural to wonder how to deal with or handle all this extra information, even after the use of the domain and taxonomic analyses. In this study, the wealth of information collected simply could not fit into a taxonomy because other semantic relationships were involved. Therefore, I found it very necessary to use a componential analysis, which led to specific ways to represent this wealth of information. As you examine Fig. 1 (folk terms that were used by the study's informants), you will notice that it shows "a single folk term with some of its attributes in a diagram that shows how each attribute is related to the term by a semantic relationship" (Spradley, 1979, p. 174).

"The componential analysis includes the entire process of searching for contrasts, sorting them out, grouping some together as dimensions of contrast, and entering all this information onto a paradigm" (Spradley, 1979, p. 178). In this study, member checks were used to ensure validity. During this process, participants reviewed the data for
Fig. 1. Attributes and semantic relationships of administrators of higher education.
accuracy and gave additional input, which I found very useful in clarifying any incorrect or misinterpreted data.

In this study, I decided to examine domains using various types of ethnographic analytic tools, i.e., domain, taxonomic, componential, and theme analysis. I limited my detailed investigation to central domains in chapters 4, 5, and 6, describing other aspects of the higher educational administration scene in more general terms.

The Theme Analysis

In this study, I tried to constantly “keep in mind that research proceeds on two levels” (Spradley, 1979, p. 185) simultaneously. Like a Christian educator engaged in preparing the young child’s mind, body, and soul for this present world and for eternity, the researcher “both examines small details of culture and at the same time seeks to chart the broader features of the cultural landscape” (p. 185). Spradley points out that some researchers convey a sense of the entire culture or cultural scene by what he calls the *inventory approach*. For example, I used this approach to identify all the various domains (hypothesized folk categories) in the higher education culture, dividing them into thematic categories such as kinship, friendship, Christian fellowship, social relationships, gifts, etc. Like Spradley, I also believe it is very important to go beyond such an inventory to uncover the conceptual themes that informants use to link these domains. In this study, I examined the nature of cultural themes and realized how effectively they “can be used to give a holistic view of a culture or cultural scene” (p. 185).

Opler (1945), an earlier scholar of anthropology, defined a theme as “a postulate
or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society” (p. 198). In other words, cultural themes are components in the cognitive maps which make up a culture. Themes may apply to a variety of scenarios, and they may recur in numerous domains. An interesting way to discover themes is “by examining the dimensions of contrast from several domains” (Spradley, 1979, p. 186). Among African-American administrators of higher education, recurring dimensions of contrast dealt with the concepts of togetherness, gifts (talents), family, friends, social relationships, personal and administrative decision-making, and strong faith in God.

There are numerous strategies for making a theme analysis, though this type of analytic procedure is not as developed as other types of analysis previously mentioned in this study. In Spradley’s book, The Ethnographic Interview (1979), he delved into numerous strategies for making a theme analysis, and they are as follows: immersion; making a cultural inventory; making a componential analysis of folk domains; search for similarities among dimensions of contrast; identify organizing domains; make a schematic diagram of the cultural scene; search for universal themes; write a summary overview of the cultural scene; and make comparisons with similar cultural scenes. Each of these strategies is seen as a tentative guide to discovering cultural themes, not as a series of steps that inevitably lead to themes.

One way I gained a greater immersion into the ideologies and meanings of the culture under study was to write descriptions each time I stepped into the culture, i.e., interviewing informants, touring campuses with informants, mingling and tarrying on
higher education campuses during my leisure, reflecting upon Christian administrators I have encountered on campuses in other parts of America, having informants share photography with me, etc. Also, making a cultural inventory using pictures, artifacts, magazines, newspaper articles, letters, and pamphlets added to the cultural database and gave clues to new avenues of research.

Table 3 presents a componential analysis of folk domains that I made after the cultural inventory. In my research on the role of faith in God in administrative decision-making, "I reviewed many hours of interviews and came up with the following list of domains" (Spradley, 1979, p. 194). (See Table 3.) This compilation is representative of hundreds of included folk terms, some of which I had pinpointed; others were yet to be discovered at the time I compiled this list. As I interviewed, observed, wrote descriptions and transcriptions, listened to the tapes, and communicated face to face with the informants as well as via telephone and e-mail, I continued to discover new cultural themes. I realized that I could no longer delay writing in hopes of discovering more themes or completing my analysis in a more detailed manner. I found it necessary to "get going" (Wolcott, 1990) with writing up the research.
TABLE 3

A COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS OF FOLK DOMAINS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentioned by One of the Informants</th>
<th>Mentioned by Two of the Informants</th>
<th>Mentioned by All Three of the Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reasons for prayer journal</td>
<td>1. Time spent teaching</td>
<td>1. Kinds of decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Places to shop</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Kinds of people</td>
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<td>3. Kinds of administrative categories</td>
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<td>4. Kinds of universities</td>
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<td>8. Kinds of jobs</td>
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<td>9. Kinds of gifts</td>
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<td>10. Kinds of semesters or quarters</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Kind of work setting, and kinds of places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Steps in becoming administrator</td>
</tr>
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Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodology used in this study. As outlined, "there was no manipulation of the theory nor was an outcome predetermined" (Allen, 1998, p. 22). I described procedures for discovering domains and culturally appropriate structural questions. In addition, I probed into procedures for discovering the internal structure of a domain. The stages in constructing a componential analysis were also presented. "Cultural themes serve as relationships among domains. By making comparisons and contrasts among domains, the ethnographer can begin to find some relationships" (Spradley, 1979, p. 195). The analytic tool of the cultural theme is a main approach used in this study and has been used effectively in earlier studies (Agar, 1973; Carlson, 1977; Ehrman, 1977; Lofland, 1973; Spradley & Mann, 1975).

In chapters 4 through 6, the data are presented from each informant's standpoint as it relates to the role of faith in her administrative decision-making practices. The 21 interviews conducted in this study elicited the informants' views, stories, and experiences as African-American Christian women administrators of higher education. Therefore, these case studies explain what occurs in the day-to-day environments of one public institution of higher education and two parochial institutions of higher education. Chapter 4 presents Ellysha's story—with Ellysha serving as an administrator in a parochial institution of higher learning making decisions based on faith in God.
CHAPTER FOUR

FAITH IN GOD IN ELLYSHA'S ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES

A General Introduction to the Three Case Studies

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, three case studies are reported that describe what occurs in the natural environments, where administrators actually make daily administrative decisions based on faith in God. Each of the chapters comprising this multiple case study represents a complete case and was chosen to facilitate replication (Allen, 1998) and add to the storehouse of knowledge on qualitative case studies.

It is the presence of faithful Christians in academic institutions, openly living the richly communal life God has given them, who can bring a constant "challenge to the demonic forces of atomistic individualism that more and more possess academic life" (Bloy, Hubbard, & Palmer, 1980, p. 437). These scholars suggested a theory that is very applicable to these case studies. They theorized that when one discovers faithful Christian administrators in the academic world of higher education, they seem to have four distinguishing marks:

1. They are spiritually disciplined, or they know very well that their life is sustained and their mission is focused only through obedient attentiveness to God.
2. There is a deep sense of moral engagement. In other words, they know that their lives as Christian sisters and brothers have its origin in the community of humankind and they remain restless until all of humankind share in the justice and mercy which we all deserve.

3. A third mark of a faithful Christian in the academic world of higher education is that they are theologically reflective. Contrary to Marx, ideas have power, and academic institutions are primary places for ideas that shape our lives and determine our primary self-identity (Bloy et al., 1980). Therefore, the Christian will reflect on and engage those formative ideas out of the experiences of their life with God. As this scholar articulated, Christians in the academic world have a specific role to play on behalf of all of the people of God.

4. Christian administrators of higher education are also collegially led. That is, while they recognize that certain formal functions are reserved for ordained individuals, they understand that God is no respecter of persons, and they must remain open to God’s Spirit concerning every aspect of leadership, particularly administrative decision-making practices.

Thus, students, faculty, administrators, staff, spouses—whoever is joined to the community are all looked to for the insight and leadership they are given on behalf of the whole community. Such communities of Christians do indeed exist and carry out significant ministries in the academic world. (Bloy et al., 1980, p. 438)

The three Christian administrators were selected because they met the criteria of the study, and according to the criteria, they fall within the parameters of this study as African-American Christian women administrators of higher education. They were also
selected because they maintained the philosophy that faith in God impacted their administrative decision-making practices. White (1968) observed that Christ requires from all His followers open, manly confessions of their faith. According to this scholar, from a biblical standpoint, each must take his or her position, and be what God designed them to be, "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Every Christian is to be a light, not hid under a bushel or under a bed, but put on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house" (White, 1968, p. 94).

The case study approach to collecting data was chosen because it suits the research questions best and is an inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 1994). Approaches of a similar nature were used with each of the administrators. The categories which emerged after I analyzed the data were the outcome of the responses given to the inquiries and other available data. After the data was analyzed, reports were constructed according to the findings at each cultural setting. These reports are discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 6, and are written based on collected data.

The informants are characterized as Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary to preserve anonymity, which was agreed upon by the researcher and the informants. The institutions of higher education are not identified except to mention that they are public and parochial schools in the states of Michigan and Indiana. I have not disclosed the religious affiliations of the two parochial schools either, other than to say that they are well-established Christian denominations. This position assists in assuring the integrity of the research methodology. Access to this information is privy to the researcher and the
dissertation committee that probed the study.

Since the purpose of this work was not to interview an array of informants, these are not exhaustive case studies. Because the topic of religious faith and administrative decision-making is very broad, it was narrowed to a specified area of research. In doing so, the focal point was placed on African-American Christian women administrators in higher education, although administrators from all walks of life have their viewpoints, stories, and experiences on faith's connection to decision-making practices. This study focused on the administrators as the leaders and key decision-makers within their institutions of higher learning. Another aim of the study was to capture the viewpoints and description of the phenomenon as it naturally unfolds in the cultural setting.

The documents reviewed, administrators' stories, and field notes from the observations serve as the content of chapters 4, 5, and 6. Since chapter 1 includes a discussion of the problem of this study, chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe the contexts of the settings with which the inquiry is concerned as well as a description of the transactions or processes observed in these settings. Not all the data collected was used for this study. However, all the information which was pertinent to the purpose of this study was chosen.

Introduction

In this chapter, which is the first of three case studies, I describe the phenomenon of religious faith as it operates in the natural setting of higher educational administration. This chapter also discusses the cultural setting in which Ellysha, my first informant, operates and some of her activities, particularly decision-making practices. In addition, I
delved into asking Ellysha questions about some of her administrative decisions informed by faith in God. On October 12, 1998, I arrived in Ellysha’s office at the Christian institution of higher education where she worked. Her first interview with me began.

**Psychological Factors of Faith in God**

The interview process revealed some additional themes pertinent to the selected psychological factors, which are explained in the literature review, chapter 2. These themes seemed to assist in providing an understanding of Ellysha’s faith in God and its relatedness to her administrative decision-making practices.

**Ellysha’s Definition of Faith in God**

Characterizing herself as often thanking God for working in her present administrative setting, Ellysha articulated faith in God as trusting in God for those things that you do not have the answers to. In her own words:

My husband and I were talking about that this weekend. I didn’t go to church so he brought me the sermon the pastor preached from – prayer and faith in the church and the just shall live by faith. Faith means to me that it’s not all cut and dry. It’s not all clear. All the answers are not clear, and so you do some things in trust. Um, because things are not clear, you know, like, you know, you’re starting out on this dissertation by faith, trust in God, because you don’t always see the end from the beginning. (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 2)

Because shared decision-making is implied here, Ellysha, laughing heartily, declared that she cannot see the end of the road although she knows she wants to get there, and faith in God means trusting that she will get there (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 2).
Various Ways Christian Administrators Refer to God

Faith in God in the administrative decision-making practices of three administrators of higher education is the focus of this study. Not only is it important to gain an understanding of faith’s role in decision-making but various ways Christian administrators refer to God. After I constructed a taxonomy of synonymous terms for God, Ellysha was asked to answer the following question: “What are some other ways you refer to God besides those listed on the taxonomy?” (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 23).

I would describe God as a friend, a personal friend. A friend is a person. I will describe Him as a friend, as a person I could trust. Sometimes I act without trusting, but He is trustworthy. I was reading, I think it was yesterday, and something hit me. It was talking about peace – the memory text in Isaiah. And He said the effect of righteousness is peace, and He said I want you to feel quiet and secure, that kind of thing. Somewhere in the lesson, I read something about the experiences that you go through. It wasn’t exactly this but this is how I interpret it. (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 23)

According to this administrator, God has a plan for all our lives. So she viewed God as a planner and an organizer. She believed that the experiences we go through are the experiences we have to go through because of the plans He has for our lives. Ellysha referred to God as a guide, and He knows the plan. In addition, she declared that God knows the road maps; therefore, He takes her down the road she needs to go. She felt comfort in this because she mentioned this as having so much feeling for her. After she finished reading about that, she remembered saying, “Lord, I thank you for my experiences, good ones and bad ones” (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 24). She referred to the biblical text which says, ‘in all things give thanks.’

During the fourth interview, Ellysha found it a funny thing to say when she
referred to God as a lover. She explained that God loves people, pleasure, and nice things. She added that He is a facilitator because He facilitates things in our lives.

According to Ellysha, God organizes but also facilitates and guides. Other synonymous terms or phrases used by this Christian administrator to describe God are: caring; you can count on Him; powerful; strong; trustworthy; creative; thoughtful being; answers prayer; listens to answer; leader; comforter; providential; friend; the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow; and Father. She concluded by saying that God’s place for us is his plans for us. His plans for us may meet with obstacles from us sometimes, but this woman stated that God is creative enough in helping us to come back to where we are supposed to be. In her calm, narrative voice, Ellysha shared with me how she understood all things that happen in one’s life.

That’s how I understand that all things that happen to you, the experiences that happen to you, are the things that God is leading to happen in your life. God is a thoughtful being as well. Those are the types of things I will add. I hope I will remember that when things are happening to me that I don’t feel good about.

(Vol. 1, interview #4. p. 24)

Ellysha’s Concept of Administrative Decision-Making vs. Decision-Making

According to Ellysha, decision-making is making decisions all the time, all kinds of decisions. She viewed decision-making as a concept employed when she makes a choice about what clothing to wear, what she is going to cook, what she is going to eat, or how she is going to do her hair. On the other hand, Ellysha’s definition of administrative decision-making always involves other people. She mentioned that when one is an administrator, one’s decisions cannot be what satisfies them all the time, but it has to do
with what is good for the team (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 12).

The Administrative Setting

In describing this institution of higher education, Ellysha immediately started thinking about the physical part of the university, the grass, the trees, the ground, the fact that it is located out in the country, and the fact that she has to drive only 6 minutes to get to the school. She was also reminded that her school is a Christian university. When she thought about the Christian setting, Ellysha shared how she enjoyed praying in class, the language in class (non-profanity), the smoke-free environment, the fresh air, the beautiful flowers and trees, and the beautiful atmosphere and geographic location. She talked about enjoying having a lot of contact with people across the campus, not just in her department. In her department, she works with five individuals, and they often have meetings at least once a week. According to Ellysha, they disagree a lot in their meetings, they hash it out, and they also stop and pray (Vol. 1, interview #1, pp. 3-4).

This is an international campus established in the latter part of the 19th century with approximately 3,000 students presently enrolled. Two thousand of them are graduates and 1,000 are undergraduate students. Five schools are housed on this campus: College of Technology, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, School of Business, and the Seminary (Vol. 1A, p. 1).

Results of Making Faith-informed Decisions

In her second interview, Ellysha mentioned spending time with the Lord as a faith decision. When I asked this administrator what are all the results of making faith-informed
decisions, she mentioned two results of making these kinds of decisions—peace of mind and wisdom.

Peace, well yes, but I had to think about it. . . . I think peace of mind is one of the results of making faith decisions. Another one is wisdom because the Lord gives you wisdom to make faith decisions. Those two are the two main things that I think are the results of making faith decisions. (Vol. 1, interview #3, pp. 3-4)

The Results of Being a Christian in Higher Education

One of the criteria for this study entailed being an African-American Christian woman administrator of higher education. Therefore, a cause-effect question (Spradley, 1979) that emerged during the data collection process was, What are all the results of being a Christian in higher education in today’s times? Ellysha responded by saying that one result is that you are willing to give of yourself. She mentioned that it is not just enough to give theory or practical suggestions in class, but you are willing to look at a person holistically. In light of Fowler’s theory, stage 3, a person’s experiential knowledge of the world now spreads beyond the family circle, and numerous spheres such as school or work, friends, and possibly religion suddenly demand consideration, which Ellysha alluded to. This Christian administrator also talked about her willingness to render more sacrificial service.

I wouldn’t be at this university if I were not a Christian. I would be at a state university making more money. I would not be sacrificing, as some, as my sister said to me, ‘You’re not making your Ph.D. work for you’ because I’m working here and making a 1960 salary. Now, if I were not a Christian, I would not be here. I would be in a state school. Now, I think that’s another result. You’re willing to do some self-sacrificing. (Vol. 1, interview #3, p. 8)
Sociological Factors of Faith in God

There were still other sociological themes derived from the wealth of data collected. The category sociological factors of faith in God refers to spiritual and religious practices at work as well as at home and in the community. The following areas provide an understanding of some of Ellysha's attributes or values engendered by religious faith and their sociological foundations.

Faith's Role in the Sequence of Events Leading Up to Becoming an Administrator

Ellysha provided a thorough explanation of the sequence of events that led her to her present administrative assignment. She and her husband resided in a northern city on the East Coast of the United States for 20 years. Their children grew up there, and all that time, Ellysha was in the church there. Working in an administrative position on this university campus as a graduate assistant, Ellysha earned a doctorate degree in 1986.

Before defending her dissertation, she thought about some of the problems she had as an administrator and teacher who was competent at what she did. She expressed that she was a Black woman working in a White male world, and it was very low in administration, particularly in the department where she worked. It was dominated by White males even when she was in school, her classes, and her department. She remembered two White women that she worked with, and none of them were her advisors. Ellysha expressed that she had to be able to work with these people and make decisions. She articulated that she had to be able to make decisions, not the decisions, so much, that others wanted her to make, but she had to ask for strength to make decisions.
that she felt God would be pleased with her making. She stated that this means making
decisions that she could sleep well with at night (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 7).

In the sequence of events upon, during, and after becoming an administrator of
higher education, Ellysha mentioned that many times she does not know what to do. So,
she does not do anything until she goes home and prays. She then talks to her husband
(which can be viewed as shared decision-making), and she thanks God for a Christian
husband. According to Bauman (1999), a strong sense of support from others help us to
weather trying times, and it builds up one's spirituality.

Ellysha declared that she did not want to accept her present administrative
assignment because she really wanted to go to Washington, DC, to work in higher
education. As Ellysha stated,

Many a time, I don't know what to do. I don't do anything until I go home, and I
pray. Then I talk to my husband. Thank God for a Christian husband because I
really wanted to go to Washington, DC. I didn't want to come here. And when I
got the call, my secretary told me someone from here was calling, I would not
come to the phone. I would not speak to them. I went home, and I told my
husband, and he said, 'You'd better answer that phone because you never know
what the Lord has in store for you.' And he talked to me. So, I gave them a call,
and sure enough, that's what they wanted. They had a job for me. (Vol. 1,
interview #1, p. 6)

Ellysha mentioned discussing the issues with her husband. So, that night, when her
husband prayed, she remembered him saying, "Lord, open the door that should be opened,
and close the door that should be shut" (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 6). Ellysha stated that on
the very next day, the university in DC phoned her and said that they were not hiring for
the position any longer, and that was her answer. She said that her husband helped her to
focus. At that point, it was so late. They packed some clothes, locked their house up, and
came to her present administrative assignment (Vol. 1, interview #1, pp. 5-6).

Before accepting her present administrative position, Ellysha said that she was tired of administration because she wanted to teach. According to her, when she gets in the classroom, she just comes alive. When she accepted her present position as a professor, she thought, “Wow, this is wonderful” (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 5) because she would just go in the classroom and teach. Within 1 year of being employed in her present position, she was asked to be the school’s psychology coordinator and the assistant chair of her department. When the chairperson resigned the following year, Ellysha then became chair of her department (Vol. 1, interview #1, pp. 5-6).

**Faith in God and the Influence of Family and Friends**

As the chapters of Ellysha’s story unfolded, she reminded me that an important way to maintain faith in God is to spend time with people who really care about you and who will reinforce you, boost your self-esteem, and help you to stay strong, which one might view as shared decision-making. She pointed out that this helps her to stay focused.

As Ellysha reminisced to the days of yesteryear when her two adult children were minors, she articulated that children are a joy, but they are a lot of responsibility. Yet, she replied that without children, her life would not have been as rich because so much is learned when raising children. She further added that one learns a lot about God and how He works with us from raising children. For instance, Ellysha stated that if we look at how we love them and try to get them to do this and that, we realize that they have got a mind of their own. Furthermore, she spoke about how children are not always going the
way you want them to. As a result, this administrator admitted that she really learned a lot about how God tries to work with us and really tries to get us to do things. As Ellysha declared, “He doesn’t throw us down and sit on us even though we keep doing our thing and going our own way” (Vol. 1, interview #4, pp. 15-16).

Ellysha also stated, “You grieve over your children when they are doing that. So, that let’s you know how God grieves over us. And He loves us more than we love our children, more than we love them” (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 16).

In discussing her faith in God, Ellysha referred to the days and nights when she was a doctoral student working on her dissertation. In order to receive her doctorate degree, she made a decision based on faith in God not to delve into her academic studies in such a way that it would interfere with her family. When I asked her how she did that, she replied,

These are tough decisions. I spent time not sleeping. I refused to do my homework on Saturday nights, and I got all the way through my doctorate. I refused to do homework on Saturday nights because I decided that this was family time. (Vol. 1, interview #3, p. 5)

Ellysha continued traveling down memory lane with the following comment.

I worked most of the time. I worked full time, and then I did ask my husband if I could quit, and I did quit and I worked at the university as a graduate assistant. I have a husband who took up a lot of the slack. I devoted Saturday night to family night. I decided that no matter how busy we get during the week, Mom and Daddy would be always there on weekends; and Saturday nights, they could stay up as long as they wanted to. About 11:00 p.m., they begin to fall asleep though they would try to keep their eyes open doing things so they wouldn’t fall asleep, but of course they couldn’t. (Vol. 1, interview #4, pp. 21-22)

Ellysha’s faith in God was evident as she shared how Saturday night with her family could be a “chill” night. According to her, they would watch TV, pop corn, or just
talk. Then the children's eyes would close. Then she remembered how she would get up before her family and work on her dissertation. She would then cook a brunch, which would be everybody's favorite foods, and, as she stated it, they would just get up and "pig out." Her Sunday morning brunch even included her home-baked bread. Ellysha's reason for doing this for her family was to say, "I love you, and I enjoy doing that" (Vol. 1, interview #4, pp. 21-22). As she smiled, Ellysha made some comments about her friends.

So what I do is surround myself with Black women who boost my self-esteem, who help to enhance me, and I can keep moving. Sometimes we go to lunch, brunch, it's usually brunch. On the weekend, we'll just go to brunch and have fun. Brunch is the cross between breakfast and lunch. There is a group of us, when one of us feels the need, they will call the rest of us and say, "It's time." It's time we had brunch. And we drop what we're doing, like say this week, they'll call and say what's on your agenda for Sunday? Okay, let's see what we can change around, leave the husbands at home, whatever, and go to brunch and stay until the restaurant throws us out. (Vol. 1, interview #3, pp. 5-6)

As a Christian woman who enjoys her friends very much, Ellysha further added,

We laugh and talk and eat. We talk about books we've read, encouraging kinds of books we've read. We affirm each other. Sometimes, we'll bring cards and read them to each other. We tell each other how good they look, how nice they are. We talk about our strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes we talk about problems we'd like to get help with. We talk about things we'd like to have on the prayer list of the group, and we pray for each other. And, mostly, we have fun, we enjoy each other's company and we just stay there and laugh. (Vol. 1, interview #3, p. 6)

Administrative Categories in Which Faith in God Informs Decision-Making

One of the criteria for this study dealt with each informant's belief in the role of faith in God in their administrative decision-making practices. To gain a clearer understanding of how faith in God informed their decision-making practices, each administrator was asked to tell about administrative areas or categories in which faith in
God informed their decision-making. Ellysha mentioned the areas of hiring, setting priorities, meeting students, and interpersonal relationships (Vol. 1, interview #1, pp. 10-11).

Ellysha viewed hiring faculty as one of the big areas. Another category she discussed was setting priorities, particularly departmental priorities. Meeting students was another big area for this administrator. When I asked Ellysha what she meant by interpersonal relationships, she stated, “To get all angry and upset, and things you can say sometimes, or even sometimes when you feel you are hurt, the Lord helps me to be able to handle it. He also helps me to deal with all nationalities and cultures, and that’s a big thing on this campus” (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 11). Ellysha shared with me that she keeps a prayer (gratitude) journal which she writes in every night. She also articulated that her gratitude journal is small enough to carry in her briefcase, and sometimes she tries to spot certain things and will say, “Lord, I thank you for a student” or “Lord, I thank you for a faculty, a caring faculty” (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 10).

Ellysha pointed out that she had to be able to make decisions, not the decisions that other administrators wanted her to make, but she had to ask for strength to make decisions that she felt God would be pleased with her making. Other administrative categories in which faith in God informs this administrator’s decision-making practices are hiring and firing as well as program decisions, which Ellysha referred to as decisions about programs, little day-to-day stuff, decisions that we have to make. She declared that she had to make decisions about who she was going to support and who she was not going to support, and actually who was really on her side and who would support her and who
would not, which she mentioned as very important for an administrator to know.

As this administrator continued to reflect upon administrative categories in which faith in God informed her decision-making, she stated that it was only by the grace of God that she would know some things. According to Ellysha, she believes God looks out for her in certain cases, particularly in administrative decisions. She pointed out that she relies on God to let her know how to make decisions. Then, when strange or funny kinds of things would begin to happen or people would say strange and funny things, she would confer with her husband sometimes, and as they talked about it, she thinks the Lord uses her husband a lot to show her some things that she would not have seen. She also stated that this helps her to not make so many mistakes.

In regard to administrative categories in which she allows faith in God to inform her decision-making, Ellysha mentioned that she will make some mistakes as a learning process. She admits that there are some things she has done as an administrator that she would not do again. She clearly articulated that she has learned to be more tolerant of people. She also pointed out that she has learned that things are not all black and white. Her training was not in administration but in psychology and child development. Therefore, she asks people a lot of questions to get a clear picture because she stated that lots of times people do not always give you a clear picture. She said that this is for her own good. According to Ellysha, she can make better decisions if she has all the facts. Through the strategy of questioning, she is trying to get the facts (needed information) so that she can make clearer decisions. According to an early study by Hemphill, Griffiths, and Frederiksen (1962), the following findings emerged.
The study revealed that principals (administrators) who are effective decision-makers engage in a large amount of preliminary work: they seek more information, they differentiate between fact and opinion, and they frequently obtain the views of others. On the other hand, principals (administrators) who make quick yes or no decisions without preparation tend to be less effective. (Hoy & Miskel, 1991, p. 326)

**Faith-filled Experiences as a Black Administrator of Higher Education**

Ellysha described several faith-filled experiences as an administrator of higher education. On one occasion, when discussing her experiences on a particular Thursday, she commented that although Thursday is usually a busy day, she did not have the normal 8:30 a.m. meeting because the dean was out of town. Therefore, she stayed home after her husband had gone to work, and she listened to inspirational music on tapes, CD's, and the record player. She reminisced about turning on the record player and just singing with the tapes and just praising the Lord and having a good time.

Ellysha continued to speak about how she came in to work mid-morning and accomplished a few tasks with her graduate assistant and secretary, and then it was time for her to go to class. After her class was over at 12:30, she met with one of her students and then one of the faculty members. Afterwards, Ellysha went back home and made a sandwich because she did not want to take a lot of time. She relayed to me that she sat on her couch and stayed home until about 2:10. Then she came back just in time for her 2:30 p.m. class after which she went back to her office and met with her graduate assistant to work on a project. She ended her work day by checking her voice mail and e-mail and going home about 7:00 p.m. on that Thursday.
In response to how faith informed her decisions on Thursday, October 15, 1998, Ellysha said,

It started when I decided to stay home and talk to the Lord. I think it started with me reading because before my husband left for work, I picked up Hyveth Williams' (1996) *Will I Ever Learn?*, and I read about half of a chapter because she's got long chapters. So I only read half a chapter and there was some talking back and forth on the phone to some people. . . . I was pulling together some stuff for the children's division at church for Friday night because I had the children on Friday night. But the decision to spend time with the Lord was a faith decision . . . and afterwards I felt good because of time with the Lord. (Vol. 1, interview #2, pp. 9-10)

She began relating her sentiments about reading and her personal devotion time.

I have been reading Steven Covey's (1990) *Seven Habits of Effective People*. And so a few days before that, I had been looking at the fourth project he had been talking about. One of these projects is a project where you should be doing the things that you want to do for setting your own goals in your personal devotion, and I wanted to feel closer to God, and sometimes you feel that way. Sometimes, you just want to feel closer. . . . And that's what I wanted that day. (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 11)

Ellysha reflected upon some interesting administrative moments. She pointed out that as an African-American administrator, one is under constant pressure. She further explained how people expect a lot from her, and in her own way, Ellysha voiced her beliefs about people's expectations of her.

Well, I think that people expect a lot of . . . of, I think you have to be twice as well people expect you not to make the same mistakes, maybe, that your counterpart, who would be, uh, a Caucasian could make and get away with it, and folk not say anything. And, maybe it's just me, but I think, I think that puts some added pressure on the individual. (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 13)

Ellysha even shared some of her thoughts about difficulties she was faced with as an African-American administrator.

