LEADING EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES IN GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE:
A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

by

Johannes Schröder
Liberty University

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

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ABSTRACT

This transcendental phenomenology describes the essential experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. Changes on a global scale in the educational sector are influencing the seminaries, and lead to processes of organizational academization and leadership professionalization. These developments have a profound influence on the role of the leadership of these seminaries. Each of the six lead administrators was interviewed three times to gather in-depth, thick, and rich descriptions of their lived experience with the phenomenon. For triangulation, observations, analyses of documents, and audio and visual data, as well as research memos and journals were included. The theoretical frameworks of spiritual leadership, servant leadership, and workplace spirituality guided the investigative process. Four textures emerged that describe what the lead administrators experience in their role: (a) leading spiritually; (b) leading collaboratively; (c) leading professionally; and (d) leading academically. Furthermore, four structures describe how the participants experience the phenomenon of seminary leadership: (a) experiencing leadership as a responsibility; (b) experiencing the negative dimensions of leadership; (c) experiencing the positive dimensions of leadership; and (d) experiencing leadership as a spiritual calling. Finally, three essential experiences and three essential influences of the phenomenon could be synthesized from the textural and structural descriptions. The essential experiences include the experience of spirituality, significance and meaning, and relationship. The essential influences include professionalization, academization, and diversification. The findings corroborate the literature in several points, but also added to existing knowledge of the phenomenon of leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

Keywords: Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Theological Education, Theological Seminary Administration, Transcendental Phenomenology, Workplace Spirituality, Qualitative Lead-
ership Research.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my son, Daniel Jared, who was born at the beginning of this journey.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wife, Magdalena, for her continued support and understanding throughout this dissertation journey. She lent me her ear when I tried to conceptualize and deliberate. She gave me the space to work at a pace and in an environment that was most conducive to my learning and writing style. Her prayers, snacks, and her encouraging, “I am proud of you,” made all of this possible.

I would also like to thank my six participants who shared their time, experiences, reflections, and evaluations openly and willingly. They invited me into their lives and helped me experience what they experience in their daily lives as leaders. Despite the obvious power distance, they accepted me and helped me to build a good rapport that led to productive and fruitful encounters. I am honored to have had the chance to get to know you.

Thank you to the people who have set me onto the academic path, and who have encouraged me to pursue ever higher goals. First, I thank my father, Waldemar Schröder, who championed my pursuits from day one. Second, I thank Dr. John D. Kinchen, III, who became a mentor and friend throughout my undergraduate and graduate years, and who helped me to integrate academics and personal spirituality. I further thank the leadership of EFG Niedernberg, and especially pastor Edmund Seider, for their support and flexibility during the intense weeks of my studies. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Beth Ackermann, who became my unofficial academic advisor throughout the doctoral degree.

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List of Abbreviations

Acceptable Quality Level (AQL)
European Evangelical Accreditation Agency (EEAA)
Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (EKD)
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
Konferenz für bibeltreue Ausbildungsstätten (KbA)
International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good (NEP)
Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)
Spirituality in the Workplace Questionnaire (SWQ)
Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT)
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

What does it mean to lead an evangelical seminary? This thought was planted into my mind several years ago and ultimately led to this dissertation. For the purpose of introducing this study, this chapter describes the background of the investigation from a perspective of leadership, theological education, and leadership theory. In the Situation to Self section, I provide a brief biography, explain my motivation for this study, and position myself philosophically. The section entitled Problem Statement sheds light the context of this study, showing the unique situation of the participants. The purpose statement articulates the goals and definitions for this investigations. Then I provide a rationale for the significance of the study. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the research questions, the research plan, and delimitations and limitations for this study.

Background

What is leadership? Over the last two decades the study of the phenomenon of leadership has increasingly incited scholarly curiosity. Today there are entire university degrees singularly devoted to its study (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Since the early 90s one finds a growing number of empirical studies, theoretical investigations, and methodical inquiries of leadership (Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney, & Cogliser, 2010). Still, leadership remains a phenomenon that, according to Jackson and Parry (2011), “everyone has an opinion about but few of us seem to agree exactly on what it really is” (p. 13).

The study of leadership is not a hard science, even though many have studied it using quantitative analysis methods (Gardner et al., 2010). This study, however, will began with a
A qualitative question for leaders: What does it mean to be you? This simple question cannot be answered as quickly as it is posed. Mere observing and theorizing about it will not suffice. Quantitative inquiries will fall short of holistically comprehending this interdisciplinary field of study (Gardner, et al., 2011). They cannot answer the question of meaning comprehensively, if at all. Consequently, this study followed a qualitative approach to describe what it means to lead evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century. Since knowledge is most accessibly found “in the experiences of those doing the actual knowing” (Willard, 1984, p. 25), this study followed the method transcendental phenomenology (Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). In other words, the method for investigation was centered on capturing and qualitatively describing the lived experiences of the participants.

One of the aspects of leadership that is often studied is the leader’s influence on organizational change (Ronald, 2014). This also begs the question, what happens to the leader himself when in the wake of organizational change his role changes as well? Carter (2011) convincingly linked institutional change to self-change within the leader. Even though he spoke of this change within a leader as a method for initiating change in the organization, it is safe to assume that the reciprocity is also true, i.e. that when the organization changes, the leader’s role changes as well. The academization processes, among other influences, are changing and professionalizing the role of the seminary leader. This study sought give those leaders the opportunity to make sense of these changes to their leadership role.

The literature is rich in describing the global changes in the educational sector (Krengel, 2011; Ott, 2011, 2013; Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006), the challenges to educational leadership (Ott, 2013), the situation of evangelicals in German-speaking Europe at large (Bauer, 2012; Guske, 2014), spiritual and servant leadership (Fry, 2003; Kessler, 2006; Schuster, 2011), and many
more aspects of the reality that top leaders of evangelical seminaries experience while leading their institutions in 21st century German-speaking Europe. Many of these texts provide helpful insights and theories about these leaders and their changing roles and challenging circumstances. However, I believe it would be valuable to hear from these leaders themselves and let them answer the question of their experiences of leadership. In such an investigation, the researcher primarily assumes the role of an observer and describer, while the participants interpret and make sense of their experience. As the observer the researcher must make a structured attempt to enter into the participants’ experience as much as possible. This can be accomplished through the research method of transcendental phenomenology, and by a detailed consideration of the participants’ background. Only then the researcher has a chance to properly describe these leaders’ lived experiences, and flowing out of it, the phenomenon of leadership in general. For that reason, it was necessary to investigate the background of the participants in this study.

This section briefly illuminates the character of the theological education sector in German-speaking Europe, outline the historical and contemporary position of German-speaking evangelicals in Europe, and introduce spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and servant leadership theories as a suitable framework for this study. The issues that are introduced here and will be supplemented with related research in Chapter Two.

Theological Education

The sector of higher education is changing on a global scale. This poses considerable challenges and opportunities for evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe (Ott, 2013; Steinke, 2011; Stortz, 2011; Werner, 2011). Many theological training institutions are seeking to answer these changes through renewal of their programs and forms of operation. The second edition of the “Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education” of the Interna-
tional Council for Evangelical Theological Education (1990) is a reflection of this trend as it reads: “We rightly seek such renewal in light also of the crisis of leadership facing the church of Christ around the world. The times are weighted with unusual challenge and unusual opportunity” (par. 5). According to Ott (2013), the leaders of evangelical seminaries are challenged in the context of market orientation, the Bologna Process in Europe, and the educational needs of the global church. He identified the deregulation of markets, information technology, and mobility as the primary mechanisms that fuel these challenges. These mechanisms led to a paradigm shift of educational structures from educational policy and management-oriented models to market-based and entrepreneurial models. Institutions for theological education now have to face issues of quality-management, evaluation, accreditation, and other market-economy and management processes. Ott sees the current top leadership function in the tension between preserving tradition and pursuing market orientation – between the role of a pastoral leader and a CEO.

In other words, German evangelical seminaries face the opportunities and challenges that come from the process of academization, whereas the leaders have to come to terms with a professionalization of their own roles and their organizations. Academization is the process where an organization becomes recognized as an academic institution, and also its programs become academically accredited. Sprague (2016) explained, “in the academization process, a training course/programme obtains higher education status and becomes a course of study leading to an academic degree” (p. 105). Once this state of recognition is achieved, the institution maintains an ongoing academic process through quality management, to continually satisfy the standards and requirements that come with its academic standing (Ott, 2013). Professionalization is a connected but independent process where the seminary leader increasingly assumes the role and responsibility of a chief executive (Bezboruah, 2011). According to Bezboruah, the professional leader
is responsible for vision implementation, oversight of programs, resource management, strategy development, documentation, communication with stakeholders, and decision-making. The professionalization process also relates to the institution itself as it becomes a more structured and defined organization (Ott, 2013). It mainly is a process in response to demands from economy and society (Sprague, 2016). This study sought to understand how the top leaders of the evangelical institutions for theological education in German-speaking Europe describe their role within these changing times in the 21st century.

**Evangelical Situation**

This dissertation applied the term *evangelical* in a cautious and qualified way. The English term *evangelical* is not easily translated into the German context (Ott, 2001). Complications come from the denotations and connotations in both the English and German languages. A few examples will illuminate the problem. *Merriam-Webster* (2015) provides a simple definition of being evangelical as “of or relating to a Christian sect or group that stresses the authority of the Bible, the importance of believing that Jesus Christ saved you personally from sin or hell, and the preaching of these beliefs to other people” (para. 1). The focus here is on denominational lines identified by certain theological beliefs and resulting spiritual practices. *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Pierard & Elwell, 2001) on the other hand described evangelicalism as “the movement in modern Christianity, transcending denominational and confessional boundaries, that emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of the faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency” (p. 405). Here again the doctrinal beliefs are emphasized, but denominational lines are considered less important. For the German context, the *Duden* (2014) reduces the meaning of *evangelikal* (evangelical) to the groups of *evangelischer Freikirchen* (evangelic
or evangelical free-churches). There is no mention of theological stance, but a very strict limitation to a certain organizational form of church in its relationship to the state.

It is obviously difficult to delineate what *evangelical* means, when *Merriam-Webster* (2015) sees it as defining a denominational defined group, Elwell and Pierard (2001) as a theological movement, and the *Duden* (2014) as an organizational church type. With the denotations of the term already being so vague, its connotations also are even more manifold and contradictory. For the purpose of this study, the definition of *evangelicalism* in German-speaking Europe followed Elwell and Pierard (2001) as including those Protestant faith groups that can be identified by theological distinctives expressed in their statements of faith, and not by any denominational affiliation or form of church organization. A summary of the historical development and the present situation of German-speaking evangelicals in Europe in Chapter Two will provide more background information on this matter.

The decision for this study’s focus on evangelical institutions had both personal and pragmatic reasons. It was personal because I grew up in a German-speaking evangelical free-church environment. It also was pragmatic for it provided the necessary delimitations for the purposive sampling applied in this study (Creswell, 2013). It was, however, not expected that this study would have brought forth significantly different results if conducted with leaders from other Christian theological affiliations. Despite some important differences that certainly exist, the educational paradigm changes of professionalization and academization occur on a global scale and affect all institutions to some degree (Mause, 2013). In this context differences between theological training instructions were mostly pertaining to theological matters rather than leadership experiences (Pierard & Elwell, 2001). Nevertheless, focusing solely on evangelical seminaries could be interpreted as a limitation to the generalizability of the results in this study.
However, since phenomenological inquiries are not interested in universal applicability of their findings, this narrowing of the study rather constitutes a necessary and beneficial delimitation than a negative limitation.

In order to make any headway towards a meaningful delimitation for this study in the context of evangelicalism, I focused on the theological uniqueness that is characteristic of German-speaking evangelicals in Europe, and found an umbrella organization for theological training institutions that identified with such a theological position. Using institutions that were members of such an organization that fit a theological framework of evangelicalism eliminated the problematic necessity to subjectively evaluate to what degree of evangelicalism the participating seminaries should be identified with. The Konferenz bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten e. V. (KbA; Conference of Bible-believing Training Institutions) is such an umbrella organization that includes Protestant seminaries that all agree on a common, distinctly evangelical, statement of faith. More details on this evangelical theological position is provided in Chapter Two.

**Leadership Theories Used in this Study**

The context of theological education suggests that the top leaders of seminaries are in a unique position of spiritual and servant leadership (Jones & Mason, 2010; Ott, 2013). Therefore, spiritual leadership and servant leadership provided a fruitful theoretical framework for this study. Spirituality as a concept has recently received much attention in scholarly circles (Arménio & Miguel Pina e, 2008; Arnold, 2012; Chawla & Guda, 2013; Chen, Yang, & Li, 2012; Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005; Dinh et al., 2014; Donald, 1994; Fairholm, 2011; Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010a). It has been the focus of much non-religious theoretical groundwork in the context of the workplace (Dinh et al., 2014; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010a, 2010b; Gundolf & Filser, 2013), and leadership theory (Fry, 2003; Jackson & Parry, 2011). Spir-
Spiritual leadership has also been the focus in evangelical circles (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011; Clinton, 2012; Sanders, 2007). As the spiritual leadership theories began to be formulated, some have noted a close relationship between servant leadership and spiritual leadership styles (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Dent et al., 2005; Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010; Greenleaf, 2002). Furthermore, the leader as a servant has also been the focus of evangelical publications on leadership (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011; Ott, 2013). Therefore, spiritual leadership and servant leadership, as well as workplace spirituality as a sub-category of spiritual leadership, lend themselves to theoretically frame this study of leaders of evangelical seminaries.

**Situation to Self**

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument in this qualitative research and engaged in the activities of observing, interviewing, writing, thinking, analyzing, etc., and therefore became an important factor for the trustworthiness of the investigation. For that reason, I had to lay open my personal emotional connections with the topic and the participants (van Manen, 1990), which was accomplished by a brief autobiographical sketch. Furthermore, it was important to make known my epistemological position, since it was the basis of the chosen research method (Creswell, 2013). Following the autobiographical sketch, I positioned myself through a brief philosophical reflection. The roles of the researcher in the investigation process are further defined in Chapter Three.

**My Story**

I freely admit to my personal interest in the topic of educational leadership in general, and to spiritual leadership in theological training institutions in particular. In my younger years, I had this strange notion, or so it seemed back then, where I pictured myself as a seminary teacher. That kind of thinking appeared to be absurd at the time, since I was on my way to become a
maintenance engineer for a major airline in Germany. But as life often twists and turns, and I believe also through divine guidance, I am now closer to that vision than ever before. Training young worship leaders and Christian musicians for the marketplace and the church ministry at a large private evangelical university in the U.S. and an evangelical seminary in Germany, was just not on my radar even half a decade ago. This section tells the story of how I arrived at this juncture in my life, and how my interest in studying educational leadership for theological training institutions was awakened.

I come from a German evangelical Baptist background, growing up in the Evangelisch-Freikirchliche Gemeinde Niedernberg – Baptisten (Evangelical-Independent Church in Niedernberg – Baptists) in Germany. From a young age, I was part of a church my father had founded and then pastored for many years. These early years were truly formational for my future life choices, led me to a point where I made a personal profession of faith at the age of 9, and subsequently to receive baptism at age 16. It was at this time, that I became more seriously involved in the music and teaching ministry in the church, and my personal and spiritual growth through this involvement ultimately resulted in a change of professional direction in later years.

Theological education is a major factor in my family. My sister and I both were born while my father finished his first degree at a Bible school. Later he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Evangel Theological Seminary (ETS) in Kiev, Ukraine. Two of my siblings hold diplomas from a theological academy in Germany. My own path to theological education, however, includes an eight-year detour. As indicated before, after finishing high school I set out professionally in a different direction with training, and a subsequent career, in aircraft maintenance engineering. Throughout this time, I continued to be actively involved in my local church where I was given more and more leadership responsibility. Over time it became clear to me, one can
say I understood my calling better, that just doing ministry on the side was no longer enough for me. In my heart, and through the thoughtful input of a few wise men and women, God developed a vision and a plan for me. This plan led to the point where I left my professional career behind to prepare for a future in ministry training. To that end I graduated from Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA with the Bachelor of Science in Music and Worship and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary with the Master of Arts in Worship Studies. Assuming that a terminal degree would even go farther in my home-land, I decided to add the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership.

Working through the courses of the doctoral program, and having never been in an administrative leadership position myself, I began to wonder what it meant to lead an educational institution. Leadership studies had long become the common denominator of four of my five degrees. However, over time just reading about how others described or theorized about leadership proved to be less than satisfying. I wanted to find out from the leaders themselves what it meant to be them.

My personal background, in addition to some relationships with lead administrators I had the privilege to develop, have allowed me to gain some understanding of seminary education in a diversity of cultures in North America and Western and Eastern Europe. Over the last seven years, I have become more aware of the fact that theological training institutions in German-speaking Europe are looking to expand and change their organizational structures and academic programs in the midst of a rapidly developing spiritual, societal, and political environment. Some of the institutions also began to seek official accreditation of their degree programs or had already obtained it. These were major changes that turned simple theological institutions into rather complex academic bureaucracies, and that apparently introduced a new professional kind of
leadership. This new role of leadership sparked my interest. I began to ask myself who the leaders of these institutions are, and what it means for them to be leaders at the top of their organizations in 21st century German-speaking Europe.

My Position

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument and analyst, and so it is important to reflect on my personal worldview and philosophical position. Epistemologically I define my position from the perspective of critical rationalism and transcendental realism.

Knowing and truth. I position myself in regards to truth and the perception or knowledge thereof in the context of critical rationalism. Popper (2013) defined this position as follows:

An attitude of readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience; it is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that “I might be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth” (p. 225).

Popper (1992) further explained, “one of the best senses of ‘reason’ and ‘reasonableness’ was openness to criticism—readiness to be criticized, and eagerness to criticize oneself” (p. 132). This view supports the value and the possibility of bracketing and epoché, which is a required practice in transcendental phenomenology (see also Chapter Three). Critical rationalism further contends that true science can only occur in community following methodical rules (Wettersten, 2015). Some have argued that critical rationalism is best exemplified in empirical science, but it is limited in application for the social sciences (Irzik, 2008). For this reason, the aspects of the listening and learning attitude, or knowing and meaning making, are addressed in the context of transcendental realism. What critical rationalism does offer is a framework in which I position myself for the aspect of truth and the knowledge or perception thereof. Truth is known in coop-
eration, following methodical rules, and by keeping an open attitude and a readiness to be criti-
cized. This position corresponds with the aspects of intersubjectivity (Willard, 1984), methodical
rigor (Moustakas, 1994), and the process of *epoche* (Husserl, 2012), which are central to the
transcendental phenomenological method.

In terms of understanding the nature of truth, it is helpful to follow Hiebert’s (in Ott, 2013) distinction between truth and perception derived from the Apostle Paul’s words: “Now we see in a mirror dimly…. Now I know in part” (1 Cor. 13:12; ESV). Truth can and has to be dis-
covered or perceived, even though it never can be known to its fullest extent. Borrowing from
the words of Schaeffer (1968), we can only know some true truth about God, man, and nature;
but still we can know some of it.

As a critical rationalist, I assume the accuracy of the correspondence theory of truth. At
the danger of oversimplifying it, this theory can be understood as follows: “A proposition is true
to the extent that it corresponds to reality” (Moreland, 2007, p. 81). I assume that the existing
reality constitutes the truth-bearer, and that evidences of that truth can be perceived in form of
facts (Moreland, 2007; Ott, 2013). Facts exist outside of the human mind and are not constructed
by it. This also constitutes an important presupposition for Husserl’s (2012) transcendental phe-
nomenology. Willard (1984) pointed out that Husserl’s central philosophical quest indeed was
the reconciliation of the subjectivity of knowing and the objectivity of what is known.

**Knowing and meaning-making.** I will position myself in regards to knowledge and
meaning-making in the context of transcendental realism.

The description of Huberman and Miles (1994) resonates with me, in that the transcen-
dental realist assumes the existence of social phenomena in a real, objective world, and not only
in the mind. At the beginning of knowing stands the assumption that there are lawful and reason-
ably stable relationships between social phenomena, and that those social phenomena provide the foundation for theoretical constructs. While knowledge and meaning-making are historical and social in nature, the transcendental realist seeks to go beyond these influences. This is achieved through careful explanation of causal relationships, and how each event relates to the explanation. Again, this position corresponds with the presuppositions Husserl’s (2012) philosophy of transcendental phenomenological inquiry. It does so especially in light of the assumption of intentionality and transcendence (Willard, 1984).

The issue of bias and objectivity is of great concern in the process of meaning-making and the description others’ lived experiences. The problem of bias is dealt with convincingly though the position of critical rationalism, and through the transcendental phenomenological approach since the *epoche* process is primarily concerned with reducing bias (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; see also Chapter Three). The issue of objectivity, on the other hand, needs clarification.

Moreland (2007) provided a helpful distinction between psychological objectivity, meaning a bias-free emotional detachment and lack of commitment on the topic, and rational objectivity, which is defined as “the state of having accurate experiential or cognitive access to the thing itself” (p. 79). Psychological objectivity, per Moreland’s argument, is unachievable. This notion of objectivity is also in opposition to the spirit of phenomenological research, which requires a personal commitment to the topic (van Manen, 1990). However, rational objectivity can be supported by the assumptions of transcendental realism (Huberman & Miles, 1994); therefore, I consider rational objectivity achievable provided appropriate effort and methods are evident. It was this very issue that constituted the core question of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, the question of how objective reality can be known subjectively (Willard, 1984). Thus, tran-
Scenental realism translates well into descriptive and inductive approaches, which are the core mechanics of the transcendental phenomenological approach that I chose for this study (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). The integration and connection of my epistemological position with the method of transcendental phenomenology will become more apparent in the respective discussion in Chapter Three.

**Problem Statement**

Phenomenological studies seek to describe the essence of a shared lived experience. They are not meant to find a solution to a problem, but rather to unveil something through phenomenological inquiry that so far had been concealed while the participants make sense of their experiences in the process (Heidegger, 1962; van Manen, 1990). A phenomenological study also is not meant to predict outcomes (i.e. based on a theory), since the participants’ experiences, and not the theoretical frameworks, are the ultimate guiding factors of the inquiry (Moustakas, 1994; Willard, 1984). Hence it was not in the interest of this transcendental phenomenology to define a particular problem with leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century, but rather to describe the essence of a lived and shared experience of leadership (Husserl, 2012). In other words, this study did not seek to solve a problem through certain methods, but to illuminate a small portion of life’s mystery (Marcel in Riemen, 1986).

This portion of life’s mystery was the phenomenon of leadership. It is a broad and philosophical question that seems rather disproportionate to the narrow focus of this study, which only inquired about the experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe; however, according to DeWarren (2009), Husserl himself “attacks philosophical questions by handling specific problems that do not seem proportionate to the burden of the general questions they are meant to shoulder” (p. 51). DeWarren continued to report a remark
Husserl once made: “I am not interested in large bills, but only in small change” (p. 51). To bring this metaphor into the context of this study, educational leadership of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe was the “small change” of the greater philosophical problem of leadership. Since the transcending phenomenon of leadership is also, though only in part, reflected in the phenomenon of educational leadership, a phenomenological description of the lead administrator’s lived experiences includes the essential description of the phenomenon of leadership itself. As a result of this introductory argument, instead of a problem statement, this section takes a closer look at the role and context of the participants this study included. It also identifies the gap in the literature that this study sought to fill.

Leaders of evangelical seminaries generally assume the roles of spiritual leaders, administrators, lead theologians, active ministers, often classroom teachers, and maybe more (Gillespie, 2004; Ott, 2013). The participants of this study are instrumental in executing and shaping future evangelical leadership and ministry education in German-speaking Europe and even beyond. They are called upon to lead the theological institutions through global and local paradigm shifts in the spiritual and educational arenas. These shifts often result in an academization of their institutions and a professionalization of their leadership roles (Ott, 2013). At this point of the research, no phenomenological study could be identified that attempted to understand and describe the experiences of seminary leaders in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century that share this experience. Consequently, this current study sought to fill this gap in the literature.

Since to this point a phenomenological inquiry into the leadership of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe has never been attempted, it is valuable to provide an overview of what has been studied in this area. Studies of lead administrators of comparable institutions in Western cultures so far have focused on: (a) issues of sexuality (Turner & Stayton, 2012); (b)
portraits of personalities (Armentrout, 2002; Gatta, 2012; Lesher, 1988); (c) issues of educational and organizational structure (Aleshire, 2011; Steinke, 2011; Stortz, 2011); (d) change and transitions (Carter, 2001); (e) the role of the lead administrator (Gillespie, 2004); and (f) best practices for leaders of theological training institutions (Ott, 2013). These representative studies reveal that the authors primarily wrote about the leaders and the issues involved with the leadership process. There has yet to be a study that goes to the leaders themselves and seeks to understand the phenomenon of being the lead administrator of an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe based on the leaders’ understanding of the meaning of their lived experiences.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand leadership through the description of the lived experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. The central phenomenon of interest, or the shared life-experience (Creswell, 2013), in its most fundamental expression is leadership. Since leadership is a vague phenomenon that is not easily studied as a hard science (Jackson & Parry, 2011), a phenomenological study of leadership, which essentially is an empirical philosophy, seemed to be the most fitting approach (Moustakas, 1994).

To better understand the purpose of this inquiry, it is helpful to realize first what this investigation was not trying to do. This study set out to leave behind the natural attitude (Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994), and adopted the rigors of Husserl’s (2012) transcendental phenomenology where one turns, as the common phrase goes, “to the things [i.e. leader’s lived experiences] themselves” (Husserl, 2012, p. 328). This turning towards was realized through rich textural, structural, and essential descriptions of the lived experiences of leaders (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; see also Chapter Four).
However, this project was not a study of the leaders themselves, but of the essence of their experiences. Furthermore, for reasons of delimitation, the participants were seminary leaders of institutions that upheld an evangelical theology; however, this was not a study of evangelicalism, seminaries, or evangelical theology either. And even though the study was geographically positioned in German-speaking Europe, which currently experiences substantial paradigm shifts in the sector of higher learning (Ott, 2013), these factors were not the focus of this study. Finally, the theoretical framework, established through a review of related literature, included elements of spirituality and servant leadership, but this inquiry was also not a study of either of those, or any related, concepts. And thus emerges the purpose of this study, which was to describe and understand portions of the essence of leadership, and doing so through the description of the lived experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

All that is not to say, that this study did not also seek to fulfill the secondary aspects that delimitated and characterized this study. In fact, the primary phenomenon could only be approached through a connecting to, or filling out with, real-life experiences of what had been set forth in the purpose statement, the research questions, and also the literature review. This connecting or filling out as accomplished by looking at experiences to see, after close examination, how much those experiences have found to be as they were thought of as being (Willard, 1984). All that is to say, there were meaningful byproducts related to the aforementioned aspects as results of this study, which are documented in the discussion and implications sections in Chapter Five.

The primary question for this study, and my personal purpose and motivation, was to understand something about the phenomenon of leadership. Since a comprehensive inquiry in such
a complex topic would hopelessly outstretch the frame of this present study, I chose to limit this investigation to one aspect of leadership that was both meaningful and important to me. And so the purpose of this study as to understand leadership through the description of the experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

For my purposes, the lead administrator was generally defined as the person who assumed the highest hierarchical position within the structure of the organization. The term was not meant to connote a limited view of a leader who has only administrative or managerial responsibilities or abilities. Admittedly, the use of the term administration was influenced by American leadership structures in higher education (e.g. Smerek, 2013), while its limiting connotation is presumably related to the ongoing discussion of the conceptual differences between leadership and management (e.g. Jackson & Parry, 2011). The lead administrator, for my purposes, was the person positioned at the top of the institution where governance, leadership, and management converge.

Throughout this study the term seminary was used to describe any institution that provides formal theological or ministerial training. The institutions that were part of this study could carry any of the following descriptors: theological seminary (theologisches Seminar), theological College (theologisches College), theological Academy (theologische Akademie), Bible School (Bibelschule), College (Hochschule), etc. The term seminary was chosen to indicate an academic program format that leads to recognized degrees or their equivalents. This nomenclature also conforms to the terminology employed in related literature (e.g. Ott, 2011).

The term evangelical was used to describe those Protestant faith groups that can be identified by theological distinctives expressed in their statements of faith (this aspect will be further developed in Chapter Two). For the purpose of this study, only institutions that confess to the
statement of faith put forth by the Konferenz bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten e. V. [Conference of Bible-believing Training Institutions], as evidenced by their membership in said organization, were included. The term evangelical has been previously used in the literature to describe institutions affiliated with the KbA (Beintker, 2004).

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because of its primordial nature. No empirical investigation has attempted to understand leadership by asking the lead administrators of evangelical institutions for theological education in German-speaking Europe how they perceive, and make sense of, their role as a top leader. This question, however, is of importance on several levels. On the level of the central phenomenon (i.e. leadership) its answer will add to the present body of literature in the field of leadership studies. When taking into account the delimitations of the study and its theoretical framework, the process of arriving at the essential description of seminary leadership did yield insight into other levels as well. The present study yielded insights for educational leadership in the European higher education context, for the participants themselves as they engage in reflective and meaning-making processes, and for the theoretical concepts of spirituality, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership that frame this investigation.

This study is timely because of the changing character of the global and European educational area (Ott, 2013). The pedagogical and educational significance of this study were established because of the inquiries into the experiences of lead administrators of educational institutions in German-speaking Europe. All of the participants were educators themselves and had to negotiate their organizations through the changing world of higher education; particularly through the Bologna Process (Serrano-Velarde, 2014), and dynamics of accreditation (Stausberg, 2011). In the European context, the Bologna Process works towards more compatibility and
transparency of higher education, which also has important ramifications for accreditation (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). This study revealed perspectives and strategies for future organizational change towards the academization of evangelical institutions for theological education (Hartong & Schwabe, 2013), and the roles of its leaders in those change processes.

Furthermore, this study bore significance for the participants themselves. The in-depth conversations with each leader empowered them to let their voice be heard (Moustakas, 1994), and to make sense of their own experiences (van Manen, 1990). It is the nature of phenomenological descriptions to potentially validate the lived experiences of the participants (van Manen, 1990). Several participants confirmed this positive side-effect of the qualitative interview process (Seidman, 2013).

Finally, given a theoretical framework consisting of spiritual leadership (e.g. Fry, 2003), servant leadership (e.g. Greenleaf, 1977, 2002), and workplace spirituality (e.g. Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b), this study provided deeper understanding and practical application of these frameworks in the context of lead administrators in spiritually focused and religious institutions. In the evangelical context, spirituality and a servant attitude are important values (Gillespie, 2004; Ott, 2013), and this study illuminated how they are perceived and practiced in educational leadership settings. The geographical location of the study in German-speaking Europe provided additional insight into the cross-cultural transferability of the theoretical frameworks, since they have been developed and primarily tested in North America (Fry, 2003; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; Malone & Fry, 2003, to name a few). Findings related to the theoretical framework are discussed in Chapter Five.
Research Questions

Given the purpose of this study, I sought to answer five research questions from the perspective of the lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. The first is the main research question, while the four subsequent questions ultimately lead to, and are contained in, the answer of the first.

1. How do participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?

The main research question is directly derived from the purpose statement of this study. Its answer was developed in the descriptions of the essence of the lead administrators’ lived experiences of leadership in their positions and roles.

2. What are the roles that lead administrators identify as pertaining to their position?

The background section already alluded to the professionalization of the role of the seminary leader (Ott, 2013), which necessitated a research question that focuses on understanding of roles. Lewis & Weems (2006) outline the roles of seminary leaders to include: (a) administration and personnel management; (b) seminary governance; (c) mission definition and strategic planning; (d) academic leadership; (e) financial management; (f) facility management; (g) institutional advancement; (h) enrollment management and student issues; and (i) dealing with external authorities such as accreditation agencies. This research question was geared towards providing a role-related framework, within which the participants were be able to make sense of their own experiences as lead administrators.

3. How do the lead administrators describe their path of leadership development and how they arrived where they presently are?
Leaders are developed (Clinton, 2012), or summoned (Sweet, 2004). They usually follow a reasonable path towards a top leadership positions, a path filled with identifiable lessons, experiences, challenges, tasks, and positions (Clinton, 2012). Gaining insight into the history of each individual was an important stepping stone for me to understand the participants’ perception of their current role as lead administrators. This question helped the participants to make sense of their experience based on their past, and also helped me to join their experience (van Manen, 1990; Willard, 1984).

4. What are the influences on their present experiences, attitudes, and behaviors that lead administrators identify?

Leaders are not only the product of their personal history, but also of their present situations and circumstances. The educational arena in Europe is changing dramatically posing many new challenges and opportunities for lead-administrators of any educational institution (Ott, 2013). This research question inquired into the present external aspects of the lead-administrators’ lived experience.

5. What role did personal spirituality play in the lead administrators’ decision to assume their position, and how does their understanding of spirituality impact their continued leadership?

The framework of spiritual leadership theory and workplace spirituality is relevant to the experience of the participants (Fry, 2003). This question investigates how the participants made sense of their understanding of spirituality in their roles as lead-administrators.

**Research Plan**

The qualitative study of leadership has recently gained momentum because of its flexibility to follow unexpected paths, its sensitivity to the context, the ability to study social meaning,
and the opportunity to conduct in-depth studies into the phenomena of leadership leading to more relevant results for practitioners (Moustakas, 1994; Parry, Mumford, Bower, & Watts, 2013). This provides the first aspect of why phenomenological analysis was a suitable approach for this study. This phenomenological inquiry sought to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe. Following Husserl’s (2012) axiom “to the things themselves” (p. 328), the lead-administrators’ descriptions of their experiences became the main source for describing the essence of the phenomenon. A qualitative phenomenology seeks to answer questions about the essence of the lived experience a certain group shares (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

The concept of spirituality is another aspect that supported the decision to apply a qualitative over a quantitative approach. Leadership of evangelical seminaries is situated in the realm of spirituality (Ott, 2013). There is currently a great interest in the concept of spirituality in the religious, corporate, and empirical research arenas (Fry, 2003; Gundolf & Filser, 2013; Schuster, 2011; Wood, 2003 to name a few). In non-religious frameworks personal spirituality has been described as fluid, subjective, and even idiosyncratic (Anselmo Ferreira, 2013), while the term spirituality often remains vaguely defined (Wood, 2003). Christian perspectives of spirituality, on the other hand, are characterized by a personal relationship with God, and are defined as a living out of one’s beliefs (George, 2003). Regardless which perspective is assumed, the uncertain quality of spirituality requires of the researcher to find “a new way of looking at things… [and] start from the standpoint of everyday life… lay[ing] bare the presuppositions essential to this viewpoint” (Husserl, 2012, p. 3).

When personal presuppositions are put aside and the voice of the participant is heard, only then the particulars of the experience of spirituality and leadership can be transcended to ar-
rive at a description of the essence of things (Willard, 1984). The transcendental approach to phenomenology incorporated this setting aside of the researcher’s experiences to make room for a description of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 1970, 1973, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

This study utilized a transcendental rather than a hermeneutical form of phenomenological inquiry. The latter approach relies heavily on the researcher’s interpretation of the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon, while the former approach tries to stay with “the things themselves” as long as possible (Heidegger, 1962, 1972; van Manen, 1990). In the remainder of this section, the brief rationale for this decision will be developed. A full discussion of this matter is found in Chapter Three.

My leaning towards so-called continental, or transcendental phenomenology rather than towards North American approaches could very well be explained by my personal bias as a German national. Following a more self-reflective rationale, however, I must conclude that the existentialist, subjectivist and non-critical emphasis of the hermeneutical flavor of phenomenology (Patton, 2002) does not conform with my worldview in the dimensions of evangelical theology and of empirical qualitative inquiry. Existential philosophy, so Deztler (1979), “relegates religion to realms of the mystical” (pp. 16-17), which would render any empirical study of religious or spiritual matters irrelevant. This point had recently been emphasized in the area of empirical research on workplace spirituality where spirituality was intentionally disconnected from religion (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b). My presupposition that religion and spirituality are reconcilable and empirically investigable constructs, therefore, caused me to cautiously distance myself from an existentialist phenomenology.
In addressing the empirical dimension of my understanding of qualitative inquiry, it is my conviction that a study of lived experiences should not only seek to capture the participants’ everyday experiences, but should move “beneath or behind subjective experience to reveal the genuine, objective nature of things” (Patton, 2002, p. 483). In keeping with Husserl’s central philosophical problem, I believe that through a rigorous science of transcendental phenomenology one can objectively gain knowledge about the lived experiences of others (Willard, 1984). Furthermore, I chose the transcendental approach because it aligned more closely with my understanding of reality and how things are known. The section on the Situation to Self has already expanded on this matter.