One of the most difficult problems that I have had as an African-American
administrator is having people be loyal to me. I’m talking secretaries. I’m talking assistants. And I think every administrator needs a loyal person working with them together, to cover their backs, because you can’t always cover everything. Sometimes it becomes difficult for an African-American to find just that right person who will cover for you and not be interested in putting you down with the least little thing. That adds some extra stress, but that’s when you really have to turn it to the Lord. (Vol. 1, interview #2, pp. 13-14)

Ellysha acknowledged prayer as an option for an administrator during tough times.

You really do pray as an administrator. I think faith, faith to me varies because sometimes I’m sitting in a meeting and somebody will make a crack. It’s a White person, and I’ll say, ‘Lord, what do you want me to say to this?’ I’ll just breathe a prayer. ‘How should I handle this?’ Sometimes an answer comes, and sometimes it doesn’t. And if it doesn’t, I won’t answer, and I figure that’s the answer. You’re not supposed to say anything at this point. (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 14)

Other experiences recalled by Ellysha evolved around student encounters.

According to Ellysha, some students walk into her office, stop at the door, see that she (as the administrator or chairperson of the department) is a Black person, and would change their minds about even coming in to talk with her. She mentioned that this occurred with Caucasian students rather than students from other cultural groups. She further expressed that she thinks that the White students have a different view of things because of all of the stereotypes they have grown up with. She also commented that some of them do not even know that they are doing that. It is just a part of them to do that, but she sees it. When asked if she saw faith playing a role in her life during those times, Ellysha responded as follows.

Why, of course, of course. You would not be able to handle it if it were not for faith and self-esteem. It would just be totally knocked out from under you. You just wouldn’t be able to deal with it. You have to have faith to keep your self-esteem going because you know you are just as good as the next person. So you manage, and you move on to the next thing. Even as an advisor, you get students who don’t even know how competent you are, and they don’t want you to advise
them. As my faith in God has gotten stronger, as I’ve learned more, I just say, “That’s their problem!” And, I just keep rolling. I accept those people who accept me, and those who have a problem, they have to keep moving, and I just keep moving! (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 15)

**Anthropological Factors of Faith in God**

Fieldwork is the hallmark of cultural anthropology according to Spradley (1979), and because of this, the anthropologist goes to where people live and/or work and does fieldwork. After collecting an enormous amount of data, there were many anthropological themes that emerged. As explained by Spradley (1979), this means asking questions, eating different kinds of foods, observing, interviewing, and hundreds of other things. The themes discussed under this category provide an understanding of some of Ellysha’s ethnographic qualities or values engendered by religious faith and the anthropological foundations.

**A Personal Tour of Places Where Faith Decisions Emerge**

The fourth interview session with Ellysha established some perimeters within which faith decisions emerge. This Christian administrator made me aware of a room in her home where she does much of her work and makes many decisions. Ellysha referred to this room as her study. As she took me on a personal tour of her study, she reminded me that this room can put me to sleep. She told me about how she gets up each morning during the spring and the birds are singing right outside the window of her study. Also, this room has pictures all over it—pictures of her family members at different stages of life. She explained how she had many more pictures stacked in her cabinet under her desk.
Ellysha expounded on how she loves this room.

I call it my study, but I love this room because I get out of my bed, and my husband is all the way over on the other side of the house. So, I don't have to worry about disturbing him or the lights being on. This is my own little sanctuary here. I keep my Bible just like that. I keep it open here, maybe not to that text, but whenever I need to go to it, I can go to it. I got the CD player so sometime I just come back here and turn it on and listen to my CD. Things I don't have on the CD, I got a little tape recorder here that I keep here to listen to. (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 26)

She also showed me books which she sees as affording her the opportunity to “pull down” if she wants to read. Ellysha talked about how she will sometimes get up about 4:00 a.m. and study, read, or talk to the Lord until 6:00 a.m. She made me aware of how she spent a lot of time with the Lord in this room getting things worked out for her.

According to Ellysha, this is the room she loves because she sees it as close and intimate. She reflected on how she looks outside when she wants to, listens to the birds, and chases the woodpecker away. She also thinks of this room as special because she spends a lot of time talking to the Lord here.

**Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice**

As data were collected in this study, photography was mentioned by each informant as a source of strength and encouragement for each informant. Photographs were displayed in each of the informant’s offices, and the administrators discussed these pictorial scenes as having an important role in their day-to-day administrative activities. The pictures were of family, friends, colleagues, students, and other administrators. Each administrator was asked to share 12 or 13 pictures with me or take pictures of everything...
having to do with religious faith's role in their administrative decision-making practices. Ellysha’s response to photography, religious faith, and the narrative voice evolved around four themes which emerged as she discussed her photographs, i.e., home and family, colleagues/faculty, women’s ministry/friends, and students.

Ellysha shared her memories of her family, particularly her husband and her daughters. One photograph that was remembered in a special way was when Ellysha’s daughter graduated from college, and the family attended her graduation. Another picture represented a moment referred to by Ellysha as very sweet. This was a pictorial memoir of her and her husband at a Valentine’s party. She also shared pictures of her husband’s cousins who came up to visit with them one summer and spent about 10 days relaxing with them. According to this informant, they loved it, and her faith in God is continuously strengthened by family members.

The next theme Ellysha discussed was faculty. She remembered the time she attended a faculty retreat, which she said her department had never had. According to Ellysha, they got away and stayed overnight. She spoke about finding a beautiful, smoke-free place on the lake. They shared meals together, and she admitted that this was something that she had wanted to do for quite some time. Being able to accomplish that goal was really wonderful for Ellysha’s faith, and her photographs reflected the good times. As she said, “The faculty got away and that was good for them, and we got a lot of work done, as well as eat and prayed and had some fun” (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 19).

The third category that emerged from this informant’s photographs were friends, particularly those who are a part of her women’s ministry team. She remembered and
explained the women's ministry Canadian adventure.

This is a picture that is close to my heart. What is close to my heart is Women's Ministry, and this is a picture of part of the thirty of us who went to the Women's Ministry in Canada and took a picture there. That was such a spirit-filled experience. That was the hotel in Canada. We couldn't round up everybody, but we rounded up as many as we could, and that is very close to my heart. (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 19)

The last theme that emerged from Ellysha's photographic journey was students.

She shared pictures of her students from the West Indies who had come to the United States to work on their college degrees. These students had graduated, and after the graduation ceremonies, they insisted that Ellysha and other administrators and faculty take a picture with them. Ellysha recalled this day just as if it were yesterday.

It was most wonderful. It was a wonderful graduation . . . This was a day, Nancy, that it was so hot, and the humidity was so high, and it rained, and we felt like we were in a sauna. And I could not believe we looked so cool. (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 20)

In one word, she described this set of pictures as success. Her smile, in the pictures and in my presence, exemplified how faith in God can be a part of photography and the narrative voice.

Advice to Upcoming Christian Administrators

In the final interview session, I asked Ellysha to tell me what she would say or what advice she would give to future administrators of higher education about religious faith's influence in administrative decision-making practice. She stated:

Make sure you are moving in every direction that God wants you to move in. You know God has a plan for our lives, and I think it is our responsibility to find out from Him what that plan is and move in concert with his plans for us. If you do, and if you make God a partner and move in the direction He wants you to move in,
you will be a success because God doesn't know failure. We fail when we
disconnect from him, but as long as we stay connected, we are successful because
that is His plan for us. I think I would say in addition to that, "Make sure you find
some time for personal growth and development. Women have a tendency not to
find time for that. They have a tendency to take care and nurture other people, but
not themselves. But personal growth and development is very important."
(Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 23)

Ellysha further declared:

All work and no play, you shouldn't do that. You shouldn't do that. While you
are climbing the ladder, always find time for personal growth and development.
Never neglect the family. Never neglect the family. Never forget those people
also who strengthened and encouraged you along the way. And when you get
where you want to be, when you reach there, then do something for others.
(Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 24)

A Summary of Ellysha's Story

This chapter provided definitions of faith in God and administrative decision-
making as seen from the viewpoint of Ellysha, the first informant. The interviews with this
administrator were corroborated by observing her as she carried out various tasks, and by
the policies and manuals which outline the responsibilities of administrators of higher
education.

The administrative setting was also described in this chapter. The institution in
which Ellysha works has ample physical facilities, is located in spacious surroundings, and
has a faculty and staff to provide for the needs of the student population. According to
this informant, her workplace is guided by a philosophy and mission which harmonizes
with the mission of the church organization that operates it. Actually, most of the faculty,
staff, and administrators are Christians.

As chairperson of her department, Ellysha, who serves as a Christian administrator,
is the link between stakeholders, i.e., faculty and administration, contract teachers and graduate assistants, students and faculty, faculty and staff, faculty/staff and potential employees, etc. The church organization owns this particular institution of higher education, makes the general policies from which the school drafts its local policies, and serves as the final liaison for matters which cannot be settled at that level. The faith decisions which Ellysha makes by virtue of her position seem to be understood by the individuals who serve in the institution. She is the administrator who employs faculty and staff, subject to the approval of top administration, she delegates their responsibility, rates their performance, makes recommendations for promotion and tenure, and has the final word in all decisions in her department with faculty, staff, and students.

Throughout the interview process and this chapter, Ellysha made every effort to articulate her enjoyment of people and the importance of working as a team. In fact, she commented that administrative decisions have to be made to ensure that things continue to flow in terms of human resources because this is a valuable thing that you have. According to Ellysha, one may have financial resources as well as building resources, but the human resources are the most important.

Chapter 4 pointed out reasons why faith in God is important in Ellysha’s administrative decision-making practices. As Ellysha pointed out,

It keeps me from stumbling and bumbling all over the place. It helps me to rest at night. When I make an administrative decision, especially a tough one, if I know that I made the decision after I have prayed about it and know that God is involved in it, I have no problem going to sleep. (Vol. 1, interview 7, p. 18)

The time spent with Ellysha during the interviews provided an understanding of
her strong faith in God. Her story is encompassed in various themes—psychological, sociological, and anthropological—which existed in a mutually related fashion as a way to strengthen her faith in God. Ellysha believed that these themes worked together to help her make faith-informed decisions, particularly administrative decisions. Finally, other themes concealed within the cultural foundations provided some understanding of how Ellysha’s parents communicated moral values to her, how she received Christian training through worship and fellowship, and how she expresses religious beliefs, thus exemplifying a committed Christian administrator of higher education who makes daily decisions based on faith in God.

Chapter 5 focuses on the story, viewpoints, and experiences of Victoria, the second informant in this study. Victoria is a Christian administrator of public higher education, and her story is told of how faith in God permeates her administrative decision-making practices.
CHAPTER FIVE

FAITH IN GOD IN VICTORIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING

Introduction

In this chapter, which is the second of three case studies, I further describe the phenomenon of religious faith as it operates in the natural setting of public higher educational administration. In addition, this chapter discusses the cultural setting in which the second informant operates and makes daily decisions. As the data collection process for this second case study began, I asked Victoria many questions, particularly questions related to her administrative decisions that are linked to her faith in God. On October 19, 1998, I arrived at Victoria's home for my first interview session with her.

Psychological Factors of Faith in God

During the interview process, various themes relevant to the selected psychological factors emerged. These themes seemed to help in providing an understanding of Victoria's faith in God and its connection to her administrative decision-making practices.

Victoria's Definition of Faith in God

Describing herself as feeling a little bit tired, Victoria shared her faith in God by
beginning this first interview session with the following prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I thank you for this job that You've given me. Thank you for this opportunity to talk with Nancy, my sister in the Lord, to be able to share experiences, uh, my faith with her for her research. Please continue to give us wisdom and guidance and if there are any obstacles in the way, please provide wisdom and let things go according to Your purpose. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen. (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 2-3)

According to Victoria (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 3), the following acronym can be used to define faith.

Forsaking
All
I
Trust
Him

Like the biblical writer, the Apostle Paul, Victoria believes that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). She articulated that faith is trusting in things she cannot see. For example, she mentioned that she cannot physically see Jesus Christ, yet she has accepted Him as her personal Savior. So, that is what faith is from Victoria’s vantage point. She stated that she trusts the Word of God, the Holy Bible, and she believes that the Bible is the inherent Word of God.

In addition, this Christian administrator stated that she believes that the Bible is inspired by God even though she may have questions. According to Victoria, when she questions God’s Word, that is the flesh. She says that she knows God’s Word is true, and that is what faith is, just believing God’s Word, what He says, and His promises (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 1-4).

Victoria expressed that faith is spoken and sometimes unspoken, and she asserted, "It's spoken in how I pray and ask for guidance. Unspoken is how the Holy Spirit
prompts you to do something and you don’t know what, but you are obedient to that, and it works” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 12).

**Various Ways in Which Christian Administrators Refer to God**

During the interviews, numerous terms were used by Victoria to refer to God, i.e., Lord Jesus Christ, Lord, Heavenly Father, Personal Savior, Giver, Rock, Guide, Protector, Loving, Judge, Provider, Meets Needs, Hates Pride, Sacrificial Lamb, Peacemaker, Grace, Omniscient, Abundant, Omnipotent, Dependable, and Omnipresent.

Some of the references used by this informant are phrased to describe God’s activities such as the following: He hates pride. He meets needs. He is the basis of everything. He stretches me through people. He gives me the right things to say. He leads with a still small voice. He took my faith to another level. He does not intend for us to break one law to keep another, and He can interpret utterances through His Holy Spirit.

Other ways Victoria referred to God follows: Mercy, Immutable, Never-Changing, Unconditional, Unconditional Love, Life-Giving, and Salvation. According to this informant, one has to know that God is ever-present because you cannot see Him. She declared that she believes in the Word of God and she has faith in God. Although she is unable to see Him, she indicates that He is in her heart. She shared her belief that God is in her life, and when she accepted Him as her personal Savior 22 years ago (as a teenager of 16), He came into her life. Victoria believes that one day she will be with God and reign forever with the Lord.

The different ways in which God has revealed Himself to Victoria characterize the
You have to know that God is ever-present. You can’t see Him. ‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen’ (Hebrews 11:1). I believe in the Word of God, and I believe in God. I can’t see Him, but He is in my heart. I believe the Word of God. I have to believe that what I can’t see is there. I believe that He is in my life. I believe that when I accepted Him as my personal Savior, that He came into my life. I believe that I will be with Him and reign forever with the Lord. (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10)

Clearly, Victoria revealed that the more one reads God’s Word (The Holy Bible), the more one has that intimate relationship with Him through prayer and reading the Word, and the more a person trusts God. She mentioned trust in God as being supernatural. Furthermore, trust or faith in God has to come through the Scriptures, according to this informant, as well as believing on God as one’s personal Savior. As she said,

For instance, my girl friends–some of us have been friends for years–but that trust didn’t come overnight because we say we are friends. I had to develop and cultivate a relationship. So, as you read and pray and spend that quiet time, this flesh we can’t trust in it. The Bible says, ‘No good thing dwells in the flesh’ (Romans 7:18). Trust is a good thing. So, it won’t come naturally, but as we spend time with the Word, I believe trust in God is supernatural. It has to come through the Scriptures, and believing on Him as your personal Savior. You have to know Him, His character, His promises, then the more you can trust Him. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 23)

Victoria continued sharing her thoughts about God by saying,

I believe that He is my life. When I accepted him as my personal Savior, He came into my life. He’s just my peace maker, keeper, and protector. He is my protector and my rock, immutable, always abiding. He lets you know that your labor is not in vain. You need that rock to stand immovable. (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10)
Victoria’s Concept of Administrative Decision-Making vs. Decision-Making

When asked to tell me the difference between decision-making and administrative decision-making, Victoria remarked:

I guess I just see it as administrative decision-making when it relates to my job and decision-making when it relates to my life. I mean I could make life choices on my job. I could choose making a decision. If I were to sit in the restroom to listen to people talk about me, that is a decision, but I am not going to do it. It doesn’t necessarily relate to my job. (Vol. 2, interview #6, pp. 63-64)

Victoria mentioned that decision-making means always making decisions on her job. She stated that these decisions involved choices. According to her, one has to make decisions as an administrator. Then, she reiterated that administrative decisions more specifically relate to her job.

The Administrative Setting

In describing the administrative setting in which Victoria works, it is characterized as a public secular setting which is owned and operated by the state in which it is located. When one walks through the doors of this institution of higher education, one can expect the high quality programs, student-oriented instructors, and convenient services according to the school’s World Wide Web site. Numerous other facts can also be considered:

1. The average student to faculty ratio is 17:1.
2. Nursing, Radiologic Tech, and Occupational Therapy assisting students taking licensure exams consistently score above the national norm.
3. There are ‘In-Demand’ Tech programs, a student-oriented faculty, and various student services, i.e., tutoring, career counseling, job placement, access programs for
students with disabilities, financial aid, etc.

According to the school's on-line home page, this secular state-owned and operated institution of higher education referred to here is located on a picturesque 272-acre campus. In addition, the school's service area encompasses a population of approximately 170,000. It was also noted in the brief Internet article that more than 7,000 students are served annually in corporate and academic training programs. The article also pointed out that more than 200,000 people annually attend cultural events, meetings, conferences, and workshops held on this campus.

Results of Making Faith-informed Decisions

On October 27, 1998, in my second interview with her, Victoria cited some results of making faith-informed decisions in her administrative role. While she admitted that some situations presented unique challenges, she stressed the point that God sometimes stretched her through other people. She further stated that the times God stretched her proved to be some of the best times in her life because "they took her faith to another level" (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 9).

According to Victoria, her integrity is directly related to her faith in God, and this seems to move students and fellow-workers to come to her and confide in her. She mentioned that she shares in their experiences but keeps their secrets.

Victoria talked about being thrown completely off guard when a fellow administrator (her boss) called an administrative meeting and asked her, "Where do you get your peace; what does salvation mean to you? I'm searching" (Vol. 2, interview #2, p.
Victoria remembered this day as being one of those days that was particularly frustrating. She said she just did not know where her faith was because she did not exercise it. When she arrived at work that day, she felt like everything was going wrong, i.e., administratively, personally, etc. Concerning her boss's queries, she retorted: “And if you think that didn’t floor me! In my mind, I say Lord, help me to stop thinking about myself. I didn’t want to come up too quickly. So, I say, “Okay, okay Lord, speak through me” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 22). Victoria then reflected on how she saw this occurrence as an opportunity to witness. So, she told me how she shared with her boss how she became a Christian, and when she mentioned the word peace, her boss began to cry. She also discussed how she asked her boss if she would be willing to receive religious literature from her and she would slip it under her door. The reply was: “You don’t have to slip it under my door. You just hand it to me because I’m searching” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 23).

In response to scenarios like the previous one, Victoria replied:

You know it is different here. I can’t hold Bible studies or anything like that... but people come to me all the time, and I have students come in and I just say, ‘Close the door.’ And it is not one-sided. So, yes, I’m a people person. I’m learning as well. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 23)

Another result of Victoria’s faith-based decisions was the trust she was able to build with her co-workers. She believes that, as a result of her religious faith, God is able to direct people in her school to help her in getting positive resolutions in some difficult situations (Vol. 2, interview #6, p. 40).
The Results of Being a Christian Administrator of Higher Education

Victoria does not separate her Christian lifestyle from her professional life in higher educational administration. She reminded me that she does not try to hide the fact that she is a Christian. Furthermore, one of the results of being a Christian administrator in higher education is her self-confidence. According to Victoria, her self-confidence exudes from the conviction that her job is a ministry appointed to her by God. Therefore, as Victoria stated, the administrative position is hers until the Lord shows her it is time to move on.

As a result of being a Christian administrator, Victoria admitted to having her struggles. She described her conflicts between wanting to act out and respond to situations in an irritable and impulsive manner vs. acting according to the Person she represents—God. Her words in regard to conflict follows:

Lord, never let me forget my testimony and Who I am representing because sometimes I'd really like to step outside this Christian being and go totally in the flesh. Lord, just let me say what I want to say. Let me do what I want to do. Then I can put back on my Christianity suit. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 16)

In retort to the previous statement, Victoria replies:

So there are times when I really get nervous because I want to react in the flesh, and the Lord reminds me to never forget Who you are representing. People here know that I'm a Christian. They know that I am not a Christian in name only. They know that I believe, and my testimony is important to me, very important, worth protecting with everything. So, I had to sit back and pray and ask the Lord, “How should I respond?” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 16)

Another result of being a Christian administrator of higher education revolves around Victoria’s assurance of God’s willingness to help her and come to her aid during challenging and difficult situations. As she continued with her second interview on
October 27, 1998, Victoria related the story of a young woman who expressed suicidal intentions. With no experience in working with someone in this predicament, this Christian administrator was able to lead the young lady through a process that eventually got her the help she needed. Victoria told me that she “kept on praying, asking the Lord what to do” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 25). As she recalled this situation, Victoria remembered how a fellow administrator (counselor) commended her on how she dealt with, handled, this sensitive situation so well. To demonstrate her faith in God, she commented: “That was the Lord” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 25).

**Sociological Factors of Faith in God**

As I combed through the enormous amount of data collected, there were still other sociological themes derived. As explained in chapter 4, the category sociological factors of faith in God refers to spiritual and religious practices at work, at home, at church, and in the community. The areas dealt with under this category provide an understanding of some of Victoria’s qualities or values engendered by religious faith and the sociological foundations.

**Faith’s Role in the Sequence of Events Leading Up to Becoming an Administrator**

Victoria stated clearly that she desired to work in the realm of higher education on a college campus, and she knew that when she was hired for her present assignment. It was her passion. Some of her previous jobs had included clerical, hospital work, and working with students. She exclaimed that she loved working with students, and when
people love what they do, they just pour their heart into it.

Victoria’s administrative journey began when she was an undergraduate student at a Christian institution of higher education. She held the administrative position of women’s residence assistant. Victoria revealed that within 4 years she had one of the best student groups ever. She also articulated that God developed her abilities to deal with confrontation and conflicts. She worked with students from a variety of cultures and stated that she experienced great success. This Christian administrator said that her love for people can be described as a passion that has definitely added to her success in higher education (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 11).

According to Victoria, her love for the big city she lived in and the work she did made her extremely resistant to thoughts of residing in her home town after her job played out. She admitted to being very angry with God for bringing her back home because she loved the city where she had pursued her undergraduate degree. After pausing momentarily, she explained:

I wanted to stay in the city. I love that city. . . . I did not see any opportunity for me to come back here. . . . I got very angry. In fact, people were not used to seeing me that angry. From my family, my church, I withdrew. Then, I felt like God had let me down. Don’t send me back to that place. At least, send me back with a mate (husband). There’s nothing to do there. There’s no job, Lord. There were some issues that I had to get right with my church. I had to face it, and I am so thankful. My only regret is that I didn’t trust Him, but at the same time, I learned a lot about myself. . . . You tell people you’re not coming back to this place. You’re going on to bigger and better things. Then, this director position comes up in the very town and place that you don’t want to come back to. When I read it, it’s like God, help me Lord . . . In my spirit and my heart, the Lord was confirming, “This is the job for you.” (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 23)

Victoria maintained her faith in God’s leading in her life and made it clear that she
is committed to His will. She mentioned that on July 28, 1996, she delivered an
application for a particular job she had seen in the classified ads. She had already decided
in her heart that if the Lord closed the door, that would be her answer to move on in a
different direction. In spite of the number of extremely qualified applicants, Victoria
stated how pleased she was when she was given her present administrative position. She
also discussed how she found a mentor (fellow administrator) with whom the Lord let her
find favor with. As she thought about this administrator who showed concern for her,
Victoria recalled her mentor’s words of affirmation. “If anything, I’m going to push you
to go back to school. You are too talented. This job will be old in five years” (Vol. 2,
interview #1, p. 14).

Victoria further shared this experience by saying,

She was right. She said, ‘I don’t have any other motive than to see you succeed.’
She was only there one year. She had to leave, but in that one year, she was a
wonderful mentor to me. The vice president of the college—a lot of people did not
like her. She was not a people person . . . but for whatever reason, the Lord let
her find favor with me. She pushed me. She instilled confidence and helped me to
grow and learn about higher education and how things go as a director. (Vol. 2,
interview #1, p. 14)

Victoria stated that she experienced insecurities on her new job, but she knew that
this was the Lord’s will for her life. She discussed being a bit overwhelmed by all that was
expected of her. However, she declared that she learned about her work in higher
educational administration, the workers, the institution, and about other people.

According to Victoria, she would not trade this experience for the world. She stated that
her faith in God was affirmed because she realized that she cannot depend on anybody but
the Lord. She also shared her belief that the Lord loves His children, and there are people
He will put in our lives for a season to help and encourage us.

As Victoria continued to reflect upon faith’s role in the sequence of events upon becoming an administrator of higher education, particularly regarding her present assignment, she is thankful that her anger with God and her church has completely dissipated. She regrets not trusting God and admits that she learned a lot during that period of her life. Furthermore, she admitted to realizing that pride was preventing her from seeing and accepting God’s plans for her life, which included working in her little hometown as an administrator of higher education (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 23-24). With clarity, Victoria proclaimed:

I’ve been in different environments where I’ve had my job eliminated, where I’ve had to fight for my job, so it wasn’t like I came here, I’ve learned in these situations that I don’t get comfortable. Why God has me there right now, I love the job. I also realize that there is no such thing as getting too . . . that God is, uh, that He can raise you up and take you back. He doesn’t want us to become complacent and comfortable. I’m there for however long He wants me to be, for He called me to do this job. Until He tells me to move, that’s where I’ll be. So, I don’t get comfortable anymore. I’ve been in too many circumstances, and I’ve learned from that. (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 28)

Faith in God and the Influence of Family and Friends

As Victoria continued to share her story, as an administrator of higher education, her passion for her family and friends was evident. According to Victoria, her family and friends keep her focused. She described her family and friends as the things that are most important outside her relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. She reiterated this point by saying,

I mean this sincerely. I wouldn’t trade this for anything in the world. My family
and my friends, that's my support. This college is what I do, not who I am. I love it. The Lord has given me every opportunity here, but this is what it's all about—my friends and family keep me grounded. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 14)

As Victoria spoke of her family and friends, she mentioned that she can share freely with them. She also spoke of enjoyable moments she experiences when she can reach out to others, moments she views as blessings and a source of encouragement (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 19).

During her fourth interview on November 16, 1998, Victoria expanded on her relationships with family and friends. Referring to photographs of her two nephews, she mentioned that she wanted her nephews to know how to treat women and to be godly, bold young men. She also spoke of her brother as providing good support and her parents as being strong support for her. In addition, her female friends, who she referred to as her girlfriends, were highly spoken of. As Victoria explained, they are there to share, have good times with, fellowship, uplift, encourage, challenge, rebuke, and counsel. She also indicated that her words and actions are reciprocatory toward her family and friends. According to Victoria, the input of family and friends in her life is sought after. “There is trust” (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10). An unknown writer expressed it well by saying, “Friends are families one makes for oneself,” and Victoria voiced her agreement with similar words about her friends.

With friends, I think about a bond, about intimacy. There is trust. With my friends, I see them as mutual. I can go to them for advice. I seek their input in my life. I accept their encouragement and their challenges. (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10)

The thread of family and friends continuously runs throughout Victoria's story on
faith in God. She spoke of Christian fellowship and the spirituality of the relationships she shares. As stated by Victoria, she finds comfort, which is challenging and like a breath of fresh air. She clearly uttered that there are no regrets or repercussions from being with her friends. She remarked that she does not go through her day alone. In times of challenging situations, she told of how she would call up her friends and family and say,

    Pray for me. I am struggling big time. . . . It's always good to have a support base when I go through that. It's nice to know that if God does not immediately fix it, I got some prayer warriors out there. (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 4)

It is evident through Victoria's narrative voice that her family plays an active role in her life. She feels free to call them when she is experiencing a difficult moment. She refers to her parents as wonderful and views them as her support base. Victoria expressed that she could pick up the telephone and call them anytime. She confessed that even though she may be overreacting, her parents always put her "back to the Bible" (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 6). She spoke of their prayers for her in her personal and professional situations.

    The love for her family and friends is no secret. According to Victoria, she just does not want to take them for granted. She sees them as being among the blessings for which she constantly gives God praise. As she spoke about these relationships, she exclaimed, "I am blessed. I really am blessed" (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 9).

**Administrative Categories in Which Faith in God Informs Decision-Making**

    Victoria, while agreeing that faith in God informs her decision-making in numerous administrative categories, used every opportunity to maximize her administrative duties as
they relate to student activities, particularly planning programs for students. Victoria commented on the importance of communicating with her supervisor on student activities and programming issues as well as promoting discussions with students.

Student activities is under my jurisdiction and student programming. I have 'full ringer' on some things that I have questions on. This is a political environment, with community-based interest, and so if there is something that I feel like my supervisor doesn’t know, I need to explain. I don’t want my supervisor to be caught off guard. It doesn’t necessarily mean anything bad. For instance, when I got the students to give their opinion of the President issue, I wanted to make sure there wasn’t going to be any backlash. A college environment should promote discussion with students. It’s not always going to be puffy, puffy, la, la. (Vol. 2, interview #5, p. 11)

Victoria mentioned several other administrative categories in which religious faith informs her decision-making practices. Among these categories were programs for the women’s center, the brown bag forum (meetings where everyone brought a brown bag lunch), and the support groups. According to Victoria, all of these programs are structured around themes which empower and encourage people, particularly the students. This Christian administrator was very clear in her explanation about these programs, which include activities free from profanity or any type of vulgarity. Victoria mentioned that on occasion she would have to step in and speak up in a given social setting of higher education, though she was not directly in charge of it. Feeling offended by the language or actions of others, she would verbalize her dissatisfaction, and according to Victoria, the mood of others would change to one of utmost respect.

Coming from a Christian school, I know I’m in a secular environment. I don’t think there’s always an excuse that people can do and say what they want to in life. I ain’t gonna let them, a lot of them know that, especially with the students. (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 34-35)
Victoria then added:

So with the women... these workshops that have come up, I want to make sure that nobody's trying to do anything, like hypnosis, and I've talked to them and it was nice and I think that in my mind's eye, it's not going to happen. (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 36)

Ultimately, Victoria stated that she plans programs for the enjoyment of the students. She expressed that she is also confident when she addresses a student on any issue. Consequently, this administrator wants others to see Christ in her, and she made the comment that she is blessed that they even listen (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 38).

Another administrative category in which religious faith informs decision-making is budgeting. Budget responsibilities, according to Victoria, are automatically tied to academic responsibilities. She admits to having a very healthy budget for student activities. During later interview sessions with Victoria, she revealed that her stewardship of her department's budgetary funds brought her into relational difficulties with a senior officer of the school. By making the decision to not disburse funds from her budget to a particular administrator/colleague for an upcoming school function, Victoria came across as offensive. However, Victoria found support from an immediate supervisor, who assured her that she did the right thing.

I finally went to my boss. I went and asked her. She said, "No, you are not supposed to. Any lady who comes to ask you to see your budget is totally disrespectful. No, you are not supposed to do that." (Vol. 2, interview #6, p. 36)

Victoria concluded that even though she was not aware of her right to refrain from disbursing budgetary funds based on her own judgment, she said, "Thank you, Lord" (Vol. 2, interview #6, p. 36). Victoria stated that she firmly believed that the Lord puts people...
in positions, and “will use anybody to protect His” (Vol. 2, interview #6, p. 37).

Victoria expressed that the administrators trust her, and it is her faith in God which helps her to be successful. In a succinct summation that illustrates her faith in God, Victoria submitted:

I am okay with my Christian testimony. I organized a dance for the students, but it was fun—no drugs, no alcohol. I put a theme to it, 1976. The spirit of the time was to have fun. The administrators trust me. They would just ask, ‘How did it go?’ Fine, good job. It was not like a Bible study, but I did ask God to help me with this thing. God helps me to do these things and makes me successful. I can’t separate what I do from God. (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 11)

Faith-filled Experiences as a Black Administrator of Higher Education

As the data collection process unfolded (through the interviews), it became clear that Victoria’s life as an administrator of higher education is accentuated with numerous faith-filled experiences. For example, there is a consciousness about her as to her position of authority and her influence on the students she interacts with. As the words of her narrative voice emerged, she discussed her faith in God by referring to the awesome responsibility placed on Christians when they are put in positions of influence.

It’s an awesome responsibility when God puts us in positions to influence His people, His children, and you don’t take that lightly. People are watching, and I was a mentor to these young women. So, I was constantly being scrutinized. Those girls—they would put me on a pedestal, and I had to say, ‘Please don’t do that.’ You know, let me tell you about some of the things that happened, and when I’d tell them, they’d act surprised, and I was constantly being challenged with my own walk in faith. I was always constantly reminded that I had to be real because I was trying, I was beginning to put on this spiritual image. I thought that was what I needed to do, and I was challenged because they needed to see the real side of me, and know, not all my business, but when I’m hurting or when I’m lonely, how I handle my anger, you know, what do you do when you get angry? (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 8)
Her interpretation of leading by example and using faith in God is:

So, that was the thing, when I began to walk with the Lord, when I let my guard down, and the Lord said, ‘Trust Me.’ That’s how we lead by example. You know, when I come out, and this is how I handle a situation, uhmm, people watch. I make a mistake. I’ve blown it. So, my faith in that was like, ‘Okay Lord, I’m trusting You to guide me with these young women’s lives.’ They’re watching me. There are some things I’m not. I have no idea when one of my girls come to me and says she’s been molested by her youth director. What do I say? I don’t have the answer to that. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 8)

Victoria continued by making the following statement:

What I do by faith is that I can encourage her. I can genuinely love her, help her get the help and encouragement she needs. Give me the right words to say to bring comfort to her hurting heart, and that’s the thing the Lord helps me with in my faith. . . . I’m telling these young ladies how to confront the proper way, biblically confront. Now, I’m mad, you know, so am I going to tell or am I going to lead by example? So, that’s where faith had to come in. Lord, help me with my decision. How am I going to deal with this in order to be effective? (Vol. 2, interview #2, pp. 8-9)

Victoria shared with me that sometimes she is challenged when dealing with some social situations. One question she asks herself is, “What do I do?” When students come to her with a myriad of issues, she admitted that her first response is to rely on her faith in God. Through religious faith, she pointed out that she is able to give troubled students encouragement and love while praying for the right words to say to be effective (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 9). Victoria is aware of the sensitivity of human nature. She discussed feeling the conflict that arises when her administrative responsibilities require her to censure or scold an individual who has become her friend. She mentioned that, at those times, she depends on her faith in God to see her through.

As follows, she posited her thoughts:

When you are dealing with people, people are delicate, and you have to be so
careful in what you say and in what you do, and in how you deal with them because something you say could be misconstrued or taken the wrong way. How do you challenge someone you have built a friendly rapport with, or when they need to be chastened or chastised or corrected? But the Lord is like, ‘Trust Me. You’d be doing her a disservice to let her continue to do or think or act a certain way. You need to challenge her as a sister in the Lord. Trust Me.’ I’ll say, ‘Okay.’ (Vol. 2, interview #2, pp. 8-9)

According to Victoria, her conflicts are resolved by actively engaging her faith. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, she discussed a situation where she was faced with denying a budgetary request of a senior faculty member and fellow administrator. She stated that her decision had some repercussions; therefore, she found herself having to defend her decision. In other instances, she admitted to not knowing what to do, yet, as Victoria said, her faith in God took her through. She declared that she did not want to be seen as cowardly, but her desire was to win the trust of her co-workers.

The role faith has played and continues to play in Victoria’s administrative experiences revolves around words spoken by Victoria during the third interview:

One of the things that we do today is counsel women who want to have abortions. Here is where my values, my job, my beliefs, come into play. Do you remember the young homosexual that was beaten and left to die some time ago? I don’t believe that you will win people to Christ by being racist or through hatred. You have to show compassion. I think there is a time to stand up and be bold, and I think there is a time to be quiet in prayer. And that’s where your faith comes in. When you sit talking to someone, you pray, ‘Lord, give me the right words to say.’ We need to be bold, righteous bold, not subservient bold. I can go to my Father. I can pray. I can’t put my Christian beliefs on the shelf. This is who I am. And that’s how my faith influences me in my decision-making process. (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 10)

Anthropological Factors of Faith in God

As mentioned in chapter 4, fieldwork is the hallmark of cultural anthropology.
according to Spradley (1979). Therefore the anthropologist or researcher must travel to where people live and/or work and do the field work. The interviews from Victoria produced a lot of data and numerous anthropological themes surfaced. I asked many questions during the recorded interviews, made observations, and listened attentively. The themes discussed under this category provide an understanding of some of Victoria’s ethnographic qualities or values engendered by religious faith and the anthropological foundations.

A Personal Tour of Places Where Faith Decisions Emerge

During this study, I was honored to take a personal tour (with each of the administrators) of places where their faith decisions daily emerge, for these places form the background for a large portion of Victoria’s story. She began by giving me a tour of her office and sharing the fact that she likes her office to be welcoming, not close or narrow. She expressed that she desires for people to feel comfortable and be able to move around. According to Victoria, she feels like her office is open to all races, and as she stated, her pictures and choice of colors reflect that. She also mentioned needing to turn some of the lights off to make it softer and cozy (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 11).

Our next stop, the conference office, was what this informant referred to as “a one-stop shop” (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 11) because it was designed for convenience, and it is user-friendly. Offices included here are financial aid, registration, placement and career services, and the special population office.

Places in the main building, which consists of three levels (called Wings), were also
discussed. Among these places were classrooms, faculty offices, office of the director of internal affairs, coordinators’ offices (people who go out and recruit), bookstore, student union, president’s office, vice president’s office, the board room, technical areas, student lounges, a little amphitheater, conference center, and theater.

Other places Victoria discussed during her third interview on November 3, 1998, were the Women’s Center and The Resource Center. As stated by Victoria, both of these places where faith decisions emerge were specifically designed to “help women develop professionally” (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 12). As she visualized the work that is and will be accomplished in these places, Victoria described these places as “a beautiful use of space” (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 13).

Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice

In addition to what Victoria has spoken about her experiences as a Christian administrator of higher education, she gave insight on the role of photography, religious faith, and the narrative voice. As she gave me a personal tour of her campus, Victoria mentioned that her office is open to all races, and added, “My pictures reflect that” (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 11).

At the end of her fourth interview on November 16, 1998, I gave Victoria a camera and asked her to take 12 or 13 pictures of those things that have to do with religious faith’s role in her administrative decision-making practices. Almost a month later, at our final interview on December 12, 1998, Victoria, through the narrative voice, journeyed down memory lane using photography intermingled with faith in God. Finding
it difficult to use the camera because of time constraints in her schedule, this Christian administrator decided to use photographs readily available to her. In other words, she used photographs that she already had in her picture collection. So, I listened as she continued to tell her story.

Victoria categorized the photographs into three groups, i.e., family, church family, and friends. About her family members she said, “I love my family dearly. I think they are wonderful, and I think I can truly say that I will give my life for any member of my family” (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 37).

She further elaborated: “I get a lot of joy out of seeing my parents with their two grandchildren. I am glad my brother got married to give them that” (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 37).

Victoria referred to pictures of her family as being precious to her. She also reminisced about seeing her youngest nephew being born. As she looked at the photograph, she said that it was a special time that she could be a part of along with her mom and dad (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 38). Other expressions shared by Victoria about her family follow:

Those are my nephews. That’s my sister-in-law. I love her to death. She is like my sister. That’s my brother, and those are my parents. . . . That keeps me focused. It keeps a reality check. I wouldn’t trade this for anything in the world. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 14)

She also includes as part of her family her pastor and his wife. Victoria thinks of them as her family because (according to Victoria) they are her “main support” (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 37). Although she is single, she gets a lot of joy out of being a part of her
family's lives—her parents, her brother, her sister-in-law, nephews, and church family.

In addition to her family and church family, Victoria spoke about her friends, particularly her girlfriends. She views them as her prayer partners. They are seen as people she shares her heart with. She further elaborated that pictures just show God leading. Victoria characterized all her friends in the photographs as believers (Christians) who all "have had a profound impact in her life." One picture she shared were all college mates during her undergraduate days. She refers to her four friends in this photograph as her sisters. In Victoria's words:

These are only pictures, but these are the four ladies I pray with, these four right here. I pray with them every week. . . . These are my very close friends as well as these. . . . These are the people I consider, I don't want to use the term 'best friends' but my best friends. These are the people I share my heart with. I think I can tell them everything, and I pray with them. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 41)

Victoria mentioned that her friends, apart from her family, are the ones she can call and say, "You guys, I'm struggling. I don't know what to do. I had a hard day at work. I made some mistakes. I feel like I'm being challenged. I blew up today" (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 41). After admitting this, Victoria commented:

This is where my support comes from. It always comes from the Lord, but the Lord works through people. These people I know, know Jesus. These people are strong, phenomenally committed people. These people know me. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 42)

She then echoed reminders from her friends:

You blew it. You are not trusting the Lord. You owe apologies. You were wrong. This is your strength. You challenged me in this area. You caused me to grow. How are you doing on your job? (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 42)

Victoria declared that if she could give her array of pictures a name, she would call
She stated that she wanted to hug her pictures, and when she looks at these photographs, two words that really come to mind is support and love. After being asked to tell me what words she would use to describe her pictorial collage, Victoria said:

Support. I want to hug my pictures. These are my kids. Anyway, I just love them to death. Anyway, when I look at these pictures, one word really comes to mind—love. Love. I'm blessed. I feel very much loved, and I've been very blessed—very blessed. A lot of people don't have what I have. . . . But as I begin to grow and mature in my faith and in the Lord, the Lord said, 'You can focus on the full blessing,' and this is it. (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 43-44)

Advisory to Upcoming Christian Administrators

What advice would you give to upcoming Christian administrators of higher education? To this question, Victoria gave several answers. Her first response follows.

"I will say not to say 'no' if God is leading you in that direction. Don't fight it. Embrace it" (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 45).

Victoria continued with advice by suggesting that an upcoming Christian administrator build a network of Christian support. She expressed that nothing beats it. According to her, we are living in the last days of the earth's history, and an administrator should be an example, a role model, a woman of character. She also shared her belief that others must always be mindful of their testimony and Whom they represent, which is God.

Victoria exclaimed:

If you feel that the Lord God led you to that point, then trust that He has already equipped you with everything that you need to succeed. Don't be afraid of failure because that is your opportunity to learn and grow. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 45)

This Christian administrator's counsel revolves around one's attitude as an administrator of higher education. She stressed that no one should go about one's job
lackadaisical. She also mentioned that interpersonal skills should be cultivated if these skills are not naturally acquired. She reasoned that people are needy and looking for people to direct them. In conclusion, she expounded:

I want to tell any young person, not only African American women. I wanted to change my role early on in life, but God said, 'No.' God is sovereign. You have to be very careful when you are dealing with people. I was feeling a need to go on in my life, but I wasn't ready. So the Lord allowed things to happen. He allowed things in my life to strengthen me, to cause growth, and I think it made me a better, more effective administrator. So, I will tell people, don't try to insulate yourselves from 'hurting' things. If the Lord allows things in your life, then embrace it and learn from it. Those are what helped me to be a more effective administrator. I am not saying that people have to go through negative trials. It comes back to me as an example. I went through this. I went through that. So, I learned from it. (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 51-52)

A Summary of Victoria's Story

This chapter provided definitions of faith in God and administrative decision-making as seen from the experiences of the second informant in this study. The interviews with the administrator were corroborated by observing her as she carried out various tasks, and by the policies and manuals, including Internet sources, which outline the responsibilities of administrators of higher education.

The administrative setting was also described in this chapter. The institution in which Victoria works has modern physical facilities, is located in spacious surroundings, and has a faculty and staff to provide for the needs of the student body. According to this informant, her workplace is guided by a philosophy and mission which harmonizes with state guidelines. Although most of the faculty, staff, and administrators are non-Christians, Victoria articulated that her colleagues know that she is a Christian, and she is
not ashamed of her role as a Christian. As a result of this practice of religious faith, she approaches each day with the belief that God is in control.

As director of her department, Victoria, who serves as a Christian administrator, is the link between stakeholders, i.e., faculty, staff, students, and administration. The state owns this particular institution of higher education, makes the general policies from which the school drafts its local policies, and serves as the final liaison for matters which cannot be settled at that level. The faith decisions which Victoria makes by virtue of her position seem to be understood by the individuals who serve in the institution. She is the administrator who has the final word in all decisions in her department with faculty, staff, and students.

Throughout the interview process, Victoria made every effort to share her passion for people, particularly family and friends, and the importance of working together as a team. In fact, she commented that she makes a conscious effort to remember everyone by name that she comes into contact with at work. According to Victoria, her love for people, which she described as a passion, has definitely added to her success (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 11).

This chapter presented reasons why faith in God is important in Victoria’s decision-making practices. As she declared,

I think that we are in a spiritual warfare, and when we get up in the morning, according to Ephesians 6, we have to ‘put on the whole armor of God.’ The armor comes in prayer during that quiet time. You get up in the morning, you have prayer. You talk with your Heavenly Father. You have to gird yourself with prayer. You are to go out seeking His faith. His guidance. Because the minute you step out of the house, you are in Satan’s territory. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 15)
In reference to facing each new day, Victoria elucidated how important it is to surrender her decisions and anything else to God.

I just can't believe that I will dare wake up in the morning without giving that day and my decisions and anything else to the Lord. To me, it is like playing Russian Roulette with Satan. It's crazy. . . . And so for me, the steps are beginning with prayer, reading God's Word, and giving the day over to Him and whatever that day encompasses. (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 15-16)

When making decisions based on faith in God, Victoria outlined some steps.

We should never ever think that we could do anything apart from God's guidance. So, that's what I mean by playing Russian Roulette. Prayer, Bible reading—I think the steps include seeking input from your supervisor, knowing what the expectations are as they relate to your job and your decision-making. What are my limits, my boundaries, resources? Where can I get the answer? Co-workers, people who have been here for quite a while, seeking their wisdom and input, what has been done in the past? Surveys? What is it that people want? I may be providing something that people are not interested in. That affects my decision. (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 17)

Chapter 5 has presented some reasons why faith in God is important to Victoria in her administrative decision-making practices. This chapter also outlined steps that Victoria shared in making faith-based decisions. Chapter 6 focuses on the story of Mary, the third informant in this study. Mary is a Christian administrator of parochial higher education. Her story is told of how faith in God, which she describes as guiding everything that she does (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11), pervades her administrative decision-making practices.
CHAPTER SIX

FAITH IN GOD IN MARY’S ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING

Introduction

In this chapter, which is the final of the three case studies, I further describe the phenomenon of religious faith as it operates in the natural setting of parochial higher educational administration. This chapter provides numerous meanings of faith in God and administrative decision-making as seen from the viewpoint of the third informant in this study, Mary. As the assistant to the President, Mary is the link between stakeholders, particularly the African-American community and other ethnic groups on campus.

The interviews with Mary were substantiated by observing her as she carried out various tasks, and by the policies and manuals, including Internet sources, which outline the responsibilities of administrators of higher education. In addition, this chapter examines the cultural setting in which Mary functions and makes daily decisions. Among the many questions I asked Mary were questions regarding some of her administrative decisions permeated by or connected to faith in God. On Thursday, November 19, 1998, at 5:15 p.m., I arrived at Mary’s office for my first interview session with her.
Psychological Factors of Faith in God

While collecting data through the interview procedure, interesting themes surfaced that were relevant to selected psychological factors (see chapter 2). The following themes, in conjunction with those discussed in the literature review, seemed to help in providing an understanding of Mary's faith in God as to its linkage to her administrative decision-making practices.

Mary's Definition of Faith in God

As I walked into Mary's office, she greeted me with a warm smile and began the session with the following prayer.

Kind and gracious God, we thank you for this day which is dawning and the day which is ending. Thank you for this opportunity to come together and fellowship and combine our spirits for work that You have truly ordained. I ask You to give me the words I need to speak in order to provide information to Nancy to get this work done. In Your Darling Son Jesus' Name, Amen. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 2)

What does faith mean to you? In response to this direct language question (Spradley, 1979), Mary stated that faith means an understanding or belief that something outside of herself (God) is in control of her life. She commented that faith to her is a gift from God. Furthermore, Mary stated that faith is nothing without the Word. Therefore, according to this Christian administrator, faith is God's willingness to be present in her life. She continued by declaring that faith to her is what gives her security and peace in this world. According to Mary, faith in God gives her an understanding to know that it is present in her life (Vol. 3, interview #1, pp. 2-3). She briefly explained other aspects of the concept of faith in God and how it applies to her life. According to Mary, "It's what's
going to help me understand everything right. Faith is the essence of God's presence, and with the knowledge of that, I'm going to be all right” (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 3).

Various Ways Christian Administrators Refer to God

According to Mary, experiential faith has given her many different ways in which to refer to God. Some of the ways she referred to God throughout the interviews follow:

1. Willing to be present
2. Created us
3. Knows & understands we are creatures
4. Kind
5. Gracious
6. Sense of humor
7. Intuitive
8. Ever present
9. Caring
10. Patient
11. Omnipotent
12. Brilliant
13. Omniscient
14. Brings information
15. Created us to know and understand we come from Africa
16. Forms and fashions moments of grace
17. Nothing is too good for God to give

18. Lover.

As Mary pointed out, lover is an umbrella figure that applies to all of these words. She stated that all of these references are the same thing (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13). Other ways she refers to God are teacher, friend, and ancestor. She explained that in African traditions, those who walked the earth are our ancestors. God is also referred to as Mary's confidante, as paternal, and knowing everything (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 35).

Mary's Concept of Administrative Decision-Making vs. Decision-Making

According to Mary, making a decision means taking a stand as well as considering and granting a request. She sees decision-making as referring to her personal situations, which includes her family. She also mentioned that decision-making dealt with her personal well-being, which includes taking care of herself. After sharing her meaning of decision-making, Mary stated that administrative decision-making always has to do specifically with the university. She also made it clear that making a personal decision sometimes means putting administrative decisions on the "back burner" so that she can take care of herself (Vol. 3, interview #6, pp. 6-7). As Mary explained,

An administrative decision has to do with the institution, and the decision first and foremost has to do with the well being of the institution. So, I just have to trust that my faith helps me and allows me to know what is for the well being of the university. I have to trust that I know what that is. My history with the institution indicates that the decisions that have been made formerly were good ones. I think that the decision first and foremost has to be with the institution, and then you proceed down from there. (Vol. 3, interview #6, pp. 7-8)
The Administrative Setting

As Mary reflected upon the setting in which she works, she remarked:

The environment is very Midwestern. It's very flat, ah, ah, the people are different, and it's clear that these are not city people. City people are always on a mission and tapping into the moment is what really matters, wherein, my perception of people in the Midwest is that things are a lot slower—slower meaning there's not such an urgency to, to let life accelerate. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 4)

Mary is a baptized Christian, therefore she perceives her administrative setting as perfect since the institution also practices Christianity. In addition, she declares: “It's a perfect environment for me because it allows me to incorporate my faith and faith journey and tradition in the context of my administrative responsibilities” (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 5).

According to information retrieved from the institution’s Web site, this Christian institution of higher education has a unique spirit. As the on-line writer stated, the school is traditional, yet open to change, and it is one of a few truly national institutions of higher education. Mentioned was the fact that the student body emerges from all 50 states and approximately 87 foreign countries. It was noted that approximately 80% of the undergraduates and 50% of advanced students live on campus. In addition, the article stated that about 80% of the students are active in service learning and community volunteer activities.

According to the information from the school’s Web site, in 1998-1999, the teaching and research faculty at the institution numbered 706. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the administrative, specialized professionals, library, and special research personnel numbered 336. It was noted that there were also 338 adjunct faculty. Lastly, it
was noted on the web site that the school's faculty to student ratio was 1:12.

**Results of Making Faith-informed Decisions**

Mary relayed numerous results of making faith-informed decisions. She stressed that she believes beyond a shadow of a doubt that her faith in God guides everything that she does. For instance, when she prepares for retreats, she mentioned that she brings her perspective of God into other people’s worlds. As a result, others are afforded the opportunity and the permission to reconstruct Mary’s perspective and apply it to their own lives. She loves preparing for retreats, and most of all, she loves the reflection. When she prepares for retreats, she begins with a theme, which she believes is divinely inspired by God’s Holy Spirit. She further stated that growth takes place as a result of different information God brings to her, and she finds it very interesting how this happens.

Mary stated that she loves preaching and teaching about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when she takes a break from her administrative duties, she enjoys conducting workshops on God, which she views as a hobby. As a result, Mary said that she enjoyed “immensely entering into experiences of reflection and Scripture study” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11) because it helps her in understanding her spirituality and how to share with others.

According to Mary, another result of making faith decisions is “to begin a process of healing for individuals as well as the entire community” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 13). Mary made this statement in regard to a conflict that occurred between two students, with whom she served as the mediator for their conflict resolution.
As Mary pointed out, her decision to pursue higher education paid off in miraculous interventions in her life. As an older student, she remembered being recognized for her outstanding performance. She expressed pride as she reflected on leading the procession during her graduation march. The result of making this decision was God's equipping her with the degree she needed to start her journey as an administrator of higher education.

Mary commented: "I have a history with this institution, and the decisions that have been made formerly, were good ones" (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 8).

One other faith-filled decision was Mary's expression of her choice to work with students of the African-American community. As she stated, she realized that there were a lot of dynamics which impacted the Black students that other students did not have, such as study habits, classroom dynamics, test-taking, roommate's dynamics, how to deal with personnel and the financial aid office, record dynamics, professor dynamics, etc. Her reason for starting what she describes as "Black and White Consciousness" (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 8) was that "the Black students at the university were not doing well academically, physically, spiritually, or emotionally" (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 8).

At the risk of being viewed as a segregationist, Mary decided to work with these Black students to increase their chances of success. This meant looking at different programs, since she said, "there were no programs to give them the esteem they needed to know that they can be involved here" (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 8). As Mary pointed out, "They were just statistics" (p. 8). As a result of making the faith decision to work with them, Mary expressed how she felt. "When they are gathered in small groups, they do
better than when they are under-represented in larger groups (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 7-8).

As a result of all that she has been faced with, Mary asserted:

My greatest gift is my love of people, my ability not to be intimidated by people, my ability to walk up to a stranger and introduce myself without being intimidated, my ability to see Christ in others. I think that’s what I do. I just do. I believe I can learn something from everybody no matter what class they are or color they are. I’m just a people person, and for whatever reason, people feel comfortable around me. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 8)

The Results of Being a Christian Administrator of Higher Education

Because she is people oriented, Mary mentioned that she loves the number of people her position as administrator allows her to meet. This Christian administrator admitted:

I have met so many people from different parts of the world. It would have never been possible without exposure to this type of administrative position. I love it because the gifts that I bring to the table are gifts that are very unique, and gifts that are respected. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 8)

Mary revealed that it is always part of her consciousness as an administrator how she should deal with the students. According to her, sometimes to heal the hurt within the student community may mean overriding some of the ways in which the university has done things in the past. As stated earlier, she sees faith as forming and fashioning those moments of grace, which is our only reason for being here—to heal each other. Therefore, as stated by this informant, going outside the guidelines to bring about healing is seen as an act of faith (Vol. 3, interview #2, p.13).

Mary also stated the following about students’ understanding of her: “Christianity
is not White or Black, and they trust what I say” (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 7). As a Christian administrator, Mary realized that she was allowed to “fly.” She remembered candidly that no one ever pulled the rug from under her. During her stay on the West Coast, she had to deal with certain social issues, which she said took her through an attitude of being an angry Black woman. However, she realized that it is “very difficult to succeed because the anger eventually cuts into your spirit” (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 3). In the narrative voice of Mary:

I was able to turn my anger into action because of the acceptance. It was not that it was something staged. It's just who the people are. What I had in mind in terms of being limited—that was not in my experience. They allowed students to achieve their potential. So that anger was turned into action in discovering what my gifts are. You now use that anger to bring about change. Without losing oneself, the anger shifts to self-control and positive attitudes. If you are angry, you will not succeed because in my experience, anger leads to alienation. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 3)

Singing in the choir is not part of her administrative responsibilities, but she shared how she enjoys this activity. As Mary stated, “I’m being a witness to the students outside my office, when I join to sing with them in their choir” (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 8). Moreover, she sees herself as being fortunate in that her Christianity can be expressed in her role in Campus Ministries. Mary’s summation of the results of being a Christian administrator follows.

Christianity, in my mind, is the key to being successful, being a follower of the life of Christ. You follow His way to be successful. So, Christianity, from my experience, is the key to understanding oneself and to come to terms with what Christ wants me to do—whether I'm president of a college, or whatever. the same principle applies. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 4)
Sociological Factors of Faith in God

As I continued to analyze and interpret the wealth of collected data, sociological themes were found. As explained in chapter 4, the category sociological factors of faith in God refers to spiritual and religious practices at work, at home, at church, and in the community. The sociological topics discussed might provide an understanding of some of Mary's attributes or values engendered by faith in God.

Faith's Role in the Sequence of Events Leading Up to Becoming an Administrator

Mary shared with me that she initially came to the school as an undergraduate student. Her intent was to pursue a bachelor's degree in Theology. She remembered planning to return to the West Coast or go wherever God led her after completing undergraduate studies. She further articulated that, after graduation, her desire was to pursue graduate studies and continue her work in Afro-Centric and women's studies with a concentration in Religious Studies or Theology. While Mary waited to be accepted into Graduate School, she spent her time in praying and, what she described as, a silent retreat. She exclaimed that she really prayed because she "had no idea of the direction the Lord wanted her to go" (Vol. 3, interview # 1, p. 7).

As she continued to relate her story, she told how she came to the university at a point in her life when she had taken all the courses she could in how to train children at elementary and high-school levels in Religious Education. Mary pointed out that what she had learned in her years of teaching religious education was that she was comfortable with it, and people responded to the way she taught. She expressed that she felt like she was
“being drawn to a higher calling” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3).

As Mary mentioned,

I had my own way of teaching Religious Education, and the way I was representing God was being embraced by the people. So when you get this type of response and affirmation from people, you begin to think this is something I will really like to do, and this can help other people. So, therefore, I wanted to be as educated as I could so that more people will respond. I expressed this to my brother when I had taken all the courses I could take. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3)

Mary pointed out that her brother encouraged her to think about getting an undergraduate degree in Theology. After some serious thought, she applied to her present school and was accepted from among a number of others who applied (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3). In recalling her brother’s words, Mary paused for a moment, and then she continued.

So, he said, “You really need to get the best paper you can so the doors can be open for you. You can do what you really want to do, which is to teach people about God so they can see the applicability of God’s presence in their lives.” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3)

To the level of confidence and belief her brother had shown in her, she replied:

About that time, my brother was coming cross country. I didn’t know anything about the institution. I didn’t hear anything about the football team, except that I was impressed by the encouragement from my brother. It turned out that I was very impressed with the institution. I was very pleased with the openness in answering my questions about the institution. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3)

Her reflections about the application process included listening to a voice, demonstrating boldness, and eventually being accepted into the university with only a handful of other students.

I took an application to fill it out. On my way home, all of a sudden, I realized that I was going to be registered to go to school. But I always wanted to do this. I could hear a voice saying, ‘You better take this thing like a natural profession.’ I
figured I must be bold. I applied, and I got accepted. Of all the students that
applied for the class, only a handful were accepted. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 3)

Mary stated that her application packet was very thick. She discussed how it
included her application and a binder with everything that she had done in the church, the
ministry she had done, and the religious education courses she had taken. Having taken 8
months to bring her whole life to a close in the West Coast, Mary remembered paying all
her bills, packing her clothes, selling about everything she had, and beginning her freshmen
classes at the age of 38.