Another reason for choosing transcendental over the hermeneutic phenomenology is found in the nature of the participants’ position and leadership situation. Since I was inquiring about the shared lived experiences of top leaders of organizations, there was a certain power distance between the participants and myself as the researcher (Seidman, 2013). The transcendental approach empowered the participants, more than other qualitative approaches would, to have control over the outcome of the study (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). The bracketing of my presuppositions, the intentional refraining from premature interpretation of the participants’ descriptions, and the process of member-checking all empowered the participants to have their experiences described as unaltered as possible (Creswell, 2013). By giving up part of the power I held as the researcher, I also gained better access to the participants, and was able to establish good rapport with them (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013).

Finally, a valid hermeneutical interpretation of a phenomenon requires of the researcher more than mere theoretical knowledge of the same; he or she has to live or participate, at least in part, in the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). This is not true of my personal life experiences, and
thus my attempts to interpret the experiences of the participants would potentially diminish the validity of this study. In Chapter Three a more detailed discussion of phenomenological inquiry and the differences between transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology has been developed.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

This study focused on lead administrators of those evangelical seminaries located in German-speaking Europe that have shown evidence of a process of professionalization and/or academization. To arrive at a meaningful subset of the general phenomenon of leadership experience, four levels of delimitation were applied. The first delimitation concerned the level of leadership. The study included only those persons that were organizationally or hierarchically at the top of their institutions. The second delimitation concerned the geographical region. Only seminaries that are physically located in German-speaking Europe were considered.

The third delimitation concerned the faith orientation of the institutions under study. This study focused on theological training institutions that were directly associated with the free-church movement or the evangelical movement in German-speaking Europe. These institutions were identified by a distinct theological position exhibited by their inclusion in the *Konferenz Bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten* KbA [Conference of Bible-Believing Training Institutions] (Ott, 2011; Pierard & Elwell, 2001). The KbA was founded between 1963 and 1964 (Ott, 2013) and is a voluntary network of 38 theological colleges, seminaries, Bible schools, and ministry training institutions that identify themselves as Bible-believing, and that committed to a distinctly evangelical statement of faith (KbA, 2014a). The institutions are primarily located in German-speaking Europe including the countries of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Other non-German speaking institutions are located in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands (KbA, 2014b).
The fourth delimitation concerned the type of institution under study. This study inquired into the life experiences of lead administrators of seminaries that showed evidence of a process of professionalization and academization. Ott (2011) distinguished four types of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe by accreditation status: (a) achieved or applied for governmental recognition as institution for higher learning; (b) accreditation through the European Evangelical Accreditation Agency (EEAA); (c) partnerships with foreign universities; and (d) no accreditation. For the purpose of this study only institutions that fall under types (a), (b), or (c) were included, because these types indicated a professionalization and academization of the institution. After all of these delimitations were applied, 17 lead administrators were identified as potential participants for this study. Limitations related to the research method and the role of the researcher are outlined in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

Summary

After providing an overview of this chapter, the background of the study was illuminated in light of general leadership research, theological education, the evangelical situation in German-speaking Europe, and the leadership theories that guided this investigation. A brief telling of my story laid open my motivation. I also positioned myself philosophically in terms of critical rationalism and transcendental realism. The problem statement provided information on the unique context of this study, or the portion of life’s mystery that was investigated. After a description of what this dissertation did not try to do, the purpose was stated as to describe and understand portions of the essence of leadership through the description of the lead administrators lived experiences at evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. This section also included definitions of key terms and concepts as they were used in this dissertation. From the background, problem statement, and purpose, the significance of the study was established, and
the research question were developed. The research plan introduced the method of transcendental phenomenology and provided a rationale for its applicability to the purpose and problem of this study. Finally, the delimitations and limitations of this investigation were addressed. The participants were selected from evangelical seminaries that showed evidence of professionalization and/or academization processes.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A transcendental phenomenology requires a twofold preparation. The researcher must be aware of personal bias and preconceived notions (Husserl, 2012), but also penetrate what has been written, thought, and discussed about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). The latter is necessary, because “without guiding thoughts, one cannot begin to search” (DeWarren, 2009, p. 52). Therefore, in order to prepare thoroughly for the investigation, I illuminated relevant literature not only for the purpose of penetration and awareness, but also to initiate guiding thoughts to begin the search itself.

I followed a theoretical and thematic format that did not inform either the design or the results of the study (Moustakas, 1994). It rather developed a body of knowledge that informed the search and set the stage for the research by describing its context and background (Creswell, 2009). However, the findings and frameworks, once they are identified, need to be continually bracketed out and made no use of throughout the course of the investigation (Husserl, 2012). In other words, this literature review fulfilled two functions. First, it described and established the phenomenon that was investigated, and therefore outlined the expectation of what new knowledge would be obtained through the study (Moustakas, 1994). Second, it established a representative body of literature on the phenomenon under investigation that was to be bracketed out throughout the study (Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

This chapter follows an inductive structure in that it begins with a review of literature pertaining to the current situation of this study’s participants, and then moves to more general topics that emerged from the said literature to arrive at a theoretical framework. In the second
part of the chapter the theoretical framework is deductively re-applied to the context of leadership in evangelical theological education.

**Current Situation**

The educational sector, in which the participants of this study operated, is changing on a global scale (Ott, 2013; Steinke, 2011; Stortz, 2011; Werner, 2011). Reinalda and Kulesza (2006) observed these global shifts to include: (a) an increase of economic competitiveness in the market of higher education; (b) increasing types of adult learning; (c) the emergence of non-university institutions and programs; (d) proliferating online and distance learning; (e) innovations in collaborations between public and private entities; (f) unspecified budgets for universities to be spent at their own choosing; (g) influx of business management practices; and (h) the establishment of new private universities. Further developments included a change from elite to mass systems of education and an increased desire for mobility (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2010). Several European countries promoted these shifts by initiating what became known as the Bologna Process (European Ministers of Education, 1999) to make European higher education competitive on an international scale (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006).

This section describes the current issues with higher education in German-speaking Europe that led to a professionalization and academization of the evangelical seminaries, focusing on issues related to the Bologna Process and to accreditation processes as indicators for said professionalization and academization (Ott, 2013).

**The Bologna Process**

Since 1999 a dramatic and Europe-wide effort of restructuring in higher education is in full progress – the Bologna Process (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). The ministers of education
from 29 European countries initiated the process to establish a stronger and globally more competitive European Area of Higher Education (Schreiner, 2012). Reinalda and Kulesza (2006) describe it as, “[an] autonomous and almost Pan-European intergovernmental arrangement” (p. 3), since it includes both EU and non-EU members. They assert that the Bologna Process should be understood as a European solution or a regional phenomenon to a global process on the international market of higher education.

The process began with a joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, the Bologna Declaration (European Ministers of Education, 1999), named after the Italian city of Bologna. This declaration sought to achieve three explicitly stated goals: (a) international competitiveness; (b) mobility; and (c) employability (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). The declaration also included six action lines: (a) development of a system of academic degrees that are easy to recognize and compare; (b) implementation of two academic cycles: a first cycle geared to the labor market, and a second cycle conditional on the completion of the first cycle; (c) development of a system of accumulation and transfer of credits; (d) enablement of mobility for students, teachers and researchers; (e) enablement of increased cooperation with regard to quality assurance; and (f) establishment of a more unified European dimension in higher education (Europa.eu, 2010). The 2001 Prager Communique added the action lines of lifelong learning, involvement of students, and promotion of attractiveness and competitiveness of Europe’s higher education, whereby the Berlin meeting two years later defined doctoral studies and the synergy of education and research in the “European Higher Education Area” (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006).

In essence, the Bologna Process is a Europe-wide reform that deregulates the educational monopoly of state universities (Ott, 2013), increases programmatic quality and transparency, and enables student and faculty mobility (Europäischer Rat, 2009). Germany, with its unique and
somewhat entrenched system of higher education, poses special challenges to any institution of higher learning, and is considered an “extreme case” in the European context. It is slow to implement the Bologna Process in certain areas (Serrano-Velarde, 2014), but also implements binding legal rulings, on the other hand, to force institutions of higher learning to implement other portions of the European declaration (Beck, 2004). Certain subject areas, such as protestant theology have shown more resistance than others to accommodate some of the restructuring efforts of the Bologna Process (Krengel, 2011).

The Bologna Process soon included the aspects of accreditation and quality assurance (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). The European effort of quality assurance through the Bologna Process works both on a national and a European level (Serrano-Velarde, 2014). Nationally the drive is towards deregulation of the public sector and higher accountability for institutions. On the supranational level the efforts are towards an integration of systems and comparability of diplomas though accreditation.

Schreiner (2012) noted that the Bologna Process is also influenced or driven by economic interests in at least two dimensions. The process aims at educating professionals for employability, and a desired shortening of the program duration would lead to a reduction of educational costs (Beck, 2004). The Bologna Process can, therefore, be interpreted as an attempt to emphasize and capitalize on the economic importance of the higher education sector (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). The Europäischer Rat (2009) concluded that the Bologna Process has shown to be successful in achieving the set goals of quality, transparency, and mobility in the area of higher education. By 2014 as many as 47 countries participate in the Bologna Process (Europa.eu, 2014).
Quality assurance and the Bologna process. The issue of quality assurance and accreditation is closely related to the Bologna Process. Part of the changes in higher education in Europe were an increased emphasis on quality assurance. In 2000 the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was established, through which institutions of higher learning cooperate in matters of quality assurance (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006). This organization, though not the only stakeholder in the process of establishing quality assurance in European higher education, is of special importance to the seminaries that were part of this study. Most of the seminaries in this study had accreditation from the European Evangelical Accreditation Association (EEAA), which in turn is an affiliate of ENQA. It should be noted that the EEAA is not governmentally recognized as an accreditation agency, which could grant formal degrees, but only provides certification of comparability of standards.

ENQA quickly joined in the Bologna Process after its inception to aid in its goals of quality assurance by establishing a European wide solution (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2010). This solution was meant to sufficiently and comprehensively protect students and employers and disseminate best practices without creating too much bureaucratic overhead for the institutions of higher learning. In 2005 the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) was one of the main contributions to such a quality assurance solution (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2010).

Accreditation and the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process directly influences the possibilities and importance of being accredited on a national and European level (Stausberg, 2011). In the Berlin meeting of Bologna Ministers in 2003, the EQNA was challenged to develop standards for a peer-review system through accreditation agencies in Europe (European
Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2010). Accreditation in general refers to a process whereby an educational institution is externally evaluated by an expert body to seek recognition concerning the level and quality of their educational programs (Ott, 2013).

Ott (2013) observed that increasing numbers of evangelical theological seminaries now offer accredited bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degrees. These degrees are accredited either through national recognition, the European accrediting system, or through international collaborations. Overall, evangelical institutions seemed to have responded in a much more differentiated, and often quite positive, way to the trends of academization and professionalization. Ott (2013) remarked that some smaller seminaries might have embraced the new opportunities of academic accreditation without realizing the impact such processes have on the organizational structure and even the role of the leadership. Ott (2011) also noted elsewhere that not all evangelical or free-church supported seminaries have chosen to participate in such accreditation endeavors.

In German-speaking Europe there are currently twelve theological training institutions accredited through the European Evangelical Accreditation Agency (EEAA). The EEAA (2014) accredits evangelical institutions of theological education on six levels including: (a) the EEAA Certificate for short 60 credit, or one full-time year, programs; (b) EEAA Diploma for 120 credit, or two-year long, programs; (c) EEAA Vocational Bachelor for 180 credit, or three-year long, programs resulting in a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) that is more occupationally oriented; (d) EEAA Academic Bachelor for 180 credit, or three-year long, programs resulting in a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and are comparable to a first university degree; (e) EEAA Postgraduate Certificate for 30 to 60 credit, or six month to one year long, programs for those already in possession of an undergraduate degree; (f) EEAA Vocational Master for 120 credit, or two year, programs result-
ing in a Master of Theology (MTh) in preparing students with an undergraduate degree for the ministry; and (g) EEAA Academic Master for 60 – 120 credit, or one to two year, programs resulting in a Master of Arts and are corresponding to a second university degree. Currently the EEAA is not accrediting doctoral programs. Furthermore, several seminaries in German-speaking Europe offer bachelor, master and doctoral programs through internationally accredited universities, or have governmentally recognized first and second university degree programs.

**The Bologna Process and evangelical seminaries.** From the literature emerges a notable distinction in response from seminaries of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)¹ and non-EKD evangelical seminaries, which will briefly be covered in the following section. The protestant EKD theological training institutions responded to and accommodated the shifts and changes to various degrees (Krengel, 2011), while non-EKD, or free evangelical seminaries, embraced the new opportunities of state recognition and accreditation (Ott, 2011). The delimitations of this study exclude EKD seminaries from the investigation, but it is valuable to summarize their response to the aforementioned shifts in higher education to gain a richer and more contrasting description of the participants’ background.

**EKD theological departments’ and seminaries’ response to the Bologna Process.** The Protestant Church in Germany (EKD, 2014) is comprised of twenty-two Lutheran, reformed and united churches, the Landeskirchen (regional churches). Each regional church enjoys relative autonomy, but the EKD carries out joint tasks. The democratically organized and elected bodies

¹ The EKD officially translates its name Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland as Evangelical Church in Germany. However, I use the term Protestant instead of Evangelical to make clear the distinction between the main-line or state church, and the Pietistic and free-church movements and denominations.
of government include the Synod, the Council, and the Church Conference. The leadership of EKD seminaries reacted strongly to the two-cycle degree system, the revision of program formats, and concerns about quality assurance (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006).

Krengel (2011) observed that the European Bologna Process was only partially integrated into the theological seminaries of the EKD, and even those changes did not come easy. On the European level the Bologna Process introduced a credit point system, a two-cycle degree structure, comprehensible and comparable degrees, sensitivity to employability of graduates, quality assurance, transfer of credits, modular structure, program accreditation, system accreditation, standard periods of study, standard workloads, and career path allocations of degrees. These features are to be implemented into the national quality frameworks of institutions of higher learning. Of these aspects, Krengel observed, only credits, quality, modularity, program accreditation, periods of study, and workloads were included in reforms of evangelical theology since the inception of the Bologna Process. The two-cycle degree structure, employability and standard workloads were not implemented. The remainder of this section provides examples of one aspect that was not integrated, i.e. the two-cycle degree system, and one aspect that was integrated, i.e. the modular program structure.

Beintker (2004) criticized the new two-cycle degree (Bachelor and Master) system of academization. He noted that such a restructuring constitutes a most drastic reform for many well established systems of higher education in Germany. According to Beintker the main problem is that the Bachelor degree is attainable in 6 semesters. He noted that many schools of law, medicine, pharmaceutical, and food technology, as well as seminaries for protestant theology insist on a minimum requirement of a master’s degree, which renders the bachelor’s degree virtually useless for employment in those areas.
A second structural issue, according to Beintker (2004), is the modular program design that is introduced with the restructuring into the two-cycle system. This design could become a serious problem for theological education in EKD seminaries. In 2012 the evangelical theological seminaries under the EKD had just agreed on a common mid-term and cumulative final exam for the pastoral training programs, which is the antithesis of a modular structure. This newfound common system was now in jeopardy, and many seminaries have to establish multiple program options wherever their faculties intersect with other schools that have already implemented a modular design (e.g. schools of education). Reinalda and Kulesza (2006) observed that Germany had created issues of complexity when generally adopting the two-cycle degree system while retaining some of the older systems.

A related structural issue that Beintker (2004) pointed out concerns the loss of quality of education due to the modular structure on one hand, and a pressure to reduce overall program durations on the other. At the core of the issue, so it seems, lie different values and perceptions of the role of higher education in two major areas. Beintker sees the goal of the protestant education as the gaining of theological competency, whereas the Bologna Process, and connected to it the process of professionalization, sees the goal of higher education in producing highly skilled graduates for certain places in the professional market.

In summary it can be stated that leaders of university departments and seminaries and faculty members associated with the EKD view the current impact of the Bologna Process, and the related trends of professionalization, with a certain measure of skepticism (Beintker, 2004; Wasserberg, 2004). The tenor among EKD educators is clearly against a professionalization of theological education. Beintker (2004, p. 119) declared that the more diverse and complex the
future occupations (in communities, churches, schools, and society) turn out, the more foundational and elemental the training in the required skills must be.

**Non-EKD evangelical seminaries’ response to the Bologna Process.** In 1977 the *European Evangelical Accrediting Agency* (EEAA) was established, offering accreditations to free-church seminaries in Europe. With the Bologna Process non-EKD seminaries, mostly under private sponsorship, have the opportunity for government recognition, accreditation through international accreditation agencies, or continued cooperation with international universities (Ott, 2011). We can safely infer that free seminaries, i.e. non-EKD seminaries, seemed to have reacted more positively to the issues of the Bologna Process and of standardized accreditation than EKD affiliated departments and institutions. A crisis of decreasing student enrollment in the 1990s led many seminaries to internal reviews and possibly initiated considerations of some form accreditation (Ott, 2001). What remains is that the de-monopolization of state universities, such as EKD affiliated theological departments and seminaries has opened up new opportunities for evangelical institutions.

**Quality management for free evangelical seminaries.** Ott (2013), when observing that quality management has become a major concern for the educational sector in general, concluded that theological institutions should engage in a quality management process as well. Ott asserted that this form of accountability is an ethical obligation, it increases the trustworthiness of the institution, it helps to monitor the results of the educational process, and it provides means for evaluation. “*Qualitätsfragen sind Chefsache* (questions of quality are matters for senior leaders)” (p. 316), Ott (2013) observed, pointing out the influence of this trend on seminary leadership, contributing to the academization and professionalization of theological institutions and the role of their leaders.
Theological training institutions can choose from a variety of quality management systems that originate in the corporate sector. Others, recognizing the uniqueness of spiritual based organizations, developed new systems of quality management (e.g. Wesely, 2011). Ott (2013) distinguished between the monitoring paradigm and the evaluation paradigm of quality management. The monitoring paradigm presumes a governmental system of quality standards, which have to be adhered to. The evaluation paradigm, according to Ott the more popular paradigm, presumes a dynamic context of continual change and improvement. A second distinguishing factor of quality management concerns external peer-evaluation, versus internal self-evaluation processes. A final decision has to be made whether the management system encompasses the entire organization, e.g. Total Quality Management (TQM), or if it should only focus on certain parts of the organization.

There is a cautious resistance to the notion of quality management in seminary education. Mähling (2011) observed a lack of appreciation for quality management among theology faculty. They resent external interference with internal affairs, fear infringements upon their scholarly freedom, and see neo-liberal agendas behind legal attempts to require quality management of their faculties. Others just do not see the value of evaluation and quality management and resent the fact that only little evidence to its effectiveness can be observed. Mähling sees a chance for quality management when systems are developed in collaboration among several institutions to distribute the workload, and when quality management is viewed as a chance for improvement not for mere monitoring. Herein Mähling agrees with Ott’s (2013) recommendation to use an evaluation paradigm for quality management.
Evangelical Institutions for Theological Education

The previous section introduced two important groups of evangelical seminaries: those that are affiliated with the EKD, and those who have some form of free-church affiliated and often are privately supported (Ott, 2011). For the remainder of the paper the latter group will be referred to as evangelical seminaries, since they are the focus of this study. So far this review primarily discussed the processes and context that led to the academization of evangelical seminaries. This section introduces common characteristics of the seminaries within this group, and discuss the aspect of leadership-role professionalization.

Ott (2013) provided a helpful description of theological education in the context of the evangelical free-churches in German-speaking Europe. The group of evangelical seminaries in these countries consists of great variety of school types, which all have in common that they do theological education outside of the state university, and that they are the educational arm of their respective evangelical movement (Ott, 2001). Ott identified two main groups of schools including the Konferenz bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten KbA (Conference of Bible-believing Training Institutions), and the seminaries in freikirchlicher Trägerschaft (free-church supported). As already established in the delimitations, this study focused on institutions that are also members of the KbA. Within the KbA (2014) we find (a) interdenominational schools and seminaries, (b) schools of the pietistic tradition, and (c) schools of the free-church tradition. The group under freikirchlicher Trägerschaft combines seminaries supported by Baptists, Methodists, Free-Evangelicals, Mennonites, and Pentecostals.

Elsewhere Ott (2011) also developed a comprehensive overview of institutions for theological education in the context of the free-churches in German-speaking Europe. Two broad categories include those institutions that are supported by free-church groups or denominations,
and those institutions that are supported by different groups but still are frequently chosen by students with a free-church background. Among these institutions one finds four types of accreditation: (a) achieved or applied for governmental recognition as institution for higher learning; (b) accreditation through the European Evangelical Accreditation Agency; (c) partnerships with foreign universities; and (d) no accreditation.

**Educational Leadership**

This section will seek to summarize the present dynamics for educational leadership that have changed the role and responsibility of the leaders of educational institutions, seminaries included, and have led to a professionalization of the role of those leaders. There are, unfortunately, not many studies that target this specific circumstance.

**Educational leadership as a profession.** Ott (2013) observed that the educational paradigm-shift poses tremendous challenges to the leadership of the seminaries. In his discussion, he distinguished among leadership tasks, leadership theories, and organizational models. A lead administrator in a theological training institution needs to be competent in vision casting, vision realization, evaluation of current situations, perceiving past and future paths, context analysis, and theological expertise. He encouraged a leadership model explained by the metaphors of head, hand, and heart. The head answers the “what” question and symbolizes strategy, orientation, and contents. The hand stands for structure and coordination and thus answers the “how” question. Finally, the heart points towards culture and motivation in answer of the “why” or “what for” questions.

Scherle (2008), writing on spiritual leadership in the context of the EKD, argued that leaders in religious settings need to theologically process insights from the arena of corporate development and management. He introduced a framework for church business operations that,
in principle, describes also the challenges theological institutions face. This framework addresses the challenge of changing traditional forms of operations that have become inefficient on one side, and on the other side the challenge of providing a theological basis for the new forms of operations. The basic functions of this church business operations paradigm consist of creating measurable goals derived from the church’s mission and the efficient use of available means.

Potential problems with this framework of *church controlling* include: (a) careful consideration of promotion and/or representation of interests (Sachzieldominanz), meaning that economic viability must remain second priority to the mission or commission of the church; (b) main goals cannot be expressed monetarily, but only in terms of quality; (c) the existing vagueness of the core competency of the church; and (d) economically sensible decisions in times of crisis may lead to an escalation of the problem rather than a solution. Keeping in mind that Scherle argues from a church perspective, we still can appreciate the tension between economic viability and theological purity that seems to be at the core of the issue. Top leaders of theological training institutions may possibly find themselves in a place where they have to negotiate these seemingly conflicting paradigms.

In the United States higher education is characterized by several structural aspects, which have been introduced to institutions in Europe through missionary influences in the 1970s (Ott 2001), and more recently through the Bologna Process (Thelin et al., 2014). Presidents of North American seminaries have long been viewed as the executive leaders (e.g. McKenna & McHenry, 1992; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1992). A professional framework of thinking permeates American higher education and leadership. Lewis and Weems (2006) described the seminary president as the one who, “stands at the center point of an institution… to understand and fulfill the seminary’s mission while maintaining its economic vitality” (Introduction). They continued to outline
the professional responsibilities of seminary leaders to include: (a) administration and personnel management including aspects of organization, management, decision-making, policy-making, and planning, as well as team-building, supervision, promotion, termination, compensation, and conflict management (Hansen, Stairs, & Weeks, 2006); (b) seminary governance (Cooley, Klein, & Weeks, 2006); (c) mission definition and strategic planning (Tiede, Draper, & Yates, 2006); (d) academic leadership in relationship to deans, faculty recruitment, program development, and education practice (Bouchard, Thistlethwaite, & Weber, 2006); (e) financial management including issues of audit, budgeting, reports, analyses, and investments (Ruger, Canary, & Land, 2006); (f) facility management in areas of maintenance, projects, and planning (Ewing, Graves, & Landrebe, 2006); (g) institutional advancement through fundraising and staff development (Burch Basinger, Calian, & Leavitt, 2006); (h) enrollment management and student issues including marketing, financial assistance and spiritual formation (McAllister-Wilson, Williford, & Neelands, 2006); and (i) dealing with external authorities such as accreditation agencies (Cushing, Morgan, & Aymer, 2006). Stortz (2011), writing from the perspective of North American Lutheran theological education, commented on the professional influence: “Seminaries train professional leaders, people who will both ‘profess’ their faith in fresh ways and function as professionals” (p. 375).

All these authors have written for the North American context, which is not directly transferable to the situation of the seminaries in German-speaking Europe. However, institutional partnerships, the Bologna Process, and the global changes of higher education, as discussed above, introduce similar circumstances and changes for the leaders of evangelical seminaries in German-spaking Europe who increasingly have to exhibit professional leadership skills.
German Evangelicalism

So far the term *evangelical* has been introduced, and cautiously used, to delimitate a certain group of seminaries in German-speaking Europe. In the following sections, I seek to solidify a basic understanding for evangelicalism in Germany as part of a global movement, and develop the argument that the KbA indeed represents a group of evangelical seminaries in the sense that *evangelicalism* is defined in the context of this study. Pierard and Elwell (2001) asserted that the modern evangelical Christian movement transcends denominational and confessional boundaries in terms of theological and historical characteristics. This study refrain from any evaluative measure of the theological stance of the participating institutions and leaders, and so this section is merely descriptive in nature. The goal hereby is to make aware of this important aspect of this study’s participants’ background. Following the framework of Pierard and Elwell (2001), evangelicalism is explained in its theological and historical meaning.

**Theological meaning of evangelicalism.** The theological meaning of evangelicalism includes certain beliefs in the topic areas concerning the Godhead, the Bible, the human state, salvation, the end times, missions, evangelism, and discipleship. George (2003) summarized an exemplary statement of faith that includes beliefs in: (a) the sovereignty of God; (b) divine inspiration of the Bible as infallible and authoritative revelation; (c) total depravity of humanity; (d) Christ’s substitutionary atonement through death and resurrection satisfying God’s demands for justice; (e) salvation as unmerited, received by grace, an act of faith, and resulting in regeneration, justification, sanctification, and future glorification; (f) the written Word of God as the basis of faith and preaching; (g) a visible personal return of Jesus Christ; and (h) in the believer’s obligation for social service, evangelization, and discipleship.
Table 1

**Evangelical Statements of Faith Compared**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Evangelical Statement of Faith (George, 2003)</th>
<th>Evangelical Statement of Faith (KbA, 2014a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Godhead</strong></td>
<td>Sovereignty of God.</td>
<td>The unity of God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The divinity of Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, death on the cross, bodily resurrection, ascension, present exaltation to the right hand of God, and his return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Bible</strong></td>
<td>Divine inspiration of the Bible as infallible and authoritative revelation. The written Word of God as the basis of faith and preaching.</td>
<td>Divine inspiration and infallibility of the entire Holy Scripture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Human State</strong></td>
<td>Total depravity of humanity.</td>
<td>The total depravity of human nature, eternal damnation of the unredeemed, and following from that the absolute necessity of a new birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salvation</strong></td>
<td>Christ’s substitutionary atonement through death and resurrection satisfying God’s demands for justice. Salvation as unmerited, received by grace, an act of faith, and resulting in regeneration, justification, sanctification, and future glorification.</td>
<td>The substitutionary and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who shed his blood for us. The church of all that are born again as the body of Jesus Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End-times</strong></td>
<td>A visible personal return of Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>The resurrection of the redeemed to eternal life in glory and the resurrection of the unredeemed to eternal damnation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship</strong></td>
<td>The believer’s obligation for social service, evangelization, and discipleship.</td>
<td>The great commission by Jesus Christ to go into all the world, to teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing these beliefs to the statement of faith of the KbA, the umbrella organization that delimitates the selection of evangelical seminaries for this study, one can see the evangelical nature of this statement (see also Table 1). The KbA’s (2014a) statement of faith includes the belief in and testimony of: (a) the divine inspiration and infallibility of the entire Holy Scriptures; (b) the unity of God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; (c) the total depravity of human nature, eternal damnation of the unredeemed, and following from that the absolute necessity of a new birth; (d) the divinity of Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, death on the cross,
bodily resurrection, ascension, present exaltation to the right hand of God, and his return; (e) the substitutionary and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who shed his blood for us; (f) the resurrection of the redeemed to eternal life in glory and the resurrection of the unredeemed to eternal damnation; (g) the church of all that are born again as the body of Jesus Christ; and (h) the great commission by Jesus Christ to go into all the world, to teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Within this framework of beliefs, all participating seminaries can be identified as theologically evangelical.

**Historical meaning of evangelicalism.** The term *evangelical* has its singular origin in the British revivals of the 1730s, but the actual development of what is known as *evangelicalism* today is much more multifaceted as it relates to various movements in Europe and in the US (Ott, 2001). The historical meaning of evangelicalism traces the “evangelical spirit [that] has manifested itself throughout church history” (Pierard & Elwell, 2001, p. 407). In Pierard and Elwell’s view, evangelicalism was manifested in the apostolic church, the church fathers, in parts of monasticism, and in medieval reform movements. However, historically the greatest proliferation of evangelicalism is found in the reformation of Martin Luther. After the Protestant church had lost “much of the spiritual vitality” (p. 407), so Pierard and Elwell, three movements rooted in Puritanism recovered the evangelical spirit. These movements included German Pietism, Methodism, and the Great Awakening. In Germany it were Phillip Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), and Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) who emphasized Bible study, missions, personal conversion, preaching, personal sanctification, and social action in the pietistic movement (Ott, 2001). The focus of the development of evangelicalism then moved to Great Britain and the United States with the establishment of many denominations and parachurch organizations. In the 18th century Germany also saw her own revivals in the *Erweckungs-
bewegung (ca. 1820-1850) and the Gemeinschaftsbewegung (ca. 1875-1925) that rekindled awaning old pietism (Ott, 2001). In the years the followed the two world wars, the influences ofsecularism and the rise of liberal theology impacted the Protestant church and ignited the evang-}

elical movement as we know it in Germany today.

**The German Protestant church and the wars.** The political, philosophical, and eco-
nomic realities surrounding WWI and leading into WWII brought with them a global decline ofChristianity that was also very prevalent in Germany (Detzler, 1979). Historically Protestantism
was closely related with the state and fragmented into territorially divided churches – the region-
al churches or Landeskirchen (Latourette, 1961) – and the individual states financed and con-
trolled these churches, which today are united by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and
its governing organs, the synod and the council (EKD, 2014). The rise of the Social Democratic
movement, the lost First World War and the subsequent move towards armistice Communism,
and finally the restrictions under the National Socialist regime mark significant historical chal-
lenges to the German Protestant churches (Latourette, 1961). In the context of the Nazi regime
one must not forget the fact that, despite some protest movements within the Protestant camp,
many church leaders complied with Hitler, which subsequently led to a loss of popular confi-
dence in the church and Christianity as a whole throughout Germany (Detzler, 1979). For East
Germany the Communism of the German Democratic Republic had a profoundly negative im-
pact on the Protestant churches, which were historically dependent on the now disappeared
princes of the states (Latourette, 1961).

**The Protestant church and secularism.** In Europe secularism had its beginnings be-
tween 1870 and 1914 and increased dramatically in prevalence since 1960 (Detzler, 1979). In
1962 Bishop Hans Lilje von Hannover is quoted to have said, “the era when Europe was a Chris-
tian continent lies behind us” (in Detzler, 1979, p. 10). In Germany the post war economic miracle had a profound impact on churchgoing Protestants. From the mid-sixties to the seventies regular worship attendance plummeted from about 20 to 5 % (Detzler, 1979). For 2012 the EKD (2014a) reported a regular attendance of just 3.5 % of its members. Detzler (1979) identified the institutionalized character of the state-church and the sophistication of Germany’s society as possible causes for mass defection from the church, both Catholic and Protestant. Most importantly, however, the decline of church attendance was caused by the influx of secular rationalism on Protestant theology that shifted the locus of truth away from the Bible to the ratio of man. The results of this process can be expressed in the words of Bultman (1958), “the constant is the self-understanding of the believer; Christology is variable” (p. 80), or if phrased as a question: “either the Bible is authority, or we are?” (Külling in Detzler, 1979, p. 23). This describes the political, economical, philosophical, and theological context that gave rise to German evangelicalism.

The evangelical movement in Germany. In the years after the Second World War, and not at least attributable to evangelistic efforts from American evangelicals, Germany again saw a revival of evangelicalism leading to the present situation. Ott (2001) reports that within a decade after WWII over sixty North American missions’ organizations were active in Europe, many of them representing American evangelicalism. This time marks the beginning of Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Gideons International and many other para-church organizations on the continent.

The term evangelical (Evangelikal) itself appeared in Germany in the mid 1960s as descriptor for either a movement among West-German Protestants or a designator for a certain form of piety (Bauer, 2012); it was either a designator for protest or denoted an emphasis on a certain form of spirituality. In the years from 1945 to 1966 the Evangelische Gemeinschafts-
bewegung (Evangelical Fellowship Movement), the Evangelisationsbewegung (Evangelistic Movement), and the Deutsche Evangelische Allianz (German Evangelical Alliance) are among the most important movements for the development of German evangelicalism (Bauer, 2012). The one group that is mostly identifiable with protest is a union of several heterogeneous groups that formed an evangelical movement against the theological standpoint of Rudolf Bultmann and his demythologization movement. It was the evangelical confessional movement Kein Anderes Evangelium (No Other Gospel), founded in 1966 in the city of Hamm (Pollack, 2009).

From 1960 to 1975 there had been “a steady, almost spectacular emergence of an evangelical minority in Europe” (Detzler, 1976, p. 41). Pinnacle moments of the evangelical movement include the European Congress on Evangelism in Amsterdam in 1971, and the International Congress of World Evangelization at Lausanne in 1974. Detzler (1979) concluded: “1960 to 1976 marked for Europe the birth of a new spirit of evangelical unity…. Evangelism, social action, and vocal opposition to rationalistic, humanistic, and ecumenical theology has forged a bond that ties together believers throughout Europe” (pp. 44-45). Today evangelicalism is on the rise worldwide. This growth is so significant, that some religious sociologists predict that the evangelical orientation might at some point become the predominant movement among the established Christian church worldwide (Roest & Stoppels, 2012).

Current issues with German evangelicals. Jung (2000) provided a comprehensive overview of current issues and critiques the evangelical movement is facing in German-speaking Europe. There is first the internal critique that concerns the differences in the understanding of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Table, and the different hermeneutic approaches to understanding the Bible.
Recent developments of rapid and global growth have exposed the internal diversity that often is encapsulated with the term evangelical. Pierard and Elwell (2001) commented, “the very nature of evangelicalism never was a unified movement but a collection of emphases based on a common core belief” (p. 409). This “common core itself”, they continued, “is now under discussion” (p. 409). Theological differences among evangelical or free-church groups concern, for example, the doctrines on the Holy Spirit, Baptism, and psychological and physical healing through the Spirit (Noll, 2001). Pierard and Elwell (2001) added to this list of discussions on the doctrines of nature of God, Christology, salvation, Scripture, and direct creation.

Writing from a North American perspective, Cizik (2012) identified a new evangelicalism developing, which increasingly sets itself apart from the old evangelicals by building bridges beyond their own constituency, and by their refusal to politicize faith. In the same vein McLaren (2012) contrasts the nostalgia, nativism, and negativity exhibited in old evangelical Christian broadcasting with the “ethos of hope, diversity, and creative collaboration” (p. 6) that marks the new evangelicalism. He further observed that the new generation of evangelical believers is fleeing the denominations while assuming descriptors such as post-evangelical, post-fundamental, emergent, or spiritual but not emergent. The book A New Evangelical Manifesto, edited by Gushee (2012), serves as a helpful summary of the issues new evangelicals are concerned about beyond what already has been mentioned. This book contains articles on human trafficking, preventable diseases, Muslims, racism, women or feminism, children, the dying, global poverty, the death penalty, peacemaking, nuclear weapons, global warming, abortion, consumerism, and torture. This Manifesto concludes with a litany of principles for the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good (NEP), the organization that I chose as an example for the current trends in evangelicalism. Gushee (2012) summarized the position of the NEP as follows:
Against war and for peacemaking… against the devaluing of human life and for a society in which no woman feels that abortion is her only choice… against environmental denialism and for God’s endangered creation… against needless human suffering due to lack of health care and for human health… against the collapse of marriage and for stronger family life… against poverty and economic injustice and for dignified and decent economic conditions for all… against tyranny and for democracy, justice, and the rule of law (pp. 239-240).

Jung (2000) also reported points of external critique of the movement, which concern its increasing politicization and its allegedly outdated understanding of Scripture. In the political realm the moral and ethical convictions contradict popular opinion in many cases, and the evangelical understanding of the Bible leads to convictions about the origins of life or the existence of the supernatural, which both stand contrary to societal belief.

The contemporary situation of evangelicals is not only marked by tensions from within the evangelical camp, but also from the outside. As an example I focused on the tension of how the evangelicals are perceived by the public. Bauer (2012) believes that protest is the most important aspect of the evangelical movement. There are good reasons for such an assessment. The conflict between the evangelical movement and the Evangelischen Landeskirchen (Evangelical State Churches) in the years from 1966 to 1989 began with the Dortmunder Bekenntnistag (Day of Confession in Dortmund) on March 6, 1966. As mentioned above, the most notable group of protest was Kein Anderes Evangelium (No Other Gospel). However, if we only identify the German evangelicals by what they are against, this would paint an incomplete picture. Houston (2003) believes that through Christian spirituality evangelicals can move from being, or being perceived as, countercultural to being confessional. In other words, evangelicals could, through
the way they live in this world, show that they are for a strong confession and not against every-
thing non-evangelical. Evangelicalism, in fact, not only describes a protest movement, but also a
form of Protestant piety. Guske (2014b) described the German evangelical movement as a form
of Christian Protestant communities of faith that are not necessarily working against the Evangelical State Church (Evangelische Landeskirche), but seek to separate themselves in terms of
religious practices. From a radical understanding, or misunderstanding, of evangelicalism come
many other challenges. The example of the time after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade
Center in New York City on September 11, 2001 should suffice as an example. In this wake the
public sensibility of religious fundamentalism grew and German evangelicals were negatively
associated as Christian fundamentalist who could become a danger to society (Müller, 2012).

There is certainly more to be said about the theological diversity of evangelicalism, the
history of its individual denominations, and the tensions and current issues that are before its
leaders. However, for the purpose of this study the background canvas has been raised up and
must now be placed on easel of the theoretical framework, if I am allowed to use such an analo-
gy.

Theoretical Framework

This section includes literature that helped develop the theoretical framework for this
study. Phenomenological studies are not meant to verify a given theoretical positon. Theories
only enlighten practice (van Manen, 1990). They are the result of reflection on lived-experiences
and life-practices. In other words, theory became a guide for deliberation throughout the research
process, but also a reminder of what needs to be bracketed out in the process of epoche (Moustakas,
1994). Emerging from the foregoing discussion of the current situation of this study’s partic-
ipants, the theoretical framework focuses on the concepts of spirituality, workplace spirituality,
spiritual leadership, and servant leadership. Each aspect of the framework was explored from a non-religious and Christian perspective.

**Spirituality**

Seminaries today have to deal with the issues of reconciling academic scholarship and personal spirituality in their programs (Ott, 2013; Randall, 2007). Recent leadership scholarship in general has increasingly focused on spirituality as a foundation for theory development or the understanding of the phenomenon of leadership itself (Arnold, 2012; Dent et al., 2005; Fry, 2003). Spirituality, however, is a term that needs clarification and precise definition in order to be useable in meaningful ways (Ott, 2013; Zimmerling, 2003). In order to achieve sufficient understanding of the issues involved for this empirical inquiry we explore the origins and contemporary meanings of the term, and shed some light on non-religious and Christian perspectives on spirituality. The review then turns towards a review of literature concerning the related concepts of workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership. The last portion of this section includes literature that applies the theoretical framework directly to the context of seminary leadership in German-speaking Europe.

**Origins and contemporary meaning of spirituality.** The origins of spirituality will be explained from a Judeo-Christian perspective as it is used in the Scriptures of the Jewish and Christian faith. Sheldrake (2013) tracing the etymology of the term asserted, “the origins word ‘spirituality’ lay in the Latin noun spiritualitas, which is associated with the adjective spiritualis (spiritual). These ultimately derive from the Greek noun pneuma, spirit, and the adjective pneumatikos as they appear in St. Paul’s letters in the New Testament” (p. 2). He continued to explain that the original meaning is not a metaphysical contrast, as in spirit opposed to body (or immaterial to material), but a theological reality. Hahne (2016) explained that the Bible uses the term
spirituality to express both the reality of God and the reality of man, and the possibility of a rela-
tionship between these two realities. Spirituality, according to Hahne, is describing: (a) the pos-
sibility of relationship between God and humanity; (b) the process of that relationship; (c) the quality of the thoughts and acts; (d) the possibility of perceiving others as spiritual persons; and (e) the following of Jesus Christ and being led by the Spirit of God. Being spiritual in New Tes-
tament times was set against being carnal, or not of the Spirit of God. Departing from this origin it is necessary to trace the development of the meaning of spirituality throughout the centuries, because Christian spirituality, and some would argue spirituality in general (Milacci, 2003), must be understood historically and theologically (Houston, 2003; Wood, 2003). This section will develop the historical development of spirituality and address its Christian theological signifi-
cance.

**Historical perspectives on Christian spirituality.** This section will follow Sheldrake’s (2013) division of the history of spirituality into seven time-periods: (a) the foundations in the Scriptures and the early church; (b) monastic spirituality from 300 to 1150 A.D.; (c) city spirituality from 1150 to 1450 A.D.; (d) spirituality during the reformations – 1450 to 1700 A.D.; (e) spirituality in the age of reason including 1700 to 1900 A.D.; (f) modernity and postmodernity from 1900 to 2000 A.D.; and (g) current trajectories in the 21st century. These periods provide the framework for the following discussion of historical perspectives on spirituality.

The Scriptural origins have already been discussed above, and so we turn to the Church Fathers. Houston (2003) traced Christian spirituality back to the Apostles and the Church Fa-
thers, noting that Jerome coined the Latin noun *spiritualis* as early as the fifth century. Repre-
sentative the Church Fathers’ treatment of spirituality are the writings of Origen of Alexandria, Evagrius Ponticus, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, as well as Gregory of Nyssa’s *The Life*
of Moses, and Augustine of Hippo’s *Confessions* (Sheldrake, 2013). From the beginnings of Christianity, the church had to wrestle with the issues of reason and faith (Todd, 2003). In this we already see a departure from the original meaning of spirituality as something not in opposition to reason, but understood as a life according to God’s will. However, the tension between reason and spirituality now became and remain the focal point of the discussion. The positions that the Church Fathers assumed can be categorized by the metaphor of Athens versus Jerusalem, i.e. reason or philosophy versus simple faith or piety. Olson (1999) remarked, “the relationship between philosophy and Christian reflection forms a very important part of the story of Christian theology. It provides some of the juiciest tension in that story” (p.23). This tension still has its impact on theological education today as is discussed below (Ott, 2013).

With the rise of scholasticism in the twelfth century, a new and rather negative non-rational connotation was being connected with spirituality. In the twelfth century Bernard of Clairvaux responded, with a renewed emphasis on daily life-experience of God in his word, to the scholastic approach to theology that was perpetuated by scholars such as Abelard. Houston (2003) summarized this new situation, “from the rise of scholasticism in the twelfth century onward, terms such as ascetic, monastic, and mystical theology arose, to distinguish such lived, contemplative faith from rational speculation about it” (p. 37, emphasis in original). The term also continued to designate the clerical state throughout the medieval times. During the Protestant reformation in the early 16th century, the term was again more positively appropriated as piety, godliness, or holiness; however, by the 18th century the concept was so degraded that the 1771 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* vol. 3 of the Society of Gentlemen in Scotland defined spiritualities as “the profits of a bishop, and not as a baron of parliament…. The income of his jurisdiction” (p. 622).
It was in the 17th century in France where spirituality began to be re-connected with a form of Christian living. In recent history, Sheldrake (2013) sees a resurgence of the use of spirituality as a description of the Christian life, which began with Vatican II in the early 1960s. This emergence reemphasized the theological meaning of the term by counteracting the notion that spirituality was purely supernatural. Spirituality rather referred to the collective sense of spiritual life that integrates all aspects of human experience and establishes a foundation of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. The understanding of spirituality in this sense does no longer mean the total absence of rational thought.

Hahne (2016) observed that term spirituality became more common in German-speaking Europe in the 1960. In the 1970s the German evangelical faith community adopted the term and understood it to mean the lived-out faith in planning, thinking, and doing (Zimmerling, 2003), which is a return to the historic-biblical understanding of spirituality. Since then there has been a growing interest in the concept of spirituality among evangelicals (McGrath, 2003). However, outside of the church context spirituality was increasingly referred to in terms of internality and meaning of life (Hahne, 2016). By 1980 the term spirituality stimulated much internal discussion in the church to find a new definition, and since the 1990s an almost inflationary use of the term in the context of the new religions (Hahne, 2016). Vatican II accomplished a re-thinking of spirituality for Christianity as a whole, but for evangelicals, Houston (2003) rather sees the Charismatic movement as responsible for the challenge to focus on spirituality.

**Contemporary meaning of spirituality.** Outside of Christian circles, spirituality is often contrasted with religion. It is generally understood as a psychological, and not a theological concept. According to this understanding, spirituality is open for everyone once religiosity is bracketed out of the concept (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b; Sheldrake, 2013). Sheldrake (2013)
identified five approaches to spirituality in contemporary literature: (a) spirituality is the quest for holistic living; (b) spirituality is a quest for the sacred; (c) spirituality is a quest for meaning; (d) spirituality is a way for people to thrive; and (e) spirituality is a quest for ultimate values. Krause (2015) is not so quick to categorically dismiss religion from the discussion, but also argues that it is not a necessary requirement of spirituality. Spirituality in a non-religious sense is primarily understood as an intrinsic source of motivation. Piedmont (2001) defined it as “a non-specific affective force that drives, directs, and selects behaviors” (p. 5). He also admitted, that such a definition is different from that held by most religious psychologists or by theologians.

The problematic issues with the contemporary understanding are twofold. This understanding of spirituality is disconnected from its etymological and historical meaning (Milacci, 2003). Furthermore, it assumes an introspective and non-communal focus, whereby spirituality is merely seen as a practice that yields desirable results for the individual (Houston, 2003). The critics of the many contemporary attempts on defining spirituality assert, that such an understanding of spirituality not only contradicts its original meaning (Milacci, 2003; Sheldrake, 2013), and that it also makes the concept vulnerable to miss-use because it is generally left vague (Lips-Wiersma, Dean, & Fornaciari, 2009).

**Contemporary nonreligious research on spirituality.** Spirituality has a wide range of definitions in the nonreligious empirical literature that are all connected to the idea of intrinsic motivation (Piedmont, 2001). Most involve personal action words such as expression, response, search, striving, or quest (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b; Sheldrake, 2013). Dent, et al. (2005) defined spirituality in action terms, such as “a search for meaning, reflection, inner connectedness, creativity, transformation, sacredness, and energy” (p. 633). Others connected spirituality more directly to a relationship with a higher power that has influence on ones’ life (Fry, 2003).
Phipps (2012) found middle ground between the action and relationship foci by connecting spirituality with both the desire to relate with the transcendent, but also with the desire for wholeness and self-realization. Krause (2015) connected concepts of transcendence, faith-content, individuality, activity, meaning, connection, unity, hope, forgiveness, and appreciation as central aspects, elements, or expressions of spirituality. Along this line of thinking, Fry (2003) emphasized two key aspects of spirituality including the connection to a transcendent being and the search for ultimate purpose.

Perrin (2007) distinguished four meaning areas connected with the term spirituality, which could refer to: (a) the spiritual nature of human beings; (b) the ability of humans to transcend themselves; (c) a reality that is integrated into life in a meaningful way; or (d) an academic field of study. In the context of this study the latter two meaning area are elaborated on from an empirical and an evangelical perspective. The aforementioned discussion indicates an increased awareness that the human is not merely a rational being (Houston, 2003). For instance, spirituality has recently been empirically researched as a psychological phenomenon within the dimensions of spiritual health, well-being or wellness, transcendence, development and growth, needs, distress, intelligence, and self-consciousness (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b; Piedmont, 2001).

Critique of spirituality as defined by empirical literature. The empirical view of spirituality often intentionally disregards any connection of spirituality with religion. One argument against this view points towards its unprotected susceptibility to uncontestable subjective statements. This becomes possible because the term has lost its historical and theological foundation in the empirical definition. The empirical view of spirituality makes the term “an abstract noun that has become so devoid of theological content that it can be attached to almost any modifying phrase” (Wood, 2003, p. 92). A definition of spirituality that is disconnected from religion seems
to disregard the reality, that for people spirituality seems always to be connected to some faith content (Krause, 2015).

Perrin (2007) followed a different line of critique by distinguishing non-authentic and authentic spirituality. He noted that authentic spirituality involves “the integration of all aspects of life in a unified whole…. [It] is not necessarily associated with belief in a God or some supernatural being…. [It] is not at all about one’s personal life” (pp. 17-18). Spirituality, in an empirical sense, is generally about one’s personal life, and not fully authentic in Perrin’s sense. In other words, if spirituality is understood only in an individual psychological sense, it remains something that is contained within the person without any accountability or responsibility relationship beyond the person, as would be the case within a religious system. Willard (2003) commented on this individualistic definition saying, “spirituality as now generally understood usually refers to a human dimension… an exercise of human abilities” (p. 43). If spirituality is only contained within the subject without an outwards frame of reference or accountability, it seems almost impossible to arrive at any meaningful empirical result should it be studied. Consequently, some empirical investigators used the term spirituality and religiosity almost synonymously, since “both refer to an interest in a larger meaning and purpose in life which transcends our current mortal condition” (Piedmont, 2001, p. 4), or they at least considered some form of faith content to be essential for spirituality (Krause, 2015).

By way of contrast the evangelical perspective on spirituality is that of a letting go of self-centered identity, and of an emancipating from narcissism (Houston, 2003), and that such a perspective primarily emerges from the term’s theological moorings. Houston went on to say, “Christian spirituality today is not to confuse… with the general cultural interest in spirituality; for the latter is further expressive of the intensely individualistic and, indeed, narcissistic spirit of
our times” (p. 35). The remainder of this section briefly addresses theoretical research that did not assume the empirical definition of spirituality, but defined it based on Christian theology.

Contemporary research on Christian spirituality. First it must be acknowledged that Christianity today is not the only religion that utilizes the term spirituality as part of their faith experience and doctrine (Frisch, 2016). Christian spirituality shares with the understanding of spirituality in other religions its foundation on scriptures, the keeping of sacred spaces, visible structures, transcendent beliefs, and spiritual practices (Sheldrake, 2013). Nevertheless, Christian spirituality also has its unique distinctives compared to other religions as Houston (2003) observed, “the challenge of Christian spirituality is a major event in our times” (p. 38). Zimmerling (2003), in his treatment of spirituality in the context of evangelical (evangelische) theology, noted that in Germany the term Spiritualität (spirituality) still lacks specificity as it is juxtaposed with the concepts of Frömmigkeit (piety), Glaube (faith), and Religiösität (religiosity). He argued that the unease among evangelicals to use the term spirituality could be explained by its innate tendency to weaken the doctrine of justification by grace due to its emphasis on human activity. However, Zimmerling also pointed towards several advantages for the use of spirituality: (a) it is understood in all ecumenical circles; (b) it indicates a plurality of spiritualties; (c) it reintroduces the underemphasized work of the Spirit to the consciousness of Western theology; and (d) it clarifies that church-related dimensions are intrinsically connected to faith. Christian spirituality today is researched as an interdisciplinary field (Sheldrake, 2013), a fact to which this present study also gives testimony.

Evangelical theological perspectives on spirituality. In keeping with the delimitations for this study, primarily evangelical sources were included in this section. Evangelical perspectives understand spirituality as a personal relationship with God that transcends religion (Mi-
lacci, 2003). Faith, for evangelical believers, is something very practical that requires commitment, and that has direct impact on their lives; or to use a sociological term, faith is very salient (Roest & Stoppels, 2012). Spirituality is therefore essentially supernatural and incarnational at the same time (Willard, 2003). Christian spirituality, however, should not be understood as being confined to the ritualistic practices of a certain religious brand within Christianity. Perrin (2007) defined Christian spirituality beyond the boundaries of religion saying:

[Spirituality is] the experience of transformation in the Divine-human relationship as modeled by Jesus Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit…. It is appropriated as a lifestyle within all relationships within the broader Christian community as well as in society in general…. [It] embraces Christian traditions and beliefs, it also exceeds the boundaries of established religions and their theologies…. [It] is always open to new and unexpected expressions of the way the Spirit of God is actively incarnated in human history, whether within the Christian traditions or from outside of them (p. 32).

In other words, Christian spirituality is a lived-out theological conviction and a personal divine-human relationship that transcends traditions and religions and impacts all of life; or “spirituality is about being all of who God has made us to be” (George, 2003, p. 5). Spirituality is thus not defined by the way a person is doing religion, but by the “manifestation of the supernatural life of God in our souls” (Willard, 2003, p. 44).

However, personal spirituality, as Houston (2003) is quick to remind, is not about individualistic therapy, but has an outward focus of mission-appropriate communication of one’s faith. Spirituality is the lived out faith, theological commitments lived and felt, or an “internalization of our faith” (McGrath, 2003, p. 13, emphasis in original). It is a transformational experience that comes from knowing and experiencing God personally into authenticity of life and
thought. The gospel message of the Bible is deeply linked with the evangelical view of spirituality. An important spiritual practice is the meditation on the Bible; a "letting the biblical text impact on every aspect of our life and thought" (McGrath, 2003, p. 19). From the anticipation of an eternal future in the presence of God the evangelical believer derives meaning for the spiritual journey today. A fitting metaphor for evangelical spirituality is that of a journey that begins at a moment of conversion, and that is obediently walked in abandonment and sanctification sustained by grace while moving from achieving and doing to resting and being (George, 2003). In other words, Christian spirituality is expressed as “lived faith” (Houston, 2003, p. 33). Thus spirituality is intrinsically and essentially linked to the rational reality as well as the supernatural reality, whereby spiritual persons live out the will of God in their lives.

The concept of spirituality has now been introduced in its historical and theological Christian expressions, as well as in its current definitions. In the following sections spirituality will be integrated into the framework of workplace spirituality and of spiritual leadership.

**Workplace Spirituality**

This section includes studies and publications that introduce the theory of workplace spirituality. It is currently considered as a related sub-category to spiritual leadership, even though it was chronologically developed earlier. After defining and outlining contributing factors that encouraged its study, I turn to empirical investigations of workplace spirituality.

A scientific definition describes workplace spirituality as “aspects of the workplace, either in the individual, the group, or the organization, that promote individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b, p. 13). The recent awareness of spirituality at the workplace arose in response to a felt void at work (Avolio et al., 2009). This void can be explained by shifting values, an increase of social anomie, and a renewed search for
meaning in both personal and professional arenas (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b). Others observed that workplace spirituality programs are being implemented to create sustainable business models in the 21st century (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). Fry (2003) noted elsewhere, “it appears that the requirements for intrinsic motivation in the new learning organizational paradigm, coupled with its demands on employee time, require that people must now satisfy, at least to some degree, their fundamental needs for spirituality at work” (p. 705). With the increase of this phenomenon in the workplace empirical studies sought to investigate.

Workplace spirituality has been studied by both academic researchers and practitioners (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b). It was investigated in conjunction with servant leadership (Bowden, Ferris, & Kolodinsky, 2010), emotional intelligence (Peerayuth, Jose Luis, & Ruth, 2013), workplace integration (Goldstein-Gidoni & Zaidman, 2011), occupational stress (Zellars, Perrewe, & Brees, 2010), organizational commitment (Armenio & Miguel Pina, 2008), work-related learning (Dirkx, 2013), organizational learning (Dent, Higgins, & Wharf, 2005) and work effectiveness (Bowden, Ferris, & Kolodinsky, 2010). Other studies have shown that programs of workplace spirituality contributed to an increase of employee health, psychological well being, organizational commitment, and productivity (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013).

**Spiritual Leadership**

This section includes studies and literature that apply spirituality as the central thesis to a leadership theory paradigm, or that studied spiritual leadership empirically. Spiritual leadership has long been the focus of Christian publications, but more recently nonreligious empirical research has turned towards the formulation of a comprehensive theory of spiritual leadership.

**Christian perspectives on spiritual leadership.** Most Christian publications on the matter of spiritual leadership begin their discussion with the leader’s sense of a divine calling
(Sanders, 2007; Sweet, 2004). Lewis and Weems (2006) maintain that seminary presidency is a matter of vocation and calling. In Christian literature a spiritual leadership metaphor often relates to biblical imagery such as the shepherd leader (Ott, 2013; Whittington, 2014). In their comprehensive work of describing the spiritual leader from a Christian perspective, Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) discussed the challenge, role, preparation, vision, goal, character, influence, decision making, schedule of leaders, as well as leadership and change, team-building, pitfalls and rewards of spiritual leadership. Some developed comprehensive theories for the development of spiritual leaders (Clinton, 2012), while others focused on select best practices for spiritual leadership (Barna, 1997; McNeal, 2000, 2006). McIntosh and Rima (2007) investigated the dark sides and potential failures of spiritual leadership. In summary, the Christian literature connects spirituality and leadership, and often speaks directly about the spiritual leader.

**Nonreligious perspectives on spiritual leadership.** In nonreligious literature the concept of the spiritual leader is a fairly recent occurrence. This section includes literature and studies that take an empirical approach to the inquiry into spiritual leadership as it relates to theory development and marketplace application.

The authors referenced in this sector intentionally write about spiritual leadership from a nonreligious perspective, because, as already discussed above, they generally define spirituality as something that transcends any religion or doctrinal belief (Fry, 2003). In this context religion is defined as being concerned with faith claims, traditions, and theories (i.e. theology, Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). Spirituality on the other hand, so Fry & Nisiewicz’s argument, is universally based on love and service for others. In contrast to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010) who diminished religious spirituality as impossible to study empirically, Fry and Nisiewicz (2013) admitted that nondenominational or non-theistic spirituality is not superior to religious spirituality. It
seems that these authors cannot dismiss the validity of the constructs and values that emerge from religious sources, but at the same time seek to avoid the exclusivity that many religious systems claim. The question remains if those values are sustainable once removed from their religious source. This, however, is not subject of this study. Since all leaders in this study work in a definite Christian environment, there was not need to transcend their religion in order to describe their experiences of spiritual leadership. It came at no surprise, that during our conversations the lead administrators interpreted spiritual leadership exclusively form their own Christian persuasion and from the perspective of religious spirituality.

In the academic community much writing on spiritual leadership refers to the theoretical groundwork built by Fairholm, and by Fry and his associates in developing spiritual leadership theory (Fairholm, 2011; Fry & Kriger, 2009; Fry, 2003; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). This section focusses on Fry et al.’s, work with some additional contributions by Fairholm. Fry (2003) defined spiritual leadership “as comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 711).

Spiritual leadership theory (SLT) is applicable to leaders, to followers, and to entire organizations. It can be also applied to organizational transformation (Fry, Nisiewicz, Vitucci & Cedillo, 2007; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). In this broad applicability, Fry (2003) developed a theory based on the aspects of sense of calling, altruistic love as organizational culture, and genuine care, concern, and appreciative interest in self and others (see also Figure 1). He summarized the model of SLT as follows:

A causal theory… within an intrinsic motivation model that incorporates vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, theories of workplace spirituality, and spiritual survival.
The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team, and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity (p. 693).

The key processes of spiritual leadership include creating a vision in which followers and leaders find their calling, and establishing an organizational culture based on altruistic love where everyone experiences membership (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013).

Similar to the framework of spirituality in the workplace, spiritual leadership also places the focus on an integrated life where mind, body and spirit, or home, community, and self are integrated to become a more productive leader. It follows a brief discussion of the theory’s constructs effort, performance, reward, calling, and membership.

![Figure 1: Causal Model of Spiritual Leadership (Fry, 2003, p. 695). Reproduced with permission.](image)

In the framework of spiritual leadership theory (Fry, 2003), effort is expressed in hope/faith and works, and includes aspects of endurance and perseverance, a willingness to do what it takes, and an expectation of victory or success. Fry (2003) explained:

Faith is more than hope or the expectation of something desired. It is the conviction that a thing unproved by physical evidence is true. Hope is a desire with expectation of fulfillment. Faith adds certainty to hope. It is a firm belief in something for which there is no
proof. Faith is more than merely wishing for something. It is based on values, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate absolute certainty and trust that what is desired and expected will come to pass (p. 713).

The construct of effort has been studied elsewhere to create a theoretical framework for strategic decision-making (Phipps, 2012), and maintaining enthusiasm through intrinsic motivation, autonomy, relatedness, and spiritual well being (Maharana, Srinivasan, & Nagendra, 2014). Maharana, Srinivasan, and Negendra advanced the concept of the Spiritual Quotient (SQ) for leaders, that “is concerned with meaning, values and creative vision and most importantly has the power to transform individuals into positive, interacting and contributing members whether in society at large or in an organization” (p. 992).

The construct of altruistic love includes aspects of forgiveness, kindness, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, compassion, loyalty, trust, humility, and empathy. It is defined “as a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others” (Fry, 2003, p. 712). This construct of SLT has been studied in the context of ethical behavior (Sanders, 2014), in conjunction with follower’s happiness (Zavvareh & Samangooei, 2013), and its influence on the rebuilding of an ethical culture based on spiritual values (Driscoll & McKee, 2007).

Fry (2003) defined calling as “a vision of life’s purpose and meaning“ (p. 706). The term calling has long been used as one of the defining characteristics of a professional in any line of work. Professionals in general have expertise in a specialized body of knowledge. Their ethics are centered on selfless service to clients/customers. Professionals sense an obligation to maintain quality standards within the profession, while maintaining commitment to their calling, a dedication to their work, and a strong commitment to their careers (Filley, House, & Kerr, 1976).
People with a strong sense of calling believe in value of their profession (Fry, 2003). The study of the sense of calling has elsewhere been related to career-motivation’s impact on spiritual leadership (Sadeghifar, Bahadori, Baldacchino, Raadabadi, & Jafari, 2014).

Membership is defined as belonging to “a community where one is understood and appreciated” (Fry, 2003, p. 706). Membership, thus, includes the cultural and social structures through which people seek to be understood and to be appreciated. Through a culture of altruistic love and a vision that gives meaning to a person’s calling, spiritual leadership provides the individual with a sense of belonging that leads to spiritual well-being (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). This construct has elsewhere been studied in the context of the spiritual leaders’ influence of employee motivational autonomy and eudemonic well being (Chen, Chen, & Li, 2013), and as an explanation why overworked leaders still maintain enthusiasm (Maharana, Srinivasan, & Nagendra, 2014).

The result of spiritual leadership is an increased organizational commitment, where “people with a sense of calling and membership will become attached, loyal to, and want to stay in organizations that have cultures based on the values”, and increased productivity where, “people who have hope/faith in the organization’s vision and who experience calling and membership will ‘do what it takes’ in pursuit of the vision to continuously improve and be more productive” (Fry, 2003, p. 714).

Fairholm (2011) spoke to the spiritual leader’s values, attitudes and behaviors. His discussion relates to Fry’s (2003) construct of performance, which includes a vision that has broad appeal, defines both destination and journey, reflects high ideals, encourages hope and faith, and establishes a high standard of excellence. Fairholm emphasized value transfer and value congruence in leadership, operating from the presupposition that personal values are more
important for behavior than policies, orders, or procedures. In other words, since people are better motivated intrinsically, leaders should lead through transfer of values. “Leaders”, according to Fairhom’s theory, “identify their personal spiritual and professional values and transfer some of them to followers” (p. ix). The construct of vision has elsewhere been investigated in the context of purpose driven leadership (Dantley, 2003), and it has been utilized for creating a framework for strategic decision-making (Phipps, 2012).

Some raised warning flags about potential negative aspects of spiritual leadership. It could be used as a mere tool to coerce people into value compliance or as a strategic method to increase productivity by exploiting the follower’s spiritual sensitivities (Krishnakumar, Houghton, Neck, & Ellison, 2014). Others have noted that a vague definition of spirituality leaves altruistic love without transcendent motivation, and values and faith/hope without objective foundation (e.g. Milacci, 2003).

It must be noted that the field of spiritual leadership studies is still developing the paradigms and frameworks of spiritual leadership (Dent et al., 2005). What could be seen, however is that the non-religious perspective of spiritual leadership is based on values, practices, and leadership style, while the Christian view rests on a divine relationship and calling.

**Servant Leadership**

The review of literature on workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership indicated a close connection between these frameworks and the theory of servant leadership (Bowden et al., 2010; Gardner et al., 2010). The literary body that was considered for this study indicated, that the subject area can be divided into two categories. One category includes authors that approached servant leadership as a theory, and the other category includes authors that see it as a matter of theology, or lived theology.
Theoretical perspectives on servant leadership. At the beginning of a theoretical treatment of servant leadership must stand a discussion of the work of Robert Greenleaf (2002), who is often called the father of servant leadership. His theory follows the foundational assumption that every person has a natural tendency to serve. If leaders understand themselves as servants, their followers will potentially become “healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants” (Chapter 1, section “who is the servant leader?”). Servant leadership “is in essence, a way of being” (Spears, 2010, p. 13). The two most important elements of servant leadership theory are an outward focus, which becomes evident in a genuine concern with serving those who follow, and a proper perception of self and the self-concept of the leader as being the first among equals (Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010).

In 1970 Greenleaf began to develop the theoretical model of servant leadership with the publication of his book The Servant as Leader. Ever since others have built on this model creating a vast body of contributions. Even though this theory deserves a more in-depth treatment to do its importance for leadership studies justice, this section mainly draws from Greenleaf’s own writings in order to provide a fundamental understanding of the core concepts of this theory. In the following section each construct is briefly introduced.
Figure 2: Servant Leadership Characteristics

Servant leaders are active listeners, because they seek to understand the needs of others. They, however, not only seek to know, but also want to empathize with, the feelings of others with the goal to foster emotional and spiritual wholeness and healing, while being aware of one another’s values, feelings, strengths, and weaknesses (Ingram, 2003). Greenleaf (1977) explained that through conscience, servant leaders transform their passion into compassion, which in turn becomes one of the foundations or their moral authority. This requires leaders to accept the persons under their leadership without qualification. Greenleaf saw healing as one of the servant leader’s main sources for motivation. The awareness of servant leaders, according to Greenleaf, goes beyond the usual alertness, but a sustained perception of things as they really are.

Servant leaders lead by positive influence and respectfully communicated persuasion (Ingram, 2003). Greenleaf (1977) explained:
When people with formal authority or positional power refuse to use that authority and power except as a last resort… they have subordinated their ego and positional power and use reasoning, persuasion, kindness, empathy, and, in short, trustworthiness instead (Loc. 178, emphasis in original).

In the construct of persuasion, all previous concepts are combined to establish the moral authority of the leader who does not have to rely on position and power to lead. The leader rather exercises leadership, because he or she has proved to be trustworthy.

When planning ahead, the servant leader can conceptually integrate present realities with future possibilities while exercising the ability of foresight (Ingram, 2003). The characteristic of conceptualization is a somewhat mystical concept. The leader intuitively makes judgments and decisions without having all the information, but has a sense of the unknowable and unforeseeable (Greenleaf, 1997). Related to conceptualization is the construct of foresight, which Greenleaf defined as, “a better than average guess about what is going to happen when in the future” (Chapter 1, Section “Foresight – The Central Ethic of Leadership”, emphasis in original).

Servant leaders take responsibility as stewards for the people and organizations entrusted to them, and exhibit commitment towards service and the fostering of spiritual, professional, and personal growth within each individual of the organization (Ingram, 2003). Greenleaf (1977) regarded the principle of stewardship as the measure of leadership excellence. In essence his servant leadership theory redefined leadership as service and stewardship. For Greenleaf stewardship applies to the areas of the material world and all living things. Through good stewardship leaders build a sense of community among the members of the organization.

Studies on servant leadership often carry Judeo-Christian overtones, but Sendjaya (2010) observed that the theory had also found support from other religious and non-religious frame-
works. The theory itself was tested cross-culturally, and it has been found valid and viable across cultures, provided appropriate cultural qualifications are applied to terminology, power-distance issues, and to cultural structures to correctly communicate the follower-focus of servant leadership (Irving, 2010). The reason for these overtones may be the consequence of the resonance servant leadership theory finds with biblical principles of leadership, which in turn warrants a discussion of the matter from a theological perspective.

Theological perspectives on servant leadership. Greenleaf’s theory allows an understanding of servant leadership without any reference to the Bible or influence of Christian faith. But as Ingram (2003) concluded, “Robert Greenleaf’s explanation of servant leadership has influenced many of the models of servant leadership proposed by Christian writers” (p. 30). Since this study focuses on leaders in evangelical seminaries, only sources from a Christian background were considered for this section.

The primary example of servant leadership from a theological perspective is found in the person of Jesus Christ, and in his words and acts as they are described in the New Testament. His own words are most educative about his view of leadership as service:

But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:25-18; ESV).

Blackaby and Blackaby (2011), after analyzing Jesus’ life and leadership, formulated several keys to servant leadership. They observed that servant leaders lead (a) out of love for God and
for people, (b) knowing who they are themselves, and (c) knowing that they ultimately serve God and not people.

Ingram (2003) developed an argument for the biblical basis of servant leadership, and consecutively this leadership style’s applicability for leadership in Christian higher education. Leaning on Snodgrass (1993), Ingram made the point that servant leadership is not a style choice at all, but a living out of one’s theology. From Young (1999), Ingram traced the biblical roots of servant leadership to the Old Testament records of leadership, and Sanders (1994), Snodgrass (1993), and Blackaby and Blackaby (2003), are mentioned to develop New Testament perspectives. Rinehart (1998) combined the religious understanding of spiritual leadership with a theological perspective on servant leadership. He pointed towards the spiritual dimension of servant leadership that begins with the leader’s relationship with God, a relationship that develops and matures, and that is characterized by love, hope, and faith.

The framework is now erected and the canvas of the background has been placed on it. In keeping with the analogy, the last section of the literature review paints a picture of leadership in theological education through the lenses of the theoretical framework.

**Leadership in Theological Education**

The inductive part of the literature review takes a turn at this point as the emerging theoretical framework is deductively applied to the context of leadership in evangelical theological education, and where possible specifically in a context of German-speaking Europe. In German-speaking Europe evangelical institutions of theological training have their beginning with the foundation of Bible school in Berlin by the *Evangelische Allianz* in 1905 (Jung, 2000). With the increased influence of North American evangelicalism after WWII, new Bible schools were established, the existing schools were strengthened, and many were connected with the North
American accreditation system through the European Evangelical Accrediting Agency, established in 1979 (Ott, 2001).

In the area of spirituality, the literature reveals the historic and present tensions and reform efforts to reconcile the academic with the spiritual in the evangelical seminary. Spirituality, workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership is applied to leadership in higher education as well as seminary leadership.

**Seminary Leadership and Spirituality**

In the context of evangelical theological education, Ott (2013) observed an increased awareness of a spiritual deficit in traditional theological academics, and a respective increase of literature attempting to integrate spirituality and the study of theology. Houston (2003) attributed a renewed interest in spirituality to the recovery of Trinitarian theology in recent years. Seminaries today have to deal with the issues of reconciling academic scholarship and personal spirituality in their programs (Ott, 2013; Randall, 2007). According to Zimmerling (2003) the separation of theology and spirituality is a rather unique feature of Protestantism. Willard (2003) affirms, “the missing note in evangelical life today is not in the first instance spirituality but rather obedience” (p. 40, emphasis in original). He goes on to explain that evangelicalism has become a religion that affirms personal spiritual experience that is disconnected from theological integrity on one hand, and on the other hand engages in theological discourse without obedience to the Scriptures. Hans Urs von Balthasar (in Houston, 2003) condemned this divorce as “the disappearance of the ‘complete’ theologian… the theologian who is also a saint” (pp. 37-38). Todd (2003) traced this development back to the ancient question of Tertullian, “what does Athens have to do with Jerusalem”, meaning that reason and simple faith are incompatible. The question of reason and faith, therefore, is an age-old tension among the Christian movement (Olson, 1999). The
question of spirituality in theological education must, therefore, be investigated through the lens of history, to identify the historical development of the topic and to understand the historical context of recent reform efforts.

Historical development of spirituality in theological education. Ever since the Protestant reformation, there existed a growing separation between personal spirituality and academic theologizing. This trend was counteracted by Pietism in the 17th and 18th century through theologians such as August Hermann Francke, and later through the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche) and individuals such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to name a few. Bonhoeffer will serve as an example of how these trends sought to overcome the separation between personal spirituality and academic theologizing. Stassen (2012) summarized Bonhoeffer’s programmatic vision in seven dimensions including: (a) the importance of clear direction, identity, and conviction in the church; (b) an inclusion of Christ’s divinity and humanity in teaching and confession; (c) living incarnational lives that enter into the experiences of other people; (d) a strong emphasis on participative grace as one becomes part of God’s working in the world; (e) holding the gospel as relevant for both private life and public culture; (f) attention to the biblical call for justice; and (g) a strong emphasis on prayer.