According to Mary, the only concession the school made for her was to allow her
to stay in the graduate student housing though she had entered as a freshman as if she
were 18 years old. She discussed how she had to take swimming and the many other
freshman requirements—the whole 90 semester hours. Regarding her acceptance into
undergraduate studies, Mary discovered that everything just fell into place for her.

I came and I remember waiting for someone to pull the rug from under me because
the process was so systematic. When I got accepted, I got my acceptance letter, I
remember the director of admissions called me 3 weeks later and said, ‘I got your
application, and I want you to know that from on this end, I am trying to make all
things possible for you to come,’ and everything just fell into place. Being so
awed, I just knew that at some point, the rug was going to be pulled out from
under me. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4)

Mary then recounted:

I came here . . . right after two riots and fires and earthquakes and an African-
American in America. I was an angry Black woman. I was angry as a result of
surviving in that city. I worked in White corporate America for 20 years as a
secretary. So, you got these issues of subordination, which added fuel to the fire.
But I was very successful when I worked for White corporate America. These are
just psychological aspects of being Black in America that just makes you angry,
and I just knew that being in the University, Midwest, White as White can be, that
someone will pull the rug out in a second, but it never happened. (Vol. 3, interview
During our second interview on the evening of November 23, 1998, Mary discussed highlights of her college years. As a freshman, she reflected upon having a wonderful freshman advisor, who is her good friend now. She also mentioned taking a class with the school’s president, a person who she refers to as very accessible and one of her mentors. She also reflected upon being president of her high-school freshman class (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4).

Regarding her undergraduate years as a sophomore, junior, and senior, she said,

Sophomore year, great! At the end of my sophomore year, I got what you call ‘a candid scholarship.’ I got to participate in certain programs at the university during summer. This was reserved for graduate students. This girded me in my passion to continue to teach Religious Education. Again, the opportunity presented itself. Junior year, they had this information to go to Jerusalem. I spent my spring semester of my Junior year in Jerusalem. I did that, and I met some wonderful people. I came back, and my senior year began tragically. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4)

It is Mary’s senior year, and about a week before school was to start, Mary remembers waking up in a pool of blood. She was hemorrhaging for some unknown reason. She relayed that she was immediately taken to the hospital in an ambulance.

When the doctor told her that she had to have a hysterectomy immediately, she replied: “No way. I want to ride this out as long as I can because I’m going to graduate this year, and nothing is going to come in my way” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4).

Mary told me that she took the medicine the doctor gave her. Then, about a week later, as she was taking her roommate somewhere, a man yelled at her and said, “Hey lady, your car is on fire” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5). According to Mary, her car had ignited
under the hood and was burning right in front of her eyes. After she and her roommate got out of the car, Mary remembered the car going up in flames. As she pointed out, "It just disintegrated" (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5). As she simply stated, she had to junk it—the whole car.

As Mary continued to discuss the sequence of events, she was reminiscent of her determination to get to the finish line and graduate from the university regardless of the low points in her life.

I just came out of the hospital, now my car. I was devastated, just devastated. After 3 years, you get to the finish line? I said, 'Uh huh.' I don't know what this is, but it is not going to deter me from doing what God wants me to. I went to a friend of mine and said, 'You know what, I am at a low point. I am sick. I need a car. The next day, the problem was taken care of with my car. Thank you Jesus! (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5)

About 3 weeks after being blessed with another car, Mary woke up again in a pool of blood. After phoning her doctor, she was told that she must go immediately for emergency surgery. She remembered lying on that gurney by herself and saying, "Lord, it's just me and you. God, it's just me and you. I surrender. Some things are too much for me to bear" (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5).

Mary's recollection of the doctor's words combined with her thoughts were:

The doctor came in and said, 'Don't you worry. We can't determine the exact nature of the problem. We can't tell you anything right now—if it's cancer or not. I went home. There is nothing I could do. There is nothing I could say. I just give it over to God. On top of all this, I was planning to go to graduate school. I had already taken my graduate exam, and I had already sent out applications—all in the context of having this hysterectomy. Bound and determined, bound and determined. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5)

Mary saw herself as bound and determined. She said she just gave it over to God.
In addition, Mary expressed how a friend of hers had made her some food about 3 or 4 weeks after she had come home from the hospital. As a result of eating this food, Mary was food poisoned and back in the hospital. Again, she left it to God, and He brought her through this ordeal. After graduating with honors and receiving the award given to the senior who had excelled in academics and character, Mary exclaimed: “To walk in that stadium on that occasion, knowing all that I had gone through to get that piece of paper, was an experience I could never explain” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 6).

Mary’s summation of her undergraduate experiences, though full of obstacles, includes beauty, trust, and a real sense of undergirding.

The beautiful thing about my graduation was, first of all, that I graduated. It’s like I brought in my class. I always had a sense of undergirding. I didn’t trust Whites because of the way my social life had been in America. I did not know many Whites. There are few of them that I did know, and they were not all bad. I came here with the same suspicions—what did they want? When is the rug going to be pulled out from under me? When? But it never happened. (Vol. 3, interview #2, pp. 5-6)

She further expressed:

The more I began to understand people, the more those layers of distrust or mistrust crumbled. I began to enter into a more vulnerable community with these people. I began to see them as people. The people here are genuinely good. They don’t always know how to act around me. I could tell that many of them are uncomfortable around me because they are not used to socializing with Black people. It’s not part of their experience. They are genuinely good people, and if something had happened to me, they would be right there. I know. They care about me. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 6)

Becoming devastated after she was not accepted into graduate school, Mary recalled:

The first school I applied to, I got rejected. I was so devastated, just devastated. That’s the one I really wanted to go to. I cried and cried. The school that I really didn’t want to go to had me on a waiting list. I felt sure that this one would work, but it didn’t. Again, I was devastated. I cried and I cried. I knew God knew
because all my options had failed. I just cannot imagine myself not being productive. I got scared because I could not see any beacons. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 5)

In addition, Mary shared with me what she believed God saw during these devastating times for her. About a week after realizing that she would not presently be attending graduate school, Mary signed up for a silent retreat, which meant not talking for 5 days. However, she read, ate, slept, and reflected. She shared with me how she finally put two and two together, and God allowed everything to become so clear and so real to her. She pointed out that she loved working with Black people, and she enjoyed working at the university.

As a result of her past experiences, Mary was convinced that she had all the gifts that were necessary in order to begin programs at the University for Black students. According to Mary, the Director of Campus Ministries noted her talents and offered her a position as Assistant Director for Cross-Cultural Ministries in the Department of Campus Ministries. Two months following her graduation in May, she was part of the faculty at the university (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 7). In addition, this Christian woman was appointed as the assistant to the president. She also became a member of the officers’ group, those administrators who deal with policies, administrative responsibilities, and the operation of the infrastructure of the university.

Undoubtedly, Mary believes that faith in God plays a big part in her life. She describes her life as very non-traditional. She recalled telling one of the regional coordinators, while still a freshman, “One day I am going to be an officer at this university” (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 14). Her conviction is that there is some other entity
that directs her life. As a result of this conviction, she said with confidence, “There’s not very much that I am afraid of” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 1).

Faith in God and the Influence of Family and Friends

In introducing this sector of Mary’s story, her following statement sets the stage.

We have always been a very practicing family. The introduction of this notion of God was introduced to us by the church. As a result, I went to Christian schools all my life. We see Christ as someone who is very visible in our lives. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 2)

As mentioned earlier in this document, Mary was encouraged to pursue higher education by one of her brothers, who told her that she really needed to get the best paper she could so the doors could be opened to her. He also reminded her that upon graduating at 42, she could teach people about God and allow them to see the applicability of God’s presence in their lives.

Mary referred to how she loves to spend time with two of her brothers and their families. In her words:

Those are two of my brothers. I say this all the time, ‘I love my brother too much, too much because I don’t see his faults.’ When I’m around the man, the whole world is a different color. He is my baby brother. . . . He’s brilliant. He’s spiritual. He’s a good father. He’s a wonderful brother. He’s a good husband. He’s just a good person. I tell him that all the time. He doesn’t see it, but people love my brother as a musician. He’s a brilliant musician, and he directs choirs and teaches music. He can do no wrong. He’s just a magnet to people. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11)

Mary’s brother and her faith in God played an important part in her coming to this educational institution of higher learning. According to her brother, this university had one of the best departments of theology in the country. She was also reminded that the
degree would correspond with what she wanted to teach. So, according to Mary, these were all factors which prompted her to get a degree in Theology (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 5).

In her forth interview with me on December 1, 1998, Mary, the middle child of 11 children, used specific terms to characterize her mother and father: “My father is spiritual, a bread winner, and wise. My mother is functional. She is car-crazed. She likes cars. She is very functional, a quiet, strong, strict Black woman” (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 27).

Mary also told me that her mother and father connect her to her African origin (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 23). Mary further shared some characteristics of her brothers, i.e., very funny, fun-loving, a high-school religion teacher, a music teacher, a retired army sergeant, all are very handsome, etc. Regarding her sisters, Mary stated, “My sisters are all mothers. They are all good mothers and are all hard working” (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 27). In reference to her immediate family, Mary explained that they are all very kind.

This third informant noted that she is from a very strong family. Mary referred to her family and many of the people she worked with as her friends. She also sees Jesus as her friend. Because Mary characterized herself as a people person, she mentioned that her greatest fear is being incapacitated and not being able to minister to people. By minister, she meant being available in people’s lives, having conversations or just being in someone’s presence. She affirmed that she knows that God is still very present in her life, and she has no choice but to share that with other people (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 1).

In referring to a student who is a friend of hers, Mary made reference to a gift, which sits on a bookshelf in her office. In her words:
This wooden house is from a friend of mine. He is an undergraduate student. He made that for me, and he gave that to me with a poem because he said what I represent to the students on campus is like a house. I provide shelter, so he gave that to me. (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 41)

In a very succinct statement about her hopes of what a friend is, Mary proclaimed:

“I will hope my friend is my confidante, and a confidante has to be my friend” (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 2).

Administrative Categories in Which Faith in God Informs Decision-Making

As an administrator, Mary describes herself as wearing “many hats” (Vol. 3, interview 1, p. 7). Her primary responsibilities are as assistant to the President, and an officer in Campus Ministries. Her work deals mainly with the African-American students, although her role as Assistant Director of Cross-Cultural Ministries embraces other groups (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 7). She chose to work with African-American students as a result of her faith-directed decision-making process. She views herself as a bridge builder.

Mary expanded on some of the initiatives she created for Black students.

I have created a lot of initiatives for Black students, retreat . . . workshop . . . choir opportunities. We have a small Black community . . . that began right before I started, no, the year I graduated. So, I love it! I am a trench person. I love being in the trenches because in order for me to be fully present for them, with them, I have to understand what is it they’re going through. So, I do a lot of spiritual counseling. Much of what I do during the day is talking and listening to students so that’s a major happening. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 8)

Mary also explained:

Interestingly enough, I have been asked by the president of the university to use those gifts in the President’s office because I work so closely with students as a perspective that needs to be present at this level. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 8)
According to Mary, when she came to this community, it was at a point where God stretched her to the point where she was really able to see how her gifts were to be used throughout the course of her life. She stated that God stretched her in areas that she never thought possible.

In Mary’s words,

I’ve always been a believer. I’m a middle child, the youngest of the oldest and the oldest of the youngest, so I just had to figure life out from both ends of the spectrum. And I think that because of that, I’ve always been in perspective about my thinking. I always wanted to know how things work, you know, who God is and how does God speak to me, and how can I best fit in the community where I can grow? So, being in this position, people ask, ‘How are you doing?’ It’s a normal position for me to be in because I am very people oriented. (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 9)

According to this third informant, the group of approximately 2,000 new freshman students that she welcomes each fall are those whom “God has sent” (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 10). So, from the very beginning, initial contacts are made with a faith premise in mind that students are sent by God. Informed by this principle, she sets in motion programs that would assist her in getting to know them. As noted previously in this study, there are retreats as well as award ceremonies so that students can find out what exists for them on campus (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 10). As Mary shared, her decision to work, particularly with the African-American students, is based on her observation that there are a lot of dynamics that African-American students experience that students from other nations do not experience (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 8). Her programs with the freshmen are done in the first year to provide direction for them. She claims that “if they are lost in the first year, then the next 3 years would be tremendously difficult” (Vol. 3,
Other administrative categories in which religious faith informs decision-making follow. Mary mentioned that she is involved in activities in the community. She does different initiatives such as drug programs. Also, as a member of the city planning commission, the future of the community is discussed with the group, i.e., when buildings go up, restructuring streets, etc. Another category informed by faith in God is corresponding with the President in terms of issues having to do with race and ethnicity, an area in which Mary considers herself spiritual.

In telling me about administrative categories informed by faith in God, Mary commented:

My decision to be an administrator was totally a decision influenced by God. It came to me out of the blue. People were saying, ‘You don’t have the track record.’ I worked in the trench force. When I was approached to consider the position, I didn’t have much time to think about it. If I had thought about it more, I probably would have taken a little longer. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 9)

As Mary described her roles, as an administrator and student advocate, she realized that there was a fine line drawn between these two roles.

I work a lot with student issues, and there is a fine line which is drawn between me as an administrator and me as a student advocate. The information I know now as a member of the officers’ group is information I did not know when I was in campus ministries. So I had to find an acceptable way to communicate that information that determined the decision process that affects students’ lives. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 9)

**Faith-Filled Experiences as a Black Administrator of Higher Education**

In talking about faith-filled experiences encountered during her administrative
duties. Mary related one incident which occurred between two young students—a male and a female. There was a misunderstanding between the two, and they confronted each other in a public place. One called the other a derogatory name, and as a result, it divided the Black community on the campus. This Christian administrator received calls every day from students asking, “Are you aware of this?” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p.12). She stated that she was aware of the situation.

According to Mary, the university had a policy, which was semi-legislative, in dealing with situations like the previously mentioned one. To try to reconcile this matter would mean overriding the policy of the institution. It was clear to her that the situation became disruptive because of a misunderstanding from both sides. She decided to call the two students involved. They agreed to meet with her. They spent 2 hours together. She said she asked them questions that would not “be asked in session with the university administrators” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p.12). Mary commented that at the end of their discussion, the students understood why they had reacted the way they did. The next day the young lady came to Mary and thanked her, stating that this was the first time she was able to “make up with a person in that way” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 12).

Because of her faith and her love for people, Mary took a calculated risk or what she calls a faith decision to do what she felt was right to resolve the conflict within the Black community. As she pointed out,

The power and grace come when there is a mediator that gives them a safe place to talk about the issue because they see it from their own perspective. Those of us who are mediators are to understand and say, ‘But understand, this is the way he sees it, and because he sees it that way doesn’t mean that it is wrong. This is the way she sees it.’ If the action is wrong and very disruptive, then it is up to the
 mediators to say, 'Let me give you an idea of how this projects in the public's eyes. This is why it is wrong. This is why we don't do that.' (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 13)

To put it succinctly, Mary replied:

So, to answer your question, faith forms and fashions those moments of grace which is our only reason for being here—to heal each other, to heal each other. So, in that instance, that's when I see my faith as really being a factor, in going outside certain guidelines. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 13)

Other faith-filled experiences revolve around the student retreat, which entails the freshman orientation for the Black students. Mary admitted that there was no precedent for this type of program; however, she felt very strongly that it was something that had to be done. She tailored these orientation programs to meet the needs of the African-American students. The questions and the information all relate to what they would need to know. Mary admitted to being a bit nervous as to the response from her Campus Ministries Director, since she did not want to be seen as "someone who was doing something for a specific group of people in segregate" (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 12).

As Mary stated,

I knew it had to be done because the kids would fall into a crack first semester. So, it has to be done. So, I took a chance. You just take a chance and the support was incredible, because, I tell you, if I had to fight for this, I probably would not have done it because it takes too much. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 12)

Another faith-filled experience that Mary recalled was an article that was written on her in a local newspaper. She pointed out that the title of the article was "Faith" (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13). Mary mentioned that the writer of the article had written a wrong statement in the article by saying that Mary had come here because of reasons of divorce. Mary retaliated to the newspaper writer's false statement by saying, "I have been divorced
about eight years, but it takes a while for people to get used to a Black woman in this position” (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13).

Mary shared her memories of how individuals would come into her office asking for her and become surprised when she identified herself. In the narrative voice of Mary, “They take me for a secretary. They are just not used to it because we are in the Midwest . . . because people are just not accustomed to seeing African-American women in this position” (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 14).

As Mary enunciated,

Black folks are just not in these types of positions, not only at this school, but across the country, particularly Black women, it just does not exist. This is the reason the President had his own power of discernment in filling that position, and it says a lot about the man. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 14)

Mary concluded by saying,

Because the gifts I bring to the university do not have to be academic credentials. My credentials are experiential. I am able to make a name for myself here at the university in a way he (the President) has helped me to accept. Again it says a lot about him. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 14)

Anthropological Factors of Faith in God

As mentioned by Spradley (1979), fieldwork continues to be the hallmark of cultural anthropology. Therefore, as a researcher, one must travel to where informants live and/or work to do the fieldwork. The interviews with Mary entailed a lot of data. In addition, different anthropological themes emerged. Just as with Ellysha and Victoria, I asked many questions during the recorded interviews, made observations, and listened attentively as Mary’s narrative voice came forth. The themes discussed in this section of
the research provide an understanding of some of Mary's ethnographic qualities or values engendered by religious faith and the anthropological foundations.

A Personal Tour of Places Where Faith Decisions Emerge

The tour of the buildings began, and Mary introduced me to the church. The church is special to her because her brother and the Bishop had a very special service, which included Gospel music. It was the first time that type of service was held in the church. That year was memorable to Mary because there were Black people presiding, and as she reflected, she remembered how the music just spoke to her mind.

I will talk about the church. The church is special to me because about two years ago, I introduced my brother to the Bishop, and they had a special service with the gospel music. The first time they did it on that level was just amazing. It was like bringing every aspect of my life into that experience. My experience with God was brought into that church. That was the first time I thought I could consider this place as part of my experience with God. It was wonderful because that year we had like traditional Black presiders. But when you have that type of music, and music speaks to your mind, that was a wonderful experience to me. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 6)

On the tour, we passed by her old office. She described it as very small. Although her new office has more space and comfort, Mary reminisced about her love for the little office she once occupied. She told me that it meant much to her to have her name on the door. She spoke of feeling safe in that office. When she walks by her old office, Mary stated that her protective instinct causes emotional feelings to well up in her because it was her first office (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 5).

Her present office is filled with memorabilia from students as well as her own collection of pictures. She had a baby carrier from African tradition with the baby on the
back of his mother. In addition, her office housed an African depiction of Mary, Jesus' mother. Mary mentioned that this artifact represents the mother of Jesus in African tradition. She also pointed out a wood carving of Christ on the cross as a representative of all people, and noted that the image of Christ was not gender specific. She clarified that although Christ was a man, He was all things to all people. She shared that she had her office blessed before she fully settled into this new place.

In addition, we passed by the South Quad, which she said is a place where students meet for choir. South Quad or "God Quad" (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 43), as it is sometimes referred to, is so named because that is where the church is. As Mary pointed out, it is the main building on campus. According to Mary, her office as well as other administrative offices will be moving to that building in the near future. The tour ended with the chapel, where they also have choir practice, and she joined right in after having introduced me to her fellow choir members (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 43). Of all the places toured, Mary referred to the church as her favorite place because as she put it, "that's where her Christianity comes full circle" (Vol. 3, interview #5, p. 45).

Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice

In this section of the interview, Mary was asked to discuss some photographs she shared with me and how they relate to the role faith in God plays in her administrative decision-making. Mary divided the photographs into several groups. The first group of pictures reminded her of those Blacks who were there for her to show her and others of her generation the value of incorporating culture as faith traditions. She named that group
of pictures “roles that I play in my own expression of faith” (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 6).

Mary’s second set of photographs represented what the retreats are all about. She called them the Freshman Intro. This second set of pictures was taken with the future in mind. There was a picture of the class of 2001, which was scripted on their t-shirts as 01. Mary admits to spending a lot of time with the freshman students so they will not get lost. As she exclaimed,

This picture here is of the freshman class, and the shirts that they have on are shirts that we provide every year. Each year it’s different, and it shows them that we do have a community, and they wear them on special occasions. So, this is my very favorite picture because it is the first year we began. Picture number 5 is the picture for the year 2001. I was explaining what the shirt was all about, and that we are indeed a community, and we are required, not only by the university, but by God to share our gifts with others of the community. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 9)

The third set of pictures Mary referred to as the beginning of the second semester. As Mary pointed out, an all-day retreat is held for freshman students to see how they are coming along with their studies. According to Mary, items of discussion range from things needing to be changed to things that the students need to do. Mary explains it by saying, “It is an opportunity for continued dialogue” (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 10).

The next group of photographs depicts final receptions that freshmen have. Mary mentioned that this reception is more of a celebration than anything else because this is the day the students receive their awards. The informant also mentioned that each student receives a little bag of nick-knacks to help them through the stressful examination period. Mary finally shared the picture of a student graduate wearing her cap and gown. She confessed that she loves to show that picture to prospective graduates, particularly freshmen at their freshman retreat.
So, this is afterward, and this is a young woman I was working with for about two years. She is now a teacher in Atlanta, Georgia. So, this is a special picture. You know, I worked with her, and now she is graduating. I love to show this to freshmen because they are going to be like that too. That’s wonderful. That’s wonderful because now when we have our freshmen retreat, I can show the freshmen and say, “You see, that’s going to be you one day. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 17)

A picture, they say, paints a thousand words, and when I asked Mary what words she would use to describe her collage of photographs, she simply stated:

Okay, let me look. This one is mentor. This one is communal excellence. This one is spirituality through the storm. Celebration after the work is done, and we’ve come this far by faith. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 18)

Mary believes her faith underwrites who she is. In her own words, she declared:

Faith is making what we may think to be impossible, possible; and the only way we can make it possible is sometimes going through situations blindly, almost not knowing where you ought to go. It is almost like blindly walking through fear, walking through anxiety, walking to security. You really have to believe in God or something to make it work. Faith is the foundation of the belief that makes things happen. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 4)

Again, she relates a faith story of her younger days as a Christian. She and fellow students were given a response chart to show God’s presence in their lives. They had to measure a space on a line to show how much they depended on God. They were told that above the line was where God was very active in their lives, but below the line, God was not there. Mary’s faith in God was displayed as she spoke about this experience that dates back to her childhood.

As a response project, when I responded to the Christian faith, there was a chart we had to do about God’s presence in our lives, and the chart was based on God. We had to measure a space on the line to show how much we depend on God above the line, and below the line where God did not exist anymore. It was interesting for me to see some people had lines drawn below the line, but for me, I was proud of my chart because God was above the line. That means His presence

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is always there. (Vol. 3, interview #6, pp. 5-6)

Mary felt that her strong faith in God was a gift to her at birth, and she credits the development of her faith in God to being introduced to Christianity at an early age (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 6).

I think I was born this way. They say faith is a gift. I think I was born, not the moment I was born, but I was introduced to God and Christianity at a very early age. It was that concept and reinforcement that developed my faith. (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 6)

Advice to Upcoming Christian Administrators

My final question during the seventh interview with Mary was:

In conclusion, what advice would you give to the Christian administrators coming up in the ranks behind you, whether they are African-Americans or from any other culture, on faith and its role in administrative decision-making? (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 18)

Mary expressed the opinion that others must discover the foundation of their faith, and know their gifts that are inherently given by God.

The statement I would make is to discover: where your faith lies; what empowers them; what gives them strength; what gives them vision. Knowing how to label that, that's where you discover where your gifts lie. So, above and beyond what defines, I have what experiences I have. It is knowing what gifts are inherently given to me by God. When I know where my gifts lie, then I know nobody could take that away from them because those are given to me by God to be used in a way that aligns my faith to God. So, the advice that I'll give them is to know where their faith lies. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 27)

Mary continued by giving further advice, which revolves around being able to identify gifts and their value, to upcoming Christian administrators:

Be able to try to identify their gifts. Then, they would know how to contribute, in this case, to the university. The gifts that you bring to the table and the gifts that you take from the table give you value, give you purpose, particularly for me as an
African-American woman. There is no one else around the table who looks like me or who has that experience. So, the gifts have to be clear in my own self-understanding because I know nobody else has that, and it is valuable to me at the highest level. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 19)

Mary acknowledged that her greatest asset of womanhood has given her the responsibility to turn diminishing pictures of her purpose and role in life around. She advises others to let their voices be heard at levels of higher educational administration for it is a communal gift from God.

It is important for women to understand that, for me, my greatest asset is being a woman because society has a way of painting a diminishing picture of my purpose and role in life. So, I have to turn that picture around and let them know that it is because I'm a woman, that's why I'm responsible. That's why I'm at this college. So, being a Black woman at higher levels of administration, chiefly higher education, means that our voices must never be diminutive, but it must resound with other voices. It must be in communion with other voices so we can contribute. It's a communal gift that God gave us. (pp. 19-20)

Mary continued by commenting:

And if no one else sees that but you, if no one else sees that but me, that still gives it value. If no one else understands it, it still has value because others may not understand it. Whatever I need to do to get them to a place to be comfortable with the thought, but it is not my responsibility to undo some of the misconceptions that they have about me. As long as I put my best foot forward, as long as I extend myself, that is life giving to the community. That's all I'm required to do. So, in giving, live. Being Black is life-giving to the community. No one could take that away from you. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 20)

A Summary of Mary’s Story

Although Mary did not elaborate much on the physical setting of the educational institution where she serves, it is seen as a school with modern physical facilities, spacious surroundings, beautiful architecture, communities of students, and a well-trained faculty and staff to provide for the needs of the student body. According to this informant, her
workplace is guided by a philosophy and mission which harmonizes with Christian
guidelines. Mary stated that the faculty, staff, and administrators are Christians, and she
articulated that many of the religious leaders live on campus and "keep entrenched in the
students' world" (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 6). She also referred to the President of this
institution as very informed, very basic, very unassuming, just person-to-person. Mary
recognizes her school as a very special place because things happen (Vol. 3, interview #3,
pp. 6-7). As a result of this practice of religious faith, she approaches each day with the
belief that God is in control. The church owns this particular institution of higher
education, makes the general policies from which the school drafts its local policies, and
serves as the final liaison for matters which cannot be settled at that level.

Like the other two informants in this study, the faith-informed decisions which
Mary makes by virtue of her position seem to be understood by the individuals who serve
in the institution. She is a Christian administrator who believes that "it is important to
understand the need of a person and understand where that person is at as well as the
sensibilities of that person so she can make decisions that affect their lives in a positive
way" (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11). According to Mary, her faith, through the Holy Spirit,
can give her the insight and wisdom to touch the very core of a person's needs so she can
be of assistance in their experience of a quality life (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11).

Throughout the interview process and this chapter, Mary made every effort to
share her passion for people, particularly family, students, colleagues, and friends, and the
importance of healing, reconciliation, and trusting God to be able to whisper the unspoken
needs that a person may have.
So, I have to believe that my faith, through the Holy Spirit, can give me the insight, wisdom to touch the very core of that person’s needs so I can be of assistance in their experience of a quality life. So, I trust God to be able to whisper these unspoken needs that a person may have. I like to refer to it as intercepting the Spirit. We want to be intuitive enough to tap into the spirit and soul of that person, to be able to see if I can be an instrument to sustain that certain quality. (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11)

According to Mary, as scripted earlier in this narrative document,

Christianity, in my mind, is the key to being successful, being a follower of the life of Christ. You follow His way to be successful. So, Christianity, from my experience, is the key to understanding oneself and to come to terms with what Christ wants me to do—whether I’m president of a college, or whatever, the same principle applies. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 4)

This chapter also pointed out numerous references to God as stated by Mary.

Lover, in the broadest context, meaning nothing is too good; sense of humor; brilliant; intuitive; caring; patient; brings information. I don’t know how He does it, but ... about 2 years before I came here, I attended a class. My brother ... was teaching a class called Rediscovering Ourselves. I was sitting listening to my brother, and I became so involved with how he broke it down so everybody seemed to be engrossed, and I remember saying, ‘I want to be used like that when I graduate from this university with a degree and I begin to teach. When I graduated ... it hit me. God brought me here for a purpose. I was a freshman, but I knew I wanted to be used by God, but I had forgotten that decision I made 2 years ago until the Holy Spirit brought it back to my mind. Because I spoke it, it came back to me. God brought it to my mind. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13)

In regard to the previous statement by Mary, I asked the question: “Do you think that’s the way God brings information to us — by speaking it?” (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13).

Mary responded by saying,

Not really, but sometimes we think that these notions are outlandish. God brings information to us many times, and when we say it, it brings power to it. Think about Who God is. The God I serve is fine, and good, and healthy, and tasty, and wealthy. Everything that is good, God is. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13)
This chapter has given reasons why faith in God is important in this Christian administrator’s administrative decision-making practices. In the words of this informant,

God brings information to me sometimes on very, very, crazy notions. I know when I retire, I will have a Retreat House where people can come and learn about God. How do I know that will happen? Because that’s what I want to do. It’s not that I think about it all the time, but as I look back, God planted the seed.

(Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 14)

In conclusion, Mary pointed out that she brings back to students, particularly African-American students, every time, the fact that they were duly ordained by God.

And I tell the students all the time that it is interesting that even with all that’s happening to Africa and with African-American communities, God still continues to help people on the continent, and that is to remind us that the source is directly ordained by God. And I don’t put that on my plate alone. I bring it back to the students every time—the fact that they were duly ordained by God. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 16)

As this study continues to unfold, this case presentation regarding the connection of faith in God to Mary’s administrative decision-making practices is compared and contrasted with the faith-filled stories and experiences of Ellysha and Victoria in chapter 7, the cross-case analysis.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents the cross-case analysis of religious faith and its connection or link to the decision-making practices of the three Christian women administrators in this study. This analysis serves to examine the information comparatively across the three cases. According to Yin (1994), this is a process which in itself contributes to the strengthening of the internal validity of a case study.