Randall (2007) investigated the historical development of theological and spiritual education in Baptist seminaries using the example of the College that Charles H. Spurgeon, the so-called prince of preachers in 19th century England, founded in London. This will serve as an example of the continued historical tension between academics and spirituality at theological training institutions. Randall discovered an increasing attention to matters of spirituality in seminary education over the two decades preceding his writing. His primary goal was to determine whether and how spirituality can become part of the seminary program. Randall identified three posi-
tions on this matter: (a) theological education equals spiritual formation; (b) theological education is not equal to spiritual formation, however, the latter is viewed as an essential part of the former; and (c) spirituality cannot be taught in educational settings. The form of spirituality that Spurgeon aimed for was a grounded spirituality, one that is in touch with the day-to-day experiences of people. He sought to achieve this grounding through bringing his students into contact with vibrant churches. Spurgeon did not dismiss academic rigor, for he believed that higher academic accolades helped the minister to be heard, but he introduced a shift of emphasis – grounded spirituality first, academic scholarship second. The culture at the seminary of intentionally crafted towards communal learning, even between instructors and student. Spirituality itself was grounded in the Scriptures but also exercised through spiritual disciplines such as prayer and chapels.

**Seminary Leadership and Workplace Spirituality**

Earlier in the review, workplace spirituality has already been illumined from a non-religious perspective. This was necessary, because the literature often makes a clear distinction between religion and spirituality (e.g. Hill & Smith, 2010; Phipps, 2012; White Jr., 2010). A common rational for this division is that, “from a scientific stance, religion is ill-defined and un-testable and therefore cannot contribute to a scientific body of knowledge” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b, p. 5). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz further argue, that taking “a religious approach… removes the approach from the accepted paradigm of practice and scholarship” (p. 5). With this statement they claim the right to define accepted practice and dismiss religion, because it is ill-defined. Without intending to solve the issue completely, the following section shows that religious approaches to spirituality are in fact accepted practice in scholarship, and that a spiritu-
ality void of religious moorings becomes itself hard to define. The argument that religion itself is not definable would call into question all religious studies, programs, and efforts.

Dent et al. (2005) challenged a religion-free definition of spirituality apart from religion, contending that those studies “have not taken the time to make explicit the many beliefs implicit in how they define spirituality” (p. 635). Milacci (2003) also criticized the separation of spirituality from religion, for it makes its definition vague and imprecise. This vagueness of definition is generally recognized as a weakness in the science of workplace spirituality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b). Milacci (2003) continued to point out that a disconnection of the concept of spirituality from “traditional, etymological, and religious/theological moorings… empties the term of meaning, which in turn makes it much easier for the term to be co-opted, commodified, and misused“ (p. 100). It seems to be detrimental to the understanding of workplace spirituality if religion is categorically rejected as a viable factor. In fact, studies on the perceptions of workplace spirituality have established a strong connection between spirituality and religion (Anselmo Ferreira, 2013). For the purpose of this study the distinction of spirituality and religion will be generally disregarded since the focus on leaders in the German Evangelical context implies a religion-based spirituality.

**Seminary Leadership and Servant Leadership**

The theory of servant leadership is often related to the leadership of institutions for theological training (e.g. Gillespie, 2004; Ott, 2013). Wheeler (2012), in his comprehensive application of servant leadership to higher education, made the argument that other styles of leadership currently present in the institutions are not sustainable. His premise includes cornerstones of “a call to serve, authenticity, humility, moral courage, and healing one’s own emotional state” (p. v). Wheeler outlined ten principles as guidelines for leaders in higher education to follow. These
principles also provide a rather comprehensive outline of Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory: (a) highest priority is the service of others; (b) work to facilitate the need of others; (c) promotion of taking responsibility and problem solving at all levels of the organization; (d) promotion of emotional healing in all people as well as the organization as a whole; (e) regard of the means as important as the ends; (f) focus as balanced between the present and the future; (g) embrace of instances that create organizational discomfort such as paradoxes and dilemmas; (h) leaving a good legacy to society at large; (i) modeling of servant leadership; and (j) developing of servant leaders.

Kessler (2006) illustrated servant leadership as the inversion of the commonly held pyramid of power with the leader on top. He continued to defuse three misconceptions concerning this kind of leadership: (a) servant leadership does not mean that the leader leads servants; (b) servant leadership does not mean the leader serves and others lead; and (c) servant leadership does not mean the leader serves and does everything for the others. From the writings of Robert Greenleaf, he distilled five facets of servant leadership including: (a) servants lead others to autonomy; (b) servants’ gift of leadership is the gift of service; (c) people voluntarily follow gifted servant leaders; (d) servant leaders can lead themselves; and (e) servant leaders are open to critique. Kessler concludes that the servant leader in the Christian arena first and foremost serves God.

**Summary**

This thematic and theoretical literature review first investigated the immediate context of the participants for this proposed study. The lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe operate in a shifting arena of higher education, that is characterized by institutional academization and a professionalization of their leadership role. The Bologna Pro-
cess with its many implications was identified as an important driving force behind these two processes. It followed an introduction of institutions for theological education and their leadership. Evangelicalism was defined historically and theologically including examples of current issues with German evangelicals. Using an inductive structure, the theoretical framework of spirituality, workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership emerged from the discussion of current issues. Each theoretical construct was investigated from a Christian and a non-religious perspective. Finally, the theoretical framework was deductively reapplied to the lead administrators and the evangelical seminaries.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This study sought to arrive at essential descriptions of the phenomenon of leadership by studying the lived experiences of evangelical seminary lead-administrators in German-speaking Europe. To that end the qualitative transcendental phenomenology was considered an appropriate method (Parry et al., 2013). This chapter presents the design of the study outlining philosophical perspectives, unique features, and methodical limitations of the approach. Detailed descriptions of the participants and the setting of this study follow the list of research questions. The procedures, described in an overview, also include a section on the issues of language and translation in the context of this study. The analysis and data collection procedures are addressed within the descriptions of each data-gathering procedure. The chapter concludes with a description of how trustworthiness was established, and which ethical issues were anticipated.

Design

The description of the design of a study essentially is a description of the philosophic framework and the fundamental assumptions of the researcher (van Manen, 1990). Since I agree with the idea that knowledge is most ascertainable through the experiences of others (Willard, 1984), a qualitative approach was well suited to gain understanding of those individuals’ experiences (Patton, 2002), especially for the study of leadership (Parry et al., 2013). Van Manen elaborated, “lived human experience is always more complex than the result of any singular description, and… there is always an element of the ineffable to life” (p. 16). In order to overcome the ineffability of life, multiple sources of data from a sufficient number of participants were gathered to lay the foundation for the phenomenological analysis.
In the past, leadership has often been studied using quantitative instruments and surveys (Gardner et al., 2010). However, this present study assumed a qualitative approach with a human science perspective, since the meaning of human experiences within a lived human world was the subject matter (van Manen, 1990). Any form of human science research has in common that it studies the wholeness of human experiences that is not quantitatively measureable, and that it searches for meanings and essences through analysis of evidence primarily from first-person accounts of experiences. The theoretical framework that provided a back-structure for this study included servant leadership theory (e.g. Greenleaf, 2002), workplace spirituality (e.g. Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b), and spiritual leadership theory (e.g. Fry, 2003). These theories have also been studied extensively using qualitative approaches (Parry et al., 2013; Winston, 2010).

This inquiry followed the assumptions that experience and behavior are inseparable, and that the research questions and problems are of personal interest to the researcher who is personally involved in the process (Moustakas, 1994). Its design was systematic in its process, explicit in its intent, self-critical in its nature, and intersubjective in its scope (van Manen, 1990). Even though it is not the main focus of a transcendental phenomenology, theorists are confident that a phenomenological approach will yield relevant findings that may lead to practical applications, which will be addressed in Chapter Five (van Kaam in van Manen, 1990; Husserl, 2012).

**Choosing Transcendental Phenomenology**

Phenomenological inquiry has been defined as “a scientific study of the appearance of things, of phenomena just as we see them and as they appear to us in consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 49), or as “a philosophy or theory of the unique… interested in what is essentially not replaceable” (van Manen, 1990, p. 7, emphasis in original). From these two definitions one can gather four key elements of the phenomenological approach to scientific inquiry: (a) that it is
indeed scientific in nature (Willard, 1984); (b) that it is concerned about things as they appear or present themselves (Heidegger, 1962); (c) that it is a philosophy (Creswell, 2013); and (d) that it is a search for the essences of things (Husserl, 2012). This introduction to phenomenology further explains these key elements, primarily from the perspectives of Husserl (2012, 1973, 2012) and Heidegger (1962, 1972). Before proceeding with a deeper discussion of the concepts of phenomenology, it is of value to provide a more comprehensive definition of this approach to qualitative inquiry.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena, which are “the building blocks of human science and the basis for all knowledge” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Phenomenology can be understood as a relatively new branch of philosophy that is not concerned with a certain set of ideas, but rather develops a method of understanding the world. In Husserl’s understanding of the method, phenomenology helps subjects to gain objective knowledge (Willard, 1984). Phenomenological inquiry must consequently be thought of as a “science[s] within the field which philosophy opened up” (Heidegger, 1972, p. 57). It is a descriptive science of experiences where the unit of analysis is the human experience or conscience (Husserl, 2012; Willard, 1984). In the words of Heidegger (1962):

‘Phenomenology’ neither designates the object of its research, nor characterizes the subject-matter thus comprised. The word merely informs us of the ‘how’ with which what is to be treated in this science gets exhibited and handled. To have a science ‘of’ phenomena means to grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly (p. 59, emphasis in original)
In summary, phenomenology is a method of letting things show themselves as they really are; of understanding the meaning of this world in the way it is accepted by people as real (Husserl, 2012).

**Comparing transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology.** Phenomenological studies, at least in their continental flavor (Patton, 2002), are often approached either hermeneutically or transcendentally (Creswell, 2013). Edmund Husserl (1970, 1973, 2012) first developed the transcendental approach, also referred to as empirical or psychological phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). Inspired by Brentano’s concept of intentionality, Husserl asserted two foundational assumptions, namely that every mental act must be related to an existing object, and that all perceptions must have meaning (1970, 1973, 2012). Martin Heidegger (1962, 1972), a student and critic of Husserl, continued the thought-work of his teacher, but changed phenomenology substantively into a hermeneutical brand. This section outlines some important philosophical and methodical differences between the two approaches. At its conclusion I provide a rational for my decision to keep with the transcendental approach.

**Philosophical differences.** Husserl’s brand of phenomenology is interested in epistemology (Heidegger, 1962), whereby Heidegger understood “phenomenology [as] the science of the Being of entities – ontology” (p. 61). Both transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenologies are based on Husserl’s (2012) principle: “to the things themselves” (p. 328). The differences are found in how they describe the mode of perception, understanding, and analysis of this showing themselves of things as they really are. Husserl was more positivistic in assuming that one can reduce the bias of the perceiver sufficiently to be able to describe the things as they are (Dowling, 2007), and thus to arrive at objective knowledge of the object (Willard, 1984). Heidegger (1962), on the other hand, asserted, “the meaning of phenomenological description as
a method lies in interpretation” (p. 61). He, therefore, distinguished thinking for understanding and thinking for interpretation (Dowling, 2007). In other words, transcendental phenomenologists think to understand the essence of the phenomenon, while hermeneutical phenomenologists think to interpret the phenomenon.

While Husserl sought to describe lived experiences, Heidegger emphasized the understanding of them through interpretative (i.e. hermeneutical) processes (Dowling, 2007). Heidegger thus reinterpreted Husserl’s understanding of the essence of things based on cerebral consciousness into a more existential view of categories of human experience (Dowling, 2007). In simple terms, Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology seeks to describe what people know, or the “whatness of things”, while Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on being, or the “thatness” of things (van Manen, 1990, p. 177).

For Heidegger (1972) the definition of transcendence takes a dimension in opposition to Husserl’s (2012) understanding of it. Rather than “the objectivity of an object or experience as constituted in consciousness,” as Husserl would have described it, for Heidegger transcendental means, “the realm of projection for the determination of Being, that is, presencing as such, caught in sight form the opening up of human being” (Heidegger, 1972, p. 27). Thus for Husserl the universal objectivity of meaning is located in the object under investigation, and that is the reason why epistemic acts transcend themselves in grasping truth about objects that are not part of that act (Willard, 1984). For Heidegger this meaning, should it actually objectively exist, is veiled and only by determination of human beings it can be interpreted (Heidegger, 1972). In other words, for Husserl the meaning of the essence, or Being, is a priori (Husserl, 2012) – the thing makes the description - while for Heidegger appropriation is a priori and Being is posteriori – the description makes the thing.
**Methodical differences.** Methodically Husserl expressed a strong conviction that phenomenology must be thought anew without importing any philosophical theory or doctrine (Husserl, 2012). Heidegger diverted from this concept after finding concepts in Aristotle’s writings that seemed to be early indicators of a phenomenological approach (Heidegger, 1972). What is more, the transcendental brand of phenomenological inquiry relies heavily on the researcher’s suspension of judgment of the phenomenon through bracketing – *epoche*, or phenomenological reduction – whereby none of these procedures are formally present in the hermeneutic approach (Creswell, 2013).

However, it is of value to note at this point that even in the hermeneutic approach of phenomenology one can find tendencies towards philosophical reduction. In the summary of six seminar sessions on Heidegger’s (1972) lecture on *Time and Being* one encounters language such as “gaining of distance” (p. 30), “the task for thinking is that of freeing itself and keeping itself free for what is to be thought” (p. 35), or even, “the more stringently the step back is taken, the more adequate anticipatory Saying becomes” (p. 35). These statements are hardly equal to the fairly structured approach of Husserl’s (2012) *epoche*, but they also show that even in hermeneutical phenomenology the researcher must be aware of his or her own natural situation, and “step back” from it in order to think and speak adequately about the matter of investigation.

**Rationale for choosing transcendental phenomenology.** My primary reasons for leaning towards the transcendental approach over the hermeneutic phenomenology lie in its structural appeal and its *a priori* assumption of meaning. Furthermore, transcendental phenomenology allows participants more freedom to make their own voices heard and to describe their experiences with the phenomenon from their perspective (Dowling, 2007). The hermeneutical approach seems to require of the researcher to already be an expert on the phenomenon under study, and
this can hardly be said of me. Husserl’s phenomenology, though it describes the phenomenon on the individual basis, transcends this individuality and brings to light the phenomenon itself (Dowling, 2007). Subsequently I introduce the philosophical assumptions and methodical process of transcendental phenomenology.

**Introducing Transcendental Phenomenology**

The distinguishing factors of the transcendental approach, when compared to other phenomenological methods, are its emphasis on intuition, imagination, and universal structures (i.e. the transcendental element), and the analytical process including *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Transcendence relates to intentional direction of perception, the essence of objects and experiences, as well as matters of truth, verification, and existence. In other words, transcendence is the capacity of the mind to cognitively grasp objects that exist independent of them in all their aspects (Willard, 1984).

Since transcendental phenomenology is a philosophical method rather than a philosophical question, it is best described by its goal or object: “The aim of phenomenology is the rigorous and unbiased study of things *as they appear* in order to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience” (Dowling, 2007, p. 132, emphasis in original). It is a philosophy that goes “zu den Sachen selbst (back to the things or matters themselves)” (Husserl, 2012, p. 328). The goal of scientific transcendental phenomenological inquiry is “the noticing of what was previously unnoticed” (Husserl, 2012, p. 68). The object of transcendental phenomenology is the person who makes sense of experiences and behaviors (van Manen, 1990).

It is important to have clarity what Husserl means when he writes about objects. They can be understood as a universal or an individual, a physical object, or a state of affairs, or something
that has been experienced. When Husserl speaks of objects one can also read phenomenon, even though he often uses physical objects or logical concepts as illustrations (Willard, 1984).

Perception is the main source of knowledge and first-person accounts of lived experiences are the evidences or the data (Moustakas, 1994). The rigor of Husserl’s approach should not be interpreted from a perspective of exact sciences. Transcendental phenomenology is a rigorous science, but only in the qualified sense in that it constitutes a methodological approach to a science of possibilities, and not an exact science of facts (Willard, 1984).

Willard’s (1984, pp. 248-249) summary of Husserl’s argument for the objectivity of knowledge through subjective knowing rests on three *a priori* assumptions: (a) a community of knowledge is possible in that many subjects can know the same thing in the same way; (b) all acts of thinking are governed by certain laws that regulate the relationship between thoughts and things; and (c) the fact that transcendent objects can be known through repeated cognitive acts and thus enter into a relationship with the essence of the object. These three assumptions frame the subsequent discussion of the main concepts of intersubjectivity, intentionality, and intuition.

A brief look at the concept of essence is then followed by a description of the method of inquiry. This discussion primarily follows the methodical strategies developed and described by Creswell (2013), Moustakas (1994), and van Manen (1990).

**Intersubjectivity – the community of knowledge.** Transcendental phenomenological inquiry seeks to arrive at an essential description of the lived and shared experience of all participants (Creswell, 2013). This is possible based on the assumption that many subjects can know the same thing in the same way. Therefore, the phenomenon must be considered, at least to some degree, as universal, so that it can be shared as an experience and knowledge, or lived through,
by a certain group of different individuals. This group that shares in the same lived experience then develops a shared knowledge of that phenomenon.

The researcher enters into the experiences of the participants, and, through the process of phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation, arrives at a description of the original, universal phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Willard, 1984). Through personal interaction, the researcher initiates the intentional act, or conscious act, of reflection on the lived experience within the participants, and then joins in and makes sense of the experiences. The accuracy of the description, therefore, stands in direct relationship to the researcher’s ability to bracket out previously held opinions and experiences with the same (Willard, 1984). In this approach, “only the co-researchers’ [i.e. participants’] experiences with the phenomenon are considered, not how history, art, politics, or other human enterprises account for and explain the meaning of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19). The success of this research approach depends heavily on the participation of the co-researchers, and the researcher’s relationship with them. Willard (1984) explained:

Knowledge is not found in books because they themselves do not know. It is not found in the world in general because there only the things known are present, but not the knowledge of them. One finds knowledge, it might plausibly be assumed, only - or perhaps in its most accessible form - in the experiences of those doing the actual knowing (p. 25).

Since the credibility of this study heavily relies on the participants and their relationship to the researcher, these relationships must be characterized by both neutrality and rapport. Patton (2002) explained:
Neutrality means that the person can tell me anything without engendering either my favor or disfavor with regard to the content of her or his response…. Rapport is a stance vis-a-vis [in relation to] the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-a-vis the content of what that person says (p. 365).

In this framework of intersubjectivity, I am aware of and bracket out my own intentional consciousness, and then begin to apprehend the perception of others. Even though my perception remains primary, I can “include the perception of the other by analogy” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 37). It remains inescapable, however, that my understanding of someone else’s life experiences remains a description of my experience with their experience. The presupposition of intersubjectivity assumes that both the participant and the researcher begin to know something about the same object. In this sense transcendental phenomenology is intersubjective and shared knowledge is possible.

**Intentionality – the lawfulness of relationship between thought and object.** The concept of intentionality is inseparably connected to transcendental phenomenology (Dowling, 2007). It was Brentano’s thinking on intentionality that inspired Husserl to begin his philosophical work in phenomenology in the first place (Husserl, 2012). The term itself “indicates the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 181). Each individual is perceiving, feeling, thinking, remembering, or judging at all times. However, the meaning of things can only be drawn out of its concealment when the act of perception is intentional. In the words of Moustakas (1994): “intentionality directs consciousness toward something” (p. 68, emphasis in original).

This kind of intentional cognitive act transcends the object and ultimately allows contact with it; i.e. we can know its truth even in its absence (Willard, 1984). Willard drew important
distinctions between different types or qualities of cognitive experiences: (a) they may be of or about different objects; (b) they may have the same object, but apprehended it under different aspects or predicates, or in a different sense; (c) they may be directed upon the same thing under the same aspect or sense, but involve a different propositional attitude such as believe, hope, surmise, etc.; and (d) they may be of the same thing under the same aspect and with the same positional attitude, but differ in their degree of force or intuitive fullness. Each quality is important for the process of cognitive variation that changes the perceiver’s intentional perspective of the object (Moustakas, 1994).

When investigating lived experiences of others through gathering verbal statements and observations, and then analyzing their textual form in absence of the participant, intentionality becomes the mechanism of knowing while cognitive variation becomes the process of analysis. This leads to the next aspect of the transcendental inquiry process, which is intentional intuition.

**Intuition – the knowledge of transcendent objects.** Intentional intuition is the process of the kind of thinking and reflecting that makes things appearing before me to become clearer in the sense of what is actually given in them. Through intuition the essence of the phenomenon or the object is truly re-cognized (Willard, 1984). “Intuition is the beginning place in deriving knowledge of human experience, free of everyday sense impressions and the natural attitude” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 32). In other words, it is not only important that one arrives at an in-depth description of the phenomenon under study, but it matters how one arrived there. In the words of Husserl (2012):

Fullness of meaning is not the only requisite; we are also concerned with the mode *(Wie)* of the filling out. One mode of experiencing the meaning is the “intuitive,” whereby we are made aware of the “meant object as such” through direct mental vision, and as a par-
particularly outstanding case we have that wherein the mode of direct vision is the primordial object-giving mode (p. 285, emphasis in original).

This mental vision, that Husserl introduced, includes the components of matter, quality, and senses (Willard, 1984). Matter determines the object and the way it is intended. Quality relates to the attitude taken towards the object. Senses refer to the necessity of a sensible act that modifies the mental act itself. By way of example, if I would think about a scarf that is lying on a desk in front of me, my thoughts are determined by the properties of the scarf itself (e.g. material, color, etc.). However, my attitude towards the scarf (i.e. I find it comfortable, or it reminds of my wife who gave it to me, etc.) modifies my thoughts. Finally, my thoughts are also influenced by how I feel at the present time (i.e. whether I am cold or warm). The researcher must be aware of these qualities as conscious intuition is directed towards the objects during phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

Intentional intuition – the thinking about objects in various ways – occurs when the object is directly in front of my senses. But the “mental vision,” as Husserl (2012, p. 285) phrased it, continues to be real in my mind even when the sensory perception is over. Even though “what one sees intentionally bears an immediate relationship to what actually appears” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 80), the reflective process of analysis also requires the same level of intentionality. Willard (1984) explained:

Matters of essence which, according to Husserl, can be known with absolute Evidenz by any properly prepared and unprejudiced person who will bring cognitive acts, in their essential variations, directly into view and scrutinize the Ideas or universal forms which they contain (p. 249).
Intuition, thus, is the process that, when paired with a deference of all judgment, allows the researcher to arrive at essential descriptions of phenomena (Moustakas, 1994), and it can do so because the intuited cognitive acts transcend the object that is being though about.

Phenomenology does not only set out to search for objective truth of phenomena, describe their essence, and show their truthfulness, but it seeks also to fulfill these phenomena through concrete experiences (Willard, 1984). This is the kind of fullness Husserl (2012) was referring to in the earlier quote. The phenomenological researcher is not interested in developing a logically inherent theory about the phenomenon, but to describe and understand, even if only in part, how this phenomenon is experienced (Willard, 1984). Through the intentional and methodical description of lived experiences the researcher, through the process of phenomenological reduction, perceives something transcendent of the phenomenon itself, and at the same time fulfills this transcendent insight with real-life experiences.

Fulfillment, in its ideal expression, is the total alignment of intuition and intention, which can be considered Evidenz or “complete adequacy of representation” (p. 230). In simpler terms, a phenomenon is fulfilled when my thoughts, expressed in my description, and the essence of the phenomenon are one and the same. In such a case the phenomenon is truly re-cognized. This fullness must not be understood in terms of exact science, in that all possible aspects of the phenomenon have been accurately described. Transcendental phenomenology is rather a science of possibilities (Willard, 1984) where the researcher seeks to arrive at descriptions that are “adequate, incapable in principle of being either ‘strengthened’ or ‘weakened’, thus without the graded differences of a weight” (Husser, 2012, p. 290, emphasis in original). In other words, a full description is not comprehensive but adequate in that it correlates with the a priori meaning (i.e. the transcendent meaning) of the phenomenon that is described. After having elaborated on
the three *a priori* assumptions for Husserl’s argument for the objectivity of knowledge, I must clarify the key concept of *essence* in the context of transcendental phenomenology.

**Essence in transcendental phenomenology.** Fundamental to the understanding of transcendental phenomenology is the concept of *essence*. Husserl (2012) introduces this aspect: “Transcendental phenomenology will be established… as a science of essential being… A science which aims exclusively at establishing ‘knowledge of essences’” (p. 3). The term *essence* is derived from the Greek *ousia*, meaning the true being of a thing, and its Latin form *essentia* (derived from *esse*, to be). Thus essence can be understood as, “what makes a thing what it is (and without which it would not be what it is); that what makes a thing what it is rather than its being or becoming something else” (van Manen, 1990, p. 177). In other words, the essence of things can be defined as the non-replaceable uniqueness of an experience of it. The essential element transcends everything it belongs to in such quality of relationship, that its absence would change the thing it belongs to, but the absence of the other would have no impact on the essential element whatsoever (Willard, 1984).

Transcendental phenomenology is, therefore, a search for the essential elements of a phenomenon that transcend the contextual experience in the aforementioned sense. By way of example, Willard (1984) explained, “God has often been pictured in Western thought as transcending the world” (p. 9). Speaking from a biblical perspective we can analogize that God would continue to exist without the world, but without God the world would not be the same as it is today; i.e. God is essential to the world, but the world is not essential to God.

This study will modify the aim of establishing pure knowledge, or fullness, of essences (Husserl, 2012) to the maybe humbler goal of describing them merely “to a certain degree of depth and richness” (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). This modification, even though it can be implied
in Husserl’s philosophy as outlined in the section in intentionality (Willard, 1984, p.16), states more clearly the impossibility of arriving at full knowledge of essences. Every essential phenomenological description must remain an approximation, since “a human science perspective also assumes that lived human experience is always more complex than the result of any singular description, and that there is always an element of the ineffable to life” (van Manen, 1990, p. 16).

**Doing Transcendental Phenomenology**

Transcendental phenomenological inquiry is a structured and rigorous approach, a descriptive science, or “the first method of knowledge because it begins with ‘things themselves’” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41, emphasis in original), in search of the essences of phenomena. The rigor of phenomenological research is found in its systematic, explicit, self-critical, and its intersubjective characteristics (van Manen, 1990). Transcendental phenomenology relies on sensory data and intuition to arrive at descriptions of essences, and thus perception constitutes the medium of obtaining pure descriptive knowledge through pure reflection (Husserl, 2012). This purity of description and reflection is defined by the core concepts of the natural standpoint, bracketing or *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, and phenomenological descriptions.

**The natural standpoint.** Husserl (2012) wrote, “our first outlook upon life is that of natural human beings, imaging, judging, feeling, willing, ‘from the natural standpoint’” (p. 50). From this natural standpoint most current research conceptualizes, describes, compares, distinguishes, collects, counts, presupposes, infers, or theorizes. In other words, to make sense of the natural world from this standpoint, the researcher needs to assume a stance of ‘cogito’; i.e. he or she establishes meaning by assuming a standpoint of being consciously aware of the natural world.
In the natural world, every person shares the same experiences but in different ways, for every person has their own conscious awareness and assumes a unique standpoint. All perceive differently from that natural standpoint, influenced also by their own memories, which lead to differences in knowing the natural world. All sciences that assume the natural standpoint seek to “know it [the world] more comprehensively, more trustworthily, more perfectly than the naïve lore of experience is able to do, and to solve all the problems of scientific knowledge which offer themselves upon its ground” (Husserl, 2012, p. 56). Investigations from the natural standpoint can, therefore, never describe the meaning of things, but only portions of their appearance. Since the method of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology is aimed to provide descriptions of essential meaning (Moustakas 1994), the researcher must leave this natural standpoint on the grounds of the principles of bracketing or *epoche*, and phenomenological reduction.

**Bracketing and epoche.** The principle of bracketing, or *epoche*, is fundamental to the phenomenological method (Dowling, 2007). The Greek term *epoche* has been interpreted to mean, “to hold back” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 9), or “to stay away from or abstain” (p. 85). *Epoche* requires the researcher to lay aside as much as possible the natural attitude towards things comprised of personal biases, prior knowledge of the subject, and personal presuppositions, to enable “a new way of looking at things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Through *epoche* the researcher doubts that the natural attitude, as a source of truth, will lead to an understanding of the essences phenomena (Dowling, 2007).

However, instead of suspending the natural standpoint or declaring it irrelevant, it is merely bracketed out (Moustakas, 1994). This means, one makes no use of it, or one refrains from judgment based on it (Husserl, 2012, p. 57). The researcher further seeks to study the life world, “pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it” (van Manen,
1990, p. 9). She studies things as they present themselves (Heidegger, 1972, p. 9). This refraining from judgment acts in two dimensions: (a) towards the theories and doctrines of the natural sciences, and (b) towards the researcher’s own prejudices. Thus, the first act of the researcher, even before data is gathered, is to engage in the process of *epoche* while conceptualizing the study (Moustakas, 1994).

In transcendental phenomenology theories are viewed as only facts of our environment that do not have anticipatory functions or serve as valid explanations for facts (Husserl, 2012). Husserl described the process of bracketing in regards to the sciences of the natural world:

I disconnect them all, I make absolutely no use of their standards, I do not appropriate a single one of the propositions that enter into their systems, even though their evidential value is perfect, I take none of them, none of them serves me for a foundation… I may accept it only after I have placed it in the bracket (p. 59).

The bracketing of oneself, even though related to the former dimension, requires intentional acts of reflexivity throughout the research project. Reflexivity is “the engagement by the qualitative researcher in continuous self-critique and self-appraisal and the provision of an explanation of how his/her own experiences did or did not influence the stages of the research process” (Dowling, 2007, p. 136).

A final note of criticism or caution towards the process of bracketing is in order. I will follow van Manen (1990) on this issue who asked, “how does one put out of play everything one knows about an experience one has selected for study” (p. 47)? Perfect *epoche* is impossible to achieve, and so van Manen suggests a coming to terms with one’s theories and biases of common sense and holding them at bay. In his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl (1970) seemed to have moved towards this kind of existential stand-
point himself by taking into account the fact that phenomena always present themselves in the world (van Manen, 1990). This could be interpreted as such that Husserl acknowledged the impossibility of a pure *epoche*, but not a dismissal of the process per se.

With keeping in mind that Husserl’s primary quest was to find a way that subjects could know objective truth (Willard, 1984), this study assumed that psychological objectivity is unattainable, but a rational objectivity is within reach for the phenomenological researcher through a rigorous process of *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994; Moreland, 2007). Psychological objectivity is a bias-free emotional detachment and lack of commitment to the topic while the observer has an accurate perception of, or cognitive access to it. Since the study of lived experiences requires a personal commitment from the researcher (van Manen, 1990), the pursuit of psychological objectivity is neither attainable nor helpful. Rational objectivity, on the other hand, aligns well with transcendental rationalism (Huberman & Miles, 1994), whereby we assume that there are lawful relationships between phenomena, and that through careful explanation, one can remove in part subjective influences on knowledge and thereby arrive at rationally developed descriptions of objective truth.

Willard (1984) concluded that Husserl presupposed the same to be true in order to make transcendental inquiry possible as outlined above: (a) the community of knowledge is possible in that many subjects can know the same thing in the same way; (b) all acts of thinking are governed by certain laws that regulate the relationship between thoughts and things; and (c) the fact that transcendent objects can be known through repeated cognitive acts and thus enter into a relationship with the essence of the object.

**Phenomenological reduction.** While the process of bracketing is applied, and continuously re-applied throughout the investigation, the researcher can approach the descriptions of the
essence of phenomena through phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological reduction is the process through which textural descriptions are derived (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (2012) provides a clear definition of this process:

Transcendental experience in its theoretical and, at first, descriptive bearing, becomes available only through a radical alteration of that same dispensation under which an experience of the natural world runs its course, a readjustment of viewpoint which, as method of approach to the sphere of transcendental phenomenology, is called ‘phenomenological reduction’” (Author’s Preface to the English Edition, para. 2).

In other words, in order to describe the essences of lived experiences in a phenomenological way the researcher must abandon the natural standpoint including own biases. In the next step an ongoing readjustment of viewpoint through imaginative variation result in a seeing of the thing in several new ways (Moustakas, 1994). Since all perspectives are looking at the same essentiality the description of the same becomes more accurate. The transcendent essence becomes more visible, or is fuller recognized.

**Transcendental phenomenological descriptions.** The transcendental phenomenological process of inquiry is basically comprised of two distinct phases. First, the researcher obtains a description of the shared life-experience (Heidegger, 1962). Here the researcher seeks to describe things as they appear (Dowling, 2007). This phase includes the steps of initiating contact with the participants and gathering data through in-depth interviews and other sources. In the second phase the researcher engages in a reflective analysis and interpretation of the data to arrive at a description of the structures and meaning of the participants’ lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The goal of this essential description is to reduce the experience to its most universal
basic form (Husserl, 2012). After all, essential cognitive insight within the researcher is the foundation of phenomenological analysis (Husserl, 2012).

**Limitations of transcendental phenomenology.** Transcendental phenomenology poses inherent limitations due to its method of inquiry. Perception is the main source of knowledge, and since one only sees things from certain limited perspectives, the possibilities of knowing and experiencing are never exhausted (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher will have to make the decision when the phenomenon is adequately described, knowing that new perspectives always may contribute to the knowledge. Phenomenological descriptions are, therefore, bound by time and space, since the phenomenon under study remains a dynamic lived experience. This is the nature of the main object of any phenomenology, and there is no procedure to halt this limitation. However, Willard (1984) convincingly argued, that concepts and proposition are classes of universals, and therefore have timeless and law-like connections that are transferable to other instances of universals. In this sense, the essence described through one particular study is intrinsically transferable to expressions or limitations based on the same universal. In the case of this study, what is essentially been said about leadership, even though described through the lens of seminary leadership, might be transferable to other instances of leadership. This limitation is further developed in Chapter Five.

A second limitation with perceptions is the danger of fancy; i.e. seeing what is not there, or not accurately describing what is seen (Moustakas, 1994). Certain measures to establish the trustworthiness of the description counteract this methodical limitation. They include member checks, triangulation where possible, rigor, peer-review, and *epoche* through reflective memoing (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).
The researcher himself poses another layer of limitations to the study. Since it is required for phenomenological inquiry to have a personal connection to or interest in the question or problem (Kohler Riessman, 1993), a pure state of *epoche*, a primary assumption of transcendental phenomenology, is virtually unachievable (Moustakas, 1994). Sustained attention, topical delimitation, and self-reflection, however, are aids in achieving, “an original vantage point” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). Van Manen (1990) asserted that this requires a coming to terms with one’s theories and biases, which has been accomplished in part through the literature review, and was be an ongoing process throughout the data gathering and analysis in form of memoing and jounaling. I understand *epoche* more as an ideal to strive towards, rather than an absolute requirement that has to be achieved before the analysis can be considered credible. Below I develop the role of the researcher in greater depth.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to answer five research questions from the perspective of the lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. The first question was the main question while the four subsequent questions were contained in answer of the first.

1. How do participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?
2. What are roles that lead administrators identify as pertaining to their position?
3. How do the lead administrators describe their path of leadership development and how they arrived where they presently are?
4. What influences on their present experiences, attitudes, and behaviors do lead administrators identify?
5. What role did personal spirituality play in the lead administrators’ decision to assume their position, and how does their understanding of spirituality impact their continued leadership?

Setting

The setting of this research included 17 evangelical seminaries that are located in German-speaking Europe, from which a purposive sample has been derived. These theological training institutions are members of the Konferenz bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten (KbA) [Conference of Bible-believing Institutions] in Germany, and identify themselves with a distinctly evangelical statement of faith. Limiting the focus on this selection of seminaries inevitably left out other institutions that would fit in the population; however, the current delimitations were considered no threat to the credibility of the study. Using only institutions affiliated with the KbA assured a common evangelical identity of the institutions, and further delimited the common lived experience of the lead administrators so vitally important for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). The institutions under study showed evidence of professionalization and/or academization that is inherently required when accreditation is sought (Ott, 2013). Only those KbA member seminaries were included in the study that also achieved or applied for governmental recognition as institutions for higher learning, are accredited through The European Evangelical Accreditation Agency, or maintained accrediting partnerships with foreign universities (Ott 2011).

Participants

A purposive sample was drawn from the 17 ministry training institutions organized in the KbA (2014) that are located in German-speaking Europe, and that fit the delimitations set for this study. These organizational delimitations included evidence of a process of professionalization and academization through the establishment of accredited academic programs.
This study only included persons who assumed the hierarchically top leadership position in their institutions.

The target sample size of 5 to 12 lead administrators approximates Creswell’s (2013) recommendation for phenomenological studies; however, the actual final number of participants was capped at the point of data saturation (Moustakas, 1994). In this study data saturation was reached after interviewing six participants. Upon contacting those lead administrators with whom I already could establish personal relations, I asked them to refer the researcher to other lead administrators. This snowball sampling technique established initial rapport with and easier access to the lead administrators. Through this process, I contacted each lead administrator of the 17 training institutions identified as the population. Six participants responded positively and consented to their participation in the study.

**Procedures**

The philosophical paradigm of transcendental phenomenology must be applied to the empirical world. This is done by identifying strategies that help most effectively to obtain the purpose of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The forms of qualitative data and source materials are continually developing (Creswell, 2013), and fall under one of four broad categories including observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2009). This study included as many source categories as possible within boundaries of reason and practicality.

After receiving IRB approval, I approached those lead administrators with whom I had already established personal relations, asking them for participation but also for referral to other lead administrators. The purpose of this procedure as to establish initial rapport with the leaders and to ensure access (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013). After every lead administrator of the train-
ing institutions had been contacted and asked to participate, I sent a written informed consent form (see Appendix I) in German language providing instructions on the purpose of the investigation, asking for agreement, delineating responsibilities, and ensuring the voluntary nature of participation (Creswell, 2013). The consent form was retranslated into English as well for submission to the IRB (see Appendix H).

Secondly, I sent them an email containing a link to questionnaire that was available online. The questionnaire was an adaptation of the Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; see Appendix B), the Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLT; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; see Appendix D), and the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ, Ingram, 2003; see Appendix C), which were consolidated into one applied survey (see Appendix E), and translated into German (see Appendix F). I further scheduled three interviews and observation opportunities, and submitted portions of the findings or transcriptions for member checking (Creswell, 2013). The following section includes a detailed description of the strategic procedure of this study, and the data sources this study will acquire in order to answer the research questions.

**Translation Procedures**

In trans-language studies such as this present one, special consideration needs to be given to issues of language and translation. Squires (2009) observed, “in the literature, language is the most commonly mentioned area of concern in cross-cultural studies. Specifically, researchers are concerned with the conceptual meaning assigned to vocabulary in different cultural settings” (p. 125). Thus, reducing bias and increasing validity of the translation process and product are necessary to achieve conceptual equivalence (Clark, 2001). The translation process begins with an awareness of the concerns related to language translations such as words or phrases that cannot
be translated, or indigenous typologies that function like labels that are formed in cultural sub-
groups (Geroy & Lewis, 1991). This section introduces a conceptual definition of the translation
process, describes important aspects about the translators, and develops a methodical framework
for translation.

**Conceptual definitions for language-transfer.** For the purposes of this study, the con-
ccept of translation was defined as “the transfer of meaning from a source language… to a target
language” (Yi, 2011, p. 18). This definition implies that the translation is not a word-by-word
process that achieves full equality of meaning (Squires, 2009), but a transfer of the meaning of
text. In this sense the translation process becomes the first formal analytical step in the analysis
process. In order to retain the original meaning after language transfer, one must consider the
aspects conceptual equivalence, the credentials of the translators, description of the translators’
roles in the research process, the use of a methodical framework for translation, and the
acknowledgement of limitations due to translation (Esposito, 2001, p. 570).

All of these procedures, however, do not completely eradicate every threat to functional
and conceptual equivalence, which is an inherent limitation to any trans-language inquiry (Clark,
2001). Since the goal of phenomenology is to describe a lived experience (Esposito, 2001), the
procedures of this study sought to only establish conceptual equivalence for the results of the
analysis and not functional equivalence (Squires, 2009). However, for the questionnaire both
functional and conceptual equivalence are important. Further details on how conceptual equiva-
rence is established are discussed below in the section on trustworthiness of the study.

**Prerequisites for the translators.** The trustworthiness of the translations depends on the
translators’ skill and perspective. The translators should be bilingual individuals who are inti-
mately familiar with the field of research or the cultures (Clark, 2001). In cross-cultural studies
the problem of perception is discussed in terms of emic (i.e. intra-cultural) and etic (i.e. cross-cultural) perspectives (Dorfman et al., 1997). Since the researcher is an insider to the German culture, i.e. with an emic perspective, he is able to interpret behavior and speech the same way the participants of the study would interpret it (Clark, 2001). Geroy and Lewis (1991) recommended the use of native speakers for the source language to have them translate into the target language, which would be their second language. Authenticity of the translation can be improved when working with language specialists in both the source and target language who can verify the accuracy of the translation (Clark, 2001).

**The methodical framework for language transfer.** No single applicable method was found in the literature that could be applied for the various forms of language transfer that were necessary for this study. Drawing from what could be found in the literature a methodical framework for language transfer was developed. This framework includes three phases that cover the translation and verification of written text, empirical instruments, and spoken words.

**Phase 1: Translation and verification of written documents.** Phase one addressed the transfer and verification of all text-based documents used in the study, in both the source and target language. These documents included the informed consent, the study’s title, the guiding research questions, and the interview guides. Ensuring authentic transfer of these documents was foundational to establishing the study’s trustworthiness. The authenticity of the translation depended both on the credibility of the translators and a methodical translation process (see Figure 3).

The most common methodical framework for translations in qualitative research is *back translation* (Geroy & Lewis, 1991; Tetroe et al., 2008) or retranslation. This process involved a first translation of the source text into the target language by the researcher (Geroy & Lewis,
1991). A second translator, whose native tongue is the target-language, re-translates the text into the source language. This retranslation serves to identify possible misunderstandings in the initial translation through a comparison with the source text (Clark, 2001; Gho, 2004). After all revisions were applied to the initial translation the written text was considered verified for conceptual equivalence and fit to be used in the context of this study.

**Figure 3**: Translation and Verification of Written Documents

**Phase 2: Translation and verification of empirical instruments.** In this study three questionnaires were translated into German (i.e. the target language). The translation for the questionnaire followed a two-step process as developed by Huberman and Miles (1994, see Figure 4). The first step included an initial translation of the instrument from the source-language into the target language. As native target-language speaker who was familiar with the underpinning theoretical concepts and constructs of the instrument, I performed the first step of translation. Similar to phase 1, here also a retranslation had to be done by a second person who was a native speaker of the source language (Seidman, 2013). Again the translator’s working knowledge of the theory
behind the instrument was important. A comparison of functional and conceptual equivalence between the initial translation, the retranslation and the source text resulted in version no.1 of the instrument in the target language.

**Figure 4**: Translation and Verification of Empirical Instruments

In step two cognitive pilot interviews and discussions were conducted to verify the instrument in the target language. These interviews functioned as a type of protocol analysis to identify response errors (Hubermann & Miles, 1994). The participants of the cognitive pilot interviews were native target-language speakers who had a basic understanding of the field of study. One participant was a language expert who helped to eliminate mechanical and grammatical errors. For these interviews the participants completed the questionnaire and provided comments and feedback for each question. The interviews and discussion were handled both synchronously, that is in person, and asynchronously through written comments. After implementing revisions to the first version, the second version of the instrument was ready to be subjected to yet another cognitive pilot interview and discussion rotation using different native target-language speakers. After implementing the final revisions, a translated and verified instrument in
its final version in the target-language was ready to be applied in the study. For reasons of transparency each step of the process was documented (see Appendix J).

**Phase 3: Translation and verification of spoken words.** The interviews were conducted in the participants’ native language, as recommended by Fujishiro et al. (2010), Tetroe et al. (2008), and Yi (2011), because lived experiences are best expressed in the language context they have been experienced in. Even with bi-lingual persons, as the participants in this study all were, memories become more accessible in the language of they were experienced (Marian & Neisser, 2000). Not using the participants’ primary language could affect their confidence and positive self-perception (Wallin, 2007), or experience a sense of detachment form the subject of the conversation (Baumgartner, 2012). After recording the interviews in the original language, the audio recordings were translated into English for analysis purposes (Gho, 2004). The methodical framework for translation and verification of spoken words included the steps of translation, re-translation, and member check (see Figure 5).

**Translation and Retranslation of the interview data.** As a bi-lingual and experienced translator, I transcribed and translated the audio recordings of the interviews using the T5 transcription software. The retranslation process also applies when the translations were created directly from the audio recordings (Gho, 2004). In her qualitative dissertation, Gho used the re-translation process only in random samples for the interview transcriptions to eliminate unnecessary complexity from the translation process. Following Gho’s recommendation, random retranslation checks through a second translator were applied to ensure accuracy of conceptual equivalence of the initial translation (Clark, 2001). The random selection of the samples for retranslation and comparison for conceptual equivalence followed a systematic procedure.
The selection of the paragraphs that were retranslated was adapted from the industry standard for quality control sampling according to ISO 2859 for single sample counting standards, while using the method of Acceptable Quality Level (AQL). This procedure was developed to check the quality of incoming shipments to determine the acceptability of the product's quality, and as such it constitutes an internationally accepted practice for determining the ratio for size of population to sample size (see Table 2). For the purposes of the retranslation process for this study, the number of paragraphs of each interview transcription was considered the population N. For the calculation of the sample size the general quality level of "I" was assumed, which provided the measure for determining the population to sample size ratio.

For example, Benedikt of Nursia's first interview included 137 paragraphs (N = 137), which, according to ISO 2859 standards, corresponds to the code letter of "D" (see Table 2). For normal, single counting this corresponds to a sample size of n = 8. The specific paragraphs for
retranslation were determined using a random number generator. If the generated number corresponded with a paragraph containing a question rather a participant response the following or preceding paragraph that contained at least one complete sentence was selected instead. The selected paragraphs were checked for anonymity to protect the identity of the participants. The retranslations were created by experienced translators whose native tongue was German. The translators were instructed to translate as directly as possible, while keeping in mind that the original was a spoken, and not written text. In a final step the retranslations were compared to the recorded interviews to check for conceptual equivalence (see Appendix K).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of paragraphs in transcript “N”</th>
<th>Code letter</th>
<th>Corresponding sample size “n”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-15</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-90</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-150</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-280</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281-500</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1200</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1201-3200</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Member checks process for interview data. The revised transcript was then subjected to the required member-check process (Creswell, 2013). To verify that the participants are understood correctly, I applied active listening strategies of verification and summative statements throughout the interviews (Huberman & Miles, 1994). After the transcriptions of the interviews have been created, translated and verified, two versions of member checking were applied. The decision for either version followed the expressed preference of the participant. The first version was a pre-analysis member check where the participant received the translated transcripts for review. Five of the six participants chose this version. Each replied with comments about minor
changes to phrasing or mechanical issues. In one instance conceptual equivalence was not given and the appropriate revision was discussed with the participant. One participant opted for the second version of member checks, which essentially is a post-analysis process. After completing the textural description of the interviews the findings were submitted to the participant for review. Upon positive feedback without revisions, the analysis process was continued. Each participant had sufficient English language competency to forgo another translation process of the texts submitted for member checking.

**The Researcher’s Role**

I, as the researcher, was the primary instrument in this qualitative research. I engaged in the activities of observing, interviewing, writing, thinking, analyzing, etc., and therefore became an important factor for the trustworthiness of the investigation. Van Manen (1990) explained that the success of qualitative research, “may depend more on the interpretative sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent of the human science researcher” (p. 34).

Willard (1984) summarized Husserl’s description of the phenomenological scholar:

> Matters of essence which, according to Husserl, can be known with absolute Evidenz by any *properly prepared and unprejudiced person* who will bring cognitive acts, in their essential variations, directly into view and scrutinize the Ideas or universal forms which they contain (p. 249, my emphasis).

The properly prepared person, therefore, should be a skilled researcher who has knowledge of the transcendental phenomenological method (Moustakas, 1994), has studied relevant literature, is aware of own prejudices, positions, and biases (Creswell, 2013), and has a level of personal investment in the investigation (van Manen, 1990). Since the first three aspects of the properly prepared person have already been covered in previous chapters, the aspect of personal invest-
Phenomenology is concerned with the understanding of the essence of a common experience (Creswell, 2013). In this context van Manen (1990) asserted, “we can only understand something or someone for whom we care” (p. 6). My personal emotional connection with the topic and the participants is, therefore, encouraged as long as I am aware of it. This awareness is also the basis for phenomenological bracketing, since the phenomenological analysis requires a continual engagement in a supposition-free reflection to arrive at essences of the phenomenon (Husserl, 2012). With this mindset of being aware of my own position, as well as having a well-established knowledge of the related literature, I now could “make no use of it” (Husserl, 2012, p. 57) as I engaged in the research process. Thereby I was confident that my intuited, directed, and repeated looking at the phenomenon achieved the level of quality that led to a worthy description of its essence (Moustakas, 1994). The roles of the researcher can be described fourfold as a sense-maker, a listener, a writer, and as an interpreter.

**The Researcher as Sense-Maker**

Qualitative inquiry and analysis, in its essence, can be described as the researcher making sense of the participants’ sense-making of a lived experience (Smith, 1986). As a phenomenological researcher, “[I] gather other people’s experiences because they allow [me] to become more experienced [myself]” (van Manen, 1990, p. 62). Willard (1984) pointed towards the limiting factor of the researcher when he remarked, “what can be known… is restricted to what can be fully intuited or perceived” (p. 232, see Chapter Five for further discussion).

At this point the researcher becomes the main limiting factor to the transcendental phenomenological inquiry. I did not perceive everything fully and correctly, and also did not think
about everything fully and correctly. In response to this limitation the rigorous method of data
gathering and analysis is essential. That way I could, nevertheless, arrive at adequate descriptions
of the phenomenon with a certain measure of confidence concerning its trustworthiness
(Moustakas, 1994). During data gathering and analysis, I had to capture critical moments that
provide information to the “what is it” question of qualitative research. Whether those moments
were identified depends on my skills as a researcher paired with an attitude of thoughtfulness,
minding, heeding, and caring (van Manen, 1990). Moustakas (1994) reflected on this:

The only way I can truly come to know things and people is to go out to them, to return
again and again to them, to immerse myself completely in what is before me, look, see,
listen, hear, touch, form many angles and perspectives… each time freshly (p. 65).

The fresh perspective that Moustakas is referring to can only be achieved through the process of
*epoche*, while the looking he speaks of refers to the process of directed intuition (Husserl, 2012).

Husserl (2012) identified dangerous biases that prevent the researcher to arrive at trust-
worthy conclusions. These biases include: (a) overemphasis on first impressions; (b) selectivity
in data evaluation; (c) hasty conclusions on correlations or causality for co-occurring events; and
(d) over-accommodation when the hypothesis is questioned by the findings. While being aware
of these potential biases, I as sense-maker had to be immersed in the data for an extended period
of time (Patton, 2002), persevere through continuous *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994), and stay with
the analysis until I arrived at a sense of completion (Husserl, 2012).

**The Researcher as Listener**

As a human science researcher, my data was primarily derived from in-depth conversa-
tions with the participants. Therefore, it was important to “develop a conversational relation
which allows to transcend *self*” (van Manen 1990, p. 105, emphasis in original). I entered into
the lived experience of my participations by listening and made sense of the it. The accuracy of my description, therefore, stood in direct relationship to my ability to become mute to my previously held opinions, experiences, and assumptions, that is to transcend self, and to be aware of the material, sensational, and emotional influences on my thought process (Willard, 1984).

It was crucial to develop a positive rapport with the participants so that the conversations would in fact yield the kind of in-depth and rich data necessary for phenomenological description. Since the spoken word was the main source of data, I had to become a true listener who could hear in ways that are uncommon to my casual listening habits, in order to be able to, “listen to the way things of the world speak to us” (van Manen, 1990, p. 111). Through the process of listening in these new ways, I experienced a transformation within myself on which I report in the Epilogue in Chapter Five (van Manen, 1990, p. 163). In keeping with the transcendental method, each of these moments I had to capture, put them into writing in the research journal or memos, and then bracket them out from the further investigation only to bring them back in the analysis as part of my data material. That I was indeed successful in this endeavor of listening was affirmed, when Avius (pseudonym) commented positively about my listening skills.

**The Researcher as Writer**

Van Manen (1990) claimed, “human science research requires a commitment to write” (p. 126). He further explained that writing is the method of phenomenological inquiry, because it creates the right “reflective cognitive stance” (p. 125). Husserl himself was known to accomplish much of his thinking through the process of writing (Husserl, 1970). In the writing process, I realized what I knew and what I was able to say (van Manen, 1990). In this sense, writing became a self-reflective exercise; an exercise in self-consciousness. In the end, the research report is little more than a testament to what I was capable of seeing and putting into writing. I essen-
tially wrote myself. In the process of developing Chapter Four, I very strongly experienced the dynamics of writing as self-reflection. While transferring findings and themes into a written discourse, I found myself being continuously drawn back to the original data to refine the tone and emphasis of my descriptions, to bracket out my thoughts by writing them up in a memo, and even to revise the themes. Writing was an essential aspect of the research analysis.

**The Researcher as Interpreter**

Even though I applied the process of bracketing to my biases and all I supposed to know about the phenomenon, a certain engagement in some forms of interpretation and translation is inevitable (van Manen, 1990). Pure transcendentalists would argue that any kind of interpretation moves beyond the bounds of phenomenology, but as noted above, no single person is truly capable of bracketing out the natural standpoint (Dowling, 2007; van Manen, 1990). However, we must also acknowledge that not all levels of interpretation and translation actually influence the understanding of the essence of the phenomenon in an impairing fashion. The critical levels that impacted understanding included the interview phase and the analysis of the data; the other levels mostly established delimitations and language transfer, where a methodical framework reduced my interpreter influence.

The first level of this interpretation and translation occurred already during the purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013), when all information gathered about the participants was used to determine who would potentially provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon. The formulation of interview questions was another interpretative process as the researcher guided the conversation, and thereby potentially influences the form and content of the participants’ descriptions and reflections (Saldaña, 2016).
In this study an important level of interpretation occurred during the transcription and translation when spoken words in the source language were converted into written text in the target language. This was a twofold process including language transfer, and spoken-word to written-word transfer (Kohler Riessman, 1993; Seidman, 2013). Language transfer is naturally interpretative (Clark, 2001), but Heidegger (1962) argued that the transfer of spoken to written words also is interpretative in nature. This argument is hard to deny; however, van Manen (1990) suggested that this transfer must not necessarily be seen in a negative light, since the researcher might have the chance to verbalize the participants’ experience beyond their linguistic competence or sphere of influence.

Finally, the analysis process constituted the highest level of interpretation (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (1990) summarized:

[In analysis the researcher is] making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning…. A process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding [that] is not a rule-bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning (p. 79).

Even though the method employed in this study followed the more structured approach by Moustakas (1994), the interpretative aspect within the structure remained. The researcher also was an interpreter. Chapter Five addresses the limitations of this study due to the researcher.

**Data Collection**

The data was primarily collected through online questionnaires, qualitative interviews, and field observations. The questionnaires were developed and translated from the Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000), the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ; Ingram 2003), and the Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLT; Fry, Vitucci, Cedillo,
The interview process included three phases where, using a semi-structured approach, conversations were guided by questions related to life history, contemporary experience, and meaning making. Observations were documented as field-notes and research journals on formal and informal encounters with the participants. Secondary sources included my personal memos and journals.

**Questionnaires**

Three questionnaires were adapted and consolidated into one survey (see Appendix B). The participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire, made available Online through SurveyMonkey.com, prior to the interview cycles. However, three participants submitted their replies either after the interviews were over, or in the middle of the interview cycle. I found that this deviation from the plan did not have a negative impact on the data-gathering procedure. The survey was adapted for descriptive purposes only (see Appendix C).

**Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ).** The survey included an adaptation of the Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). The questionnaire measured variables of inner life, meaning and purpose in work, and sense of connection and community with Cronbach’s α coefficients ranging from .689 to .859 (see Appendix B). Each question was answered on a five-point Likert response scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). Permission to use the SWQ questionnaire had been obtained from its authors (see Appendix G).

**Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ).** The Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) was adapted from Ingram (2003; see Appendix C), who developed and field-tested the SLQ in the context of his doctoral dissertation. After obtaining permission for the translation and adaptation of this questionnaire (see Appendix G) the portion of the SLQ for administrators was
translated and applied for descriptive purposes. This questionnaire consisted of 18 questions that shed light on the participants’ conceptualization of servant leadership. The questions measured the dimension of leader values, attitudes and behaviors through the variables of acceptance, credibility, encouragement, influence, relationship, and vision, with face-validity Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficients ranging from .877 to .923.

**Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLT).** Fry, Vitucci, and Cedillo (2005) developed the Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLT). In a personal communication (2014) with Fry, I was sent an updated version of the SLT from 2013, which was adapted for descriptive purposes, and translated into German using the methodical framework outlined above. The SLT measured variables on the constructs of vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, inner life, organizational commitment, productivity, and satisfaction with life. It includes a total of 40 questions, which are answered on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree). Permission to use the SLT questionnaire has been obtained from its authors (see Appendix G).

**Interviews**

When the written consent forms were returned, the in-depth interviews of about 45 to 60 minutes in length, were scheduled with the selected participants. Whenever possible the preparation for each interview included the participant’s questionnaire results, official publications, and notes from previous interviews to inform the interview guide (Seidman, 2013). Depending on the situation and the choice of the participants, these interviews were conducted via videoconference or in the lead-administrators’ offices. Each interview was audio-recorded for transcription and translation.
The three interview phases. The data gathering process followed Seidman’s (2013) three-phase approach to phenomenological interviewing, with a modification to the placement of the analysis as recommended by van Manen (1990). Seidman (2013) suggested to first gather all the data and then engage in the analysis process, but according to van Manen (1990) “these two acts [gathering and analyzing] are not really separable and they should be seen as part of the same process” (p. 63). In keeping with van Manen, the analysis process was ongoing throughout the interview cycles.

The first two phases of interviews followed a semi-structured form (Patton, 2002). Semi-structured interviews have been found to allow for more free responses giving the opportunity to busy participants to talk about the issues they see as most relevant (Fujishiro et al., 2010). The final phase was the least structured in format to allow the participants to formulate for themselves the meaning of their lived experience (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013). During the interview phase the final number of participants was reevaluated based on data saturation (Creswell, 2013).

Following the recommendation in the literature (e.g. Fujishiro et al., 2010; Tetroe et al., 2008) for interviewing in qualitative cross-language studies, the interviews were conducted in German.

Interview phase one – life history. The first phase focused on the historical context of the participants’ experience (Seidman, 2013). The guiding question for this phase was how the participants became a leader of an evangelical seminary? This first interview sought to answer the following research questions: (a) how do lead-administrators describe their path of leadership development and how they arrived where they presently are; and (b) what role does personal spirituality play in the lead-administrators’ decision to assume their position, and how does their understanding of spirituality impact their continued leadership?
After the first interview-cycle was completed, a review of the interview notes was used to revise and refine the protocol for the second interview phase of each participant individually (Seidman, 2013). Patton (2002) recommended this process saying, “[analysis] often makes clear what would have been most important to study, if only we had known beforehand” (p. 431). To allow the lead administrators to tell the story and emphasis they wanted to communicate, the protocols were slightly revised for the individual participant after each interview cycle.

**Interview phase two – influencing context on the contemporary experience.** The second phase of interviews focused on understanding the experiences and influencing contexts of a lead administrator of a seminary in German-speaking Europe (Seidman, 2013). This interview was guided by two questions: (a) what is it like to be a leader of an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century; and (b) what are the details of the participants’ experience in their current roles? The questions of this interview phase sought to “establish the context of the participants’ experience” (Yi, 2011). Again, the interview guide for the final phase was influenced by emerging themes identified in the previous interview (van Manen, 1990). Interview phase two sought to answer the following research questions: (a) what are the roles that lead-administrators identify as pertaining to their current position; and (b) what influences on their present experience, attitudes, and behaviors do lead administrators identify?

**Interview phase three – making sense of the experience.** The third phase of interviews turned to the first research question about the meaning of being the lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century. The two guiding questions for this interview were, (a) what does it mean to lead an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe in the 21st century, and (b) how do the participants make sense of their current role in light of past life experience? The goal of this phase was to answer the main research ques-
tion: How do participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe? These interviews were structured more informally than the previous two in order to allow the interviewee to create meaning or make sense of his or her lived experiences. These interviews ended whenever they turned into a conversation “that gradually diminish[d]… into silence” (van Manen, p. 99).

Internet-based interviewing. When approaching the participants for this study, they were given a choice as to which format of interviewing they would prefer (Seidman 2013). Each lead administrator had been given the option of face-to-face interviews only, internet-based interviews only, and a blend of both forms. This seemed to be necessary to increase the chances for access (Hanna, 2012), to reduce cost and travel due to the distance between participants (Evans, Elford, & Wiggins, 2008), and to accommodate the busy schedule that lead-administrators of a theological training institution expectedly had, while providing them with a sense of ownership, convenience, and control throughout the interview process (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009). Four participants chose to do the first two interview cycles through online videoconferencing. I found that there was little difference in the success between in-person and internet-based interviews. This section elaborates on the advantages and potential limitations of internet-based interviewing.

Advantages and method of Internet based interviewing. Internet-based interviewing makes use of new technologies that have been used successfully in other qualitative research inquiries. Germany has the largest cohort of Internet users in Europe with 67.5 million Internet users as of June 30, 2012, which corresponds to 83.0% of the national population (Janghorban, Latifnejad Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). This supported the likelihood that the participants for
this study will have both access and exposure to the technology required for online interviewing. This assumption was corroborated by my experience with the participants.

The Miniwatts-Marketing-Group (2014) claimed, “[Internet based interviews] although not identical to face-to-face interviews, are definitely similar to it, especially in regards to unstructured or semi-structured interviews” (p. 55). Researchers who have used internet-based interviewing are generally confident it is a viable replacement for face-to-face interviews, and considered it a much better choice when compared to phone or email interviews (e.g. Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Sullivan, 2012). Many aspects of face-to-face encounters, such as real-time direct conversation or non-verbal communication, are also true for virtual encounters through a videoconferencing software (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Weinmann, Thomas, Brilmayer, Heinrich, & Radon, 2012). Tsangaridou (2013) observed that internet-based interviews needed little adaption from face-to-face interviewing to build rapport with the participants, to observe body-language and communicate nonverbally themselves through videoconferencing, and that participants sometimes perceived the virtual settings as real face-to-face encounters. Thus, the authenticity of the social interaction is similar to face-to-face interviews since both verbal and nonverbal cues are present (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009).

Finally, the participants are more empowered in an online setting since they are given the option to leave an uncomfortable situation through a click of a button (Sullivan, 2012). This format also increases the sense of partnership for the participants by allowing for personal space in a familiar and safe location of their choice (Janghorban et al., 2014). Finally, online interviews have the benefit of easier audio and video recording (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009).

**Limitations of Internet-based interviewing.** It has been noted in the literature that online interviews, though comparable to face-to-face encounters, still have unique limitations. Online
interactions lack the full shared experience of personal interviews, and the non-verbal commu-
nication is not always as clearly identifiable (Janghorban et al., 2014). The ability to discern non-
verbal cues depends on the position of the camera and the quality of the transmission. The use of
a software such as Skype, therefore, could pose a limitation to this study, because non-verbal
communication information will potentially be lost (Janghorban et al., 2014).

Others have noted that online interviews are potentially more formal in nature. This could
lead to a psychological distance and depersonalization between researcher and participant. How-
ever, it remains unclear if this affects the researcher’s capacity to gain in-depth information
(Tsangaridou, 2013). In fact, the formal nature and psychological distance during the interview
process has possibly even benefitted me, since the participants are top-leaders of their organiza-
tions and therefore could be considered “elites” as per classification by Sedgwick and Spiers
(2009).

Another threat to the success of online interviewing could be the participants’ unfamiliar-
ity with the technology (Seidman, 2013). This limitation did not apply to the participants of this
study. The technology itself could also be a limitation, since high-speed Internet access is rec-
mended for the application of online-based videoconferencing applications (Deakin &
Wakefield, 2013; Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009). With the exception of a rare interruption of the
connection, technology did not impair the interviews conducted in this study.

It has also been noted that the rate of absence or rescheduling might increase with the op-
tion of online interviewing (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). Again, this issue did not apply in my
case. A notable threat to the interview process is the researcher’s limited influence on the inter-
view location of the participant (Janghorban et al., 2014). In a personal communication with
Milacci (2016), I was made aware that in online interviews I have also no control over the fact
whether the interviewee is alone in the room. The presence of a third party could, unbeknownst to me, impact the responses of the participants. For this study, however, all participants chose either their office or their home as interview locations, where they were by themselves. These were conducive conditions to qualitative interviewing (Patton, 2002).

**Observations**

Observations as sources for qualitative data are usually associated with other methods of qualitative inquiry such as ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) or case studies (Creswell, 2013). However, in the course of this study I sought out opportunities to observe the participants as they were living out their role as lead-administrators in a public or private setting. This type of observation put me in the position of a non-participant observer who remained an outsider to the activity of the leader under study (Creswell, 2013).

Observations and fieldnotes were secondary data sources for this phenomenology (Creswell, 2013; see Appendix M). While I avoided *ethnographic participation* as my position as an observer, transcripts of ethnographic fieldnotes at best are raw data product of my observations. Each observation was guided by the purpose statement of this study and sought to answer, or contribute to, the answer of the research questions (Creswell, 2013). The process of observation and fieldnote taking was informed by the methodical framework developed by Emerson et al. (1995). Even though they wrote in the context of ethnographic study from the standpoint of intense participation, I was able to derive a viable method for the purpose of this study.

Fieldnotes can be understood as, “accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made” (Emerson et al., 1995, pp. 5-6, emphasis in original). The goal of fieldnotes is to produce a text that corresponds to the observation as accurately as possible. Throughout the observation process, I needed to be mindful of my method (i.e. *epoche*), since what I did find out
was inherently related to how I was looking at things. In other words, observations needed to provide data for understanding what the participants’ “experiences and activities mean to them” (p. 12, emphasis in original).

The method of taking fieldnotes included aspects of observing, timing, and jotting (Emerson et al., 1995). The timing of taking fieldnotes should be as close to the observed experience as possible in order to preserve “their idiosyncratic, contingent character in the face of the homogenizing tendencies of retrospective recall” (p. 14). In essence, the fieldnotes were not the place to be analytical, but to record accurate descriptions of the experiences and activities observed.

Upon entering the observation phase, I took mental notes of impressions that were supported by jotted-down key words and phrases. The second step in the observation process involved taking note of key events or incidents and the participants’ reaction to them. The in-field jottings included key components of the observation, sensory details about action and talk, and sensory details about the overall scene. At this point the distinction between field-notes and the personal journaling process, in which the researcher also engages, must be emphasized. The fieldnotes, for the most part, refrained from generalizations, identifying of motives, and personal impressions and feelings. These elements were recorded in the personal research journal (Creswell, 2013). In the context of this study fieldnotes and journal entries were taken either during the observation or as audio recordings which were transcribed later.

After the observation phase, the fieldnotes were written up based on the jottings during a “block of concentrated time” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 39). In the end, the observations resulted in transcripts that contain thick descriptions of the experience, which in turn became the raw data
for the analytical process (see Appendix M). In this study, the observations were primarily used to triangulate the findings from the in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2013).

**Phenomenological Analysis**

The purpose of a phenomenological analysis is “to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or a group of people” (Patton, 2002, p. 482). The analysis process for this study began with *epoche*, which is a full description of the researcher’s personal experiences of the phenomenon in order to lay aside “the natural attitude, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Practically that meant the suspension all judgment of reality until there was sufficient evidence (Patton, 2002). All text-based, data including interview transcriptions, field notes, public documents, and memos were entered into the computer program MAXQDA 11 for phenomenological text analysis and coding (Saldaña, 2016).

**Interview Data Analysis**

The interpretative process in a phenomenological study begins with the formulation of the research questions. Interpretation is further influenced by the nature and application of the data collection processes, even though *epoche* seeks to reduce these researcher influences (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Through social conversation throughout the interview process, data is generated under the influence of the framework of the inquirer. Each time the data is represented on a different level analytical and interpretative elements are in effect (Kohler Riessman, 1993). Van Manen (1990) summarized the role of the researcher in the analysis process:

In analysis the researcher is making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning… a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasp-
ing and formulating a thematic understanding [that] is not a rule-bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning (p. 79).

Nevertheless, the approach of transcendental phenomenology follows a systematic pattern of analysis.

This study utilized the analytical framework introduced by Moustakas (1994) and simplified by Creswell (2013). The process of transcription was informed by Kohler Riessman’s (1993) discussion. The foundational analytical process involves a rigorous emersion into the data (Moustakas, 1994) and personal reflection (Creswell, 2013) on the basis of intuition and induction (Husserl, 2012), using both intuitive and systematic coding processes (James & Busher, 2009; Saldaña, 2016).

**Coding cycles.** The analytical process included two coding cycles with distinct purposes and methods (Saldaña, 2016). The coding process was applied throughout the analysis process and included systematic coding strategies for the first coding cycle, and intuitive coding strategies for the second coding cycle (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2016). In following Saldaña’s (2016) definition, systematic coding was understood as a systematic approach using specific methods of coding that fit the unique nature of this study, the purpose and research questions, as well as the forms of the data.

The purpose of the first coding cycle was horizontalization, a process through which the transcriptions were analyzed for significant statements on how the participants experienced the phenomenon in order to develop a list of non-repetitive statements with each statement having equal value (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2016). To find the significant statements in the interview transcripts, Saldaña’s structural coding procedure was adapted. This procedure categorizes the data according to the research questions. Each statement of the participants was considered
whether it provided an answer for any of the research questions. Thus a selection of un-themed but significant statements was created.

The purpose of the second coding cycle was to organize the horizontalized statements into meaning units, which in turn were further categorized into common themes (Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña, 2016; van Manen, 1990). The analytic reading of the significant statements utilized the process of intuitive coding, which can be understood as the search for themes within the data by “classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, [and] conceptualizing” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 69). Themes are the “knots in the webs of our experience around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes” (van Manen, 1990, p. 90).

The goal of transcendental phenomenology is the description of the essence of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994), and consequently I was looking for powerful themes that allowed me to formulate such descriptions (van Manen, 1990; see examples in Appendix N). The theme-codes were developed following van Manen’s suggested sententious approach, where the fundamental meaning of a certain text is expressed through a single phrase. These sentences are reflected in the headers and sub-headers in Chapter Four.

**Phenomenological descriptions.** From the meaning units and themes, textural descriptions were developed outlining what the participants have experienced with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). The textural description is the result of phenomenological reduction and constitutes a report of the invariant qualities, or themes, of the participant’s experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994), and includes all aspects of what the participants are currently experiencing as the lead administrators of their respective seminaries.

In reflection on textural description, a structural description was developed outlining how the experience happened (Moustakas, 1994). The structural description constitutes a report of the
researcher’s reconstruction of the participant’s experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). It includes all aspects of the participant is experiencing the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminary (Creswell, 2013).

The final step of the analysis involved the integration of the textural and structural descriptions to develop a representation of the meaning and essence of the experienced phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). It is the result of an intuitive and reflective integration of the textural and structural descriptions of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon, and constitutes a description of the meaning and essence of the participants’ shared experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The essential synthesis description constitutes the most transcendent description of the essence of leading a seminary in German-speaking Europe today, as it reduces the experience to its most universal basic form (Husserl, 2012). In fact, it is the “culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 194).

Memoing

The process of memoing is an intricate part of the research process in transcendental phenomenology for it constitutes the main tool for *epoche*. It is here where I captured my personal thoughts and evaluations and integrated them into the coding software. In this sense, memoing became a secondary data source for the analytical process (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2016). For Saldaña memoing is an integrative part to the coding process during the analysis. Each memo was the result of a reflective study of the codes and findings in the source texts. They included paraphrases of findings, documentations of thoughts and ideas, and intuited connections (see also Appendix P). Once all texts were analyzed and annotated, all memos were integrated, interpreted, and synthesized across the individual transcripts.
Document Data Analysis

Written texts are considered qualitative data sources and can be distinguished as either public or private documents (Patton, 2002). This study only included publications and writings from the participants that were categorized as public documents. This alleviated me from the application of ethical considerations connected to the use of private documents in qualitative inquiries (Patton, 2002). Since the writing process is both reflective and thoughtful, publications provided rich data about the participants’ views, interests, and areas of expertise. Furthermore, these documents allowed me to “obtain the language and words of the participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 180), which helped with the preparation for in-depth interviews and conversations, but also with the formulation of the phenomenological descriptions.

A second source of public documents was obtained from official websites that were accessible through the World Wide Web. Each participant was the lead administrator of an institution that maintained some form of online representation. Commonly their websites included vision-, mission-, and purpose statements, revealed organizational structures, and provided information concerning academic and non-academic programs. The data gathered from these sources was primarily used to develop participant information sheets (Seidman, 2013) that included contact information and specifics concerning the training institution (see also Appendix Q).