A similar framework used to separately analyze the three case studies will be used in this chapter. In addition, narrative text and tables provide detailed information within each theme. Within the tables, the administrators' statements are displayed in the regular font style, whereas specific clarifications (meanings) of numerous words or phrases used by the administrators are in brackets. Themes that emerged across the three case studies are described in this cross-case analysis as similar or different. These themes were divided under three major categories: sociological, psychological, and anthropological factors.

The psychological factors include:

1. **Defining Religious Faith**

2. **Ways Christian Administrators Refer to God**
3. The Concept of Administrative Decision-Making vs. Decision-Making

4. Results of Decisions Based on Religious Faith

5. Results of Being a Christian Administrator

6. Advantages of Having Faith in God.

The sociological factors include:
1. Faith and Events Leading up to Becoming Administrators
2. Family, Friends, and the Community
3. Administrative Categories in Which Faith in God Informs Decision-Making
4. Faith-Filled Experiences as an Administrator of Higher Education.

The anthropological factors include:
1. A Personal Tour of Places Where Faith Decisions Emerge
2. Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice
3. Poetry, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice
4. Advice to Upcoming Administrators.

The aim of this chapter is to closely compare and contrast what has been postulated, while creating for the reader a sense of having been there (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 149). In addition, this chapter focuses on how numerous kinds of decisions, particularly administrative decisions based on faith in God, find expression in the lives of Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary, the informants of the study.

**Psychological Factors of Faith in God**

In this study, many psychological or behavioral factors of faith in God surfaced
from the collected data. Some of these behavioral factors were presented in chapter 2.

Following are other factors, which include those listed previously in this chapter. As one attempts to understand the psychology of faith and to proceed to provide a description of the psychological facets of God as found in this study, it is important to reflect upon thinking and learning, both vital functions of psychology. According to Phillips and Soltis (1985),

Thinking and learning . . . enable human beings to survive by escaping from danger, by foreseeing serious problems before they occur, by enabling foresight and planning and productive activity, and so forth. In other words, thinking and learning are ‘practical’ capacities, in the exercise of which we actively interact with our surroundings. (p. 38)

In studying the connection of psychology and faith in God, Jacobsen (1995) dealt with the effect of religious faith on human behavior to provide practical rather than theoretical examples of the interaction between religious faith and behavioral science. For instance, she outlined how to make connections between psychology and the broader lives of students. She assumed that, for many students of higher education, fundamental understandings of human nature are connected to religious beliefs, faith in God, and spirituality fostered in their home life. In a similar way, this study deals with faith-informed decision-making and provides practical as well as theoretical examples based on Fowler’s theory of the stages of faith (Fowler & Lovin, 1980).

A number of psychological factors emerged from the interview sessions with the three informants, which included their definition of faith in God. Table 4 narratively displays or presents one of these psychological factors, which is defining religious faith.
TABLE 4
DEFINING RELIGIOUS FAITH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Faith means to me that it's not all cut and dry. It's not all clear. All the answers are not clear, and so you do some things in trust. Because things are not clear, you know . . . you're starting out on this dissertation by faith, trust in God, because you don't always see the end from the beginning (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 2). Faith is just believing God's Word, what He says, and His promises (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 4). Faith to me means an understanding, a belief that something outside of myself is in control of my life (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 2).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith is trusting in God for those things that you don't have the answers to or for those things that you can not see (Vol. 1, interview #2, p.2). It's spoken in how I pray and ask for guidance. Unspoken is how the Holy Spirit prompts you to do something and you don't know what, but you are obedient to that, and it works (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 12).</td>
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| Defining Religious Faith

As with other terms in the English language, “faith . . . carries many connotations” (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 17). As these writers said, “If I asked you to share the ideas about faith which you brought to this reading, perhaps the first meanings that would come to mind would have to do with the religious sphere” (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 17). As these authors stated, we know that to have faith is to be actively prepared to believe or trust in and to be committed to someone or something. In the words of Fowler and Keen (1978),

To have faith is to be related to someone or something in such a way that our heart is invested, our caring is committed, our hope is focused on the other . . . Faith is an active 'mode-of-being-in-relation' to another or others in which we invest commitment, belief, love, risk, and hope. (p. 18)
Ways Christian Administrators Refer to God

In this study, numerous ways of referring to God emerged from the data. All three of the informants made many references to God. Ellysha and Mary both viewed God as caring and a lover. As Ellysha said, “God is a lover. He loves people. He loves pleasure. He loves nice things” (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 12). Mary stated, “God is a lover. Lover is an umbrella figure. It applies to all the words. Lover is overarching” (Vol. 1, interview #6, p. 4). On the other hand, Victoria referred to God as unconditional love (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10). They also referred to God as a personal friend, organizer, guide, facilitator, peacemaker, and protector. Table 5 shows many other ways that the Christian women administrators in this study refer to God.

The Concept of Administrative Decision-Making vs. Decision-Making

As the informants shared their views on different kinds of decisions, I could see how important other people were in their decision-making practices. According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), “networking is the process of forming relationships with influential people. Such people may or may not be in important positions, but they often have access to useful information” (p. 192). Administrators “who usually connect with a community of believers who will love them unconditionally and help them in times of need” (Bauman, 1999, p. 2) might be relieved of stress during life’s crises. Narratively depicted in Table 6 is a similarity which is seen in each informant’s experiences—a network of support (people).
<table>
<thead>
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<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
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<tr>
<td>I would describe God as a friend, a personal friend. A friend is a person I could trust. He is trustworthy (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 23).</td>
<td>I believe that He is my life. When I accepted Him as my personal Savior, He came into my life. He's just my peacemaker, keeper, and protector. He is my protector and my rock, immutable, always abiding. He lets you know that your labor is not in vain. You need that rock to stand immovable (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10).</td>
<td>Lover, in the broadest context, meaning nothing is too good, sense of humor, brilliant, intuitive, caring, patient, brings information. . . . God brings information to us many times, and when we say it, it brings power to it. Think about who God is. The God I serve is fine, and good, and healthy, and tasty and wealthy. Everything that is good. God is (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13).</td>
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<td>God has a plan for all our lives. So, I'll say God is a planner and an organizer. I will say God is a guide. He knows the plan. He knows the road maps. So, He takes you down the road you need to go. God is a thoughtful being as well (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 24).</td>
<td>Mercy, grace, immutable (always abiding), never-changing, ever-present, loving, unconditional—I should say unconditional love, life-giver, salvation, hope. You have to know that God is ever-present. You can't see Him. I believe in the Word of God. I have to believe that which I can't see is there (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10).</td>
<td>For God to give us everything, He has to be kind—or gracious. He loves us. He is caring, is concerned about us. about people (Vol. 3, interview #5, p.32).</td>
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<td>He is a facilitator because He facilitates things in our lives. He organizes but he also facilitates and guides. He is caring. You can count on Him. He is powerful and strong. He is always there. He is creative. His plans for us may meet with obstacles, but God is creative enough in helping us to come back to where we are supposed to be (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 13).</td>
<td>I believe that He is my life. I believe that when I accepted Him as my personal Savior that He came into my life. I believe that I will be with him and reign forever with the Lord. So that's where my peace comes in, and that relates to my faith. He's my peacemaker, keeper, protector, and rock (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 10).</td>
<td>He waits on us, shows patience. They are all generic to God: caring, gracious, intuitive, eternal, maternal, paternal, compassionate, omniscient, omnipotent. The thing is that God is everything (Vol. 3, interview #5, pp. 33-34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is a lover. He loves people. He loves pleasure. He loves nice things. So, I will say that He is a lover (Vol. 1, interview #5, p.12).</td>
<td></td>
<td>God is a lover. Lover is an umbrella figure. It applies to all the words. Lover is overarching (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 4).</td>
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TABLE 5
CHRISTIAN REFERENCES TO GOD
### TABLE 6

**ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING VS. DECISION-MAKING**

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<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
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<td>Administrative decision-making always involves other people. When you are an administrator, your decisions can't be what satisfies you all the time, but it has to do with what's good for the team, and that's a whole different kind of decision-making (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 12-13).</td>
<td>I just see it as administrative decision-making when it relates to my job, and decision-making is as it relates to my life (Vol. 2, interview #6, p. 64).</td>
<td>The first one (decision-making) has to do with my personal well-being - family, taking care of myself. The second one (administrative decision-making) has to do specifically with the university (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 7).</td>
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<td>There is a big difference. I think in decision-making, you make decisions all the time. Decision-making, we make decisions all the time, all kinds of decisions. You make decisions about what to wear, what you're going to cook, what you are going to eat, or how you are going to do your hair. These are all kinds of decisions that you have to make (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 12).</td>
<td>Decision making? I am always making decisions on my job. Similarly is that they involve choices. You have to make decisions. Administrative, to me again, more specifically relates to my job (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 64).</td>
<td>An administrative decision has to do with the institution and the decision first and foremost has to do with the well-being of the institution. So, I just have to trust that my faith helps me and allows me to know what is for the well-being of the university. I have to trust that I know what that is (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 8).</td>
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I think that a decision is a very personal thing, a personal act, a personal function. So, they all come under personal (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 7).
Table 6—Continued.

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<td>So, there are shades or levels of decision-making that people make. There are kinds and there are levels of decisions. There are decisions that you make all the time. Do I want to have hamburger for lunch or veggie burger, or do I just want a salad? Those are little decisions. People fail to see that these are decisions they are making (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 13).</td>
<td>I mean I could make life choices on my job. I could choose making a decision. If I were to sit in the restroom to listen to people talk about me, that is a decision, but I am not going to do it, but it doesn't necessarily relate to my job (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 64).</td>
<td>Sometimes I have to make personal decisions which prompt me to put the university on the back burner (in a secondary position) so I can take care of myself. And there are times when the institution has to come first, depending on what it is (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 7).</td>
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<td>Sometimes, we fail to have children make decisions or fail to teach them decision-making skills by saying, 'What do you want today?' Besides making decisions as a couple, my husband and I have to make decisions as a family (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 14).</td>
<td>Decision-making — I can choose to go do something now, or I could decide to wait (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 64).</td>
<td>My history with the institution indicates that the decisions that have been made formerly were good ones. I think first and foremost has to be with the institution and then you proceed down from there (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 8).</td>
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Results of Decisions Based on Faith in God

What are some results of making decisions based on faith in God? Answers to this question emerged from the data as each informant continued sharing her stories. Table 7 gives narrative accounts of the results of each informant's faith-informed decisions.
TABLE 7

RESULTS OF MAKING DECISIONS BASED ON FAITH IN GOD

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<td>I also had to make the decision if I should go back to school and get my doctorate. I had to do it in such a way that it will not interfere with my family. How do you do that? These are tough decisions. I spend time not sleeping. I refused to do homework on Saturday nights, and I got all the way through my doctorate. I decided this [Saturday night] was family time. (Vol. 1. interview #4. p. 20).</td>
<td>These are some of the highlights for me. When I see single mothers and how they have developed in confidence in the choice they make in relation to men. They will come here and they will tell me things in confidence. They know I would not say anything to anyone. These are the ways I believe God is using me to share my faith (Vol. 2. interview #2. pp. 21-22).</td>
<td>I love preaching and teaching about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I love bringing my perspective of God into other people's world and giving them the opportunity and the permission to reconstruct it and apply it to their own lives (Vol. 3, interview #2. p. 11).</td>
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<td>Saturday night could be a chill night. We'll watch TV, pop corn, or just talk. Then their [the children's] eyes will close. Then, I'll get up before they get up and work on my dissertation. Sundays, I'll cook a brunch—everybody's favorite food, and they will get up and pig out. My reason was to say, 'I love you, and I enjoy doing that' (Vol. 1, interview #4. p. 22).</td>
<td>I came in here [workplace] and everything was going wrong administratively, personally, and I rolled up in here, work, so much I had to do, and I think, 'Huh!' Then my boss called a meeting which we called, 'Time Out,' and she asked me, 'Where do you get your peace?' In my mind, I say, 'Lord, help me to stop thinking about myself... okay Lord speak through me.' I shared with her how I became a Christian. When I mentioned the word 'peace' she started crying (Vol. 2, interview #2. pp. 23-24).</td>
<td>I love preparing for retreats. What I love most about it is the reflection. When I prepare for retreats, I begin with a theme, and it is divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, but they grow as a result of different information God brings to me (Vol. 3, interview #2. p. 11).</td>
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<td>This department has yet this year been on a departmental retreat. I planned it and negotiated it with the dean, and picked the place, and all of that. When we got there, it started to unfold. It was exciting, and everybody was there. Everybody stayed, and we stayed overnight in the hotel. It was wonderful (Vol. 1. interview #2. pp. 12-13).</td>
<td>Yes, I shared with her [my boss], and I told her 'If I were to buy you a book and slip it under your door – she said. 'You don’t have to slip it under my door, you just hand it to me because I’m searching (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 24).</td>
<td>It is like somebody may drop an article on my desk that has direct connection to what I’m teaching or what I’m trying to present on the retreat, or I’ll hear a song that I can use. It’s incredible how it grows (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 11).</td>
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<td>Do I quit my job and go to school, or do I not? Those are faith decisions. Do I go to this church because they have something for children, or do they go to this church because they have more for children? So, these are the kinds of decisions I will have to make (Vol. 1. interview #4. pp. 19-20).</td>
<td>When people know that you care about them, they’ll keep in contact with you (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 21).</td>
<td>The greatest result is that they [new students] know who I am. By that, I mean, there is always someone who will be there to coach them, to tap into the greatest person who will make them feel safe and secure. So, that’s why I spend so much time with the freshmen, because for the next four years, I will be the one who will be there to coach them and be around them (Vol. 3. interview #3. p. 2).</td>
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<td>Lord, this is my first conflict you know [another administrator wanted money from my budget]. You know I can’t go to my boss and ask. ‘Can we pray about this?’ Lord. You lead me and guide me, and He did. The role faith played in there is like God used my boss, the vice president. . . . The Lord used them to train me to say, ‘That is what you should do.’ and I felt peace about that (Vol. 2. interview #5. pp. 38-39).</td>
<td>Lord, this is my first conflict you know [another administrator wanted money from my budget]. You know I can’t go to my boss and ask. ‘Can we pray about this?’ Lord. You lead me and guide me, and He did. The role faith played in there is like God used my boss, the vice president. . . . The Lord used them to train me to say, ‘That is what you should do.’ and I felt peace about that (Vol. 2. interview #5. pp. 38-39).</td>
<td>Faith to me is a gift from God. Faith is nothing without the Word. therefore, it’s God’s willingness to be present in my life. Faith to me is what gives me security and peace. . . . It’s what’s going to help me understand everything right. Faith is the essence of God’s presence, and with the knowledge of that, I’m going to be all right (Vol. 3. interview #1. p. 3).</td>
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<td>Peace, peace of mind, just general overall peace about what you’re doing and actually good common sense, good wisdom decisions. I think that just because you make a faith decision doesn’t mean that things always run smoothly, but you’ve got some peace of mind behind how it really does go (Vol. 1. interview #3, pp. 3-4).</td>
<td>I believe that I will be with Him and reign forever with the Lord. That’s where peace comes in, and that relates to faith (Vol. II. interview #4, p. 10).</td>
<td>So, I enjoy entering into experiences of reflection and Scripture study [retreats] because it helps me to understand my own spirituality as well as sharing with others (Vol. 3. interview #2, p. 11).</td>
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<td>When I throw something on the table, and I get people to say, ‘I will do it, I will do it.’ that can be an exciting moment for an administrator. When I plan something, and then see it happen for the department, that’s an exciting administrative moment (Vol. 1. interview #2, p. 12).</td>
<td>One boy came back and said to me that he now understands why I was so offended by his language because he had an experience. He didn’t have to come back to tell me that. He didn’t have to tell me anything, or the woman who came to show me her grades and how well she is doing. She didn’t have to do that. I say, ‘You go girl.’ These are some of the highlights for me (Vol. 2. interview #2, p. 21).</td>
<td>Faith forms and fashions those moments of grace which is our only reason for being here – to heal each other. So, in that instance [a conflict between two students], I see my faith as really being a factor, in going outside certain guidelines to begin the process of healing for individuals as well as the entire community (Vol. 3. interview #2, p. 13).</td>
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Results of Being a Christian Administrator of Higher Education

Another theme that surfaced from the data was the results of being a Christian administrator. As a result of being a Christian, an interesting point revealed by the women was that much time was spent in prayer. At the beginning of each interview, all three of the informants agreed to pray, which I have displayed in Table 8. This, they agreed, allowed them the opportunity to thank God for His blessings and ask Him to be with us during the research process. Ellysha prayed:

Lord we are grateful to you for this beautiful day that You have given us, and especially for this preparation day just before Sabbath. Please help us to finish the task that we have to do and to turn our minds to worshiping You—Amen. (Vol. 1, interview #7, pp. 1-2)

As a result of being a Christian administrator, Victoria asserted.

We can get comfortable in our walk, in things that we do, but as an administrator, you have to make decisions. When you're dealing with people, people are delicate, and you have to be so careful in what you say, and in what you do, and in how you deal with them because something you say could be misconstrued or taken the wrong way, and sometimes you'll walk away and will never know. But, as for me, the Lord really used my ministry there with those women to encourage them, to challenge them, and that was where another area of faith comes in. How do you challenge someone you've built a friendly rapport with or when they need to be chastised or corrected? The Lord's like, 'Trust Me. You'd be doing her a disservice to let her continue to do or think or act a certain way. You need to challenge her as a sister in the Lord. Trust Me.' I'll say, 'Okay.' (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 10)

The biblical model (Heb 11:8) might be an applicable model in this situation as I think about how Abraham exhibited faith in God.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise . . . for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb 11:8-10 NKJV)
TABLE 8

PRAYER: A RESULT OF BEING A CHRISTIAN ADMINISTRATOR

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<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
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<td>Lord, we're so thankful to you for this beautiful day. You've given us today. We're thankful for the beautiful leaves on the trees, and the sunshine, the flowers that are out. We're thankful Lord for being in the country here, ah, where it's quiet and peaceful. We ask that you would continue to be with us. As Nancy begins her dissertation process, we ask that you would give her wisdom, knowledge, and understanding as she writes and as she thinks, and guide her in each step of the way. In Jesus' Name, Amen (Vol. 1, interview #2, pp. 2-3).</td>
<td>Dear Heavenly Father. I just thank You Lord for this time that Nancy and I can come and talk and share. Lord, I just pray that You will give her strength, clarity of mind. Lord, to be able to complete her task toward her goal. I pray that You strengthen her body as she prepares to go into surgery next week. Please bind Satan. We know Lord that You already have met her needs and will meet her needs by looking out for her son. You know we just praise You for what You have done and will do in and through our lives. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen (Vol. 2, interview #5, p. 2).</td>
<td>Kind and Gracious God, we thank You, we thank You for this day which is dawning, and the day which is ending. Thank you for this opportunity to come together and fellowship and combine our spirits for work that You have truly ordained. I ask You to give me the words I need to speak in order to provide information to Nancy to get this work done. In Your Darling Son Jesus' Name, Amen (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 2).</td>
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<td>Dear Lord, we thank You for this day. We thank You for the strength You have given us to get through this day. We thank You for the wisdom You've given us to solve some of our problems. We thank You most of all for Your protection and care. As we begin this session, we ask that Your Holy Spirit will be here. Bless Nancy as she asks these questions. Give us both clear minds. In Jesus' Name, Amen (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 1).</td>
<td>Dear Heavenly Father, Lord I just thank You for this time that Nancy and I can continue with her study tonight. I pray that You will help her to get it together. Give her clarity of thought to help her achieve her goal. I pray, Lord, help everything to come together and fall as You have planned it, right up to her dissertation. I pray that things will go according to plan, and things will move quickly. I pray, Lord, for her son and that she would use her time as she is recuperating to reflect on You. I thank You now in Jesus' Name. Amen (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 6).</td>
<td>Kind and gracious God, we thank You for this time today. We thank You for the other activities. We thank You for caring for us. I thank You for looking after Nancy and her little boy. Bless us now we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 2).</td>
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<td>Our kind and gracious God, we thank You for the day, completely knowing that we are in Your care. Thank You for the strength you have given us. We thank You for the health You have given us. We thank You for the Holy Scriptures and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We ask that You will bless Nancy and the work You have called her to do. In Jesus' Name, Amen (Vol. 3, interview #4, p. 1).</td>
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When negative feelings emerge, Victoria suggested giving them to the Lord, and as a result, one’s faith can be strengthened.

Give it to the Lord. If you know that you have a spiteful, angry spirit, give it to Him. That’s why It [Holy Bible] says put away strife and anger—all these things—because it limits you because at that point, when you stop dealing with it, it is when you start growing [in faith in God]. (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 25)

In Ellysha’s words, “To get all angry and upset, and things you can say sometimes, or even sometimes when you feel you are hurt, the Lord helps me to be able to handle it” (Vol. 1, interview 1, p. 11).

Ellysha told me that she keeps a prayer journal, and she writes in it every night. For instance, she said that a journal entry that she would write may be like the following statement: “Lord, I thank you for a student, or Lord, I thank you for a caring faculty” (Vol. 1, interview #1, p. 10).

As she reflected upon her days as a student of higher education, Mary made the following comment regarding the results of being a Christian administrator:

It’s very difficult to succeed because the anger eventually cuts into your spirit. I was able to turn my anger into action because of the acceptance [from Christian people]. It was not that it was something staged. It’s just who the people are. What I had in mind in terms of being limited, that was not in my experience. They [Christian administrators and faculty] allowed students to achieve their potential. So, that anger was turned into action in discovering what my gifts are. You now use that anger to bring about change. Without losing oneself, the anger shifts to self-control and positive attitudes. If you are angry, you will not succeed because in my experience, anger leads to alienation. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 3)

I believe that the biblical model (1 Cor 13) can be applied to the narrative voices of each informant as they discussed turning away from anger. As this model reminds us,

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil. (1 Cor 13:4-5)
As one can see, Table 9 conveys similar as well as different sentiments of other results of being a Christian administrator of higher education. As a result of being a Christian administrator of higher education, Mary commented:

I deal with Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, American Indians—and I think one of the reasons that it works is I believe that the students understand from me that Christianity is not White or Black, and they trust what I say. It’s always part of my consciousness as an administrator how I should deal with the students. I’m really proud of it. That is what I’ve been able to contribute to the university. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 7)

Before her present administrative assignment, Ellsha reminisced about administrative duties of yesteryear as a Christian administrator in an American public institution of higher learning. In Ellsha’s words, “There were hiring and firing decisions that had to be made. There were program decisions, and a lot of little day-to-day stuff—decisions that we have to make” (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 8). She also pointed out that she had to make decisions about who she was going to support and who she was not going to support. She stated that she had to decide who was on her side and who would support her and who would not, “and that’s very important for an administrator to know. It was only by the grace of God that I would know some things. I had to rely on Him to let me know” (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 8). (See Table 9.)

**Advantages of Having Faith in God**

As Fowler’s theoretical model points out, people best described by stage 6, which is referred to as a stage of transcendental rarity (few people reach this stage), have created an ultimate environment of faith in God in which they are totally immersed (Fowler &
TABLE 9

RESULTS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN ADMINISTRATOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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<td>Well, one of the things is that you’re willing, you’re willing to give of yourself. It’s not just enough to give theory or practical suggestions in class, but you’re really willing to give of yourself. You’re willing to look at a person as a whole person. If you look at students differently, you take into account some of the problems students are having. It’s not just a policy kind of thing that you look at. You kind of see that person as a person (Vol. 1. interview #3. p.8).</td>
<td>I have never had an experience working with someone who wanted to kill themselves. And as a resident director, you are one of the first ones to be called, and I was on duty that evening when I received a phone call that said, ‘We have a student who is agitated, and she needs someone to talk to right away’ (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 24). It was in the evening, and I threw on something. I thought she was downstairs. So, the security picked me up. I asked where we were going. He said, ‘She ran off.’ She was walking fast. She was incoherent. She was headed to a park. It looked like she was headed to Lake Michigan (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 25).</td>
<td>I’ve always been a believer. I’m a middle child so I just had to figure life out from both ends of the spectrum, and I think that because of that, I’ve always been in perspective about my thinking. I always wanted to know how things work, you know, who God is and how does God speak to me, and how can I best fit in the community where I can grow? (Vol. 3. interview #1. p. 9).</td>
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<td>Another result is that you’re willing to give service. I wouldn’t be at this university if I were not a Christian. I would be at a state university making more money (Vol. 1. interview #3. p. 8).</td>
<td>I would not be sacrificing, as some, as my sister said to me, ‘You’re not making your Ph.D. work for you’ because I’m working here and making a 1960 salary. Now, if I were not a Christian, I would not be here. I would be in a state school. Now, I think that’s another result. You’re willing to do some self-sacrificing (Vol. 1. interview #3. p. 8).</td>
<td>So, being in this position, people ask, ‘How are you doing?’ It’s a normal position for me to be in because I am very people oriented. I always have been. I love being able to hear people’s stories and share my story (Vol. 3. interview #1. p. 9).</td>
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<td>He [security personnel] dropped me off. Security asked me if I would like him to come. I said, ‘No, if I need you, I’ll call you.’ When I got up there, she was using profanity. She was crying. She was obviously distressed. I had never dealt with anything like that. She was using profanity, not at me, but at the security (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 25).</td>
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<td>In the end, I want to be. when I retire. I want to have a center where people can come in from the road, and where they can feel good. In the end, I learn more of myself when I am with other people because they share their impressions of me. So, I can see how to project myself. Their response is how God is using me and where I need to focus (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 9).</td>
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It was only by the grace of God that I would know some things. I think. I think He looks out for me in certain cases with that kind of thing. He has done it here. You're gonna make mistakes. There are some things I have done as an administrator that I wouldn't do over. (Vol. 1. interview #2. p. 8).

So, I guess I learned to manage back in NC. They would see me stand up for what I believe, and I'm not afraid to do and say what I believe, and I ask a lot of questions to get a clear picture of things. Or it just could be my natural, ah, the way I am naturally because I'm the oldest of seven children, and I learned to manage (Vol. 1. interview #1. p. 8).

My training was not in administration. My training was in Psychology and Child Development. So, I didn't take Management classes and all that kind of thing. I'm still trying to figure out why people thought I would be a good manager, but they did (Vol. 1. interview #1. p. 8).

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<td>It was only by the grace of God that I would know some things. I think. I think He looks out for me in certain cases with that kind of thing. He has done it here. You're gonna make mistakes. There are some things I have done as an administrator that I wouldn't do over. (Vol. 1. interview #2. p. 8).</td>
<td>I began praying. She was crying. I wanted to know if someone had messed with her physically. I was trying to understand what she was saying. I wanted her to go back to my apartment because it was cold. I did not have on proper clothes. I kept on praying, asking the Lord what to do (Vol. 2. interview #2. pp. 24-25).</td>
<td>Sometimes when I get an idea in my head, I can go with that idea, and I can be very controlling, meaning the idea moves me to the point where I get it done. The thing is people like my idea, and because it's my idea, I can run with it, but I have to allow people to run with me (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 9).</td>
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<td>So, I guess I learned to manage back in NC. They would see me stand up for what I believe, and I'm not afraid to do and say what I believe, and I ask a lot of questions to get a clear picture of things. Or it just could be my natural, ah, the way I am naturally because I'm the oldest of seven children, and I learned to manage (Vol. 1. interview #1. p. 8).</td>
<td>I told her, 'You have three choices: You can stay out here; you can either walk back to the school with me; or you can drive back in that warm van over there and have security call the police.' 'I don't want to do that,' all of a sudden, she said, 'If you walk back with me, it is cold, and they are going to blame me, ... You don't have a coat, they'll blame me.' I just said, 'Thank You Jesus' because I was cold. We got in the van and went back (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 25).</td>
<td>I'm fortunate in that my Christianity can be expressed in my role in Campus Ministries—the way Christ lived, and His passion for unbelievers. If we follow His way, it can lead to success. Christianity, in my mind, is the key to being successful, being a follower of the life of Christ. You follow His way to be successful (Vol. 3. interview #3. p. 4).</td>
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<td>My training was not in administration. My training was in Psychology and Child Development. So, I didn't take Management classes and all that kind of thing. I'm still trying to figure out why people thought I would be a good manager, but they did (Vol. 1. interview #1. p. 8).</td>
<td>I never had Counseling. I never knew about that. That was the Lord. I stayed up with her. She was doing homework. A few minutes ago, she was trying to kill herself. She was still crying, but she was calmer. I said, 'Call me in the morning.' And she did. She said, 'I'm here. I'm not going anywhere,' and we walked to the counselor together. Eventually ... she graduated, and she looked fine (Vol. 2. interview #2. pp. 25-26).</td>
<td>So, Christianity, from my experience, is the key to understanding oneself and to come to terms with what Christ wants me to do (Vol. 3. interview #3. p. 4).</td>
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<td>To answer your questions, I see myself in the end being in a position where people can come to me, and I can share. I am a very smart woman. I am a very learned woman. But my greatest gift is that I have a lot of street smart. I am very gut-oriented. I trust my intuition. I trust the communication that God has with me, which is more intuitive than cerebral or intellectual, and that affects everything that I do (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 9).</td>
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Lovin, 1980). One might see this stage as being the ultimate advantage of having faith in God because those rare individuals in stage 6 “are ready for fellowship with persons at any of the other stages and from any other faith tradition” (Fowler & Lovin, 1980, p. 31). In this study, the informants openly talked about advantages they think they have because of faith-informed decision-making practices.

As Victoria stated, she can come to work knowing that she has an advocate (God) Who will help her to make it through each day. She shared how she believes that God is with her guiding and directing her. Mary verbalized boldness as an advantage she has because of her faith in God. As she stated, she considers her greatest gift to be seeing people as individuals and not being afraid to approach them. Ellysha mentioned that faith-informed decision keeps her from stumbling and bumbling all over the place, and it also helps her to rest at night. She has no problem going to sleep at night.

In Ellysha’s words:

You know, God has a plan for our lives, and I think it is our responsibility to find out from Him what that plan is and move in concert with His plans for us. If you make God a partner and move in the direction He wants you to move in, you will be a success because God doesn’t know failure. (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 23)

Victoria commented:

So, my faith influences my decision-making in that I know that regardless of the circumstances around me, I’m representing Christ, and nobody can stop me from praying. I believe God answers prayer. So, when I talk to the Lord, I believe He’s going to answer. (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 31)

As Mary recalled some advantages of her faith-informed decision-making, she said,

It is important for women to understand that for me, my greatest asset is being a woman . . . I’m responsible. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 19) (See Table 10.)
TABLE 10

ADVANTAGES OF FAITH-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

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<td><strong>What do I do?</strong> Well in the middle of the night, I would get an idea— that's this person— and I know that this is the Lord answering that plea (Vol. 1. interview #1, p. 9). Faith enters into my decision-making, actually I don't know what I'm doing here. I don't know if anyone always knows what they're doing. I do know that I've got to consult the Lord, and say, 'Lord, you know we got to cover this thing together' (Vol. 1. interview #1, p. 9). Sometimes it would be, 'Lord show me, and maybe this is not your instruction, but before I go to class. He'd show me what I am to do. I would have studied the materials, and I say, 'Lord, you take charge,' and I would get there, and it goes in a direction that I didn't expect it to go (Vol. 1. interview #1, p. 9).</td>
<td>**So, I know that when I come in to the job, I have an advocate, that I don't have to come in and expect to carry this on my own. I know that when I go to work, the Lord knows the day I've got ahead. You know, I've got this coming up ... God help me! And the Lord will do that, you know (Vol. 2. interview #1, p. 30). Sometimes He wants us to go through that so we can learn to have dependence on Him. I close my door. I have students to come in with situations and say, 'Will you pray with me?' Let's pray. It's faith in that I know I am not doing this by myself. God is with me. He's going to guide me. direct me. It's faith in the fact that God is with me (Vol. 2. interview #1, p. 31-32). My boss said that people were calling her, and that's why I was on so many committees. 'Oh,' they say, 'ask her if she'd be on my committee.' I had to start saying, 'No.' Thirteen committees in a year? Last month, it was three. She [my boss] said, 'Of everybody, all the focus is on you.' I did not seek it. I did not ask for it. I cannot control who I am, but for whatever reason, the Lord let me find favor [in the lives of others], and some people did not like that (Vol. 2. interview #1, p. 26).</td>
<td>**I really prayed because I had no idea the direction God wanted me to go into. I just knew I would get into graduate school. I graduated with honors, and I had excellent recommendations, and I just knew [I'd be accepted]. Well, it didn't happen, and I just prayed. It became clear to me that the gifts that I have were gifts that could be used at the university working with the African-American undergraduate students on campus (Vol. 3. interview #1, p. 7). I have created a lot of initiatives for Black students—retreat opportunities, workshop opportunities, choir opportunities. So, I love it! I am a trench person. I love being in the trenches because in order for me to be fully present, for them, with them, I have to understand what it is they're going through (Vol. 3. interview #1, p. 8). I love it because the gifts that I bring to the table are gifts that are very unique, respected, valued (Vol. 3. interview #1, pp. 8-9).</td>
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<td>It [faith-informed decision-making] keeps me from stumbling and bumbling all over the place. It helps me rest at night. When I make an administrative decision, especially a tough one, if I know that I made the decision after I have prayed about it, and know that God is involved in it, I have no problem going to sleep (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 18).</td>
<td>My faith comes in [to decision-making] at the fact that when I give my testimony, I believe that I have the Holy Spirit reigning in my life. Then, when I accepted Christ as my Saviour, God, through processes, began to change my life through people, through my family (Vol. 2. interview #1. p. 30).</td>
<td>I am also a member of the Officers' Group, those of us who in some form or fashion deal with policies, administrative responsibilities, the operation of the infrastructure of the university. That's the part I love because in the short time that I have been in this position, I have met so many people from so many places in the country and the world. It would have never been possible without exposure to this type of administrative position (Vol. 3. interview #1. pp. 8-9).</td>
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<td>You would not be able to handle it [negative attitudes of others] if it were not for faith and self-esteem. It [faith] would just be totally knocked out from under you. You just wouldn't be able to deal with it. You have to have faith to keep your self-esteem going because you know you are just as good as the next person. So you manage, and you move on to the next thing (Vol. 1. interview #2. p. 15).</td>
<td>The Lord really stretched me through other people. I was challenged. I was challenging other people. It was one of the best times in my life, but it was one of the hardest because it took my faith to another level. As for me, the Lord really used my ministry [gifts] there with those women to encourage them, to challenge them, and that was where another area of faith comes in (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 9).</td>
<td>To be quite honest, when I came here to this community, it was at that point where God really stretched me to the point where I was really able to see how my gifts are to be used throughout the course of my life (Vol. 3. interview #1. p. 9).</td>
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<td>Even as an advisor, you get students who don't even know how competent you are, and they don't want you to advise them. As my faith in God has gotten stronger, as I've learned more, I just say, 'That's their problem!' and I just keep rolling. I accept those people who accept me, and those who have a problem, they have to keep moving, and I just keep moving (Vol. 1. interview #2. p. 14).</td>
<td>With God's gift to me, I can comfort. I am in various ministries – decision-making in the program-ming aspect, decision-making even in counseling. I am not a counselor, but I am a lay counselor. I see it as a gift that the Lord has given me. I just see things because that's my spiritual gift (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 19).</td>
<td>When I know where my gifts lie, then I know nobody could take that away . . . because those are given to me by God to be used in a way that aligns my faith to God (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 28).</td>
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<td>I think my greatest gift is to see people as individuals and not be afraid to approach them, not be afraid to enter their space. My second gift is that I am able to articulate myself before people in all walks of life (Vol. 3. interview #2. p. 8).</td>
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<td>Spending time with other people is a faith decision.</td>
<td>I want to stay in higher education because I like the idea of working with students—women, young males, young females, older males, older females—I love that aspect of my talents and gifts. I don’t get any of the glory. I give that all to the Lord. It is easy to get puffed up when people come back, but I know enough to know better because I have been humbled twice in jobs, but God can raise you up and He can take you down. So, He put me in this job, and I will stay there (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 10).</td>
<td>The gifts that you bring to the table and the gifts that you take from the table give you value, give you purpose, and particularly for me, as an African-American woman, there is no one else around the table who looks like me or who has that experience. So, the gifts have to be clear in my own self-understanding because I know nobody else has that, and it is valuable to me at the highest level (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 19).</td>
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<td>Taking a trip to NY for the school is a faith decision.</td>
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<td>Spending time with Women’s Ministries is a faith decision.</td>
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<td>Giving tithe and offering is a faith decision. I tell you what, just walking out of your house sometimes is a faith decision. Getting on a plane is a faith decision. Saying “yes” to other responsibilities is a faith decision (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 17).</td>
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<td>We don’t just have devotion—read something and pray. Sometimes, we’ll read something then get into this deep discussion of what we’ve just read. It makes me feel good. It’s very nice to have a husband that you can get into these discussions with. That’s why it’s important to marry a person who is in tune with God and is of the same faith because you can have these challenging and interesting discussions (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 3).</td>
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It is important for women to understand that for me, my greatest asset is being a woman because society has a way of painting a diminishing picture of my purpose and role in life. So, I have to turn that picture around and let them know that it is because I’m a woman, that’s why I’m responsible—that’s why I’m at this college (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 19).
Table 10—Continued.

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<td>It’s giving up a good job and coming to this university. I know it is God that leads me, and I told you about that, about not wanting to come and go to another university (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 17).</td>
<td>I close my door and pray. I can send e-mails to my sisters and brothers that are working in different places. ’Pray for me.’ and I receive the same e-mail. ’I need your prayers. So, I’m blessed that I have Godly support with my family and with my mom and dad. I can always call them. ’Pray for me.’ So, my faith influences my decision-making in that I know that regardless of the circumstances around me, I’m representing Christ, and nobody can stop me from praying. I believe God answers prayer. So, when I talk to the Lord, I believe He’s going to answer (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 31).</td>
<td>So, being a Black woman at higher levels of administration, chiefly higher education, means that our voices must never be diminutive, but it must resound with other voices. It must be in communion with other voices so we can contribute. It’s a communal gift that God gave us, and if no one else sees that but you, if no one else sees that but me, that still gives it value (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 20).</td>
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When I was asked to be chair [head administrator] of the department, I did not want to be chair. So, I talked to the Lord about it, and He said, ’Go forward,’ and that was it. But that has helped me to increase my faith, and I know He is the one who has brought me here (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 12). | I’ve learned in these situations [on any job] that I don’t get comfortable. Why. God has me there right now. I love the job. I’m there for however long He wants me to be. for He called me to do this job. Until He tells me to move, that’s where I’ll be (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 28). |                                                                                           |
Some of the sociological factors of faith in God which emanated from the data have been described in earlier chapters. Each administrator recalled past events and experiences, which according to Fowler’s theory (Fowler & Lovin, 1980), contributed to the administrators reclaiming and reworking their past. As Fowler’s theory explains (stage 5), it is vital to understand and recognize one’s social unconscious—the legendary stories, valued icons, and biases built deeply into the self-system by reason of one’s upbringing within a given society, religious tradition, culture, etc. (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). This chapter continues to describe sociological factors the informants discussed during the interview process.

**Faith’s Connection to Events Leading Up to Becoming Administrators**

Though Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary came from different geographical locations in America, and their sequence of events leading up to administrative positions took different turns, there are common threads that intertwine their narrative voices as they share the impact of faith in God on their decisions of yesteryear. In regard to the theme of events leading up to becoming administrators, each of these administrators admitted to coming from homes where the existence of God was acknowledged and practiced. As a result, each of them explained how her faith in God became less theoretical and more practical. Ellysha was particularly expressive of being a competent “Black woman working in a White male world” (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 7). As Victoria spoke of the time she spent as an undergraduate student in parochial higher education, working in an administrative role...
(as a Residence Assistance or RA), she stated that her Christian education was "preparation for the battle" (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 7). According to Mary, she is a city girl who came from a big, fast-paced West Coast city known for racial riots, fires, and earthquakes. In addition to teaching Religious Education, Mary said that she worked in "White corporate America" for 20 years (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4).

For an elaboration on faith in God, in the lives of the three informants and its connection to events leading up to these women’s present administrative assignments, see Table 11.

Family, Friends, and the Community

During the interviews, the informants made many comments about love, caring, and spiritual support that they experience along the way from their families, friends, and other sources, which Fowler might refer to as individuative-reflective faith. In this stage (4), an adult begins to earnestly embrace the burden of responsibility for her own commitments. All three of the administrators discussed having been influenced in some way by families and friends initially and during their professional careers.

On November 27, 1998, while sorting cards (Spradley, 1979) of taxonomic terms that she had used in previous interviews, Ellysha categorized God, Christian, and self in the same category. She explained, "I will call this the spiritual category for me. God, being the Head of all this, and in order to be a Christian, I need to let go of self" (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 10). On November 3, 1998, Victoria mentioned how "Christian fellowship can come in many ways" (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 2).
**TABLE 11**

**RELIGIOUS FAITH AND EVENTS LEADING UP TO BECOMING ADMINISTRATORS**

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<td>My classes, my department, was dominated by White males. White male teachers were there, and I can remember one White woman that I had, two that I had, and none of them were my advisors. I had to be able to work with these people, and make decisions, not the decisions, so much, that they wanted me to make, but I had to ask for strength to make decisions that I felt that God would be pleased with me making and making decisions so that I could sleep well at night (Vol. 1. interview #2. p. 7).</td>
<td>It's way more than what I wanted to go into, but that's the environment there at The Bible College. It was one with a deep spiritual emphasis, encouraged students to pray, and it was very comfortable for me. The only struggle was putting up with the White culture, and I don't have a problem with that because I was raised in a very integrated background. ... The students of color struggled a little bit with that, trying to integrate, and be more tolerant, but it was a very good experience for me as a student and as an administrator (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 7).</td>
<td>I came here when I was 38 years old. Here I am, an older adult, entering into an undergraduate environment with people my children's age. I taught Religious Education for 20+ years and wanted to get more education (Vol. 3. interview #1. p. 5).</td>
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<td>Thank God for a Christian husband because I really didn't want to come here. I had two job offers. So, my husband knew some people and called them up about a job that he wanted, and they told him the job was his, and then he said, 'I think the Lord is working it out.' So, that night, when he prayed, he said, 'Lord, open the door that should be opened, and close the door that should be shut.' The very next day the university in DC called and said, 'We're not hiring for that position any longer.' and that was the answer (Vol. 1. interview #1. p. 6).</td>
<td>When I saw this [newspaper] ad for Director. I knew. I told the president, 'Oh my God, that's my job!' So I called some friends who knew I didn't want to be back here because I just thought it was a temporary stop. I applied for the position and knew that if the Lord closed the door, that was my answer (Vol. 2. interview #1. pp. 12-13).</td>
<td>I worked in White corporate America for 20 years as a secretary. So, you got these issues of subordination which added fuel to the fire. but I was very successful when I worked for White corporate America. ... It was so interesting. So, needless to say, it took eight months to bring my whole life to a close in CA. I paid my bills, packed my clothes, sold about everything I had (Vol. 3. interview #2. pp. 3-4).</td>
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<td>When I got to my freshman class at age 38. The only concession they made for me was that they allowed me to stay in the graduate student housing. I had to meet all the freshmen requirements. I mean the whole 90 hours (Vol. 3. interview #2. pp. 3-4).</td>
<td>I got to my freshman class at age 38. The only concession they made for me was that they allowed me to stay in the graduate student housing. I had to meet all the freshmen requirements. I mean the whole 90 hours (Vol. 3. interview #2. pp. 3-4).</td>
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<td>You know, my husband helped me to focus, and by that time, it was so late. It was a wonder that we got the children into the academy. We packed some clothes, locked the house up, and came here (Vol. 1. interview #1, p. 6).</td>
<td>It was on July 28th, a Sunday. I took my application in on July 29th. Six months later, the job was mine. Nothing happens by happenstance. I believe in a Sovereign God (Vol. 2. interview #1, pp. 12-13).</td>
<td>My brother said by the time I graduate, I will be 22. He said, 'You really need to get the best paper you can so the doors can be open for you.' My brother said. 'You can do what you really want to do, which is to teach people about God so they can see the applicability of God's presence in their lives—and faith, salvation, creation, self-esteem—all these issues that connect people with their God' (Vol. 3. interview #2, p. 3).</td>
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Christian fellowship can come in many ways. You and I could be fellowshipping. You know, we are sitting here talking—because as a sister in the Lord—we can talk about anything confidential. But I fellowship by talking to women and men, and the Lord is in the midst. When the Lord is in the midst, you can't have anything but sweet fellowship. (Vol. 2, interview #3, pp. 2-3)

As Mary stated on November 30, 1998, in my third interview with her,

I deal with Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, American Indians, and I think one of the reasons that it works is I believe that the students understand from me that Christianity is not White or Black, and they trust what I say. (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 7)

Family, friends, and the community are themes that appear to have made impressions on the lives of each informant. They viewed social relationships as a strong part of their lives and faith as an everyday practical experience. According to Fowler's theory (stage 3), a person's experience spreads beyond the family to worldly associates, peers, mass media, etc. As Ellysha said, you learn a lot about God from loving, working with, and raising children. On the other hand, Victoria and Mary love talking with others, particularly friends and family members, which can be seen in Table 12's written account.
### TABLE 12

**FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND THE COMMUNITY**

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<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td><strong>I genuinely enjoy talking to people, and it just blesses, it encourages me, and I like to encourage it. Those opportunities when I’m sitting there with someone who’s talking about something, and they are down, and I know this person, it’s like, the more I get to know you, if you come in feeling a bit down, it’s like ‘Nancy, how are you doing today?’ Oh, okay, but I just enjoy talking – because my phone bill will verify three, four, five hundred dollars (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 19).</strong></td>
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<td><strong>If you look at how you love them, and work for them, and try to get them to do this and that, but they’ve got a mind of their own, and they are not always going the way you want them to. You really learn a lot about how God tries to work with us and really tries to get us to do things. Because He doesn’t throw us down and sit on us, we keep doing our thing and going our own way, and you grieve over your children when they are doing that. So, that let’s you know how God grieves over us, and He loves us more than we love our children – more than we love them (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 16).</strong></td>
<td><strong>I think the most I have paid for a phone bill is a thousand. That was over a year and a half period that added up on my last job. Now, I’m a single woman, but that’s no excuse because the Lord wants us to be disciplined in all areas, but I enjoy talking with my friends. My dad’s like, ‘I don’t understand it.’ And I’m like, ‘You got mama, you know?’ (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 20).</strong></td>
<td><strong>I love bringing my perspective of God into other people’s world and giving them the opportunity and the permission to reconstruct it and apply it to their own lives (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 11).</strong></td>
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<td>Students can be challenging, and interesting, and friendly, but there is a special place in my heart for friends. Yes, friends are special (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 25).</td>
<td>My best friends – these are the people I share my heart with. I think I can tell them everything, and I pray with them, and these people, apart from my family, are the other ones I can call and say, ‘You guys, I’m struggling.’ This is where my support comes from. It always comes from the Lord, but the Lord works through people. These people I know, know Jesus. These people are strong, phenomenal, committed people (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 42).</td>
<td>I say all that to say this, that a break for me and to be rejuvenated is to spend a weekend with my brother and his family. It is a major portion of love and warmth because I can be who I am around them (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 12).</td>
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<td>I would describe God as a friend, a personal friend. I will describe Him as a friend, as a person I could trust... He is trustworthy... I will say God is a guide. He knows the plan. He knows the road maps. So, he takes you down the road you need to go, and that is comforting because it had so much feeling for me (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 23).</td>
<td>Sometimes, we’ll talk every day. We just get on there and act like we’re school girls, and I love it. Christian fellowship means to me caring, building the body of Christ. It means that you can laugh, you can cry, and seeing someone you know is like a breath of fresh air. It’s relaxing, it’s therapeutic. If I need anyone of them, they’ll be there for me right now. I’m with my sisters and brothers in the Lord. I love them. Sometimes, it is not even talking (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 1).</td>
<td>I consider my life to be a ministry because that’s just a gift. I am because of God, so I don’t have to turn it on or off. It’s a gift. That’s what I do. It’s just a given. When I talk, I express that gift. It is my way of ministering. Talk is an expression of my ministry. Talk is an expression of my ministry. To me, it’s all one (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 2).</td>
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<td>I will hope my friend is my confidante, and a confidante has to be my friend (Vol. 3, interview #6, p. 2).</td>
<td>When the Lord is in the midst, you can’t have anything but sweet fellowship (Vol. 2, interview #3, p. 3).</td>
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Administrative Categories in Which Faith Informs Decision-Making

As Christian administrators of higher education, all of the informants discussed administrative categories or areas such as hiring, firing, student programming and activities, campus ministries, drug programs, etc. in which religious faith informs their decision-making practices. A more detailed narrative depiction can be seen in Table 13.

Faith-Filled Experiences

As the data collection and analysis processes unfolded, it became clear that the lives of the three Christian administrators in this study were accentuated with numerous faith-filled experiences. These experiences seemed to have had a positive effect in the lives of each of the administrators. Fowler’s theory (also Erikson’s psychosocial stage 6) emphasized that reflections from a childhood of yesteryear, impressions and energies from deep within the soul, and a nagging sense of the emptiness and meaningless of gone yesterdays, troubled todays, and unknown tomorrows signify readiness for something new (stage 4) (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). Victoria strongly supported this notion by stating,

I’m going to go to school and get my Master’s... The only reason I don’t want to go back to school... I don’t want to write papers. I just want to be able to talk, take the test, and go on and get my degree. I know it’s not that easy. There is a price to pay. So, I’m getting ready to pay that by going back. (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 10-11)

As Mary recalled days gone by, she said,

So, I graduated with honors, and I applied for graduate school, thinking I wanted to continue the work in terms of Afro-Centric studies and a woman’s study program with a concentration in Religious Studies or Theology. Now, the graduate school I wanted to go to, they put me on a waiting list. I had to wait, and at 42, you don’t have a lot of time for waiting. (Vol. 3, interview #1, pp. 6-7)
TABLE 13

ADMINISTRATIVE CATEGORIES IMPACTED BY FAITH DECISIONS

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<td>The areas of hiring, hiring faculty. It's one of the big areas. Setting priorities, particularly departmental priorities. It's another thing that I have to do. Um, I'm on the admissions committee for the M.A. program. So, I'm chairing the admissions committee, and meeting students is another big area—interpersonal relationships. ... The Lord helps me to deal with all nationalities and cultures, and that's a big thing on this campus (Vol. 1, interview #1, pp. 10-11).</td>
<td>Student activities is under my jurisdiction and student programming. I have full ringer on some things that I have questions on. This is a political environment, with community based interest, and so if there is something that I feel like my supervisor doesn't know, I need to explain (Vol. 2, interview #5, p. 11).</td>
<td>I work with a lot of student issues, and there is a fine line which is drawn between me as an administrator and me as a student advocate. The information I know now as a member of the officers' group is information I did not know when I was in campus ministries. So, I had to find an acceptable way to communicate that information that determined the decision process that affect students' lives (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 9).</td>
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<td>There were hiring and firing decisions that had to be made. There were program decisions, decisions about programs, and you know, you do a lot of little day-to-day stuff – decisions that we have to make. I had to make decisions about who I was going to support and who I wasn't, and actually who was really on my side, who would support me and who wouldn't, and that's very important for an administrator to know. It was only by the grace of God that I would know some things (Vol. 1, interview #2, pp. 7-8).</td>
<td>I don't want my supervisor to be caught off guard. For instance, when I got the students to give their opinion of the President issue, I wanted to make sure there wasn't going to be any backlash. A college environment should promote discussion with students (Vol. 2, interview #5, p. 11).</td>
<td>I do different initiatives like drug programs. I'm out in the community. The City Planning Committee members come together and we talk about the future of our community. When buildings go up and the streets are restructured, we have input into what's best for the city ... as it continues to grow. I do correspondence with the President in terms of issues having to do with race and ethnicity, the area in which I consider myself spiritual, and I believe it has a lot to do with my being exposed to racism and inner city challenges (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 7).</td>
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Sharing goals is one of those areas and setting corporate goals [goals for the department] as well as setting personal goals. Part of setting personal goals is how do you use your strength that you have? What do you do for yourself to renew yourself so that you can keep going – so you don’t wear yourself ragged. Another one [category] is setting schedules for faculty members and contract teachers (Vol. 1, interview #2, p. 17).

When I’m planning, I’m doing programming for the Women’s Center, the Brown Bag Forums, the support groups. I want to do things that empower and encourage . . . . Like I mentioned to you before. programs are scheduled that the kids can enjoy. There’s not profanity, no vulgarity (Vol. 2, interview #2, pp. 34-35).

I wear several hats (serve in numerous roles), and I work mostly with African-American students. I work in Campus Ministries as well as the Assistant to the President (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 7).

Areas of administration? Dealing with student issues, being an advocate for them, and being a member of the opposite group is a delicate check and balance so that one does not infringe on the other (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 10).

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Ellysha conveyed similar sentiments when she remembered some of her gone yesterdays. “I also had to make the decision that if I had to go back to school and get my doctorate, I had to do it in such a way that it will not interfere with my family” (Vol. 1, interview #4, pp. 20-21). As this descriptive multiple case study continued to unfold, each of the Christian administrators indulged in reminiscence as they recalled faith-filled experiences in Table 14, particularly regarding the role of the church in their lives.

Victoria remembered attending church with her grandmother as a child. She said that she was a child who desired to know about God, and she believed that God protected her from a lot of things. Ellysha discussed how she brought her children to church at very young ages. Similarly, Mary stated that her faith bridged everything—even her children’s baptisms in the church. Faith in God seemed to be the informing factor for each of the women in regard to church participation during the various stages of Erikson’s life cycle.
TABLE 14
 FAITH-FILLED EXPERIENCES

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<td>As the children grew up, does the church have an active youth society that is up and rolling? Is there a children's choir? So, these are the kinds of decisions I will have to make (Vol. 1, interview #4, pp. 20-21).</td>
<td>I went [to church] with my grandma when I was little, but it didn’t mean anything. When I got older, the Lord. I look at all these big words like urging of the Holy Spirit, but I did not know back then what was going on. I was with my family, and we had our New Year’s party with liquor and drinking and my baby sitter called me and asked if I wanted to go to church. I didn’t want to go. This was party night (Vol. 2, interview #1, pp. 20-21).</td>
<td>My daughter is 23, and my son is 17 (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 8). My faith bridged everything. They [my children] were baptized in the church. I mean faith was everything. How I raised them had everything to do with faith. I started teaching Religious Education when they were small, particularly my daughter. I had started teaching Religious Education when she was 2-3 years. So, as a result of my faith, I knew I wanted to introduce her to God through the Christian faith. So, I began teaching courses in Religious Education. She was in preschool (Vol. 3, interview #4, p. 21).</td>
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<td>Another decision was because I sent them to a church school that was predominantly White for most of their elementary school out in the country, do I also join their church? So, I pulled them out of the inner city school, and I put them out there, and they did grow (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 20).</td>
<td>I had attended other churches, and none had talked about the Word or salvation . . . yet, this was different. The pastor talked intelligently. I didn’t have to believe him, but with the Bible I was given. I could follow along. I could understand. The people were genuine. I could see the love of the Lord, and when the challenge came – when it was time to be baptized, and the war was with the Spirit and the flesh (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 21).</td>
<td>I don’t know how He does it, but when I was in the city where I lived, about two years before I came to this university, I attended a class. My brother, ‘S’, was teaching a class called ‘Rediscovering Ourselves.’ I was sitting listening to my brother, and I became so involved with how he broke it down so everybody seemed to be engrossed. And I remember saying, ‘I want to be used like that when I graduate from this university with a degree, and I begin to teach’ (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13).</td>
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<td>Or do I join a Black church so that after I leave school, then what about their identity? Do they hob-knob with African-American children? Do they sing in the choir? Hob-knob means play around. These are children who come in your car after church and fill up your car on the way home and sit around your table, and play with each other, then, go fool [play] with each other’s hair, and that kind of thing (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 21).</td>
<td>The question was, ‘How many of you want to know how to be saved?’ and I raised my hand. I was always seeking. I was a child who desired to know about God, and I just didn’t understand. He protected me from a lot of things (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 21).</td>
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<td>It's tough when you have young kids, and you are by yourself, but I have a husband who took a lot of the slack. I devoted Saturday night to family night (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 21).</td>
<td>So, his [the pastor's] daughter took me in the back of the church and began to talk to me about some of the things that the Bible teaches. She showed me some scripture, how to become a Christian. I believed it. I read it (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 22).</td>
<td>When I graduated from this university, it hit me. God brought me here for a purpose. I was a freshman, but I knew I wanted to be used by God, but I had forgotten that decision I made two years ago until the Holy Spirit brought it back to my mind. Because I spoke it, it came back to me. God brought it back to my mind (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 13).</td>
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<td>I decided before that no matter how busy we get during the week, Mom and Daddy would always be there on weekends, and Saturday nights, they could stay up as long as they wanted to (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 21).</td>
<td>I prayed and asked the Lord to save me, forgive me for my sins, and I didn't speak in tongues, see light bulbs flashing, but I knew I had peace in my heart with God, no question. Then, I went and talked with my brother, and we talked with our mother, and she saw a change in me. She thought - she was a little cynical - 'It doesn't take all that.' She later on became a Christian, and my dad used to drink, and he has been faithful in serving the Lord, and God has really done a lot in our family (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 22).</td>
<td>I have always been like that [unafraid and articulate] because I've been in leadership at a very young age. I was president of my freshman class. Did I tell you I was president of my freshman class [high school]. Yes. I was shocked. I asked the principal, 'How did this happen?' She said, 'Hon, everybody voted for you.' Nobody has time to train you. Coming out of pre-adolescence, it was so surprising to me. I did not know what people saw. So, I was put in leadership roles as a very, very young child (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 8).</td>
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<td>Jerusalem, going to Jerusalem. It is one of the best decisions I have ever made. It was unique. Like I said, maybe it's just me, but the people were just wonderful. I was so blessed, so blessed (Vol. 3, interview 3, p. 12).</td>
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Anthropological Factors of Faith in God

As mentioned in chapter 2 of this study, anthropology is the study of cultural development as well as social customs and beliefs of mankind (Stein, 1980). According to Spradley (1980), when ethnographers study other cultures, three basic aspects of human experience must be dealt with, i.e., "what people do, what people know, and the things people make and use. He explained that these aspects are referred to as "cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts" (p. 5). In this section of the cross-case analysis, one anthropological factor, places of faith-informed decisions, is discussed.

Touring Places Where Faith-Informed Decisions Emerge

During this study, each informant escorted me on a personal tour of places where her faith-informed decisions daily occur. These places form the background for a substantial portion of the informants’ stories. As I remembered the tours of places where the informants’ faith-informed decisions emerge, I believe that somehow Fowler’s stage of mythic-literal faith (stage 2) can be applied. In this stage, a sense of belonging is embraced by individuals. According to Fowler and Lovin (1980), people begin to gladly, eagerly, and willingly accept for themselves stories, convictions or beliefs, and celebrations that symbolize being a part of their community.