A final source of written text consisted of a research journal that I kept throughout the process of this study (Creswell, 2009). In contrast to the memoing process, which related directly to the text-code analysis, the journal was even more personal as it became the place where my impressions and emotions found expression (see also Appendix O). The journal made me aware of my natural standpoint, my valuations, my theories, and my judgments; all of which I needed to bracket out in the process of *epoche* (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).
**The analysis process for documents.** The process of document analysis began with the assumption that belief, intention, and ideas underlie each text. The interpretation itself was guided by the aim to describe the texts’ most literal meaning (Hodder, 1994). Analytical considerations included the temporal context, function of the text, and style of the writing. The determination of context is in itself an interpretative act where the writing is related to similar meanings (Stenvoll & Svensson, 2011). However, I assumed that the context of the writing as resource could be drawn from the analysis of the text rather than to be something that was to be constructed from the text (Hodder, 1994).

The result of the analytical process of the participants’ public documents helped making connections between contextual data obtained through observations, the theoretical position of the author, and the data obtained through in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2013). The analysis of website-based public documents further informed the context of the participants’ lived experiences. The journal became a data source in addition to its aforementioned primary function in the context of phenomenological *epoche*.

**Visual Data Analysis**

The design of the website, especially the main page (Creswell, 2013), were be considered to find clues concerning the focus, emphasis, and self-representation of each training institution. The appearance of the website design, the institution’s logo, and other visual symbols could possibly be a reflection of the lead administrators’ personality, convictions, and the institutional culture he or she seeks to establish. The institutional facilities constituted another source of qualitative data. Of interest hereby were the layout, the location of administrative offices, the condition of the facilities, and the geographical location. The findings from the visual data analysis were integrated into my research journal and helped me to enter into the experience of the participants.
**Trustworthiness**

Willard (1984), in his discussion of Husserl’s search for the possibility of subjective thinkers obtaining objective knowledge, argued that no phenomenological method, or philosophical outlook for that matter, could result in systematic certainty. Therefore, I was content with establishing methodical trustworthiness instead, which is to be evaluated against the findings and the method of research. In other words, the results and the rigor of this study establish its trustworthiness, and the quality of the phenomenological descriptions is the strongest validation of this study. Van Manen (1990) explained, “a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience – is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience. This is sometimes termed the ‘validating circle of inquiry’” (p. 27). This study also established trustworthiness through methodical rigor, analyst triangulation, researcher credibility, member checks, and a philosophical argument on the value of qualitative inquiry (Stenvoll & Svensson, 2011).

**Methodical Rigor**

Rigor was shown through the comprehensive discussion of my predispositions as the lead investigator that made explicit my biases through the process of *epoche* (Patton, 2002; see also Chapter One). Throughout the analysis, the I systematically engaged in the search for alternative themes to determine the best fit of the data (Patton, 2002). In this process, special consideration was given towards outliers that challenge the established themes to determine if they are exceptions proving the theme, additions broadening the theme, challenges changing the theme, or objections doubting the theme. For example, five participants expressed that they felt not fully prepared for the professional portion of their experience. One participant, however, did not mention this aspect at all. A closer look at his biography revealed that he indeed had had professional
leadership training, whereas the other participants did not. This is, according to van Manen (1990), “the most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science… to differentiate between essential themes and themes that are more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study” (p. 106). Since this study was a trans-language phenomenology, special consideration was given to translation procedures, for which a methodical framework was developed. The interview transcripts, and in one case the structural description of the experience, were presented to the participants for comments on the representation’s clarity and comprehensiveness (Patton, 2002).

**Triangulation of Data**

For inquiries that follow the transcendental phenomenological approach, the in-depth interview is the primary source of data (Moustakas, 1994). This fact renders methodological triangulation between the interviews, the field, audio and visual observations, the questionnaire and the document analyses weaker in establishing the trustworthiness of the representation of the phenomenon’s essence that in other qualitative approaches (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, the process of triangulation between data from the various data sources described earlier was applied and integrated in the report of the findings (Creswell, 2013). To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, I employed analyst triangulation through correspondence with the dissertation committee, as well as data triangulation between interview findings, observations, documents, the research journal, and personal memos. Methodical trustworthiness was further established through clear descriptions of procedures and limitations (Patton, 2002). The trustworthiness of the analysis of written texts was established though confirmation of (a) internal and external coherence; (b) correspondence of the data with findings from other sources; (c) fruitfulness towards the understanding of the posed question; and (d) professionalism of the researcher (Hodder, 1994).
Phenomenological Bracketing

Personal credibility was sought be established through a reflective journal that became a documentation of my reactions to the participants and the settings, the changes I experienced throughout the process, realized predispositions and biases, and confessions of failures and incompetence on my part (Patton, 2002; see excerpt in Appendix O). Potential biases could have included overemphasis on first impressions, selectivity in data evaluation, hasty conclusions on correlations or causality for co-occurring events, and over-accommodation when the hypothesis is questioned (Husserl, 2012). Scholars on the phenomenological method have noted that the researchers must (a) be committed to immerse themselves in the data for an extended period of time (Patton, 2002), (b) persevere through continuous *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994), and (c) stay with the analysis until they arrive at a sense of completion and arrival (Husserl, 2012). The immersion was accomplished in that I transcribed and translated all interviews, and spent more than 13 months analyzing the data. Continuous *epoche* is reflected in the report itself by making transparent the Situation to Self, in establishing a strong background in the literature review, in describing the philosophical suppositions of transcendental phenomenology, in outlining the phenomenon, and in comprehensively describing relevant methods (Creswell, 2013). After finishing the essential descriptions, I indeed arrived at a sense of completion of having adequately described the essence of the phenomenon. Analyst triangulation additionally confirmed that the phenomenological descriptions reflect the essence of the phenomenon of leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

Member Checks

In accordance with Creswell’s (2013) recommendation, member checks were employed to increase the trustworthiness of the study (see also Figure 5). To verify that the participants
were understood correctly, I endeavored to apply active listening strategies of verification and summative statements throughout the interviews (Huberman & Miles, 1994). After the transcriptions of the interviews had been created, they were submitted to the participants for review. This submission was accompanied with probing questions concerning accuracy and completeness of understanding. One participant requested to check the initial textural analysis report of the interviews to the same effect. The participants’ responses, corrections, and clarifications were integrated into the transcripts, only after a positive response did I proceed with the formulation of the phenomenological descriptions.

**Reliability of Translations**

Since this study was a trans-language phenomenology, the translations processes played an important role in establishing trustworthiness. The proposal of this dissertation was first drafted in English, including purpose statements, research questions, interview guides, and other preparatory texts. These were subsequently translated into German, using the methodical framework outlined above, and the data was gathered exclusively in German language following the recommendation in the literature (e.g. Fujishiro et al., 2010; Tetroe et al., 2008; Yi, 2011). The interview transcriptions, research journals, observation field-notes, and questionnaire comments were then translated back into English for analysis. These processes have been outlined in detail already. This section will focus on two aspects of the process that are fundamental to the reliability of the translation, which are the equivalence of translations, and the methodical framework for translation.

**Reliability through equivalence of translations.** In general, the reliability of translations was established on the basis of the concept of *Gleichheit* (quality or equivalence) as developed by House (2005). In essence, a reliable translation of a text says the same as the original
text; the content message is equal or equivalent but not identical. House defined equivalence in translation in three aspects, which are (a) to receive, understand, and interpret a text in its original language, and then say the same in a new text, (b) to use language and terms that mean the same in both languages in the situations given in the original context, and (c) to appropriate the context and pragmatic meaning of the original use of language. Therefore, equivalence of meaning includes semantic, pragmatic, and textual components. Ivir (in House, 2005) commented on the relative nature of equivalence:

Equivalence is… relative and not absolute…. It emerges from the context of situations as defined by the interplay of (many different) factors and has no existence outside that context, and in particular (p. 79).

Thus, any translation only constitutes a secondary source that allows access to preexisting information (House, 2005). This reality constituted a limitation to this study that was sought to be overcome by the methodical framework of trustworthy language transference as outlined above.

Among the possible forms of equivalence of translated texts (e.g. denotative, connotative, pragmatic, etc.) this study primarily sought to establish functional equivalence for the questionnaires, and conceptual equivalence in overt translations in all other instances of translation (House, 2005). Functional equivalence is achieved when the translated text can be used in the target language the same way it can be used in the original language and its situational context. Function itself consists a cognitive-referential component that communicates facts, and an interpersonal component. Functional equivalence is empirically certifiable because it puts the texts in equivalent situational contexts.

Conceptual equivalence, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the contextual meaning of the vocabulary (Clark, 2001; Squires, 2009). Overt translations are clearly identifia-
ble as a translation from a source language (House, 2005). It is necessary to use overt translations if the original text is specifically linked to its culture or to certain events in the past, which was the case in this study. The function of overt translations is to allow speakers of the target language access to the original text (i.e. to “hear” the original text). In essence, both language and culture of the source text are transferred into the target context. Overt translations feel translated because their focus is rather on representing the original text than to achieve an equivalent affect in the target language.

Conceptual equivalence of overtly translated texts is achieved when the original text is maximally preserved. This also means that the focus of the translator remains on the text and not on the target audience, creating a distance and absence of true functional equivalence as it was defined above. In other words, the translations will seek to reflect the terms and their contextual meaning in the original text, but will not seek to elicit the same reaction of the target-language readers, as the text would have in the original language. The most extreme case of overt translating is interlinear or word-by-word transfer without regard to semantics of target context.

**Reliability established through a methodical framework for language transfer.** The trustworthiness of translation is established by the translators’ skill, and by a method that allows for translation verification. In this study three phases of translation were used. Phase 1 included the translation and verification of written documents through retranslation. As a native German speaker, and one who is familiar with the field of research and culture (Clark, 2001), I created the initial translations seeking to achieve conceptual equivalence. The retranslations were created by a second translator whose native tongue was English, and who also was familiar with the field of research and culture (Clark 2001; Geroy & Lewis, 1991; Tetroe et al., 2008).
Phase 2 included the translation and verification of empirical instruments through retranslation and cognitive pilot interviews (Huberman & Miles, 1994). As native target-language speaker who is familiar with the underpinning theoretical concepts and constructs of the instrument, I performed the first step of translation. A second translator, who had a working knowledge of the area of study created the retranslations. Two cycles of cognitive pilot interviews using the translated instrument, with two participants each, helped to revise the questionnaires and achieve both conceptual and functional equivalence. The participants in the pilots were either in leadership positions, or in one case a German language-expert. It must be noted that the questionnaires were not statistically validated after translation.

Phase 3 included the translation and verification of spoken words. In this phase I translated the recorded interviews while transcribing (Gho, 2004). Random samples of the English transcriptions were divided up among three professionally trained translators for retranslation. These transcription excerpts were edited to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues during the data collection process include the elements of informed consent, deception, confidentiality, benefits and risks, and the researcher’s stance (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

**Informed Consent**

I sought written consent from all participants outlining the purpose and process of the study and clarifying the voluntary nature of participation and the individual’s freedom to leave the study at any time (see Appendix D). The content of the consent was communicated verbally and in writing. I did not knowingly engage in deception, but openly communicated and discussed the purpose of the study as a whole and any portion of it. During the manuscript development, I
was sensitive to omit any detail that a participant shared off-the-record, or expressed discomfort with the thought of having it shared. Benefits and risks were clearly stated; however, direct risks and benefits to the participants were not anticipated (Creswell, 2013). Part of the consent agreement pertained to the aspect of observation where I openly took notes while the participant engaged in an activity or experience (Emerson et al., 1995).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was upheld by keeping the identity of the participants anonymous using pseudonyms and omitting any telling details from the report (Barsky, 2007; Seidman, 2013). All electronic data was stored on a password-protected computer, digital storage devices were being kept in a locked location, and electronic back-ups were encrypted on an external hard-drive. Any hard-copy items or research related artifacts was stored in a locked location (Creswell, 2013). All data will be stored for 10 years after their acquisition (Creswell, 2009), and only the researcher and the dissertation committee have access to the data. Online based interviewing raises another level of concerns about privacy on the web (Janghorban et al., 2014). The participants were informed about the limited privacy that could be guaranteed when using video-based online communication services.

Epoche

I upheld the methodically necessary stance of *epoche* (Moustakas, 1994) throughout the data collection and analysis process. No personal experiences with the phenomenon were directly shared with participants, and the interviews were semi-structured using a guide to reduce interviewer bias through pre-formulated questions (Patton, 2002). I anticipated further ethical issues to arise during the data collection, analysis, and dissemination process in form of transformative effects on both participants and researchers (van Manen, 1990). These effects were docu-
mented in the researcher’s reflective journal and included in the report when applicable and in the epilogue found in Chapter Five.

**Summary**

This chapter described the method of this dissertation. The study followed the transcendental phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry to answer the research questions. The transcendental method was juxtaposed with hermeneutical phenomenology, and then described in greater detail. It further introduced the role of the researcher as sense-makers, listener, writer, and interpreter. Data was gathered through a questionnaire, a three-cycle interview process, field observations, and analyses of document, audio, and visual data sources. Secondary data sources consisted of a research journal and memos. Since the researcher was the main instrument of both data gathering and analysis, the process of *epoche* was be applied throughout the study as outlined above. Trustworthiness was established within the parameters of the structured approach including methodical rigor, data triangulation, phenomenological bracketing, member checks, a framework for reliable translations. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand leadership through the description of the lived experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. The central phenomenon of interest, or the shared life-experience amongst the participants, is leadership. This chapter presents the findings of data analysis that answer the main research question, which flows directly from the purpose of this study: how do the participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe? The chapter’s structure follows Moustakas’ (1994) approach to phenomenological analysis and phenomenological descriptions.

Each participant is introduced briefly by explaining how I established contact and gathered the data. It follows a biographical sketch of the participants’ personal leadership development up to the current position at the respective seminary. This portion directly answers the third research question: how do lead administrators describe their path of leadership development and how they arrived where they presently are? In the remainder of the chapter the findings are presented in textural, structural, and synthesis descriptions.

The textural description is the result of phenomenological reduction and constitutes a report of the invariant qualities, or themes, of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). It includes all aspects of what the participants are currently experiencing as the lead administrator of their respective seminaries based on their descriptions and reflections. Thus, the textural description answers research questions one, two, four and five on the lead administrators’ current experiences, their role, perceived influences, and the impact of spirituality (a summary of findings concerning the research questions is provided in Chapter Five).
The structural description is the result of the process of imaginative variation. It constitutes a report of the researcher’s reconstruction of the participant’s experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) and includes all aspects of how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries (Creswell, 2013).

The synthesis of descriptions, or essential description, incorporates the textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2013). It is the result of an intuitive and reflective integration of the textural and structural descriptions of the participants’ experience with the phenomenon, and thus constitutes a description of the meaning and essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the individual participants (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, the essential synthesis description constitutes the most transcendent description of the essence of leading a seminary in German-speaking Europe today. This is the “culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 194). The data for the descriptions primarily comes from the three interviews that were conducted with each participant, but are triangulated with findings from field notes on observations, research journals, memos, written documents, and the results of the questionnaires (the complete results and discussion of the questionnaires are presented in Chapter Five).

Introducing the Participants

The six participants in this study were included because they are the lead administrators of seminaries that fulfilled the required delimitations set for this study, and because they consented to participate in it. For reasons of confidentiality pseudonyms are used to disguise both the participants’ names and the names of the seminaries they lead. Fitting with the context, early church fathers were used to identify the leader, and the city associated with the church father as the pseudonym for the seminary. The assignment of names was purely accidental and does not reflect any parallels of location or theological position. The six participant pseudonyms are: The-
ophilus of Antioch, Gregory of Nazianzus, Methodius of Olympus, Avius of Vienne, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Benedict of Nursia.

To further reduce the distinguishability of the participants, telling details about the seminaries, such as specific leadership structure, details of accreditation, and types of program of study, were omitted. Since the evangelical population and the number of relevant seminaries is relatively small, I felt it was necessary to also greatly limit the biographical information about the participants to only include those aspects that are important to their current experience as leaders. All participants are husbands to their first wives and fathers to at least two children. Some already have grandchildren as well.

**Introducing Theophilus of Antioch**

I experienced Theophilus as a structured thinker who answered the questions very comprehensively with much detail and depth. He was referred to me as a potential participant, since the seminary he is leading fulfilled all delimitations for this study. After consenting his participation in the study, Theophilus completed the online questionnaire and we scheduled the first two interviews as Skype conversations. For the third interview we met in person. The interviews were between 60 and 70 minutes long and took place within two weeks of each other. Theophilus also invited me to observe him in his leadership practice as he interacted with students and faculty. As part of the member-check process, the interview transcriptions were submitted to him. Only after Theophilus’ positive response and application of necessary corrections to the transcripts the analysis process was begun.

Early on Theophilus had already inclinations towards spiritual work. He remembered, “I wanted to do the best, biggest, most important, that is: a missionary.” This thought has guided his decision-making processes throughout his youth and made him a student who still is fascinated
by theology. To this day Theophilus does not regret his spiritually influenced decision for the chosen professional path. During his developmental years, Theophilus continually was involved in educational settings where he assumed both spiritual and administrative leadership functions. A good portion of his leadership experience was gathered in a theological seminary abroad. Returning from that experience, Theophilus pastored a number of churches before entering Antioch Seminary, first as a teacher, and then being promoted to be its director.

Theophilus recalled that most of his leadership opportunities, including the present one at the Seminary of Antioch, evolved rather than him actively searching them out. Even though there were times in his formative years when he pushed for leadership as well. One of the reasons for being asked into leadership had to do with his personality. Theophilus reflected, “I took over leadership, so to say, as a function in a team because of my gift-mix.” On the other hand, he also admitted, “it is hard for me to work under a leadership that does not do a good job; that is inefficient. Well, then I do try to lead up, or to see what I can do about it.” In reference to his character, Theophilus also noted, “in the long run, I think I am perhaps a better leader than follower.” But he quickly added, “I would not say that I (uhm) I am not after power and position.”

**Introducing Gregory of Nazianzus**

I experienced Gregory as an analytical thinker who spoke about his experiences from both a pragmatic and idealistic perspective. The contact with Gregory of Nazianzus was established through mutual acquaintances. After consenting to participate in this study, Gregory agreed to participate in three interviews, to complete the questionnaire, to allow me to conduct a field-observation, and to complete a member-check feedback. The first two interviews were conducted through videoconferencing, and for the third interview I met with Gregory in his office on the campus of the Seminary of Nazianzus. All three interviews happened within the span of a
month and averaged about 60 minutes in length each. Later I also spent half a day with Gregory observing him as a leader in two types of faculty meetings.

Gregory experienced what he called “this classic youth group career” that introduced him to his first leadership responsibilities. He remembered, “I have always taken on responsibility. I actually did desire it. It was something that I liked to do, where I loved to invest myself in collaboration. And that always was a common theme in my biography.” Another significant aspect of his development was his theological education, which for Gregory was “certainly a shaping experience.” Gregory also experienced that leadership responsibility was continually given to him, which he in turn was able to fulfill satisfactorily. These instances of leadership success influenced his future direction as well. A fourth aspect that Gregory mentioned in the context of his leadership development were influential personalities and mentors that invested in him. Before coming to the Seminary of Nazianzus, he spent most of his professional life working in an academic environment. When Gregory arrived at Nazianzus, he relieved an interim director and found, as he said, “a well ordered house.” With the call to this seminary he made the personal determination that education would be the field of his remaining professional career.

**Introducing Methodius of Olympus**

I experienced Methodius as a matter-of-fact person who answered the posed questions to the point without much elaboration. The contact with Methodius was established through a common acquaintance who recommended his inclusion in this study. After consenting his participation, we scheduled the first two interviews through videoconferencing, and for the third interview we met in person in his office on the campus of Olympus Seminary. The first two interviews occurred in the same sitting, while it took about four months to find an appropriate time for the last interview. The interviews themselves were between 25 and 35 minutes long. Metho-
dius seemed to be an experienced interviewee and reflective leader who answered all questions in brief but in-depth statements. Despite the relative brevity of the interviews, I was able to obtain the depth of information required for phenomenological analysis. Methodius also completed the online questionnaire and provided helpful feedback through the member-check process.

Methodius traced his development towards his current leadership position at Olympus Seminary through two central experiences. These were “the conversion back at the age of [xx], and then the switch into full-time ministry.” In his early years in the faith, a couple mentored him, especially “concerning the willingness to invest oneself for the kingdom of God.” Later, now already in ministry, Methodius remembered a pastor who mentored him as well. Methodius’ pursuit in full-time ministry is his second career, since he started out working for a large company. In his mid-thirties he received the call into ministry and began his theological education. Methodius began to think about full-time ministry while volunteering in a local church and assuming some leadership responsibility. The experiences during that time, and his professional expertise from the marketplace combined, gave birth to a conviction that he could help equip the evangelical community if he committed to the ministry full-time. At first the perspective was towards a pastorate, but soon Methodius understood his calling to be in teaching. Towards the end of his studies, Methodius was approached by the founders of Olympus Seminary to become the leader of the institution. Today he works as a part-time leader at the Seminary of Olympus while being engaged in other institutions as well and serving in a leadership capacity at a local church.

**Introducing Avius of Vienne**

I experienced Avius as a very reflective leader who seemed to always be especially intentional about what he said, and how he said it. We connected through referral by a mutual ac-
quaintance. After consenting to his participation in this study, we scheduled two interviews through online conferencing, which were conducted back-to-back, and a final interview in his office on the campus of the Seminary of Vienne three weeks after. The interviews were between 50 and 65 minutes in length. Avius completed the online questionnaire and the member-check process. I also had the chance to spend a full day observing Avius at an annual staff-meeting a few months after the interviews had been conducted.

Avius comes from a family with a long ministry tradition, and so his decision to go into Christian ministry was in part due to this family heritage. During his formative years he always was carrying leadership responsibility in various capacities. Community was a huge aspect in Avius’ development as a leader. He said, “I have had many examples who shaped me.” He completed theological degrees both in the inland and abroad, and was engaged in various ministry and teaching opportunities before coming to Vienne. Avius was invited by the board of Vienne to consider becoming the leader of the seminary, and after a short period of time his wife and he made the decision together to accept the invitation.

Introducing Cyril of Jerusalem

I experienced Cyril as a passionate leader who tended to answer the questions primarily in story or metaphor. The connection to Cyril of Jerusalem came about through mutual acquaintances, and a brief personal introduction where I secured his interest in this study. After providing written consent we sought an appropriate time for the interviews and observation. Due to the tight schedule that he had at the time of my data gathering, we agreed on spending an entire day together to complete all three interviews and the observation of his leadership at the Seminary of Jerusalem. Throughout the day I was able to observe Cyril in his leadership role, spend time in three interviews, and also engage in some informal conversations to build rapport.
Cyril is the leader of the youngest seminary in this study. In his early 20s he began to teach at Jerusalem Seminary and now works with the institution for more than two decades. Feeling led by God through prayer and the affirmation by others, Cyril studied theology and worked in churches in his homeland and abroad. While furthering his education, Cyril was approached by the leadership of Jerusalem to consider teaching at the seminary. He accepted and so his story at the Seminary of Jerusalem began. Most of his leadership development occurred during his actual leading when he eclectically gleaned leadership insight and guidance through the literature and personal observations. He considers his Christian family background and his original church environment as the most important influences on his life and development as a leader.

Introducing Benedict of Nursia

I experienced Benedict as a spiritual thinker who, maybe more than the other participants, evaluates his experiences from the perspective of his personal spirituality. He and I came in contact early into the study when I had the chance to observe him leading a group of seminary students in a ministry practicum. During that time Benedict consented to his participation in the study and we sat down for a 34-minute, a 55-minute, and a 58-minute long interview. Later he also completed the online questionnaire. After receiving a positive feedback from the member-check the analysis process was begun.

For Benedict his current position is a second career. After becoming a Christian, he first pursued a career in the marketplace while working voluntarily in church ministry. Here he also made his first experiences in leadership. Reflecting on these early experiences he said, “I enjoyed it but I was never driven to land leadership positions.” Benedict never wanted to become “just a tag-along, or consumer as a Christian”, and so at some point he began to study theology. After
graduation Benedict was called to the Seminary of Nursia to teach and to eventually become the successor of the leader at that time.

**Textural Descriptions**

The textural descriptions include all aspects of what the participants are experiencing with the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries (Creswell, 2013). Through phenomenological reduction of the interview transcripts and observation field-notes, textural themes were identified that describe what the participants are experiencing as lead administrators at their respective seminaries. The development of the themes followed a three-step process. After transcription of the interviews all statements that answered the research questions were identified with each receiving equal value, which is the process of horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Once the horizons were established, each statement received a short-phrased code that served as a symbol for the meaning of the related interview phrase (Saldaña, 2016). In a final step for each participant a list of invariant constituents was identified and clustered into core themes and sub-themes of their experience (Moustakas, 1994). These themes with their respective sub-themes are sentences that express the fundamental meaning of the interview text they represent in a single phrase (van Manen, 1990). The textures of the lead administrators’ experience with leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe include the themes of leading spiritually, collaboratively, professionally, and academically.

**Leading Spiritually**

The theme of leading spirituality describes both the leadership attitude and leadership activities of the participants at their seminaries. For the participants their leadership, and in fact their lives, are intrinsically connected with their personal spirituality. Each participant described this aspect from different perspectives. Theophilus said, “I hope that I am not only perceived as a
manager and administrator, but also as person with in that sense a spiritual aura where people say, ‘there, yes, there is something of Jesus likeness visible.’ Avius, reflecting on his leadership of personnel, said, “I desire that my thinking is imbedded in; that it is a thinking as a Christian and not just as a manager.” Cyril admitted, “I cannot imagine any life other than in this total dependence and this total closeness with Jesus.” Methodius remarked in the context of his academic leadership: “Of course, spirituality is not our main topic, but it is an aspect of the whole package.” Speaking of his task at the seminary, Gregory acknowledged, “this is a matter that is to a high degree meaningful and motivating, to contribute at this place to the church of Jesus Christ in this world.”

It seemed that the aspect of spirituality was the most foundational to both the what and how of their shared experience as leaders. This is also confirmed by the high scores each participant achieved on the questionnaires on spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality (see Chapter Five for more detail). In personal observations of the leaders the spiritual dimension of their experiences was quite visible as well. I saw them pray, care, discuss spiritual matters, and express their desire to promote unity, the local church, and Christian missions, just to name a few. In the following section the theme of leading spiritually is filled out with the sub-themes of leading with spiritual leadership and leading with spiritual values.

**Leading with spiritual leadership.** All participants shared in some detail how they translated their spiritual convictions and values into a specific spiritual leadership strategy, and for some into servant leadership practices as well.

The foundation for Avius’ spiritual leadership comes from his confidence to be commissioned by God to lead the Seminary of Vienne. He associated this task with a specific calling into a “spiritual leadership service.” With the term “pastoral administrator,” Avius described how he
experienced his role at Vienne. There is an intentional integration of professional attitude into the spiritual life. He admitted, “I cannot see that I could separate the leadership and management task from the pastoral dimension. For me that belongs together.” In other words, Avius practices spiritual servant leadership as a Christian in the conscious presence of God.

Theophilus sees himself as a spiritual leader. He wants to be perceived as a spiritual person who leads by Christian values, and who integrates a personal spirituality into every act of leadership. Strategic planning, for example, is a spiritual and theological practice for Theophilus. He explained:

For me personally it [spirituality] is expressed in that I take part of my work time, not a big part, but a part of my work time for prayer for my co-workers, for the students; and I mean also in planning, and in more strategic leadership and such, there as well of course. I don’t just sit down and think something or write something, I am in prayer then as well.

His hope is to be perceived not only as an administrator, but also as a spiritual person who increasingly resembles his Lord, Jesus Christ. This attitude should manifest itself in his openness for God’s guidance as well. At Antioch Seminary Theophilus has instituted moments of spiritual focus in various groups and settings throughout the week. He explained, “we don’t see ourselves as a church, but as a Christian community.” He especially emphasized the importance of prayer with the core-faculty team at Antioch.

For Theophilus personal spirituality is primarily expressed through spiritual practices and a conscious testimony of his faith. The study of the Bible, alone or in community, is Theophilus’ primary source for spiritual living, but regular worship service attendance and a personal prayer life are also important. For him correct theological thinking, which is developed through education, is closely linked to his personal faith. He frequently observes personal quiet times of prayer
and Bible study, takes prayer walks, and goes on retreats into a house of silence. In the academi-
zation process Theophilus increasingly comes into contact with non-Christians, which encour-
ages him to live a consistent testimony of his faith. He said, “I am maybe the first, or one reli-
gious representative/church representative they come to know a bit more closely, and hopefully
experience a pleasing taste of the gospel.”

On a foundational level, Gregory understands himself as a spiritual leader at the Semi-
nary of Nazianzus in the sense that he seeks to shape the students spiritually by passing on the
Word of God through lectures, devotions, and worship services. The metaphor that best describes
his leadership style is that of a father who is “going ahead and taking along.” He knows all stu-
dents by name and offers them the casual you to create more proximity with them. On the other
hand, he also established professional boundaries, especially in the context of spiritual counsel-
ing. Due to his particular leadership position, Gregory usually refers students that seek his coun-
sel to other counsellors within the organization. Referring to deep issues that students carry, he
noted, “I don’t want to know too much about them.” A secondary level on which Gregory con-
siders himself a spiritual leader concerns the day-to-day decisions that the leadership task brings.
Even with those items “the theological question is always the fundamental question,” he assert-
ed.

When asked about his current experiences as a spiritual leader in the context of Olympus,
Methodius answered, “this comes out the most during the courses themselves.” During his lec-
tures he would seek to place spiritual impulses, integrate the topics with spiritual principles, and
communicate his spiritually motivated servant attitude. He asserted that spiritual leadership “is
reflected more in my teaching, than in my leading.” When asked about his leadership philo-

sophy, Methodius explained, “servant leadership is a good title.” Servant leadership is also the phi-
losophy that best resembles his understanding of the biblical model of leadership. For Methodius this means to support the maturation of individuals and to be self-reflective of how he perceives the other. In the church context servant leadership means for him to be the impulse giver and to develop things with others in contrast to dictate and push things along by himself. Methodius developed his philosophy through reading on leadership, reflecting on what style would be a personal fit, and the acknowledgement that he tends to lead the same way he would like to be led himself. In our conversations Methodius personal spirituality was primarily expressed as the appreciation of the Bible is a guide for leadership. For him the Bible lays the foundation for all leadership practice. The principles he derives from his understanding of the Bible find application in his leadership in the local church, but also in the professional context. Giving an example for church leadership, he explained, “the Holy Spirit is given to all flesh, and that means, there is a totally different foundation to lead; that I include others.”

Cyril framed the theme of his personal spirituality in one statement: “I cannot imagine any life other than in this total dependence and in this total closeness with Jesus.” It was obvious throughout the conversation that his personal faith is connected with all that he does, and that it gives meaning to his experience as a leader. His spiritual life is primarily fed through Bible study and prayer. Cyril confessed that his tasks and ministry exercises were negatively impacted if he lacked in those particular spiritual disciplines. The Bible is of foundational importance to Cyril’s life and ministry, and its study is a natural exercise for him. The Scriptures have a real impact on his leadership experience in that they are a great motivation and source of meaning for him. His personal faith also gives him a sense of responsibility in various contexts. To defend, or “to confess to the truth of Scripture whatever the cost”, is his primary task in relationship to society, and to encourage every believer to study the Bible is his primary task in relationship to the church.
He explained the latter saying, “I hope that increasingly, I’d say, it becomes more central for theological training institutions that they commit to this task to turn every Christian into a good Bible student or student of theology.”

Cyril understands himself as a spiritual leader in everything he does in his role as lead administrator of Jerusalem Seminary. His faith is important for making decisions, because Cyril believes that God can guide him in those processes. He elaborated on his spiritual role and responsibility using the biblical metaphor of a shepherd. This understanding of the leader as a shepherd motivates and guides his leadership practice. When moving the flock ahead the shepherd goes in front, but when the herd arrives at the pasture he stands in the middle. In application, people follow voluntarily because they trust the shepherd leader. For Cyril, this means that he has to go ahead through changes and developments, but to step back in day-to-day operations and give freedom for others. The spiritual leader as a shepherd leads “first need-oriented, and second goal-oriented.” That means seeing the needs of the person first – or in terms of the metaphor, seeking out the lost sheep, before considering the task one wants them to accomplish or the goal one wants to achieve. He summarized the need-orientation saying:

I have to find pastures now that the sheep can graze. And I must meet the needs; I cannot drive a starving herd towards a goal, because I am goal-oriented, because I just want to get to the end of the journey. Yes. They will starve to death on the way. I must act need-oriented.

However, there are times when a shepherd cannot consider all the needs of his flock. Expanding on the metaphor, Cyril added:

When the shepherd knows it is getting dark, and I have to get the sheep into safety, then it might be the case that one sheep was so dumb and did not eat enough all day long. That
cannot bother the shepherd, because now he must reach a secure place. And here he must lead the sheep goal-oriented. That is leadership for me.

For Cyril, the spiritual leader also is a servant leader. The spirit of service comes from an attitude of humility which is crucial for leading others and for leading together with others. “If you don’t have that,” Cyril remarked, “then I would very quickly, I’d say, be a chief without warriors; yes, because I would just do my thing over the heads of everyone.”

The final aspect of Cyril’s experience and practice of spirituality in his role as the lead administrator concerns institutional spirituality. In the seminary he organized several meetings and devotions in various settings that are meant to increase spiritual awareness and spiritual living with everyone involved at Jerusalem. Additionally, he encourages mentor and counselling relationships between students and faculty. As a faith community they share each other’s burdens and hurts. However, Cyril maintains the perspective that “you cannot create spirituality, see? But it is a bit like, I’d say, a gift…. It emerges from a conscience.” Thus he sees his role as a facilitator of opportunities where spirituality can emerge. Spirituality cannot be prescribed for someone else, but it can be modeled. On the other hand, Cyril knows that spiritual communion does not happen by chance, but must be sought out intentionally. He summarized his understanding of the institutional spirituality at Jerusalem saying, “we are not only a learning community here, but we are also a faith community.”

Benedict used the shepherd metaphor as well to describe his understanding of his role as the spiritual leader at Nursia Seminary. His leadership is characterized by a spiritual responsibility as one who leads under the supervision of the head-shepherd (speaking of Jesus Christ). This responsibility is felt the most when making decisions that will impact the seminary’s future. Benedict explained, “I think very much from the end; what will the head-shepherd say one day?”
Throughout our conversations the strong spiritual responsibility towards the church became apparent. This fact was further supported by my personal observation of Benedict who invested much time and energy in a church when I had the chance to observe him. As the leader of the Seminary of Nursia, Benedict assumes spiritual responsibility for his staff and students. His first expression of this responsibility is his personal example. He explained, “first [I have] to live it myself.” Additionally, Benedict intentionally communicates it with the staff about spiritual matters. The foundational message he seeks to convey is “to see ourselves as Christians and children of God and not only as full-time spiritual professionals.” Spiritual elements such as prayer, Bible study, and times of testimony are implemented into each formal meeting. Seeing his co-workers as called to their jobs relieves him as a leader, since everyone under his leadership “also has a sense of responsibility before God as well.”

In summary, each lead administrator described the most fundamental orientation for their leadership practice in terms of spiritual leadership. Their practice is a living out of their personal faith. In a sense they are pastoral administrators, to borrow Avius’ words. The Bible, prayer, and Christian community are common spiritual aspects among all participants. They described this theme further using metaphor, servant-leadership, spiritual practices, and efforts to promote institutional spirituality.

**Leading with spiritual values.** Each participant described guiding spiritual values for their leadership attitude and practice. A common finding among all participants is the relationship between experience and practice. Most values that the lead administrators described as guiding their leadership practice they also received from others during their formative years or in their current experience.
Benedict’s leadership experience is strongly based on his spiritual values, which also define the culture at Nazianzus Seminary. The most personal value is Benedict’s commitment to the seminary and its mission. Being committed is something that he learned early in his leadership development, and he fully lives this out in his current position. Reflecting on his own personality Benedict explained, “I would describe myself as a leader who is very much focused on the area for which I am responsible.” This focus is evident in his continual balancing of his work-life responsibilities, whereby family and the Seminary of Nazianzus receive the highest priority. In terms of commitment to the seminary, he said, “I can fully identify with [the goals of the school]. I fully support the concept that we have.” This commitment to the current direction of the seminary is so high that he admitted, “for that I have a great passion. If it would become [something else], then I would lose that passion.”

Trust is at the center of Benedict’s leadership practice. He intentionally builds trust relationships by refusing to exercise excessive oversight. “I don’t have to control everything. I want, and I don’t need to know what my employee has done every minute of the day. That would disturb the trust relationship,” he explained. On the other hand, Benedict expects of his co-workers and co-leaders to be trustworthy as well in terms of discretion and integrity. If discussions behind closed doors would somehow leave the room, “that would be a great breach of trust,” he said. Yet another value that Benedict experiences and exercises in his leadership is safety. The staff expects him “to create an environment (uhm)... I think, [of] significance and safety.”