As the tour of the Mary’s campus began, she introduced me to her church (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 6) by mentioning that the church was special to her because her brother and the Bishop had a very special service there, which included gospel music. Mary
explained, "The first time they did it on that level was just amazing. It was like bringing every aspect of my life into that experience" (Vol. 3, interview #3, pp. 5-6). Victoria, on the other hand, began the tour by sharing some insight with me about her office. She said, "I feel like my office is open to all races. My pictures reflect that. I need to turn some of the lights off to make it softer. I like it to feel cozy" (Vol. 2, interview #4, p. 11).

On my tour with Ellysha, she gave me the honor of touring her study, a special room in her home where she makes faith-informed decisions. She said, "This is a nice room, Nancy. This room can put you to sleep. It is warm. In the spring, I get up each morning, and the birds are singing right outside this room" (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 25). In Table 15, the informants further discuss places where faith-informed decisions emerge.

Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice—Part I

According to White (1952), faith in God "acknowledges His ownership and accepts the blessings" (p. 255). White (1952) further pointed out that "faith is needed in the smaller no less than in the greater affairs of life. In all our daily interests and occupations, the sustaining strength of God becomes real to us through an abiding trust" (p. 255). As I compared the theme of photography, each case revealed how pictures emanate as a blessing and an interest in the lives of each of the informants. From the narrative voices of Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary, varied themes emerged as they shared photographic memoirs of faith's role in their administrative decision-making practices. The pictures were comprised of family, friends, smiling faces, and lovely places. Table 16 elaborates further on photography, religious faith, and the narrative voice.
TABLE 15

PLACES WHERE FAITH-INFORMED DECISIONS EMERGE

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<td>This room has pictures all over it. It got pictures of family in different stages all over this room, and I've got lots more . . . I call it my study, but I love this room because I get out of my bed and my husband is all the way over on the other side of the house. So, I don't have to worry about disturbing him or the lights being on. This is my own little sanctuary here. I keep my Bible just like that - open . . . , listen to the CD - tape recorder - read books - listen to the birds. (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 25).</td>
<td>Well, this is the conference office. It's pretty much a one-stop shop. This unit, you have financial aid. This is my friend and co-worker, director of placement and career services. She is a friend of mine. This is where most of the classes are held. There are three levels. Faculty offices, the classes are here. The President's office is here and vice president. We have a student dance here. We have a blood drive here. We have weddings (Vol. 2, interview #4, pp. 11-12).</td>
<td>My experience with God was brought into that church. That was the first time I thought I could consider this place as part of my experience with God. It was wonderful because that year, we had like traditional Black presiders, but when you have that type of music [gospel], and music speaks to your mind - that was a wonderful experience to me (Vol. 3, interview #3, p. 6).</td>
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So home and family is this set of pictures. These are my husband's cousins. One lives in MD. and one lives in DE. This is mother and daughter. They came to visit us this summer and spent about ten days of relaxation with us. They loved it, we loved it, and when they wanted to go somewhere, we said, 'Okay, we'd go.' and when they wanted to go and rest, we let them. They loved it because nobody bothered them (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 21).

This was when my daughter, J., graduated and we went to her graduation. This is my husband and me at a Valentines' party. Let me tell you, I was away on a trip for leadership. We had gone to a leadership workshop. He picked me up at the airport, and met me with roses (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 21-22).

Then, he [my husband] had an orchid corsage made. When I got to the house, he said, 'We are going to a Valentines' party.' and I said, 'Oh no, I don't have anything to wear.' He says, 'Wear your pretty black dress.' We went to the banquet, and we had such a good time, and I just came back from a trip. I just had time to go in the house, take a shower, and get dressed (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 21-22).

In this picture, number 1, I am helping the choir. Something is not blending right. So, as an elder of the community, I am the one to help them. So, I am showing them how it should be done. In picture 7, I have the book, and I am showing them how it should be sung... and picture number 12 shows me helping him to answer or understand the questions he might have asked me on parts I might have read (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 15).

Some of these are the same: 1. 2. 7. and 12 are preparation for Black service. How my faith plays a part in this is that I'm a Black woman who believes in the tradition of Christianity. I believe that part of understanding God and expressing the Christian aspect of who I am is Black and the Black environment. Thanks be to Black Christians who were there for me to show me and others of my generation the value of incorporating culture as faith traditions (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 15).
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<td>This is a picture that is close to my heart. What is close to my heart is Women’s Ministry, and this is a picture of part of the 30 of us who went to the Women’s Ministry in NA and took a picture there. That was such a Spirit-filled experience. That was in the hotel in NA. So, we couldn’t round up everybody, but we rounded up as many as we could, and that is very close to my heart. These are goals that were accomplished this year that I really wanted to do (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 19).</td>
<td>This is a precious picture to me. This is ‘T’ and ‘C’ – just put that there. He was the first grandson, and he was the baby for three years. Oh, that was ‘C’ when he was born. I was there to see him. My mom and daddy came in after. He was named after my daddy. That’s their second grandson. So, that was a special time. I could be a part of that. When ‘T’ was born, I wasn’t able to be there. I had to take baby pictures out (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 38).</td>
<td>So, I’m part of that culture too, here at the university, and so we have Black service. And what I do, I bring what I learned and teach to the university, which is predominantly Eurocentric, and the service is executed in that style. I said, ‘How can we take these services and express them in a way that we can appreciate and learn in our environment (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 15).</td>
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<td>That is the solid foundation that I had. My parents, godly example – 30 years’ anniversary. I don’t think it is something to enter into lightly. I’m starting to sound like my pastor, and then my brother and his wife’s wedding, which was a very special day for our family. As you see. God blessed and provided, not only stabilizing my parents’ marriage, but my brother’s. All this is just the foundation, the legacy that I have. With my family, it’s a legacy. Then my brother’s family’s growing and extending (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 39-40).</td>
<td>The role I play is training others how to prepare in a service that is Black and Christian, how to sing the songs, how to participate in the culturalization. So, if something happens to me, there are persons who are there who understand and could carry on. So, that’s the role my faith plays in training others to understand what’s happening (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 15-16).</td>
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This is a group of students from WI who had been coming up here to work on their degree, and they graduated. Because they graduated when we were not having a graduation, they wanted to have a graduation at our school in WI, and we pulled that off. It was most wonderful. Dr. G. gave the address, and she talked about how she first met that class, and they insisted that we take pictures with them. This was a day, Nancy, that was so hot, and the humidity was so high, and it rained, and we felt like we were in a sauna, and I could not believe we looked so cool. They wouldn’t let us get out of these robes. They took picture after picture, but the graduation is a wonderful time (Vol. 1, interview #7, pp. 19-20).

This is my brother and sister. I don’t have pictures of them, and one is gone to meet the Lord, but ‘B’ is the one that led me to the Lord, but cancer broke the cycle. I still have a lot of pictures back at my parents’ house. I just got this one. Some of the albums I have are back home. That’s her right there. She died from breast cancer in ’95. That’s ‘D.’ She is with the Lord [deceased]. I will see her again. That’s their daughter. That’s my pastor and his wife. They are my spiritual parents, and that’s where I got my counseling, growth, and encouragement – from my pastor and my dad to move on to the Christian college (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 39-40).

Okay, pictures 4 and 5. I think picture number 4, in relation to what I do here, this must be my most favorite picture here. This was the first year that we started freshman intro... a program I started in campus ministries, and it is an overnight retreat for African-Americans who come to the university, and these freshmen take what we call the plunge. These retreats are facilitated by myself and upperclassmen, who take them the process of being African-American at the university. The sessions that the upperclassmen prepare have to do with study habits, test-taking, professor dynamics, roommates dynamics, personnel and financial aid office (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 16-17).

Photography, Religious Faith, and the Narrative Voice–Part II

For this study, each of the informants expressed the desire to share more than 12 or 13 photographs from her collection. However, Mary did agree to share 12 pictures, and Ellysha and Victoria shared 13. An enormous amount of data was collected through the interviews in regard to photography, religious faith, and the narrative voice. The informants shared photographic records of graduation time, faculty retreats, friends from college days, believers (other Christians), final receptions, and special occasions, which can be seen in Table 17.
TABLE 17
PHOTOGRAPHY, RELIGIOUS FAITH, AND THE NARRATIVE VOICE, PART II

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<td>When it comes to graduation time, it’s a wonderful time. This is a picture of our graduation. This was last year. I have this picture because this is a picture of my graduate assistant. She is from NC. I hired her simply because she is from NC, and her mother was up here for graduation and her mother’s friend... I wanted to get a picture of her (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 20).</td>
<td>These are all believers, and all of them have had a profound impact on my life. There is ‘R’ again. We have been friends since college days - my college roommate, my girl friend. These are all college mates, as well as this guy up there... the one that I thought I was going to marry, but the Lord closed the door, or he closed it, but that’s another session, but friendships, these are my sisters (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 41).</td>
<td>Pictures 3, 8, and 11 are pictures of final receptions that we have for freshmen. This reception is held the last day after class, and this reception is more celebratory than anything else because this is the day they receive their awards (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 23).</td>
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<td>These are pictures of what we got for a faculty retreat. This department had never had a faculty retreat. So, we got away and stayed overnight, and I found this place on the lake, which is just a beautiful, smoke-free environment. This is a picture of us having one of our meals. That was really a goal that I wanted to do, and to be able to accomplish that goal was really wonderful for me. The faculty got away, and that was good for them, and we got a lot of work done, as well as ate and prayed and had some fun (Vol. 1, interview #7, pp. 18-19).</td>
<td>My girl friend. ‘R’ - we went to the same college. That’s me down there. We were the second Black RA’s. I was responsible for 27 girls on the floor. They had to answer to me, and this was my star in student affairs. So, I was learning student affairs. That was my first job, you can say, in student affairs, and the Lord continued to with stretching me. I was the first Black class speaker at my Christian college. Yes, I was. That’s history there because I was the first African-American, I made it, and I tried to get out of it, but the Lord said, ‘No, you are going to follow through with that.’ So, this is just showing God leading, and the rest of it deals with friendships (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 40-41).</td>
<td>This picture here is of the freshman class, and the shirts that they have on are shirts that we provide every year. Each year it’s different, and it shows them that we do have a community, and they wear them on special occasions. So, this is my very favorite picture because it is the first year we began. Picture number 5 is the picture for the year 2001. I was explaining what the shirt was all about, and that we are indeed a community, and we are required, not only by the university, but by God, to share our gifts with others of the community (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 18-19).</td>
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This is a picture of a guy whose parents thought he would do absolutely nothing. One day, his mother called me. ‘He wants to go to school. Could I help?’ And I helped, and he graduated. Success is what I’ll call this picture. While everybody was celebrating, they had no place to go. So, I had a celebration here for them at my home (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 20-21).

I had it [celebration] here because it is my home, which I love dearly. It is a place I enjoy inviting people to share with me. These are pictures of my dining room and living room (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 20-21).

... Ah. “Things that are important to me” (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 21-22).

Table 17—Continued.

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<tr>
<td>This is a picture of a guy whose parents thought he would do absolutely nothing. One day, his mother called me. ‘He wants to go to school. Could I help?’ And I helped, and he graduated. Success is what I’ll call this picture. While everybody was celebrating, they had no place to go. So, I had a celebration here for them at my home (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 20-21).</td>
<td>These are only pictures, but these are the four ladies that I pray with - these four right here. I pray with them every week (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 41).</td>
<td>Number 10, the last picture, is a picture of myself with a young graduate. At the university, every ethnic group has a separate celebration. It is not like the students walk across the stage to receive their diploma because there are so many students. They just ask particular colleges to stand, and the president confers their degree on them (Vol. 3. interview #7. pp. 26-27).</td>
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<tr>
<td>... Ah. “Things that are important to me” (Vol. 1. interview #7. pp. 21-22).</td>
<td>These are my kids [nephews]. Anyway, I just love them to death. When I look at these pictures, one word really comes to mind—love. I’m blessed. I feel very much loved, and I’ve been very blessed (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 43).</td>
<td>But at each celebration, each student walks across the stage and receives a certificate from the director of that particular program. As the student walks across the stage, they actually get a sense of the ceremony being individualized vs. 1900 students. ... They get to go to their ethnic celebration as well as the larger commencement exercise. This is at the end of the celebration ceremony for Black students, and as you see, Black students get a stole that they wear. These stoles are so distinctive, and they are so proud (Vol. 3. interview #7. pp. 26-27).</td>
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<td>Those are my nephews. That’s my sister-in-law. I love her to death. She’s like my sister, and that’s my brother, and those are my parents, and girl friends. Pictures mean a lot to me. Girl friends, friends, photo albums, friends—that keeps my focused. It keeps a reality check, what’s it’s all about... This college is what I do, not who I am. I love it (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 13).</td>
<td>This is the beginning of the second semester—an all day retreat. So, that’s pictures 6 and 9. After the first semester, and they’ve gotten their grades, it is an opportunity for continued dialogue (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 19).</td>
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<td>The Lord has given me every opportunity here, but... my friends and family keep me grounded, and I love pictures and looking at them (Vol. 2. interview #2. p. 13).</td>
<td>The last one is we’ve come this far by faith (Vol. 3. interview #7. pp. 26-27).</td>
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Poetry, Faith in God, and the Narrative Voice

According to Glesne (1997), poetic transcription creates a third voice that is neither the interviewee’s nor the researcher’s but a combination of both. Also pointed out by Wolcott (1994), poetry can ‘pull out’ meaning and move into the interpretive realm where the writer and reader make leaps while staying close to the data. During the interview phase of the research, Ellysha voiced poetic expressions of love written by her daughter. Similarly, Mary and Victoria spoke their words poetically at times, and those words are displayed as follows. (See Table 18.)

Advice to Upcoming Christian Administrators

As Wolcott (1994) reminded the researcher, a “way to maintain the analytical aura . . . is to raise rather than attempt to resolve questions posed or implicated by the data” (p. 28). Wolcott (1994) further added that questions that are asked while conducting research need to be real, not rhetorical. As researcher, I always kept before me the question of whether I had set and approached the problem of this study in an appropriate way (Wolcott, 1994, p. 28). Therefore, in the final interview session with Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary, I asked each of these administrators to share advice that she would give to future administrators of higher education, particularly Christian administrators, about faith in God and its role in their administrative decision-making practices. General advice that surfaced among the administrators is that faith in God is the foundation of all that they do for themselves and for others in community, i.e., family, friends, or other people.
**TABLE 18**

**POETRY, FAITH IN GOD, AND THE NARRATIVE VOICE**

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<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
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<td>My daughter wrote a poem. I’m going to get it published. In the poem, she said, ‘Grandma M’ – she wrote a poem about skins and smells. Grandma ‘M’ skin smells like love and hard work and tears. Like children and hair rollers. Her skin smells like welcome. and I’m so glad to see you. Like, ‘Do you have to go so soon?’ Like pink lotion and braids (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 6). Mommy’s skin smells like perfume and silk slip and knowledge. Her skin smells like success, like I miss you. like I miss my little girl (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 6). Now, she [my daughter] wrote about my husband’s [her daddy’s] mother. ‘Grandma Mel’s skin smells like violet, like Oil of Olay, and olive oil. like blueberry crunch pie and crunchy skillet corn bread’ (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 7). She [daughter] said that she wrote it [poem] when she tried to remember the smells of her childhood (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 7).</td>
<td>Trust, believing, faith, and rock. Trust, believing, and faith are what motivates. Rock. I see, as believing in the Rock, our Lord. I see the Rock as the Lord. My activities are to trust–believe God–and have faith in Him (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 34).</td>
<td>Faith is the essence of the presence of God. . . . Faith is the great strength that one has to survive. Faith is the foundation of feeling secure. Faith is the right to every wrong (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 13).</td>
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<td>The Rock is consistent. So, the Rock, to me represents faith in the Lord. I am here. Nothing can move me. But I have to have faith in that. I had to believe in that. I have to trust in that. That’s how I choose to live my life (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 34).</td>
<td>It is almost like blindly walking through fear, walking through anxiety, walking to security. You have to really believe in God . . . to make it [decisions] work. Faith is the foundation of the belief that makes things happen (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 13).</td>
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Ellysha and Victoria stated that God has a plan or direction for their lives, and they never have to feel alone for God is a partner, an advocate, and He watches out for them. Ellysha further advised upcoming administrators to take time for personal growth. Victoria mentioned that God allowed things to happen in her life to cause growth, which she said made her a more effective administrator. Mary affirmed, “When I know where my gifts lie, then I know nobody could take that away from me because those are given to me by God to be used in a way that aligns my faith to God” (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 28).

The administrators in the study committed themselves to a religious lifestyle; lives of service to others; and developing their own faith in God. According to Ellysha, “all work and no play, you shouldn’t do that. You shouldn’t do that. While you are climbing the ladder, always find time for personal growth and development” (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 24). Similarly, Victoria declared, “I am working to be the best that I can be for God” (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 51). (See Table 19.)

Along the same line of thought, Mary stated,

My greatest asset is being a woman because society has a way of painting a diminishing picture of my purpose and role in this life. So, I have to turn that picture around and let them know that it is because I’m a woman, that’s why I’m responsible. That’s why I’m at this college. (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 28)

Mary further elaborated,

So, being a Black woman at higher levels of administration, chiefly higher education, means our voices must never be diminutive, but it must resound with other voices. It must be in communion with other voices so we can contribute. It’s a communal gift that God gave us, and if no one else sees that but you, if no one else sees that but me, that still gives it value. (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 28-29)
TABLE 19

ADVICE TO UPCOMING CHRISTIAN ADMINISTRATORS

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<td>I guess what I would say to them is make sure you are moving in every direction that God wants you to move in (Vol. 1. interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>What I would do is to encourage anyone in integrity, character, and example in the day and age when we see so many Christian leaders that are falling by the wayside—they are not walking morally (Vol. 2. interview #7, p. 50).</td>
<td>The statement I would make is to discover where your faith lies, what empowers them, what gives them strength, what gives them vision. Knowing how to label that, that's where you discover where your gifts lie (Vol. 3. interview #7, p. 27).</td>
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<td>You know, God has a plan for our lives, and I think it is our responsibility to find out from Him what that plan is and move in concert with His plans for us. and if you do, and if you make God a partner, and move in the direction He wants you to move in, you will be a success because God doesn't know failure (Vol. 1. interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>That's important to us as college administrators that we lead by example, that we be people of integrity, and as for me, I am a believer. I am not ashamed of that (Vol. 2. interview #7, p. 50).</td>
<td>So, above and beyond what defines, I have what experiences I have. It is knowing what gifts are inherently given to me by God (Vol. 3. interview #7, p. 27).</td>
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<td>We fail when we disconnect from Him, but as long as we stay connected, we are successful because that is His plan for us (Vol. 1. interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>As a believer, I believe that the Lord has put me in this position. He wants to use my life because He has directed my life, and my faith is in that. I believe that and because of that, these decisions that the Lord is leading and guiding me (Vol. 2. interview #7, p. 50).</td>
<td>When I know where my gifts lie, then I know nobody could take that away from me because those are given to me by God to be used in a way that aligns my faith to God. So, the advice that I'll give them is to know where their faith lies. Be able to try to identify their gifts, then they would know how to contribute, in this case, to the university (Vol. 3. interview #7, p. 28).</td>
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<td>Women have a tendency not to find time for that. They have a tendency to take care and nurture other people, but not themselves, but personal growth and development is very important (Vol. 1. interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>I don't have to be out there alone. I do have an Advocate, someone Who is interceding for me. He's watching out for me. Therefore, when I go out to work, I don't have to take on the burden because it is a burden. When people come in and they have different needs and different struggles, you are in the office, you can be challenged in an hour (Vol. 2. interview #7, p. 50).</td>
<td>The gifts that you bring to the table and the gifts that you take from the table give you value, give you purpose. It gives you—and particularly for me as an African-American woman, there is no one else around the table who looks like me or who has that experience. So, the gifts have to be clear in my own self-understanding because I know nobody else has that, and it is valuable to me at the highest level (Vol. 3. interview #7, p. 28).</td>
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<td>I think I would say in addition to that – make sure you find some time for personal growth and development (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>You have to be very careful when you are dealing with people’s lives. So, that’s when faith comes in for me. Lord, you give me the wisdom, give me the things I need to say so I can encourage and direct and guide the person (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 50).</td>
<td>It is important for women to understand that for me, my greatest asset is being a woman because society has a way of painting a diminishing picture of my purpose and role in this life. So, I have to turn that picture around and let them know that it is because I’m a woman, that’s why I’m responsible. That’s why I’m at this college (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 28).</td>
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<tr>
<td>So, I would say, all work and no play, you shouldn’t do that. You shouldn’t do that. While you are climbing the ladder, always find time for personal growth and development (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 24).</td>
<td>People are fragile. They are needy. They are looking for people to direct them. I have a responsibility to do that. People who you are working with need to be prepared because as an administrator, no one should go about their job lackadaisical. I am working to be the best that I can be for God (Vol. 2, interview #7, pp. 50-51).</td>
<td>So, being a Black woman at higher levels of administration, chiefly higher education, means our voices must never be diminutive, but it must resound with other voices. It must be in communion with other voices so we can contribute. It’s a communal gift that God gave us, and if no one else sees that but you, if no one else sees that but me, that still gives it value. If no one else understands it, it still has value although others may not understand it. Whatever I need to do to get them to a place to be comfortable with the thought (Vol. 3, interview #7, pp. 28-29).</td>
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Never neglect the family. Never neglect the family. Never forget those people who strengthened and encouraged you along the way. and when you get where you want to be. when you reach there. then do something for others (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 24).

That was a career opportunity in higher education. I was an RA. and I was good at it. I enjoyed it. but at the same time, I was feeling a need to go on in my life. but I wasn't ready. So. the Lord allowed things to happen. He allowed things in my life to strengthen me. to cause growth. and I think it made me a better. more effective administrator (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 51).

So. I will tell people. 'Don't try to insulate yourselves from hurting things. If the Lord allows things in your life. then embrace it. and learn from it.' Those things are what helped me to be a more effective administrator. I am not saying that people have to go through negative trials. It comes back to me as an example. I went through this. I went through that. So. I learned from it (Vol. 2. interview #7. pp. 51-52).

It is not my responsibility to undo some of the misconceptions that they [other people] have about me. As long as I put my best foot forward. as long as I extend myself. that is life giving to the community. That's all I'm required to do. So. in giving. live. Being Black is life-giving to the community. No one could take that away from you (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 29).

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<td>Never neglect the family. Never neglect the family. Never forget those people who strengthened and encouraged you along the way. and when you get where you want to be. when you reach there. then do something for others (Vol. 1. interview #7. p. 24).</td>
<td>That was a career opportunity in higher education. I was an RA. and I was good at it. I enjoyed it. but at the same time, I was feeling a need to go on in my life. but I wasn't ready. So. the Lord allowed things to happen. He allowed things in my life to strengthen me. to cause growth. and I think it made me a better. more effective administrator (Vol. 2. interview #7. p. 51).</td>
<td>It is not my responsibility to undo some of the misconceptions that they [other people] have about me. As long as I put my best foot forward. as long as I extend myself. that is life giving to the community. That's all I'm required to do. So. in giving. live. Being Black is life-giving to the community. No one could take that away from you (Vol. 3. interview #7. p. 29).</td>
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All three administrators expounded on the role of faith in God as an integral part of their decisions and experiences. They stressed the importance of daily maintaining religious faith, encouraging and nurturing positive growth in the lives of others, enhancing personal growth, and completely relying on God. Hence, Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary's narrative voices affirm the connection of faith in God to their decisions-making practices as well as their experiences.

Summary

This chapter, which presented the cross-case analysis, has examined commonalities and differences (across themes) of faith's role in the decision-making practices of the three African-American Christian women administrators in this study. Mary and Ellysha are both administrators in parochial institutions of higher education. Victoria serves as a Christian administrator in a public institution of higher learning. Themes across cases surfaced under the categories of psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors.

In the cross-case analysis, religious faith seemed to have helped each of the informants to be concerned about the whole person (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), “concern for the total person is a natural part of the working relationship, which tends to be informal and emphasizes the whole person and not just the individual’s work role” (p. 131). This holistic viewpoint, according to these scholars, enhances a strong egalitarian environment, a community of individuals who work cooperatively on common goals rather than relying on the formal hierarchy. Each of the informants promoted the basic values of love, faith, honesty, cooperation, and
egalitarianism, core values typical of Theory Z organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

The cross-case analysis seemed to bring a more lucid understanding to each phase of Fowler’s theoretical model of the stages of faith (Fowler & Keen, 1978), which explains the stages of faith (see chapter 2). As analyzing continued, Fowler (stages of faith) and Erikson’s (psychosocial stages of the life cycle) theoretical models were applied to the informants’ stories. For instance, Mary recalled how she embraced a sense of belonging (Fowler’s stage 2 and Erikson’s stage 4) when she was accepted into her university and continued “waiting for someone to pull the rug from under me because the process was so systematic” (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 4). Similarly, Victoria remembered how happy she felt after she realized that she was hired for her present administrative position (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 24). Finally, Ellysha reminisced about a co-worker calling her ‘Sunshine’ when she walked into a meeting one day feeling down and stressed since her brother died. Ellysha recalled her saying, “Good Morning Sunshine! You make my day bright. It’s so nice to see you. Sunshine, and I’ve been waiting for you,” and she started grinning and the gloom just left.

“The qualitative aspects of experience are not only secured in attending to qualities out there, but also are manifest in the things we do and make” (Eisner, 1998, p. 18). The final themes dealt with in the cross-case analysis were photography and poetry, which can be seen as “things we do and make” (p. 18). The tables that emerged in this study, particularly in this chapter, “are connected to the social networks of which they are a part; as a result, narrative format helps construct the meaning of human living, knowing, and feeling” (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997, p. 70).
To better understand the purpose of graphics, Wolcott (1990) explained that graphics such as tables, charts, and photography offer other ways to give our thoughts organization by inviting us to sort and categorize data, examine what should be placed together, and ponder how seemingly discrete data may be connected in ways previously unrealized. Therefore, as the researcher, I was able to “think spatially” (Wolcott, 1990, p. 63) and “work through . . . charts and diagrams in order literally to see” (p. 64) the study in a more lucid way. Finally, “graphics also enhance the likelihood of capturing the attention of readers who ‘see’ facts or visualize relationships in other ways” (Wolcott, 1990, p. 64). Chapter 8, the final chapter of this study, focuses on summarizing the study, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study utilized qualitative methods in its research to acquire an understanding of religious faith's role in the administrative decision-making practices of three African-American Christian women administrators of American higher education. This qualitative multiple case study included 21 interviews, which entailed 7 interviews each with the three informants. Also employed were the tape recorder, taxonomy procedures, observations, and visits to the "research settings" (Maruyama & Deno, 1992). As these scholars explained.

The nature of the research setting is an important feature that should not be underestimated, for it moves researchers away from the academic culture with which they are generally familiar to a different culture with very different values and norms. (Maruyama & Deno, 1992, p. 3)

Creswell (1994) defined a qualitative study "as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reported detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (pp. 1-2). During the study, I asked many questions to elicit the viewpoints, experiences, and stories of the informants regarding ways in which faith played a role in their administrative
decision-making practices.

There was a concerted agreement and conviction among the informants that faith in God influences every aspect of their lives, particularly their administrative decision-making practices, and as a result, they all affirmed that they have peace (peace of mind).

(See Table 20.)

### TABLE 20

**PEACE: A RESULT OF FAITH-INFORMED DECISIONS**

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<td>'What are the results of making these kinds of decisions?' I think <em>peace of mind</em> is one of the results of making faith decisions. . . . I think that just because you make a faith decision doesn’t mean that things always run smoothly, but you’ve got some <em>peace of mind</em> behind how it really does go. <em>Peace, peace of mind, just general overall peace about what you’re doing</em> (Vol. 1. interview #3, pp. 3-4).</td>
<td>You have to know that God is ever-present. You can’t see Him. I believe the Word of God. I believe that when I accepted Him as my personal Savior, that He came into my life. I believe that I will be with him and reign forever with the Lord. So, that’s where my <em>peace</em> comes in, and that relates to faith. He’s just my <em>peacemaker, keeper, and protector</em> (Vol. 2. interview #4, p. 10).</td>
<td>Faith to me is a gift from God. Faith is nothing without the Word, therefore, it’s God’s willingness to be present in my life. Faith to me is what gives me security and <em>peace because I know in this world, it’s through my faith and understanding, in an understanding to know that it is present in my life. It’s going to help me understand everything right. Faith is the essence of God’s presence, and with the knowledge of that, I’m going to be alright</em> (Vol. 3. interview #1, p.3).</td>
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Two of the women, Ellysha and Victoria, responded that faith in God means trusting him. They expounded that this trust is inclusive of the Holy Bible, which they believe to be the Word of God. The other administrator, Mary, explained that faith is the presence of God in her life. In addition, she commented that faith is the conveyor of peace.

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and security in the world.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I presented three separate case studies that related to the faith-informed decision-making practices of Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary. In chapter 7, I analyzed the cases using the cross-case analysis approach. In addition, tables, diagrams, poetry, and photography were used in this study. As Wolcott (1990) stated, "Qualitative research weds us to prose" (p. 63). He further pointed out that “we need to remind ourselves that charts, diagrams, maps, tables, and photographs not only provide valuable supplements to printed text but can condense and expedite the presentation of supporting detail” (Wolcott, 1990, p. 63).

**Findings Based on the Study’s Research Questions**

The following statements represent the responses and findings based on the examination of the interview questions in the research. These are questions that this study sought to answer.

*Research Question 1* asked: “How does the concept of faith in God connect to an administrator’s decision-making practices?”

Each of the informants felt that religious faith is derived through communication with God through prayer and the study of His Word. The findings of this study show that the desire to pray is commonly aligned with faith-informed decision-making practices. A formal posture in prayer was not articulated by any of the informants, yet they mentioned prayer as always being necessary at the start of each day and before and particularly during crisis situations. One of the informants, Mary, also mentioned that prayer time or
TABLE 21

THE CONCEPT OF FAITH IN GOD

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<td>Even in our lives, even if we don’t see it, our lives are organized by God’s plans (Vol. 1, interview #5, p. 11).</td>
<td>That’s how I feel about my faith. I know there are some things, and I can’t even begin to explain it. It’s faith in the fact that God is with me (Vol. 2, interview #1, p. 32).</td>
<td>Faith to me means an understanding, belief that something outside of myself [God] is in control of my life (Vol. 3, interview #1, p. 2)</td>
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Reflection time for her sometimes came during the late hours of the night. On the other hand, Ellysha relayed how she sometimes enjoyed quiet time (prayer time) in the early morning hours (around 4:00 a.m.)

According to Fowler’s theoretical model (individuative-reflective stage of faith), the adult must begin to earnestly embrace the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and outlooks (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). As Fowler’s theory is applied to Research Question 1, faith in God was interpreted as an earnest embrace of God’s divine intervention and guidance in the administrators’ decision-making practices.

As revealed by the wealth of data collected during the interviews, these Christian administrators’ outlook on faith in God and its connection to their administrative decision-making seemed to revolve around God’s continuous presence in their lives. Table 21 elaborates on the concept of faith in God as relayed by the informants in this study.

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Research Question 2 asked: “How does faith in God connect to the decision-making practices of three African-American Christian women administrators in American institutions of higher education?”

In this study, many instances were shared and discussed by the informants which relayed how faith in God connected to their administrative decisions. The data revealed that some of these decisions occurred within situations where their experience and professional skills alone were inadequate to resolve the issue. The informants believed that during these times they would appeal to God for guidance through prayer.

At times, the informants pointed out that their faith in God seemed to remove fear from their emotions, and a boldness and risk-taking on the behalf of others surfaced. As Mary stated, “Whatever is to be done to heal the hurt within the community comes first” (Vol. 2, interview #2, p. 10). According to this informant, faith permeates this desire to do and dare on behalf of others.

In light of Fowler’s theory as it is made applicable to Research Question 2, a person’s experiential knowledge of the world now spreads beyond the family circle to other spheres in the community (such as peers, colleagues, students, religion, etc.). These spheres now demand consideration (Fowler & Lovin, 1980).

It also became evident in this study that personal relationships became healed through faith in God. In regard to each of these administrators, there is a definite consciousness of their influence in the workplace, as well as the impact that their decision-making may have on the quality of life of the persons they are dealing with on a daily basis. All three of these women commented on how important it is for faith in God to
work through them as they make decisions that affect those people with whom they work.

*Research Question 3* asked: “How powerful is religious faith’s connection to cultural background, education, family, and friends?”

Fowler’s theory of the stages of faith suggests an answer to this question (stage 5). According to Fowler and Lovin (1980), this stage of paradoxical-consolidative faith involves the administrators reuniting symbolic power with conceptual meaning by seriously reclaiming and reworking their past. Faith, as it is practiced in the lives of these Christian women, seemed to have evolved from their experiences, i.e., background, education, family, and friends. While they all admit that faith is trusting God, there was an expansion of the term to include its application and personalization in their lives. A descriptive term of faith that was used by Mary is healing, which involves an understanding or belief in someone outside of yourself who is in control of your life. Each informant also spoke of faith as a gift, as well as one’s willingness to have God present in her life.

Cultural background may have shaped their religious faith as it enhances their ability to accept and work with people of different cultures. Faith seemed to have extinguished mistrust in the minds and hearts of the women in this study, thereby removing this mistrust from their relationship with persons of different cultures.

As youngsters, each of these women remembered experiencing religious instruction. In other words, faith was practiced in their homes. Though the experiences of Ellysha and Mary began when they were very young, Victoria spoke of becoming a Christian as a teenager of 16 under the influence of her grandmother. Therefore, the
family formed a strong bond in regard to the growth of faith in all of their lives, and conversely, faith in God strongly connected family members. Additionally, they all described their families as individuals whom they can turn to and count on for support through prayer in any crisis. The thick, rich descriptions revealed candid comments on the mutual caring and love that is shared within the families.

Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary all believed that their friends were precious to them. They discussed how their friends share their faith and provide counsel and support. Victoria articulated that they could even be trusted with her inner thoughts. Each of the informants stressed that their friends helped them to remain strong in faith.

As a result, background, education, family, and friends strengthened the faith of these administrators in that the opportunities for application became more and more evident from day to day. In other words, faith became an outworking of an inner experience that emerged from past and present influences.

Research Question 4 asked: “How is faith in God linked to the sequence of events that led three Black Christian women to becoming administrators of higher education?” Each informant recounted the sequence of events that led her to where she is now. In each case, the women explained that there seemed to be an overruling on the part of God as He adjusted their plans to meet with His divine will for them. They also discussed having a desire to work in different geographical locations, but in each case, the door to their plans was closed, while God’s alternate plan remained available.

Their prayers and faith in God led them to believe that what was being made available was the position that God wanted them to accept. It was not too difficult for any
of them to give God consent, since they believe that He was directly related to all their undertakings.

None of these Christian administrators believed that it was fate or luck that caused the series of events to take place, which eventually took them to their present positions. Their narrative voices sounded out that it was their faith in God which made them confident in their ultimate acceptance of God’s will for their lives.

Research Question 5 asked: “What are ways three selected Christian women administrators of higher education daily increase or strengthen their faith in God as they make routine administrative decisions?”

All three of the informants emphasize that daily devotions, particularly in the morning, are part of their routine in preparation for the day. I was reminded by each of the informants that it would be almost asking for disaster to leave home without first committing the day into God’s keeping. Fowler’s theory (stage 5) says that it is vital to understand and recognize one’s social unconscious . . . built deeply into the self-system by reason of one’s religious tradition, culture, etc. (Fowler & Lovin, 1980). Another point that surfaced was the mental preparation which comes through their trust in God to do what is best for them, which they phrased as a source of strength. The data pointed out that their commitment to God is a daily occurrence. Neither Ellysha, Victoria, nor Mary could see any other way to live their lives than through faith in God.

According to all three informants, family and friends provide a daily source of strength. These administrators mentioned that they felt free to call on family or friends at any time to ask for prayer in any situation, and they will receive counsel and the assurance
that they are being prayed for.

Even though the women in this study began their day with prayer, they reminded me that throughout the day there are many appeals to God for help in certain situations. According to each of them, faith and prayer are power tools that are kept actively involved in shaping the outcome of the day. The study shows that faith is never a one-time event, but an integrated belief that is postured in the administrative deliberations of these women.

*Research Question 6* asked: "What are some values (principles) present in the lives of Christian administrators that inform their decision-making practices?"

I observed that, in each case, there was a calling on God for guidance as the responsibilities of each day required. One of the administrators, Ellysha, commented that if she does not know what to do in a given situation, she will not make a decision until she goes home and prays about the matter. Various experiences gave examples of instances where the administrators' skills and professional qualifications did not prepare them for handling certain situations, but through prayer and faith in God, they were successfully dealt with. As the administrators reflected upon those occasions, they would acknowledge that the accomplishment was from the Lord, Who also gave them the values of love, joy, peace, and courage. (See Table 22.)

According to the findings, it is the practice of Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary to ask God for help when difficulties confront them. Because of their experiences, stories, values, and viewpoints, it is evident that their profession of faith in God is practiced overtly. The study shows that faith is used as a practical approach to problem solving,
TABLE 22
VALUES THAT IMPACT DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith, love, inner control, and prayer. I would think that they might be the same kind of thing, but they are personal. They are all different for each person. They are all very personal for each individual (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 17).</td>
<td>I know that He will give me that wisdom to make the decision – not for myself, but for Him, on the job, as it relates to other people here (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 10).</td>
<td>I believe God gave me the wisdom (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I trust the communication that God has with me, which is more intuitive than cerebral or intellectual, and that affects everything that I do (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 9).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

conflict resolution, and decision-making practices in the lives of these administrators of higher education. As a result, religious faith has become the essence of who they are, and it informs and guides what they do.

*Research Question 7* asked: "What attributes or values (i.e. love, joy, peace, courage, patience, kindness, etc.) do faith in God engender that could reflect anthropological, psychological, or sociological factors, thereby suggesting theoretical models for understanding faith-informed decisions?

Throughout this study, numerous attributes that were engendered by faith in God emerged from the data as Table 23 narratively displays. Therefore, anthropological, psychological, and sociological factors of faith were discussed in this study. Finally, Fowler’s theory of the stages of faith and Erikson’s theory of the life cycle have been applied to this study to provide general explanations and guide research and analysis. As

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRIBUTES ENGENDERED BY FAITH IN GOD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFORMANT #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace, peace of mind, just general overall peace about what you’re doing and actually good common sense, good wisdom decisions. I think that just because you make a faith decision doesn’t mean that things always run smoothly, but you’ve got some piece of mind behind how it really does go (Vol. 1, interview #3, pp. 3-4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you look at how you love them, and work for them, and try to get them to do this and that, but they’ve got a mind of their own, and they are not always going the way you want them to. You really learn a lot about how God tries to work with us and really tries to get us to do things. So, that let’s you know how God grieves over us, and He loves us more than we love our children – more than we love them (Vol. 1, interview #4, p. 16).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hoy and Miskel (1996) proposed, "Theory in educational administration, however, has the same role as theory in physics, chemistry, biology, or psychology—that is, providing general explanations and guiding research" (p. 1).

**Conclusions**

**Psychological Factors**

1. Religious faith plays an active part in the decision-making practices of the three Christian administrators in this study. As a result, the women in this study exhibited characteristics such as honesty, love, hope, intuition, prayerfulness, courage, patience, and joy.

2. Faith in God in their administrative decision-making is practiced throughout the day by the administrators in this study, and it is applied to psychological or behavioral situations that are complex, such as budgetary issues, controlling anger, and conflict management, as well as those scenarios of a less complex nature such as planning retreats, luncheons, etc.

3. An important issue that surfaced from the data was the theme of gifts, which each administrator candidly discussed during the study. As a result of their God-given gifts such as faith, comfort, counseling, love, boldness (seeing people as individuals and not being afraid to approach them or enter their space) (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 8), these women's faith in God seemed to be strengthened. As Mary commented, "When I know where my gifts lie, then I know nobody could take that away—because those are given to me by God to be used in a way that aligns my faith to God" (Vol. 3, interview #7, p. 28).
4. As Spradley (1980) noted, in any study of human psychology or behavior, ethnography has an important part to play. "It says to all investigators of human behavior, 'Before you impose your theories on the people you study, find out how those people define the world' (Spradley, 1980, p. 14). In this study, I was able to find out how the three Christian administrators defined the world, and then I realized the applicability of Fowler's theory of the stages of faith (Fowler & Lovin, 1980) and Erikson's theory of the life cycle (Knowles et al., 1982) to this research.

Sociological Factors

This study confirms Willimon's (1997) research in which he reported that if higher education is to contribute to society's improvement, it must focus on producing people of character. Among some basic principles of liberal arts education listed by Willimon (1997) was an appropriate setting, conversation, religious faith, etc.

Numerous sociological factors that enhanced the administrators' faith-informed decision-making practices emerged from the data. One factor that all three of the Christian women deemed important was their relationship with God. Referring to the Christian's union (relation) to God, White (1968) said that everyone, by his own act, either puts God from him by refusing to cherish His Spirit and follow His example, or one enters into a personal relationship with God by "self-renunciation, faith, and obedience" (p. 46). Ellysha asserted that "if you make God a partner and move in the direction He wants you to move in, you will be a success because God doesn't know failure" (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 23).
In White's (1968) words, “Selfishness can no more live in the heart that is exercising faith in Christ than light and darkness can exist together. Spiritual coldness, sloth, pride, and cowardice alike shrink from the presence of faith” (p. 48).

As one thinks about social relations, the following comment seems apt in an attempt to further understand the concept of faith in God as it relates to sociological factors.

Faith, then, is a person’s or a community’s way-of-being-in-relation to an ultimate environment. As such, it includes, permeates, and informs our ways-of-being-in-relation to our neighbors and to the causes and companions of our lives. (Fowler & Keen, 1978, p. 21)

The three Christian women in this study deemed their relationships with their families, friends, and the community as very important in every aspect of their lives, particularly administrative decision-making. According to White (1968), “A union of believers with Christ will as a natural result lead to a union with one another, which bond of union is the most enduring upon earth” (p. 47). (See Table 24.)

**Anthropological Factors**

As African-American Christian women administrators of higher education, each informant emphasized her faith-informed decision-making practices as being rooted in her cultural upbringing. The three women discussed how their religious convictions were influenced by the spiritual involvement of their parents, grandparents, siblings, and their own desire to personally know God.

Other anthropological factors of faith-informed decisions that surfaced in this study were photographic depictions, places, and poetic expressions. Each
TABLE 24

SOCIOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS: FAMILY & FRIENDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMANT #1</th>
<th>INFORMANT #2</th>
<th>INFORMANT #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never neglect the family. Never forget those people also who strengthened and encouraged you along the way, and when you get where you want to be, when you reach there, then do something for others (Vol. 1, interview #7, p. 24).</td>
<td>For instance, my girl friends – some of us have been friends for years – but that trust didn’t come overnight because we say we are friends. I had to develop and cultivate a relationship. . . . Trust is a good thing. So, it won’t come naturally, but as we spend time with the Word . . . . then the more you can trust. . . . (Vol. 2, interview #7, p. 23).</td>
<td>The more I understand people, the more those layers of distrust or mistrust crumbled. I began to enter into a more vulnerable community with these people [at work] to see them as people. The people here are genuinely good . . . and if something had happened to me, they would be right there. I know. They care about me (Vol. 3, interview #2, p. 6).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

administrator reminisced about her photographs, the contexts where faith-informed decisions occurred (including their offices at work and at home), and faith-filled memoirs of these special moments. However, poetry emerged naturally from the data collected during the interviews as the informants shared their stories, and a section was devoted to the anthropological aspect of poetic expressions in the cross-case analysis.

Ellysha, Victoria, and Mary’s narrative voices helped me to understand their “way of life from the native point of view” (Spradley, 1979, p. 3), which is considered the essential core of ethnography. Cultural anthropology, also known as ethnography, “rather than studying people . . . means learning from people” (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). Through the use of photograph records, watching programs, taking field notes, interviewing the informants, etc., cultural anthropology was used in this study to understand and describe the viewpoints, experiences, and stories of three African-American Christian women.
administrators of higher education who allow faith in God to impact their administrative decision-making practices.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This was not a comprehensive study of the impact of faith in God in administrative decision-making practices, since it reflected only three cases. The study of faith-informed decisions in the lives of African-American Christian women of higher education can be seen from numerous viewpoints. This study is merely a starting point in looking at this phenomenon in public and parochial colleges and universities from the administrators' perspectives. Since one of the most prolific biblical writers, the apostle Paul, coined faith as "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1, KJV), further study could be conducted to:

1. Capture additional themes that were concealed or missed by me during the analyzation and interpretation phase of this study.

2. Undertake a longitudinal study on the connection of faith in God to decision-making practices of Christian administrators in elementary and/or secondary education.

3. Compare and contrast the successes of the faith-centered Christian administrator in their decision-making practices with that of one who is not thus persuaded.

4. Expand the study to other areas of public and parochial organizations other than institutions of higher education to determine to what extent faith in God is connected to the decision-making practices of that entity.
5. Involve professors and identify their perceptions of faith in God, and observe the extent to which this varies from administrators' perceptions.

6. Identify the applicability of the findings to both women and men from all walks of life.

In conclusion, rather than bring this dissertation (ethnographical study) "to a close by pushing a canoe off into the sunset" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 283), perhaps some reflection on the ethnographic experience would be in order. I agree with the following view because I believe

Ethnography has shaped my career by presenting me with interesting purposes in challenging places and challenging purposes that made familiar places interesting. As a way of seeing, ethnography has provided a conceptual framework that makes sense to me not only in my academic life but in my personal one. . . . Whether your motive in this reading has been to better understand what ethnographers do, to expand your repertoire of fieldwork techniques, or to pursue ethnography in depth in some future inquiry, I hope that in even your most ordinary of everyday social settings you now find yourself asking, "I wonder what an ethnographer would make of all of this?" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 288)
APPENDIX A

LETTER AND CONSENT FORM TO INFORMANTS
October 6, 1998

Dear Ma’am:

This letter is being sent to you as an African-American Christian woman administrator in higher education to seek your participation in a qualitative study on the role faith in God plays in your administrative decision-making practices. Due to the lack of research on this specific topic, your cooperation in this study will be invaluable in strengthening the emerging knowledge base concerning African-American women administrators in higher education.

The research project will be conducted using interviews, which will require approximately thirty to sixty minutes for each of six to ten sessions. If you are willing to be a participant in this study, please sign and date the consent form that I mailed (or faxed) to you. Information gathered from the ethnographic interviews will be handled in a strictly confidential fashion and your anonymity will be protected.

I realize that you have an extremely busy schedule, especially during this time of the year. However, I am hopeful that you will take some time from your busy schedule and complete the consent form. If you choose to fax this information, you may fax the form to me at (616)471-6115 (Monday through Thursday from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M.) or (Friday from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 NOON, Eastern Standard Time). Otherwise, you may send the form via postal services to the above address. Due to the fact that I work as a full time teacher, I would like to begin the interview process as soon as possible. Because I would have to travel to your setting, would you please let me know when we would be able to begin the interview process? I certainly look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your wholehearted consideration in this study.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Link
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Consent Form

Researcher: Nancy A. Link

Andrews University

School of Education

Department: Educational Administration
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103


Purpose: It is the purpose of this study to compare and describe the viewpoints of three African-American Christian women presently serving as administrators in institutions of higher education on the role of faith as it relates to administrative decision-making practices.

Potential benefits: Faith qualifies and gives tones to one's entire way of interpreting, reacting to, and taking initiatives in the world (Fowler, 1974b, p. 208), even as it relates to administrators in higher education. Therefore, this study will prove beneficial to everyone involved, i.e., the researcher, subject(s), and/or society.

The information and data collected during the conduct of the research will be kept in strict confidentiality and the identity of participants will be kept anonymous.

The location of the participant's involvement in the research study will be their college campuses, and the duration will be 2-3 months, i.e., 6 to 10 interviews, face to face, and telephonic.

It is recognized that participation in this study is of a voluntary nature. The researcher or participant is free to withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Because of the voluntary nature of participation, there will be no form of payment, reimbursement of costs or other type of inducement for participation in the research.

Participants have the opportunity to ask questions and receive satisfactory answers before consenting to participate in this study.

Signed

Printed

Dated

Please send me a report on the results of this research project. (Please circle one.) YES NO

Note: Criteria for this study: (1) African-American Christian woman; (2) Higher education administrator; (3) Willingness to participate in study on faith and decision-making in higher education; and (4) Believes that faith in God plays an important role in your administrative decision-making practices.

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APPENDIX B

PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS AND INITIAL INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS
Purpose of Interview(s)—shared with informants at the start of each interview session.

The purpose of our interview sessions is to elicit your viewpoint as it relates to the role of faith in your decision-making practices. Foremost, the interviews will elicit your views, your story, and your experiences as an African-American Christian woman administrator in an institution of higher education. The results will be confidential, your anonymity will be protected, and the report will be made available to you upon request.

Initial Interview Schedule of Questions (for the Three Christian Administrators)

1. Please tell me what faith means to you.
2. Let's take a grand tour of your college campus. Tell me about the setting, the environment in which you work.
3. Tell me about your time at the college.
4. Tell me about a typical quarter.
5. Tell me about a typical day.
6. Tell me about your sequence of events leading up to you becoming an administrator of higher education and how faith in God has played a role in this sequence of events.
7. Tell me about the people at your college.
8. One of the criteria for participation in this study deals with your belief in faith's role (faith in God) in your administrative decision-making practices. Tell me how faith in God influences your decision-making practices.
9. Tell me about administrative areas or categories in which faith in God informs your decision-making practices.
APPENDIX C

METAPHORICAL DESCRIPTIONS
Metaphorical Description #1
Interview #1 with Victoria
October 19, 1998

For this first interview with Victoria, we met at her house, which exemplified the immaculate hand. We sat at the glass, full-size dining room table with a pretty beige and brown six light chandelier hanging over our heads, and the atmosphere was very relaxed. Nice beige carpet covered the floor, and white walls lit up the place. Opened beautiful blinds covered the windows. A warm unlit fireplace drenched with house warming cards sends off a warm feeling of relaxation.

FAITH AT HOME
by Nancy A. Link

What a great feeling chatting with Victoria!
She shared many stories & experiences with me.
I can tell she loves people, and wants to do her best.
Faith in God influences her decisions, she did confess.

Victoria expressed a lot of positive energy for friends.
A radiant glow she definitely and marvelously sends.
This session has been a nice blessing for us – oh yes.
And, I praise God as we move in faith to pass each test.
Metaphorical Description #2
Setting: Victoria's Office
October 27, 1998

I Was Greeted
by Nancy A. Link

I was greeted by Victoria's smile,
Her office on campus has colorful style.
Victoria's black dress and gold attire's great,
I'm glad I was able to make this date.

Photographs of family and friends galore,
Her faith in God seems strengthened more and more.
A dainty white lamp glowed so bright,
The beautiful grayish carpet looks just right.

She's sipping on authentic lemonade, so cool,
Victoria, as an administrator, is a great asset to this school.
I thank God Almighty for blessing us today,
For meeting again with Victoria and remembering to pray.
Metaphorical Description #3

Interview #2 with Ellysha
Nancy Link, researcher
October 19, 1998
4:50-5:50 p.m.

We met in Ellysha’s office, and it was very relaxing once the interview sessions started. In the window sits a picture of two beautiful young ladies (Ellysha’s daughters), Ellysha (with a perpetually glowing countenance, smiling, and looking fresh in pastel green attire), and a tall, skinny vase with dainty green and yellow flowers (that almost look real). Another vase, short and wide with holes and a glass dish holding potpourri, also accents the right corner of the window sill. We sat at the round table and Ellysha looked very comfortable in her light green dress accented by her bluish, green, tan, and beige scarf and her navy jacket and matching navy pumps.

Her desk was uncluttered with a phone, beige and white lamp, computer monitor, and a few papers. Bookshelves, metal and wood, with much information, along with two four-drawer file cabinets stood along the walls and corners. In addition, three dark orangy chairs and one beautiful greenish-brown chair gave the room a somewhat delicate decor.

The scenic view from the big picture window’s simply marvelous. Though Fall is in the air, the green, low cut grass covers the campus like freshly laid carpet stretching across humongous plains. The trees, the sky, the other cozy looking building, the hilly ground, peppy-looking people passing proudly, and the day’s light glowing brightly bringing everything to life all join together to give this campus an exciting and excellent aura of comfortability for students coming up in the ranks behind those that have been here and departed. What a beautiful day, and what a blessing it is to be graced by the presence of Ellysha, a Christian administrator of higher education who makes faith decisions in today’s world.
Metaphorical Description #4
Interview #3 with Ellysha
4:30-5:30 p.m.
10/26/98

The Interview
by Nancy A. Link

Coming in to interview Ellysha,
Feeling tired, I quickly awake, yes sir.
Her warm smile & words say, “Come in.”
It is nice to be here with someone who’s a friend.

At the round table, which she clears.
I sit right down and don’t feel any fears.
Four black briefcases and one small case.
Multi-colored carpet covers the floor of her office space.

The sunshine, warmth, windows, her yard, and trees.
Ellysha expresses being so very thankful to God for.
Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding too.
Having a lot on her mind, faith in God always see her through.

She’s a Christian woman in higher education.
An African-American professor also in administration.
Ellysha is the chair of her department—oh yes.
Faith in God influences her decision-making, she does confess.

Purple and white attire, she eloquently styles today.
“A mighty competent Christian administrator,” I boldly say.
A wife, a mother, & a friend to many, that’s Ellysha.
She daily makes faith decisions, even administratively, uh huh.
Metaphorical Description #5

Interview #7 with Ellysha

December 11, 1998

Ellysha's Study
by Nancy A. Link

Her study is where she spends much of her time in reflection, reading, and prayerful decision-making.
Comfortable and really relaxed.
This Christian administrator and I talk.

A computer and a printer decorates her desk.
Light gray carpet accented by bright white walls Quietly listen as Ellysha informs me about faith-informed decisions.

*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,*
*If My People Pray, Will I Ever Learn?, Incredible Answers To Prayer,* different versions of the *Holy Bible* and much more inspirational literature deck the bookshelves of Ellysha's study. In addition, beautiful photographs remind her of days full of joy and life as she explains explicitly the memorable moments that each picture eloquently entails.
The heater is softly blowing,
The computer is colorfully showing
U.S. World News and Politics page—
In this qualitative study, another stage.

Victoria’s office is so nice,
The atmosphere’s warm—unlike ice.
The blinds are mostly closed—oh yes.
I appreciate Victoria’s story I must confess.

Zooming in at approximately three o’clock,
A pleasant surprise I had before I could knock:
Victoria introduced me to her dad & a church friend.
Honored, I greeted them with a grin and came in.

The tour Victoria took me on was really great,
I even met her college president on this date.
Yes, Victoria knew everybody by name that day,
She’s a Christian administrator who loves to pray.
Metaphorical Description #7
Interview #2 with Mary
November 23, 1998

Mary, an African-American Christian administrator, greeted me with a warm smile. She offered me water although I wasn’t thirsty, and I felt refreshed and comfortable still. The clean white walls, beige carpet, cabinets, and bookshelves had a welcoming influence. Black art accented the quiet walls—a Black brother reading and a Black Jesus pleading! The Africentric spiritual library with kinte’ cloth—ah, so beautiful and bright—is loaded with books galore from Carter G. Woodson’s *The Mis-Education of the Negro* to Kozol’s *Amazing Grace*. In addition, a television/VCR combination unit added a technological view to Mary’s office.

Waiting For Mary
by Nancy A. Link

It is 6:00 in this beautiful place,
I’m here for my appointment—I see not one face.
I rushed to get here right on time today
What exciting research! As I wait for Mary, I pray.

I walked in ready to go and knocked on Mary’s door,
It’s locked, and no one at all seems to be on this floor.
Is this what ethnographic research is actually all about?
Honestly, I don’t know if I should jump or, uh, shout!

The university President comes through and I ask.
“Have you seen Mary?” Right now. I have a task.
He said, “She’ll be back in just a minute.”
And I feel a little better because God is in it.

God made us all, yes you and even me.
This colorful auditorium I wait in you see.
Grayish carpet speckled with red, brown, white, and peach.
We all have a part to play and for the sky, we reach.

Lamps and lights glowing brightly all around.
A passerby saying, “Hey!” what a nice sound.
It’s now 6:20, and I hoped Mary would soon come.
Maybe I’d feel better if I chewed some bubble gum.

Well. I’d say, “That’s the world of research.
Thinking, writing, reading, waiting—what a search!”
She has now come and even gave me a big hug
Praise God for His all. from the sky to the rug.

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Metaphorical Description #8

Interview #7 with Mary
February 22, 1999

A Heart Full of Faith
by Nancy A. Link

Bright blue and dazzling black attire Mary wears.
With a heart full of faith and love, she really cares.
Competently turning societal perception around,
She makes daily decisions, and success she has found.

In her final interview on decisions based on faith in God,
Our hearts beat in proximity as our heads periodically nod.
I listen and observe with a vibrant smile of affirmation.
Praise God for Christian administrators in higher education.

Mary shared memories galore about experiences of yesteryear.
Her faith in God is real as she recalled decisions made without fear.
She said what she meant, and she meant what she said.
Praise God for this study—my soul has been richly fed.
REFERENCE LIST


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VITA

Nancy Ann Link

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:

2000  **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Educational Administration and Leadership**
Specialty: Higher Education
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI

1991  **Master of Arts (M.A.) Educational Administration and Supervision**
Specialties: Elementary and Secondary Education
University of the District of Columbia
Washington, DC

1980  **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Elementary Education**
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL

1976  **Associate of Arts (A.A.) General Education**
Minor: Business Administration
Seminole Community College
Sanford, FL

1974  **High School Diploma**
Oviedo High School
Oviedo, FL

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

1996 - 2000  Full-Time Certified Teacher—All Subjects, Grades 5 and 6
Henry C. Morton Elementary School
Full-Time Substitute Teacher—English, Grades 9 through 12
Benton Harbor High-School (Fall 1966)
Benton Harbor, MI

1988 - 1996  Full-Time Certified Teacher, All Subjects, Grades K through 6
Gladys K. McGogney Elementary and Abram Simon Elementary School(s): Washington, DC

1985-1988 United States Armed Forces Service Member
   Basic Training: Fort Dix, NJ (1985)
   Permanent Duty Station: Pirmasens, West Germany (1986-1988)

1983-1985 Full-Time Certified Teacher, All Subjects, Grades 5 and 6
   Robert Brent Elementary School: Washington, DC

1980-1983 Full-Time Certified Teacher, All Subjects, Grades 3 and 4
   Southside Elementary School: Sanford, FL
   Red Bug Elementary School: Casselberry, FL

HONOR SOCIETIES MEMBERSHIPS:

1999 Pi Lambda Theta – Educational Honor Society
1998 Phi Delta Kappa – Educational Honor Society

HONORS:

1991 Academic Excellence Award
   Department of Veterans Affairs
   University of the District of Columbia
   Washington, DC

1988 Good Conduct Medal
   Army Achievement Medal
   United States Army in Europe
   Pirmasens, West Germany

CERTIFICATIONS:

1990 Certified Elementary Teacher–Professional Certificate
   Grades 1 through 6: Washington, District of Columbia

1996 Certified Teacher– Provisional Certificate
   Grades K through 6, Grades 7 and 8 (self-contained): State of Michigan