Significance comes from the knowledge, that “what I do has meaning, it has meaning for the kingdom of God.” Safety is provided through his efforts “to create a working environment where they can feel safe to express themselves and just do their job.” There are several facets to this point as it relates to his own need for safety as a leader, the provision of a safe learning-
environment for the students, and the creation of an environment in which the staff can do their jobs well. In relations to the staff it means “to create a working environment where they can feel safe to express themselves and to just do their job.” Benedict sees his task to eliminate what threatens to diminish the staff’s ability to perform their tasks. During times of crisis his presence as a leader provides assuredness to all members of the organization, as Benedict explained: “In some situations it is important that there is just one person you can rely on.”

The core values that Theophilus described for his leadership were respect, trust, and giving space, but also to challenge the co-workers, to promote self-responsibility, compassion, listening, wisdom, respect, attentiveness, and approachability. He expresses the values of respect and trust towards the co-workers by giving them space, and by being committed to still work together even when chemistry is missing. Towards the students Theophilus expresses the values of respect and trust by creating structures within which they can personally develop.

Some of his values are also manifested in the corporate culture, for Theophilus is confident concerning the value of giving space, that “it is also the ethos of the school.” The value of giving space also relates to the area of professional leadership, as Theophilus explained:

I see this as an important task for the leadership, that I create the open space for my co-workers, that they do what they are supposed to do; and that is to train, that is not to produce paper for statistics.

Throughout his development Theophilus remembered many leaders and mentors of whom he said, “they have challenged me, they had confidence in me, but they also left space for me to try it out”. He now passes on these values through his own leadership practice. Finally, Theophilus emphasizes in his leadership the value of promoting self-responsibility with his co-workers.
Freedom is the most prominent leadership value for Methodius, and he seeks to pass it on to those he leads. He explained:

Yes, I believe the theme of freedom is important…. I enjoy it that the chairman of the board of [name of seminary] gave me freedom, and that I give those whom I lead freedom. Yes (uhm) I don’t want to prescribe too much.

Methodius wants the instructors in his organization to keep their own style of teaching and to give the courses their personal touch. His own task remains to keep everything within the big context of the degree program and the mission of the school, and that certain topics are covered throughout the lectures, “but then, very intentionally, let every lecturer put their mark on it,” he added.

A second value that Methodius mentioned, closely related to freedom, is trust. Methodius admitted, “the entire organization lives by trust.” For example, everyone working for Olympus Seminary is not clocked for work-hours. Methodius also communicates trust to the instructors by giving them room on one hand, and by providing the best teaching environment possible on the other. He also realizes that trust built over time is the main factor for inter-organizational cooperation, and that “one has to build trust…. Sometimes you are in for the long haul.” Finally, trust is also extended to the students by expecting them to provide quality feedback on the lecturers through standardized surveys. This allows Methodius to have enough control over the proceedings in the classroom and to exercise his leadership at Olympus.

At Vienne Seminary Avius intentionally formalized his leadership values into a leadership philosophy document. In our conversations several values from this document were mentioned including the values of trust, respect, service, transparency, efficiency, watchfulness, and freedom. He experiences trust primarily in his relationship with the board where he is entrusted
with the task of developing the organization, but also with the co-workers who expect him to stay for the long run. The value of respect came up in the context of leadership and power. The seminary lives a flat leadership culture. However, the executive leadership is held formally responsible to a board, but informally to many stakeholders as well. Avius acknowledges, “that is a totally different sense of power.” He is accountable to many stakeholders while in turn leading in a flat organization.

Avius experiences the value of service as his primary task towards the people he is working with. He explained his responsibility to be “to help people to develop, to set free their potential, to flourish, to get ahead… to find joy.” The value of transparency and honesty are connected in that Avius is not demanding of others what he is not ready to bring himself. The value of efficiency has to do with professional leadership practices. Watchfulness is a value that is expressed through self-reflection. The value of freedom is related to some of the previously mentioned values, but it finds a unique expression in the development of others through conflict. In conflict situations Avius seeks “to be gracious here and allow others the same development process that I have experienced.”

In our conversations Gregory mentioned his leadership values only tangentially. However, the values of respect, trust, and transparency could be identified as guiding influences for his leadership practice. Gregory experiences respect as a leader, a value that he passes on to the people he works with as well as the students. However, the most important value in his context is trust. “I need the trust of [stake holders]. I need the trust of my faculty… we need the trust of our students and our potential applicants” His strategy to build trust is to lead transparently. In conclusion Gregory noted, “trust; I have to build it. We live by it.”
Personal and institutional values are the driving forces of Cyril’s leadership practice, and their expression especially in the context of relationships. When reflecting on his statements on values, it became apparent that Cyril considers them a measure for his own practice, but they also constitute both his expectations towards the people he works with, and the perceived expectation of others towards him. Moreover, Cyril made it clear that his leadership values flow from his personal faith and from the Bible. For a team to work well it needs harmony that is expressed in respect, trust, transparency, and esteeming the other higher than oneself. Cyril framed this expectation saying, “a team must be in concord.” Cyril not only demands these values of others, but seeks to model them as well. He explained, “I must live this out if I want to experience esteem and respect.” Other leadership values that emerged throughout the conversation included giving freedom to those being led, being dependable in the execution of his leadership, remaining approachable for everyone, exercising empathy for others, listening intently, engaging in reflective exercises, and maintaining an attitude of service and humility.

Cyril’s values concern his own church orientation, which also translates into the values of the seminary as an institution. His self understanding as a church member and part of a specific evangelical movement, paired with Jerusalem Seminary’s history and purpose, are the foundation for the practice and value of church orientation. Cyril explained, “I have seen my task in supporting this movement, and to make my contribution to it.” Church orientation also defines the primary purpose of the seminary as Cyril summarized, “this school only exists until the churches say; as long as the churches say we need this school. When the churches say this school is obsolete, then we close it.” This value is lived out in the seminary by inviting church leaders to evaluate the seminary as part of the quality-management system, which is a unique process among the six participating seminaries. Finally, the orientation to church illuminates Cyril’s un-
derstanding of the role of theory. For him any theory is validated in its applicability in the church context.

**Leading Collaboratively**

The theme of collaborative leadership describes the core strategy of leadership style and experience that each participant in this study shared. Avius explained, “we are a leadership team,” and Benedict acknowledged, “the school is led by a leadership team and I preside over it. We are seven people (uhm) every one leads a certain resort.” Cyril even admitted, “I only want to do this as a team.” Theophilus leads both with an administrative team, and a core team of teachers that functions as the academic leadership of the seminary. Gregory mentioned the team aspect in his leadership experience as well.

Each lead administrator operates in some form of a shared leadership structure. Collaborative leadership also seemed to align with the personal leadership style since the participants placed great value and importance on community and relationships. The theme of leading collaboratively is clustered into the sub-themes of shared leadership structures, and leading in community and through relationships.

**Shared leadership structures.** In Theophilus’ experience shared leadership happens on each leadership level of the seminary. On the highest level he shares equal responsibility with the executive director. Together with the assistant director they form the official leadership level of Antioch Seminary. The convent of the core faculty constitutes another level of leadership, where procedure, curriculum and student-related decisions are being made. Theophilus is the leader of the convent, but his power is limited by clear regulations. He gave some examples of how this looks like in practice:
We as the core team see ourselves also as leadership of the seminary in as much as we dismiss the regulations and guidelines. I am not doing that by myself; or the curriculum, if we would adopt a new subject; also all student related questions, if there would be disciplinary measures, admission of new students, we are actually doing that together.

I observed him interacting with members of the core-faculty team in a discussion of curriculum changes. His demeanor during conversation indicated that Theophilus intentionally positioned himself on eye-level with the others and not as their superior on that matter.

Cyril’s experience of leading within a bigger unit is lived out in the practice of shared leadership. He experiences a unique shared leadership situation, since in the end he alone carries the final responsibility. In his own words: “I cannot hide behind anyone and say, ‘for this someone else has to take responsibility.’ (uhm) In as much that is my responsibility.” However, team-leadership was always the DNA of Jerusalem Seminary. At the beginning of his tenure Cyril had determined, “I only want to do this in a team.” Shared leadership is a direct result of the relationship values that Cyril expects of himself and of others. In an atmosphere of trust, he gives his team members much freedom while assuming the final responsibility. Cyril does this confidently because he knows, “as a school director I have a team of strong leaders.” Shared leadership also influences his practice when he delegates responsibility, coordinates processes, or moderates through meetings.

Avius leads the Seminary of Jerusalem in a team as well. The flat leadership culture requires of him “a very reflective use of power. That is, in an institution like ours power is relative.” The leadership team develops the vision for the organization, defines goals, and evaluates their success. He explained:
We then have the team leader, in our leadership meeting where we also look what is going on in each area. We have quality management processes that run through the house where it becomes apparent if something is not running well, that we look at.

The Seminary of Nursia is led by a leadership team chaired by Benedict. He explained, “I am not a solitary leader at the very top.” The professional community of leaders, staff, and teachers is lived out especially in decision-making processes. Here Benedict described his leadership attitude as “collegial, not hierarchical.” He admitted that his approach to decision-making takes more time this way. Leading a community this way actually has become corporate culture, as Benedict asserted, “we seldom make lonely decisions. I myself am not one to make lonely decisions. This actually permeates into all areas of work.” He also maintains an open information culture to raise identification with both the organization and the decisions being made.

Methodius leads the organization with the smallest number of staff members in this study. Nonetheless, the leadership structure is team-based where three individuals from different countries form the academic leadership of the Seminary of Olympus. Most of the instructors at Olympus are contract lecturers which puts him in unique power relationship with them. Methodius explained, “over them I don’t have real formal authority. Well, that is, they are no employees…. Yes, well, that means, my organizational power is somewhat limited.” Beyond his supervisory role, Methodius is much more focused on collaborating with the faculty and lead by persuasion to develop the future of the organization together.

Gregory’s leadership structure is unique in the sense that he is informally, but still significantly, accountable to the leadership of a partnering organization. For the success of his leadership a positive contact with the leadership of that organization is essential. With them and “the college administration [I practice] very, very close coordination”, Gregory explained. I had the
privilege of observing Gregory lead in two different team-leadership settings. It was obvious that the leadership structure at the Seminary of Nazianzus itself promotes shared leadership. Responsibilities are distributed among several people and staff and faculty are empowered to make certain decisions on their own or contribute substantially to school policy and operational agenda.

**Leading in community and through relationships.** The aspect of community and relationships was mentioned by all participants, and some placed a special emphasis on this sub-theme. Beyond the team dynamics and institutional spiritual connections, which require a sense of community and functioning relationship, some leaders also connected their personal motivation and stress level to the condition of their relationships and the community.

Within the team Gregory is all about a harmonious atmosphere. In our conversations he expressed that he valued the skills and knowledge of his peers, especially in areas of his own deficit when he said, “we do have a good administration, and I have excellent colleagues.” The main mechanisms that hold the team together are communication and intentional relationship-building. Gregory’s credo is “total communication, total clarity.” He coordinates closely with all stakeholders, communicates new developments and decisions openly, and seeks out personal conversations where he clearly communicates his expectations. However, this open leadership style also comes at a price. Gregory commented on the pressure this kind of leadership can produce at times, “to take everyone, if possible, along… I sometimes feel like this Atlas, this guy that holds the globe.”

At Olympus Methodius sees his role as a networker, bridge builder or connector. Beyond the walls of his institution, he seeks to build relationships with people who are working in similar areas. These relationships are built through conferences or even institutional cooperation. He observed that, “it is a very relationship-oriented culture, and there a relationship is often more
important than formal issues.” This networking with people and institutions takes time to bear fruit, but it is important to Methodius nonetheless. Through relationships new instructors are won, new students are acquired, and the program itself is strengthened and expanded.

Community was a huge aspect in Avius’ development as a leader. He remembered people always being available for advice when needed. He reflected, “real community, experience of community surrounded me. A gift that I was given in my life, actually from the very beginning; (uhm) companions, friends, role models.” Expanding on that idea Avius added, “I think we learn much more from the people that surround us, walk with us, influence us, or whom we perceive very intensely through books, more than we might want to admit.” In terms of his own development, Avius acknowledged that it was the experience of real community that has often helped him through times of crisis. These experiences have a profound influence on the way Avius is leading the Seminary of Vienne today.

For Avius shared leadership involves the idea of leading in community that empowers the individual to work more autonomously. Avius considers the relationships with the leadership team at Vienne Seminary of primary importance to his leadership experience. He said, “it is very essential for us, that we are standing together here in our leadership team.” This standing together is accomplished by taking a personal interest in each other, communicating on a spiritual level, and holding each other accountable both personally and professionally. To strengthen the community among the leadership team, Avius institutionalized opportunities for shared reflection on personal strength economy, vision orientation, and personal burdens. Another aspect of standing together is to develop vision as a team. The team works with clear job descriptions and a formulated leadership philosophy.
Community and development is like a two-way street in Avius’ experience. On one lane he contributes to the development of others through community, and on the other lane he experiences how community helps to shape and develop him as a person and a leader. He expects of himself and others to learn in community as the seminary moves ahead. Reflecting on the classroom community Avius explained:

If you see the people that are sitting here in the classroom and listen to where they work and what they do and with what kind of trust to God they are on the way, what they experience with God, and we can make a contribution to this, then even all this… becomes meaningful. And here we come to the question of meaning, you see?

His community orientation is reflected in Avius’ understanding of the seminary’s mission, where “primary are the people themselves.” As a leader he understands his task in community to ensure cohesiveness, which is mainly accomplished through a comprehensive and intentional communication system and intentional information elements integrated in staff meetings.

The theme of community seemed to be central to Benedict’s experience as a leader at Nursia. Benedict enjoys leading, even though he qualified, “from my personality I don’t have to lead…. That means, if I would see someone else who (uhm) would take over the leadership well, I have no problems giving it up.” He does not want to dominate people as a leader, actively pursue leadership responsibility, or defend his leadership position. Benedict much rather leads together with others in relationship and in the context of a healthy professional, spiritual, and social community. Benedict is very intentional about the way he builds spiritual community at the Seminary of Nursia. First, this is reflected in his attitude towards the students. Benedict explained, “one meets on eye-level; one knows we are all siblings, we are all God’s children.” But also with the co-leaders and staff Benedict creates frequent opportunities to pray, share, and
study the Bible together. Friendship and fun are important aspects for Benedict that he emphasizes to build a positive social community. He admitted, “from my personality I am more in need of harmony.” He maintains very close friends and relies on them for guidance and advice. Benedict also promotes healthy friendships among the staff at Jerusalem Seminary. However, in his communications Benedict also maintains very intentional boundaries about what he shares with whom.

Cyril’s leadership practice is primarily influenced by relationships. For a team to work well, it needs harmony that is expressed in respect, trust, transparency, and esteeming the other higher than oneself. Cyril framed this expectation saying, “a team must be in concord.” Interestingly, though Cyril does not consider himself a strong relational person, he still depends greatly on a good functioning team. His appreciation of the reality of team-leadership became obvious when he said, “I say time and again, that sometimes as a leader I only have to delegate well and coordinate well, see? (uhm) And combine well, because there is so much potential in the team.” Cyril is also very intentional about shaping the team so that it works towards the goals of the seminary.

A very prominent role that Theophilus is experiencing as a leader is that of a bridge builder. For him relationships and building community even became a defining factor of his self-perception as a leader. Using the metaphor of a bridge-builder, Theophilus described this theme from the perspectives of personal development, the mission of the seminary, and the practical ramifications of his leadership through relationships both within and beyond the walls of the seminary. The bridge-builder emphasis is a result of Theophilus’ personal development. Even during his formative years, Theophilus had the desire to work with “ecumenical width,” as he phrased it. This attitude was further shaped by his theological education. Theophilus suspects
that his “critical independent spirit” would also partially explain his seeking out new paths between different denominations, congregations, churches, and theological worlds. 

For Theophilus one purpose of the Seminary of Antioch is expressed in building “bridges between the gospel and the world; the society.” Through Theophilus’ increased contact with secular parties he begins to understand himself increasingly as a bridge builder between religious and secular education. On the other side, his hope is to connect the conservative Christian milieu with the world through the work at Antioch. Furthermore, at the seminary Theophilus seeks to connect two developments he sees happening within the evangelical world, which are purity of the gospel on one side and doing something meaningful in society on the other. As a bridge-builder Theophilus sees the danger to “fall off the wagon from both sides,” and the potential difficulty that representatives of the opposite camps might misunderstand his intentions. This creates a real tension for him, since somewhat conflicting expectations are continually voiced by the different camps.

At Antioch Seminary itself Theophilus leads through multiple relationships. With the board he is held accountable to the organization’s vision. He is partners with the executive officer with whom he builds intentional working relationships through regular meetings and open communication. Furthermore, Theophilus shares leadership with a co-director and the core faculty convent. He is intentional on building these relationships in spiritual formation meetings and communities, and by maintaining a positive atmosphere of functioning work relationships and Christian fellowship.

**Leading Professionally**

The third textural theme, leading professionally, refers to the reality that all participants experienced in their current role either an increase of professional leadership responsibility, or at
least a significant influence of professionalization on their leadership task. The participants identified three possible causes for this reality including increasing academization of the seminaries, diversification and growth of the program, or a general trend towards the need for more professional leadership.

It was significant to note that all lead administrators, except Methodius, did not feel completely prepared for the professional aspects of their role. Theophilus did not acquire professional leadership skills through formalized training, but he learned to function in that capacity through listening to peer instructors and professional advisors, through the reading of related literature, and through on-the-job learning. Gregory admitted that he entered into his current role without being fully prepared. The college accreditation was pursued “without grasping or understanding all of its dimensions.” In retrospect Gregory wished to have had more management and human resources competencies, or at least some experience in college administration. Reflecting on his current trajectory he said, “I still make it up as I go.” When asked about his own abilities as a professional leader, Cyril admitted, “I don’t have business training for the job I am doing.” Therefore, he is aware that the leadership structure will have to be adjusted if the seminary were to become more professionally led. Benedict would not even describe himself as a professional leader. He explained, “I would consider someone who is professionally trained for that…. Well, in that regard I am rather a self-made leader.” However, he also felt an increasing need to be more professional admitting, “I believe it is necessary, with my successor I would like to place some emphasis on this.” And finally for Avius the professionalization of his role meant a real identity crisis. When recalling significant events that impacted his current experience he said:
The last more significant turning point, I believe, was here the whole year turning towards the main emphasis on the task of leadership. That was also a crisis that needed to be worked through and required a decision.

Within the theme of leading professionally, most participants expressed that the professionalization of their role influenced their leadership role, and all reported an influence their leadership practice. These two aspects serve as sub-themes of the textural theme of leading professionally.

**Influence of professionalization on the leadership role.** The crisis Avius experienced with the redefinition of his role at the Seminary of Vienne was already addressed above. During his time the seminary at Vienne has experienced significant organizational change in form of a diversification of their program and organization. Avius summarized these developments saying, “it has become much broader and more multi-layered, more complex; and that requires more investment into leadership and guidance.” This statement indicates that the academization process has also professionalized Avius’ role as the leader of Vienne Seminary.

Theophilus described his role at the Seminary of Antioch as being the manager, administrator, and strategic planner of the organization. His professional leadership abilities became noticeable when he talked about creating projects with milestones, rolling planning practices, change management, or institutional development. Theophilus is also part of the core faculty which he heads up as the chair, and he has teaching responsibilities in the classroom as well. He considered this important for two reasons. The first reason has to do with leading the teachers. Theophilus explained, “I have to feel and experience them, otherwise I could not lead my core team the same, since it consists of teachers.” The second reason is to stay in touch with the students he leads. Theophilus described his role as a leader being:
[To] contribute to a helpful atmosphere for the learning and the personal development, for my employees, to give them freedom that they can really do their jobs, that is in the teaching, in the coming alongside of students.

A very prominent role that Theophilus is experiencing as a leader is that of a bridge builder. This role was already introduced under the theme of collaborative leadership. In the context of the impact of professionalization on Theophilus’ leadership role, another dimension of the bridge builder metaphor is revealed. With the growing school and accompanying accreditation processes the bridge-builder role was reshaped by an increase of external expectations towards his leadership, especially governmental expectations. Due to the increase in the number of stakeholders to which Theophilus represents the Seminary of Antioch, and due to the added secular arenas within which he has to network, he has begun to think about delegating even more leadership responsibility within the organization.

With the changing role also arose the need to adjust the leadership style. Theophilus usually emphasized giving space and promoting self-responsibility, since this style “works well with people who lead themselves well or who sometimes overwhelm themselves and where I can slow them down.” As the leader of Antioch Seminary he had to learn, that there are “people who perhaps need more control and guidance-leadership. There you cannot give that much latitude anymore.” Theophilus predicted that the continually increasing influence of professionalization of his role might lead to further changes of the leadership structure at Antioch in the future.

While Theophilus saw an adjustment of his leadership role, Gregory experienced a significant redefinition of it through the influence of professionalization. “I have become more the manager and less the spiritual leader,” were the words Gregory used to introduce the changes he experienced in his leadership. He sees increasing tasks in the area of business, management, per-
sonnel leadership and academic processes. The demand for his time and attention has multiplied, whereby “the accreditation processes are actually devouring a lot of my time.” Gregory further observed, “in the context of this process I moved further away from my students.” Opportunities to exercise spiritual leadership directly are now much more limited. However, Gregory kept these changes in a neither positive nor negative perspective saying, “I have learned to accept this as part of the process. That’s just the way it is.” The issue of meeting the expectations of various stakeholders seemed to be very important for Gregory. His staff expects of him a fair distribution of tasks. He himself faces the challenge to confront people with the expectations that he has for them in order to move the seminary forward. This is “the challenge of my life,” as he confessed.

Methodius described himself as “the academic leader as well as the business leader” of the Seminary of Olympus. He leads a very horizontally organized institution where he doesn’t “have many hierarchical opportunities.” It is a decentralized seminary offering their courses at multiple locations. Methodius wears many hats in his function as leader of the Seminary of Olympus. When asked if this reality was burdensome, he answered, “this is actually invigorating.” Some of his roles are confined to the seminary, but most are reaching beyond the organization he leads. “I have several different employers,” he said. Methodius is a requested speaker on various topics in his field of expertise. He continues to engage in research in this field as well, which is something that he considers to be very closely aligned with his own personality. Furthermore, at Olympus and other institutions Methodius has responsibilities as a teacher. He personally expressed a high interest in academic pursuit, and the academization of his field of study in the evangelical community.

Benedict did not experience a dramatic change to his role since his seminary is in the most relaxed situation when it comes to accreditation and academization. In fact, the latter is
currently a non-issue. Since Benedict did not enjoy specialized leadership training, he does not consider himself a professional leader. In his perspective a professional leader is, “someone who is professionally trained for that… I rather am a self-made leader.” He attributed most of his leadership development to the experience of community with seasoned leaders and mentors. Reflecting on his introduction to the seminary, Benedict remembered, “I somewhat stumbled into it and had to grow out of the role of a regular employee and become a leader.” Nonetheless, in general Benedict does experience a growing need for professional leadership, and more specifically responsibility for vision casting at the seminary he leads. He agreed, “it is necessary… to professionalize leadership in such institutions.” Benedict considers professional leadership skills important for the future. When we talked about a hypothetical successor, he explained, “I would make sure that he at some point would be prepared more professionally.” Later in the conversation he remarked, “I believe it is necessary [to professionalize] … leadership, I think, will become more complex in the coming years.”

**Influence of professionalization on the leadership practice.** The participants not only experienced an influence on their leadership role and style, but also described more specifically how their leadership tasks and practices were influenced by the process of professionalization. This impact was felt to various degrees, since not all seminaries were currently undergoing fundamental change processes. However, professional leadership practices were part of the shared experiences of each lead administrator as a direct result of the role of professional leaders they, in part increasingly, have to fulfill.

Methodius leads the Seminary of Olympus through persuasion and communication. There is a tension that he experiences in his leadership practice. Methodius explained, “on one end I have to be watchful that the results as a whole make sense, and on the other side, I don’t
want or could micromanage the instructors in how they teach.” As noted before Methodius does not have much organizational power to lead, and so persuasion and communication are the primary mechanism for him to exercise leadership. Due to the decentralized nature of the seminary the direct interaction with his faculty is limited. Points of contact with instructors include orientation talks at their introduction to Olympus, and then one time during the duration of the course they teach, when Methodius visits them in the classroom. Beyond his responsibility to keep the program and faculty aligned with the purpose of the seminary, his professional responsibilities include the financial stability of the organization, program development and accreditation, and networking with stakeholders and potential partners and future faculty. Methodius reflected, “well, Olympus itself is a very small organization, and therefore we have only a few employees, but a network of teachers, that is yes, I am leading… a network.”

In Avius’ experience the processes of professionalization was primarily caused by the academization of Vienne Seminary and the accompanying diversification of the program and organization. This introduced him to a new set of leadership tasks. He asserted that his first responsibility is the seminary, and his primary tasks are now with the staff and faculty. “[Vienne] had become much broader and more multi-layered, more complex, and that requires more investment into leadership and guidance,” he remembered and continued to say, “at one point one has to make a decision, because they don’t run themselves anymore, you see? The things don’t get accomplished by themselves.” This realization required of Avius a timely decision to move into a more professional leadership role with a resulting reorientation of priorities in his everyday work. Consequently, his responsibilities have become more involved with the co-workers and teachers, and less with the students.
Avius sees his leadership priorities on three levels. Of primary importance is the mission of the school while the people affiliated with Vienne are secondary, and the lowest priority are administrative and structural aspects. The internal conflict he is experiencing comes from the fact that more and more of his time is spent on tasks related to the area of lowest priority. In search for sources of meaning and motivation in this situation, Avius had to make the connection between professional leadership practices and his core motivations. He explained:

If you see the people that are sitting here in the classroom and listen to where they work and what they do, and with what kind of trust to God they are on the way; what they experience with God – and we can make a contribution to this – then even all this tertiary work becomes meaningful.

Due to the aforementioned changes the decision-making processes at Vienne have become more foundational and complex. Accreditation legislation is currently changed and developed at a relatively great pace, which makes it “a hot issue” for the seminary, reported Avius. These developments are not always dealt with in side-notes, as Avius predicts, “there we will have to make some foundational decisions, (uhm) that in some circumstances will have enormous long-term effects.” The main challenges that he experiences with accreditation are foundational decisions about organization structure, program structure, and academic partnerships. From Avius’ perspective these are decisions that must not be made alone, but require an intensive process of fact-gathering, consulting, and acquiring professional help.

At Vienne change management has become more intentional and mission-centered, but also more market-oriented. Avius sees his primary task to lead the internal team through these changes, and to foster a culture of a learning organization. Fortunately, he experiences Vienne as an organization that is willing to change. Within these changes Avius is motivated by being able
to “help people to develop, to set free their potential, to flourish, to get ahead. And to include staff members so that this can happen, and then to find joy in it when it happens.” In reference to mission-centered and market-oriented change he sees his task as follows:

I can help to initiate things, so that we don’t stop but move along, and the school here develops and finds answers to the demands of the times on a structural level, and program level: what we offer, where are we going, develop visions, process steps towards them, annual goals; all these tasks, and then really experience joy in it to move things along.

Avius described his leadership experiences in terms of commissions. The commission by God has been addressed under the theme of leading spiritually. The commission by the board and by others relate to Avius’ professional leadership experience and practice. As the professional leader Avius is commissioned to develop strategic plans and vision statements in collaboration with the board of Vienne Seminary. The leadership commission by the board further entails issues of organizational change and strategic leadership. The commission by co-workers has much to do with building community, the day-to-day leadership practice, and responding to internal expectations.

Avius’ professional leadership tasks now include a structured system of quality management and evaluation, and the formalization of a leadership philosophy. There are annual performance interviews with staff, detailed job-descriptions, and individual orientations for personal annual goals. An issue that Avius mentioned in the context of academization was that of finance and funds. These processes being but one of the reasons, Avius still sees an increased responsibility on his part to win new support through friends and patrons. It was Avius’ expressed goal to develop the seminary as a learning organization, which will create “a certain momentum in our organizational structure and culture.” For Avius this also means to not make every organizational
change-process dependent on him alone. In summary, and reflecting on the processes of academization and professionalization, Avius said:

Looking back a few years, what did it do for us? A lot of clarity, a lot of objectification, (uhm) good processes, also in the enabling of leading co-workers, to be able to work autonomously (short pause) to become even more a learning organization, improvement of our corporate culture, as well as it concerns our community and our problem management; (uhm) competencies and such things.

Cyril explained that the process of professionalization has been a long and slow development at the Seminary of Jerusalem. Structural professionalization was implemented as the need arose in this relatively young and growing seminary. In the beginning the institution was led by a team of leaders without specifically assigned tasks, but at some point they had to formalize responsibilities and create a more professional leadership structure. Cyril wants to see Jerusalem Seminary become more professional in a comprehensive way in terms of quality assurance and quality improvement. At this point the church orientation the seminary dictates what is considered quality and professionalism, namely that “the theory must constantly be measured in practice.” This means that the applicability of a theory to the ministry context determines the measure of quality. In other words, the better a leadership structure is serving the needs of the market, the more professional Cyril considers it to be.

When asked if the state recognition process of the Seminary of Antioch had any influence on his leadership style, Theophilus answered, “on my leadership style I would say, no.” Personally Theophilus did also not experience a greater emphasis on administration. However, in terms of influence on the organization of Antioch Seminary, the professionalization and academization processes meant for Theophilus a change of leadership content, communication practice inside
and outside the organization, increase of quality management and quality control processes, and a potentially more formalized leadership structure.

Theophilus’ primary leadership tasks are divided into managing the organization, preparation or teaching and speaking, teaching at the seminary, and conducting formal and informal conversations with staff, students and external contacts. Theophilus is highly involved in recruiting, hiring and firing processes in which he works with the leaders of the respective subject areas. In all that Theophilus has to keep the strategic orientation of Antioch aligned with the purpose and vision of the seminary. This is also an expressed expectation of his co-workers. Theophilus perceives their expectation to be that he would show leadership in going before them, in maintaining the big picture and a long-distance perspective, in respecting and praising them, and in giving them latitude to develop.

A primary concern for Theophilus in his early years at Antioch was to focus the attention of the convent to content and training related issues, removing administration and organization related decision. Reflecting on that change, he noted that after initial resistance the faculty saw the value of being freed up to concentrate on agenda items related to issues that concern their core task.

Externally his professional leadership-tasks include representation of the seminary, committee memberships in various Christian organizations, communication with secular and Christian stakeholders, and networking in the religious and academic arenas. His leadership is externally influenced by the church, which expects good graduates that can work effectively in the ministry, and that the seminary stays theological in its approach to training. Theophilus experiences that donors to the seminary expect of him regular reports and communication, good program content, and a positive public representation of the seminary. As a networker on behalf of
the seminary, he is acutely aware of the fact, that he is “the face of the school”, and that the out-
ward perception of Antioch greatly depends on him. That also means for him to stay within the
expected theological framework of the seminary’s partner churches. In relationship with the state
recognition process he sees his role as creator of the framework that will fulfill governmental
expectations.

Gregory observed that the professionalization of his leadership practices was intensified
by the academic accreditation of the seminary and the subsequent growth of the institution. With
a growing number of students and staff, new structures of organization became necessary, which
in turn required Gregory to complete more organizational and management tasks. With the con-
tinuous process of academization and professionalization, he also adjusted his leadership style.

Gregory used the metaphor of a father to describe his basic approach to leadership. For
him this meant to be committed and to go ahead so that others can follow, and by doing so to
create a dynamic that releases the energy and commitment with those that follow. He asserted,
“if you establish a college, then you need people that really commit.” As the father-leader, he
invests much strength and time to go ahead, to move things along, and to protect and to promote
his people. The new set of professional leadership tasks pushed Gregory to his limits, and he felt
that he became a limiting factor for the organization. In response to this he developed into a more
confrontational style where he communicates his expectations more clearly. However, he did not
fully abandon his basic approach of father-leadership. Gregory explained, “I cannot lead any
other way but as a father. That is part of my identity, but I can change this role a bit.”

Transparency and communication were two key terms that Gregory repeatedly referenced
as core practices of his professional leadership. These became especially important when he led
the Seminary of Nazianzus through the organizational changes made necessary by the academi-
zation of the institution. “In all these processes communication and transparency were of utmost importance,” Gregory explained. His goal remains to “inform all relevant players as completely as possible about all relevant processes.” Reflecting on the strategy of transparency, Gregory noted, “it is my impression that it is paying off…. We did not have any conflicts, but there was sometimes tension in these administrative processes… where people had to adjust and get used to them.” However, he categorized those tensions as “typical growth processes, or growing pains.” The changes that came with the accreditation have led to professional insecurities and fears with some of the staff. Therefore, it was important for Gregory to communicate as transparently as possible, so “that no one feels left out, and that everyone feels being taken along,” he remarked. In Gregory’s experience communication and transparency relate to aspects of organization processes and change management, but also to aspects of personal interaction and the communication of his expectations and perceptions to his staff. For Gregory the value of transparent communication is also important for the accreditation process.

**Leading Academically**

In addition to the aspects of leading spiritually, collaboratively, and professionally, each participant described their experience in terms of also leading academically. Even though there is much common ground between professional and academic leadership, there are certain themes in the participants’ experience that support the attempt of a distinction at this point. In the perception of the lead administrators the issues of professional and academic leadership are distinct. Methodius, for instance, made this separation when he asserted, that he is both “the academic leader as well as the business leader” at the Seminary of Olympus. Speaking of the new dynamics that come with academization, Theophilus acknowledged, “I think the main burden for that is mine to bear.” In the same context Gregory remarked, “currently that is primarily I, who is tak-
ing responsibility for the academic quality assurance.” For Benedict the academic portion of leadership is primarily concerned with renewal of Jerusalem’s accreditation. Avius on the other hand feels the burden to “initiate developments and innovations; movement that is goal oriented/mission oriented.” The seminaries for this study were chosen because they had responded to these influences in some form of academization of their program through either state recognition or accreditation. The following section describes the dynamics leading up to these decisions, the decision-making process, and the changes that were introduced to the organization and their leaders. The theme of leading academically is clustered into the sub-themes of influences and decision-making, and action steps and organizational change.

**Influences and decision-making.** The participants described the influences on their academic decision-making processes. Each seminary is in some way affected by the changes in the educational arena in Europe. But also the developments in the areas of Christian ministry and the overall educational behavior of their current and prospective students are influencing factors of the participants’ academic leadership.

The move towards state recognition was already in motion when Theophilus took office as the leader at Antioch. However, the dynamics of academization are complex issues that continue to influence his experience as the lead administrator of the seminary. In our conversations Theophilus described how the aspects of external influences, the determination of the appropriate academic level, the preparation for future changes, changes to his leadership style, professional leadership practices, and organizational changes related to these processes. Theophilus identified several external influences that caused the Seminary of Antioch to move towards state recognition. It began with the free-church sector encouraging a Europe-wide master’s program, which subsequently was implemented in partnership with other institutions. A second, and according to
Theophilus more important, influence came from the state-church that had already recognized one of the degree programs at Antioch and now is requesting the same program to also receive state recognition.

It was important for Theophilus to determine the academic level of state recognition that Antioch should pursue. His decision-making factors were the vision and mission of the school, the qualifications of present incoming students, and the demands of the professional marketplace the students are being trained for. They settled on a version state-recognition that would allow all people they would consider capable of being effective in the professional field access to the program and still be sufficiently qualified to be competitive in the marketplace.

Gregory indicated that changes in the area of Christian ministry have had a significant influence on the decision-making processes and organizational changes towards academization at the Seminary of Nazianzus. The future tasks of their graduates are changing, and consequently the program content and formats at the seminary would have to reflect that. However, Gregory did not provide more detail on this matter. In response to these external changes, Gregory led the Seminary of Nazianzus through a process of state recognition. The decision to pursue academic accreditation was preceded by what Gregory described as “an intensive, very intensive, internal process.”

Among the core issues that needed to be resolved were the legal requirement of freedom of academics and institutional autonomy, the identity and outward representation of the new institution, and the potential failure of the seminary after making the shift. However, the leadership team also sensed that remaining with the status quo would possibly mean the end of the seminary. Gregory explained their observations, “in a volatile professional world… young people are also continuously coming with different expectations.” The traditional ways and models were
obviously not working anymore. The pressing issues that threatened the existence of the seminary included “too few applications, too late applications, and too weak applications,” and a growing competition among similar institutions. Throughout the decision-making process the fears of individual stakeholders were discussed and eliminated. Then the final decision was made to pursue state recognition and accreditation. Looking back on the decision, Gregory remarked, “quantitatively as well as qualitatively it was a quantum leap.”

Methodius is acutely aware that the external dynamics have changed for Olympus over the years. In the beginning they were a unique provider of education for the evangelicals in German-speaking Europe in their special field of study. “Today there is a row of offers,” Methodius explained. As a result, he sees the need to position the organization more clearly and advertise what makes them distinct to competing institutions. On the other side, this new reality of a diversification of institutions also opened the opportunity for partnerships and wider networks. Methodius ceases this opportunity as an academic leader to develop a network into this area for the benefit of the Seminary of Olympus.

For Benedict the main influences on the decision-making in the context of academization is connected with his church orientation, the mission of the seminary, and his personal leadership perspective. Benedict understands the mission of Nazianzus as follows:

[We are a] service provider for churches…. [to] do [what] actually is the task of the church… that is, educating Christians theologically, impart deep biblical knowledge, show connections, and impart a heart for world missions.

This church orientation plays a guiding role in the decision-making processes concerning academization. Describing his basic attitude in this context, Benedict said, “as long as it serves our educational goals, I consider it important.” Since some market areas required of the gradu-
ates a degree that has some form of international comparability, the seminary sought a non-academic accreditation. If at some point this would not be sufficient for their graduates to go into their target fields, Benedict is open to think about other forms of institutional recognition as well. However, he also admitted, “I believe a different person would have to do that.” For Benedict a further academization of Nursia would be too great a departure from his personal values and leadership perspective.

During his tenure Avius at the Seminary of Vienne, he has experienced significant organizational change in form of a diversification of their program and organization. He identified “changing environmental conditions [and] societal conditions” that necessitated these changes. These conditions include a changed educational behavior of the people, which is connected to societal developments, a new reality in full-time ministry, and changing expectations of churches and Christian organizations. For Avius this poses a challenging question, as he remarked, “how can qualitative high level education for adults in the context of this current situation work?” Another area that needs to be decided is that of institutional partnerships. In the context of changing legislation certain academic relations outside of the European academic area might become difficult to maintain. Finally, as the academic leader Avius sees his task to also keep the programs and Vienne grounded in practice. He explained:

To reflect, to think, to work with models, with all these concepts and such things, all that has its own great merit, (uhm) but part of it must be that it is brought into relationship with the questions and situations of people, or emerges out of them. That is actually even better.

In terms of academization and the European Bologna Process, Cyril assessed, “in the context of all these accreditation processes that are going on in Europe we see ourselves as a
school in development.” At this point Jerusalem Seminary is in the process of becoming comparable to other institutions through certain accreditation processes. Cyril explained his attitude towards academic accreditation and the mission of the seminary:

We are moving here with small but steady steps forward and don’t let anyone pressure us, there is no explicit pressure that we feel subject to through what we have here at the moment, we feel very well established in the evangelical context.

**Action steps and organizational change.** As a result of the external and internal influences on the academic aspects of the participants’ leadership experience, they have implemented certain change processes and action steps to change their organizations to keep them operational. Every participant, safe Benedict, spoke to some extend about specific practices and processes of change management. From their description one can see how the lead administrators are attempting to accommodate the various expectations and realities with the mission and tasks for their institutions while leading their teams through organizational change.

Gregory had to respond to two events in the life of Seminary of Nazianzus, namely the academic accreditation of the seminary and the subsequent growth of the institution. With a growing number of students and staff new structures of organization became necessary, which in turn required more organizational and management tasks of Gregory. Gregory termed these developments “transformative processes” where “one has to restructure administrative processes.” Organizational processes no longer could be managed by yelling across the hall but often require committees for more complex decision-making processes. Furthermore, comprehensive information and communication processes needed to be implemented to accommodate the growth and increased administrative workload.
In the context of academization, a new dynamic of personnel leadership emerged whereby the hierarchies within the organization where redefined according to the new sets of competencies required of academic institutions. The accreditation processes are an important aspect in Gregory’s experience. “My life is a constant accreditation,” he asserted. These processes are not static, but there is a continuously increasing complexity to the accreditation processes as the legal authorities develop and implement new legislation and criteria. Gregory feels that the organization is “always pushed towards the next level.” That causes the organization to be continually in development to raise the standards. Nazianzus has to be a learning organization. “If you don’t push the standards up continually,” he explained, “they will come down by themselves.” The higher education arena has also become more unpredictable. Gregory acknowledged, “we are ourselves anxious. I cannot give you a guarantee about where we will be in 20 years, but no one can.”

Organizational changes continue to be a significant influence on Avius leadership experiences at Vienne. Program-wise multiple academic level degree programs were developed. Within the organization certain elements were centralized, and also new emphases were established in form of specialized departments. This has increased the complexity of the organization which in turn requires more leadership investment of Avius. It was notable that besides the academic nature of the studies at Vienne, the main goal remained to train for the ministry in the church and not the academy.

Methodius heads up an academically oriented program that is accredited through international partnerships. Thus the Bologna process did not directly impact the organization. They voluntarily adjusted some processes within the program to be more comparable, but the training program remains largely independent from it. However, Olympus Seminary still is an accredited
school, which influences the organization in several ways. Methodius is held accountable towards the mission of the schools and a certain level of quality. Furthermore, there are certain limits as to how fast new emphases can be implemented into the program. Methodius explained, “in that regard we are bound more long-term to course schedules and curricula.” Overall, Methodius experiences that organizational change requires more planning processes at an accredited institution.

Early in his tenure at Antioch Seminary, and in preparation for a future state-recognition process, Theophilus endeavored to receive a quality certificate through a non-state agency. This quality certificate forced the organization to formulate many processes in advance that would have become necessary with a state recognition. In doing so, the organization and its culture were being prepared for the next step towards state recognition. Theophilus commented, “with this certification we already had to formalize certain processes. I think that actually was good for the institution.... It helped me to immediately introduce certain changes (laughter).” Theophilus does not think the process of state recognition will change Antioch Seminary on a basic level, that is its “foundational orientation; calling. But in the way we do things there will be certain changes.” These changes mainly pertain to stronger connections with governmental agencies and the secular educational sector. Estimating the intensity of the changes, he remarked, “I have not turned the entire organization upside down against extreme internal resistance, but I certainly changed a more informal family culture into more of an organization.” It is important for Theophilus that the people at the seminary are able to keep up with the rate of institutional change that he introduces as their leader. However, he is also confident that Antioch will be able to manage the changes. He observed, “we are flexible, we are small, we can change quickly if it becomes necessary.”
In preparation for future academic developments at Jerusalem Seminary, Cyril instituted internal and external quality management processes. However, he does not see a pressing need to push academization. He explained, “we feel very well established in the Evangelical context.” For Cyril this reality is not a cushion to rest on, but a foundation to work towards higher academic standards. To set the example for the future himself, he went back to college for another degree to prepare for the increased demands on faculty and students that accompany the academization process. He explained:

I see in that a task, to send out signals myself first, to make my point and then take others with me. (uhm) Then to motivate others to go similar steps, see? And also to initiate certain processes, very intentionally so that (uhm) we as a school (uhm) measure up to a level (uhm) that, I’d say, at some point would have a college level or even a university level at some point. (uhm) And there I want to initiate intentional processes, and in that I see my task.

In doing so, Cyril intentionally and step-by-step initiates this process by his own example. Because of the processes of professionalization and academic accreditation, the aspect of shared leadership receives a new level of importance for Cyril, since these processes magnify his own limitations as a leader. Speaking of the requirements of academic accreditation Cyril admitted:

I don’t see my job in that I should control all these processes, well, to go through with them…. I would see my responsibility rather in that I support the people, to affirm them, to encourage them to do that, and of course also be part of the whole again.

Benedict is aware that a seminary such as Nursia needs to change to meet challenges of the changing times. He acknowledged, “we cannot stop moving…. This occupies me very much.” Benedict sees his primary responsibilities to be twofold, to cast a vision for a new future,
but also to do justice to the core values of the seminary and to protect them. In terms of accreditation Benedict entered an organization where that process had already been accomplished, and so for him it is just a matter to maintain this status. But even here he experiences a continual increasing complexity. The initial accreditation already had changed the nature of the school considerably, and so Benedict predicts that any change towards more accreditation “would change the school… it would change its purpose a bit… and it would concern our personnel a bit…. We would have to change our training program considerably…. We would have to change admissions requirements as well.” The Seminary of Nursia is distinct from the other participating seminaries in that they see academization beyond their current position as not desirable. This has to do with both the person of the leader and also with the vision and mission of the school.

Summary of Textural Descriptions

These four themes describe the meanings and essences of the phenomenon from the textural perspective (Moustakas, 1994). They include all aspects of the participants’ descriptions of what they experienced with the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries (Creswell, 2013). As lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe they are: (a) leading spiritually with spiritual leadership and spiritual values; (b) leading collaboratively within shared leadership structures, and in community and through relationships; (c) leading professionally with professionalization influencing their leadership role and practice; and (d) leading academically with multiple influences on their decision-making, and through specific actions steps and organizational change.

Structural Descriptions

The structural descriptions include all aspects of how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries (Creswell, 2013). They are the result of
the process of imaginative variation and phenomenological reduction, and constitute a report of my reconstruction of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The structural themes included experiencing leadership as responsibility, experiencing the negative dimensions of leadership, but also as a privilege, and as something that gives them joy, satisfaction and fulfillment, and unique motivations, described here as the positive dimensions of leadership. In a final structural theme, the participants described spiritual dimensions of personal faith, calling, intuition and self-reflection as defining aspects of their experience of leadership at their seminaries.

**Experiencing Leadership as a Responsibility**

Each participant described that part of their experience included an acute sense of responsibility. The details on what constituted this responsibility ranged from internal to external sources, from role-related to spiritually connected associations, and from personal expectations of self to feeling a responsibility for larger groups or people or institutions.

For Cyril the experience of responsibility is primarily connected to this role at the Seminary of Jerusalem. He considers sense of commitment and responsibility as a prerequisite of character for anyone in his position. Leading a seminary requires maturity of character, a strong sense of personal calling, and a willingness to carry responsibility even when it is not crowned with success and praise. Furthermore, it includes the ability to take the blame for certain things and to handle criticism, to have a love for the church and the ministry, a spirit of service, and “last but not least, what I wanted to say is (uhm) (laughter) you need a big portion of humility.” As a seminary leader Cyril also perceives an external responsibility which entails the establishment of the institution and its distinct position within the greater academic and societal environment of his country. He knows that Jerusalem is “anything but conform with society.” His sense
of external responsibility is fueled by the desire “to confess to the truth of Scripture whatever the cost.”

Benedict experiences his role as lead-administrator as one bearing primarily a spiritual responsibility. Reflecting on the spirituality of his leadership he said, “I am shepherding a foreign flock, it is not mine.” This knowledge is a great source of motivation as well. He continued, “the expectation towards myself is that at some point the head-shepherd says: ‘you faithful and good servant, you did treat my flock well.’ (uhm) That energizes me very much.” For him this responsibility takes shape in his relationship to the people at the seminary, to the seminary as an organization, and to the evangelical church at large.

For Theophilus the experience of responsibility is primarily an external aspect that is related to the nature of the Seminary of Antioch itself. The sense of responsibility concerns decision making and outward representation. Since Antioch is a prestigious institution, many external parties pay close attention to what is going on there. Theophilus is acutely aware of the long history and tradition of Antioch Seminary. There is a sense of prestige and visibility that comes with this, but it also makes him acutely aware of his role at this point in time. He reflected on this asking himself:

Did we, did I contribute with my leadership that the [name of school], God willing, with my successor or the one after that still is on this course that we are thinking now is the right one, and which the predecessors and the generation of founders have set?

He knows that his decisions today will set the course for the future of this highly recognized institution. In his words, “when we make false decisions, when our next generation will say ‘How could they?’”, and also “what will be said in 20 to 30 years; could we stay the course?”
Theophilus feels responsible for creating a positive model of what the seminary is all about by making decisions with a long-distance perspective. This sense of responsibility is heightened by the awareness that today’s decision will determine the position and image of the seminary in the future. He personally represents the institution in the secular and Christian environment. As a bridge-builder leading a bridge-building institution, Theophilus feels responsible to stay the course and not, “fall off the wagon on either side.” Another aspect of external responsibility is felt towards the different Christian camps that the Seminary of Antioch is serving.

Methodius described his sense of responsibility more personally. He explained, “I have a certain responsibility, that I manage my time responsibly and that, yes, that I pursue good stewardship.” Methodius is given much freedom to lead with minimal supervision. This heightens his sense of responsibility to manage his time and resources well. The second aspect of responsibility that Methodius experiences at Olympus comes from the opportunity of influence. Knowing he has the “opportunity to achieve something. I like that, that one can see one can actually achieve something through this work; that your books are being read somewhere, (uhm) when one realizes it has influenced something, yes.” The fact that his expertise is requested creates for him a sense of duty.

Gregory experiences his leadership at the Seminary of Nazianzus as a great internal responsibility, because “there is a lot attached to this job.” The seminary has a long tradition and reputation. Many people have strong ties to the seminary and identify with its purpose. The awareness of this reality is a continuous cause of pressure for Gregory. He reflected, “a ministry with [x] years of tradition… has a high level of identification…. And then to think, we can develop such a training institution even further?” When he was introduced to the leadership position, the institution was at the cross-roads towards accreditation. Assuming the responsibility
during such a crucial time in the life of the historic Seminary of Nazianzus still has a significant impact on his current experience. He continued, “the responsibility for a [x] year old seminary is placed into your hands, and you don’t know exactly what will happen. I did not have the guarantee that a college accreditation would change anything.” At this point of the interview, the academization process was already successfully implemented, and the responsibility had shifted towards maintaining and increasing the quality of the institution and its programs. However, Gregory still reflected these new processes with the same sense of responsibility towards the seminary as before.

Avius experiences primarily role-related responsibility, which becomes a defining factor for his prioritization in the many roles his position brings with it. He affirmed, “my first responsibility is the academy.” However, as a leader he recently had also experienced an increase of external responsibilities as a result of current changes to his organization and role. First, he sees a political dimension of responsibility through newly made connections with governmental ministries and the academic community. Second, from the seminary’s mission and market orientation, Avius experiences a responsibility for the church. He said, “I believe that also means to have a responsibility. What we are doing here is not just for us, but it should also minister, and especially to those churches.” Third, Avius experiences a responsibility towards Christianity worldwide. He noted, “we are living in a country that has peace… that has financial opportunities like never before.” In light of total Christianity, Avius sees his seminary, and consequently himself, in a role with global responsibility.
Experiencing the Negative Dimensions of Leadership

During the interview process each participant opened up at some point and talked about the negative dimensions of their experience as lead administers. In their role they experienced being burdened and stressed. They had to deal with unique sources and forms of tension.

**Experiencing burden and stress.** The experience of burden flows out of the experience of responsibility. Theophilus made the connection, “the responsibility is challenging, it can be a burden at times; that is also part of that.”

For Theophilus the experience of burden is deeply personal. He experiences decision-making in light of the history and future of the Seminary of Antioch as a burden. The ministry aspect of his role is another source to cause experiences of burden. He expressed the burden of isolation as part of this experience saying, “the burden to be alone at times, (uhm) not to be understood, having to decide certain things alone before God, not always being loved, but that others have to just take it.” Theophilus acknowledged, “of course there are difficulties, there is stomach ache and sleepless nights. That is part of this line of work and this position.”

The experience of limitations in leadership is yet another source of burden. Theophilus realizes that his weaknesses are at times frustrating to others, and that he thus feels guilty in his leadership task. He admitted that the thoughts of quitting are not foreign to him. However, with all the experiences of burden and doubt, Theophilus repeatedly said, “it is just part of it.” The deepest motivation for him to stay despite the negative influences is of spiritual nature, as he explained, “I am where God wants me to be. That is now part of it. I am now here, and I should not run away from it.” While meditating on the issue of calling, Theophilus concluded, “I am called to be here, even if it is hard at times.” When asked about sources of leadership stress, Theophilus answered, “well if there is conflict, that is what causes the most stress.” These rela-
tional stresses can be caused by personal issues with staff or faculty members, which diminish their performance for longer periods of time. Theophilus suffers stress if the “domestic bliss is lacking” among the faculty and staff, since that also creates a bad role-model for the students. Another source of stress comes from issues that would hinder or threaten the successful training of a student.

For Benedict the regular workload as a leader is not a source of stress. “I would see it in bearable measure”, was his evaluation. His job is demanding time-wise, but he said, “I don’t experience this as a stress that is destructive.” On the other side Benedict admitted, “what is stressful for me are interpersonal conflicts.” It is not the technical things, even if those demands infringe on his sleep at times, but damaged relationships that burden Benedict the most. As the leader at Nursia Seminary, he assumes the responsibility to resolve such conflicts. At times this can cause severe stress. Avius explained, “when I realize in that moment I don’t have the solution; I don’t know what I should do. (uhm) That is the biggest stress-factor for me as a leader.”

This desire for good relationships also burdens and impacts the decision-making process where he rather postpones a decision that did not receive consensual agreement among all team members. Another burdensome aspect in his experience, is Benedict’s perceived responsibility to be the main visionary and change-agent at Nursia, since he has not the natural personality of a visionary.

Cyril experiences stress when at times certain tasks push him to his limits, even though the demands of the job itself usually tend to push him to higher levels of effectiveness instead. He said, “those things don’t scare me, and therefore I don’t see a problem for my life in those things.” However, Cyril also admitted to have overestimated his abilities at times, and over the years he developed a better understanding of his own limitations. He acknowledged, “that certain
things I actually cannot do.” A source of great stress for Cyril is interpersonal conflict when harmony is destroyed, transparency is lost, or trust is abused. The issue of being transparent and predictable plays an important part in this matter, as Cyril noted:

When I don’t know where the other comes from, when the other just shuts himself out and does not open up to me anymore so that I say: ‘I don’t now what is going on with him.’ See? That causes certain stress factors with me, and then the job does not give me pleasure anymore. Then I don’t want to work there anymore.

Another factor of negative leadership experience are personal mistakes. Cyril confessed to have made critical decisions for which he had to take personal responsibility. He spoke at length about his mistake of neglecting his wife and children for a period of time for the sake of the ministry. As a consequence of this Avius empowered his leadership team and his wife to criticize and correct him. His wife in particular plays a special role in this regard, because she “knows so many things that no other person in this world knows, and she is therefore a good corrective for me, because she points me towards my mistakes,” Avius explained. The threat of potentially committing fatal mistakes continuously influences his experience as well, since such personal mistakes could immediately disqualify him from his position. Cyril also briefly addressed the experience of discouragement when things got overwhelming, when people disappointed him, when he did not live up to his own standards, and when his work was harshly criticized.

For Avius failure and friction within relationship and community is the primary source of stress. He acknowledged, “if trust to co-workers is damaged… that I perceive as having the highest strain on me.” In the context of stress and relationships Avius also reflected on the issue of closeness and distance in professional relationships. He explained that his leadership ability
would be hindered by too many friendship relationships, or too close spiritual involvement through pastoral care. As a result, he intentionally creates boundaries within the institution and also is very intentional with deeper relationships.

The currently heaviest burden Gregory has to bear is to keep the organization, his faculty, and himself up to the constantly rising bar of academic performance imposed by the accrediting and recognizing bodies. To lead through these dynamics “that is, I would say, the most burdensome,” he confessed. After all, “it is primarily I who is taking responsibility for the academic quality assurance,” Gregory added. The demands of the current situation in the higher education sector are an additional burden for him. He explained, “it requires a great work effort with a high frequency to position yourself… and to be part of it [i.e. the higher education sector].” Gregory also talked about experiences of overload and overload anxieties. In the wake of these experiences where he was confronted with his own limitations, Gregory responded by adjusting his leadership style without compromising his basic approach of father-style leadership.

Methodius did not provide much detail on his negative experiences as a lead administrator. However, he did describe two sources of stress. The first source has to do with the size of the administration at Olympus. It is “a relatively small organization; we have only a few employees. That means I have to do a lot. That is a stress factor,” he explained. The second source of stress has to do with his financial responsibility for Olympus Seminary. He said, “finances are always a stress factor.” This factor was also mentioned by four other participants in some form.

**Experiencing tensions.** Four participants described the negative experiences as lead administrators at their seminaries in terms of tension. These tensions have either external or internal causes, and relate to issues of position and power, various stakeholders, or personal role conflict.
Avius described the aspect of negative leadership experience primarily in terms of an internal tension between his desire to teach and the requirement to lead. He reflected, “this tension, teaching and leading, that is somewhat a consistent thread throughout my biography.” For Avius, this is not only a crisis of preference, but of motivation and spiritual rejuvenation. He recollected the thought process during the latest process where his role shifted away from the classroom:

If I orient myself more towards leadership, what would be the source of my joy? You see? What will be enjoyable in my everyday work? What should inspire me? Yes. That I have to think about, and I need an answer for that, otherwise I burn out.

Teaching has ever been Avius’ source of joy, strength, and motivation. He filled up in the classroom and then expended himself on administrative tasks. On the other hand, Avius also acknowledged that the growth as a leader that comes through such crises is central to his experience.

Another area of tension that he experiences concerns organizational change and innovation and continuity. This tension comes primarily from realizing that some staff members, who are crucial to the successful operation of the organization, will have difficulty adapting to changes due to the very character and skill sets that make them effective in the first place. Avius recognizes, that there are people “who with the diligence and their good sense for order make a substantial contribution to the stability of the organization. And especially they suffer the most when, at least from their perspective, one change chases the other.” On the other hand, Avius asserted that change “is non-negotiable.” Leading through organizational change and taking everyone along becomes a tension-laden task.

Cyril only briefly reported on one aspect of tension in his leadership experience that originates from the spiritual community at the Seminary of Jerusalem. Since it is both a faith com-
munity and learning community, the power-relationships are more complex. In the faith all are equal without regard for rank, position, age and educational background. However, as an organization and a learning community there are certain power distances between leaders, staff, faculty and students. To negotiate his leadership power and the spiritual equality in the context of his role is a constant source of tension and challenge for Cyril.

As the lead administrator of Antioch Seminary, Theophilus experiences leadership tensions that have both external and internal causes. Externally tensions are caused by the demands and expectations from secular and Christian stakeholders on one side, and the purpose and vision of the organization on the other. But even within the Christian sector, there is another tension that manifests itself as a pull towards, as he put it, “the core business: evangelization” on one hand, and “to be relevant in society” on the other. This is a tension between the gospel and relevance. Inside the organization at Antioch, a constant source of tension is sympathy, or lack thereof, in relationships.

Another internal source of tension is the need for bureaucracy and administration that comes from quality certifications and state recognition processes on one side, and the desire to keep everyone focused on their main purpose of teaching on the other. Interestingly, and different than with all other participants in this study, Theophilus only sees minimal tension and challenges in the area of finance, which has to do with the seminary’s strong circle of friends. It might also be in part the result of his personal conviction, since He asserted, “I was always of the conviction: the main challenge are the people and not the money. When the people are there, then the money will come also.”

The greatest area of tension for Gregory originates from the different arenas of stakeholders that he has to negotiate. As a Christian seminary that has governmental accreditation, he
feels exposed to the tension between faith and science. Gregory explained, “we are in a tension between freedom of science and freedom of religion.” But even though that tension is a reality, he does not experience as a result a pressure to conform or compromise theologically. It is more a challenge of communicating effectively with both the secular and Christian stakeholders. From his own perspective, Gregory does not see a real conflict between science and religion, which he endeavors communicate into said contexts.

**Experiencing the Positive Dimensions of Leadership**

While the negative leadership dimensions are significant for the participants’ experience of the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary, all lead administrators placed a greater emphasis on the positive dimensions of leadership. They described the structural themes of the positive influence of family, multiple sources of motivation, and the experience of joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment as central to their experience as lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

**Experiencing family as a positive leadership influence.** Gregory feels supported by his family in his work, but there is only little convergence between his work and family life. He established effective boundaries to protect his family from negative influences of his work. He explained, “she [my wife] can do her own thing without being identified through my role.” On the other hand, the great demand on his time due to his role impacts Gregory’s family life. Here he feels the support of the family. He asserted, “my current family (uhm) that accompanies my work.” He also emphasized that his wife and family were always important factors to consider in his career choices.

Methodius spoke about his family briefly but profoundly. He attributes a lot of his current experiences to her influence. Speaking of the decision to go into full-time ministry, he said, “I
would not have made this decision if my wife wouldn’t have gone with me and wouldn’t have supported it.” His personal development as a leader was greatly influenced by his family experiences, because in a family “one can actually recognize some leadership principles in a nutshell,” he explained. These principles are for example in the area of communication skills or conflict resolution. His wife and family continue to have an active role in certain parts of his present ministry.

Theophilus spoke of his wife in the warmest of tones and with the highest of appreciation and respect. He considers this relationship the most valuable and formative for his life, character, and leadership. Theophilus’ relationship with his wife is important for understanding his development as a leader. He considers this relationship as one of the most confidential that he experiences. Towards the end of our first conversation, when I asked him if there would be anything he would like to add that is of importance to his development as a leader, he began talking about the role his wife has in his life:

I think, I would not have been where I am without her, without – I think she is someone who is very good for me, who has strongly influenced me (short pause). I would like to think and believe, that she was able to correct some of my rough edges a bit. She is an important conversation partner in multiple situations of decision-making…. I listen to her counsel. I think, she is a very influential person for me. I think her love, her respect, her appreciation, her faith in me…. I am the person that I am because of her (short pause), even the kind of leader.

His wife and family are also important aspects to Avius’ experience as a leader. The relationship to his spouse was instrumental in his leadership development, in his decision to come to Vienne Seminary. She also is an ongoing partner in ministry. Avius continued to say, “the relationships to the children… have shaped me as a leader, and continue to shape me.” In his entire
life-setup Avius endeavors to have no disconnects between family, church and leadership. Family also becomes a place of repose and rejuvenation. Elaborating on that kind of impact of family, Avius explained, “it is something very important for me. It is a place where I can be different, where I am perceived differently, and where I fulfill other roles.” He also called family his “oasis.”

Cyril spent almost 10% of our total time together talking about his wife and family. For his spiritual development his mother was an important role model, and his father’s words kept him going in hard times in his youth. In his formative years Cyril’s siblings became mentors who helped him through the time of his theological education. Today Cyril has a friendship relationship with his own children, which he considers a gift and the result of his wife’s influence. He acknowledged, “all of that I don’t regard as my accomplishment. As I have said, it is a gift, but it was for a big part because of my wife.” At the end of the first interview, when asked if there was anything he would like to add, Cyril said, “I cannot bracket out the role of my wife, for what I, may I even say, for who I am today, or what has become of my life.” They got married very early, a decision Cyril considers “about the most important and most significant decision of my life.” Throughout the years she was his companion in the ministry, encouraging him when he wanted to give up, filling the gap in the family that he sometimes left, counselling him in important decisions, and pointing out mistakes and hubris. She is his friend, his partner in ministry and most trusted confidant. Cyril admitted that, “principally I would have never agreed to a ministry, if my wife would not support it.” In summary Cyril emphasizes, “my family is relationship-wise my highest priority.”

Explaining his commitment to his wife and children, Benedict said, “I did not want to neglect my family.” He experiences his family, and their children, as a spiritual responsibility given
by God. This commitment has impacted ministry decisions in the past, and it continues to influence his scheduling priorities today. Benedict enjoys a wonderful relationship with his wife. He acknowledged:

I believe without my wife I would not be in full-time ministry today (uhm), I am quite certain of it. Because she is a woman who is supporting this fully, and I already said that it is in my nature to enjoy leading, but that I don’t seek out leadership opportunities (uhm), it was my wife who, well pushed almost sounds too negative, but who nudged me strongly into this direction, to do this. (uhm) Even today she backs up 100% what we are doing.

Benedict’s wife continues to remind him of his calling to his current position at the Seminary of Jerusalem. In doing so she is the most important aspect for him to derive meaning from his experiences as a leader. He disclosed, “she is in these things. When I have questions about meaning, she helps me to see the big picture.”

**Experiencing motivation.** Benedict is motivated by the spiritual significance of his role at the Seminary of Nursia. Having the desire “that at some point the head shepherd says, ‘you faithful and good servant, you did treat my flock well,’ (uhm) that energizes me very much.” He is also highly motivated by the mission of Nursia. He admitted, “I have a strong desire for what we are currently doing.” The interpersonal relationships are another source of motivation for him, especially within the leadership team. Reaching a decision together and agreeing on a course of action are central to Benedict’s experience of motivation. Remembering his transition into leadership at the Seminary of Jerusalem Benedict reported, “I am completely thankful for what I experienced here.” Benedict derives deep satisfaction from conflict-free relationships. He described a situation how this could look like:
Yeah, well, if we are talking about getting satisfaction out of it, in leadership responsibility (uhm) where knots are untied, that is, if there are difficult conversations with staff members and you realize after two, three meetings you don’t make any progress, and suddenly the knot comes undone.

Benedict also derives satisfaction from harmonious relationships and positive leadership team experiences. He reported, “a great satisfaction after these leadership retreats (uhm) when we determine new ways and try to think about what God wants to do with this school within the next years.” The satisfaction is especially great when they reach decisions where all leadership team members find consensus to say: “yes, we are behind this, and we do this. I find great satisfaction in that.” In other words, Benedict experience satisfaction from reaching reasoned decisions as a team.

Benedict also plainly enjoys being a leader and assuming leadership responsibility. This was an experience he had made early on while leading in various leadership capacities during the years leading up to his current position. “Even today I would say I greatly enjoy leading,” he admitted. Experiencing joy and satisfaction in leadership is an important motivational aspect for Benedict. He explained, “if someone leads he should feel this satisfaction. I felt like that early on, I always enjoyed it.” An important source of joy for Benedict, beyond the leadership experience, is his family. He enters family related events into his personal calendar and treats them with high priority amidst his other leadership responsibilities. Finally, any experience of success in leadership provides a source of motivation and satisfaction for Benedict.

Theophilus’ leadership is motivated by what the Seminary of Antioch represents, by the meaningful nature of his work, by the meaningful nature of the graduates’ work, and by his high level of identification with both the institution and its purpose. Theophilus draws motivation
from the work-environment and the knowledge that he is doing something meaningful for the church and for society. Another source of motivation comes from the working environment with its aspects of co-worker relationships, the pleasant nature of the work itself, the student body, the climate and the corporate culture. The strongest motivation seemed to come from a spiritual conviction as he reflected, “I see myself at a position where God wants me. The multifaceted nature and what I have to do largely corresponds with my strengths.”

Theophilus’ initial response to the question concerning the meaning of his leadership experience was, “I would say it is a privilege. It is an (short pause), important institution of education, it has a good reputation, it has history.” The Seminary of Antioch has an exclusive standing and is highly visible. Because of what it stands for, being able to lead Antioch Seminary is a great motivator for Theophilus. It makes his work multifaceted and “absolutely meaningful,” as he remarked. The visibility of the school and the personal recognition Theophilus receives because of its leadership result in a joy that is “inexpressible.”

The second reason for the experience of privilege rests on the fact that the position Theophilus holds also aligns with his personality. He explained, “it is great, because it is a task that, I think, fits with my gift mix, in this sense [I experience] personal satisfaction. When the question is what does it mean for me; it’s great, it is fulfilling.” He feels privileged to have the opportunity to work in a situation that matches his talents and passions. The professionalization process at Antioch fits with Theophilus’ character who enjoys structured environments and efficient leadership practices. Theophilus’ experience as lead administrator at the Seminary of Antioch is influenced by his perception of life-phases. Reflecting on past leadership experiences, Theophilus said, “I think about phases of my life where it seemed to me what I am doing does not have such
an impact.” Realizing the potential of the current life-phase is a great motivational factor in his experience, but also an affirmation of his conviction to be called to the current position.

The final source of motivation is connected with Theophilus’ personal spirituality. In leading the Seminary of Antioch, his callings towards “theological teaching” and “bridge-building” are lived out. The experience of fulfillment or satisfaction is closely related to the experience of privilege, but it includes more personal aspects as well. Theophilus himself made this connection:

I would say, the biggest portion of my job I enjoy doing and I don’t have to force myself out of bed in the morning and think ‘oh, well, I have to do this today’ (uhm) well, it gives me pleasure, it is a privilege that I can work like this.

Methodius primarily described external sources of motivation. “Well, I notice that we can give something to our students, and that they profit from it.” He also is motivated when he sees people develop, especially over longer periods of time. It is the overall demand for his personal expertise and the product of Olympus that motivates him to continue with his work. Methodius also mentioned an intrinsic motivation that comes from his field of expertise itself. He said, “it [the field] is important to me, that drives me…. There I see a task for us.” Reflecting on his own beginnings at the Seminary of Olympus, Methodius remembered “the fact that I was called to Olympus and luckily did have a boss who gave me much freedom, that was also very fruitful.” Methodius is also energized by the freedom that he is given by his superiors in his daily work. The value of freedom is central to Methodius’ experience of leadership as a privilege, as he explained, “it is a privilege, the work that I can do. Other people don’t have such freedom.”

Cyril’s positive leadership experience is primarily connected to certain motivators. As a teacher he is motivated by the opportunity to influence and shape young people, and to do so on
a biblical basis. When teaching a group of students, Cyril is motivated by the potential of multiplication he sees within the group. As a leader he is motivated by the assurance of his calling, by his self-understanding as a spiritual shepherd, and by the opportunity to connect churches and organizations within his specific evangelical movement. He admitted, “that’s what I live for; to network people, to bring churches in contact with each other, and together tackle tasks one could not accomplish alone.” I personally could observe this behavior on several occasions where he facilitated planning meetings for larger events that included a group of leaders from different churches and organizations within the movement he belongs to.

From Avius’ personality he is primarily motivated by teaching and instruction. He is energized by the opportunity to contribute to the divine experiences of his students. Avius disclosed, “that is the best thing that could have happened to me, that people can develop here in a very excellent way, and try out things, realize their potential, and grow.” This desire to see, to promote, and to initiate development spills over into his leadership experience. He reflected, “I am just one who has a need for a certain movement, that somehow innovation and not dust gathering occurs. That is part of my personality and I bring that to the table here.” Avius mentioned the experiences of joy in terms of a challenge in the context of his current reorientation from a teaching-emphasis to a stronger leadership-emphasis. As noted earlier he usually finds fulfillment, joy, and satisfaction in the classroom. Now he is challenged to find the same experiences in the administrative setting. Avius described that he had to learn to find joy in developing people and the organization. He explained:

I’d like to help people to develop, to set free their potential, to flourish, to get ahead. And so I want to include staff members so that this can happen, and then to find joy in it when it happens.
All administrative tasks become meaningful when Avius reminds himself for whom he is doing it. However, he also seeks joy in leading the organization, as he explained:

I can help to initiate things, so that we don’t stop but move along, and that the school develops and finds answers to the demands of the times, also on a structural level, and on a program level. What do we offer? Where are we going? To develop visions, the steps towards them, set annual goals; all these tasks, and then really have my joy in it to move things along.

Next to the vision and mission of the Seminary of Nazianzus, Gregory is guided and motivated by a personal vision for the evangelical higher education area. This vision also has a spiritual dimension in that he wants to enlarge the theological influence of his denomination or faith community. Gregory attributes his personal drive to assume leadership responsibility to both come from a “Christian ethic and ethos of responsibility,” but also because “it corresponds with my character.” In his current role Gregory experiences his leadership at Nazianzus Seminary “to a high degree motivating and meaningful.” He continued to explain that the reason for this level of meaningfulness is his ability “to contribute at this place to the church of Jesus Christ in this world.”

Gregory repeatedly expressed his gratitude in different contexts of the conversation; however, in the context of motivation it became the most apparent. There are two notable sources of joy including the seminary itself and the overall dynamic of the educational sector. In the context of the Seminary of Nazianzus it gives Gregory joy “to be allowed to have the responsibility in a dynamic, growing, college…. I am under the impression that what I am doing here is very meaningful…. It is exceeding fun to develop a dynamic college.” In the context of the educational sector he remarked, “these are very exciting times. It gives me joy to contribute here.”
Experiencing Leadership as a Spiritual Calling

For each participant personal faith and a sense of spiritual calling were a foundational aspect of their lived-experience in general. They were important guiding factors for their career choices and further development as leaders. The sense of being called to what they do continues to have a significant impact on the participants’ current experiences with the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary.

Avius connected his life-experience to personal faith on a most foundational level as “the call into discipleship, it is the call to redemption. It is what unites all of us as Christians.” It was obvious throughout our conversations that Avius’ personal faith is connected with all that he does, and that he derives meaning and significance from it as a leader. His spiritual life is primarily fed through Bible study and prayer. For Avius the question of needs and desires is closely connected with the understanding of his spiritual calling. In his developmental years Avius found “a certain internal clarity to say, ‘I want to enter into the pastor’s ministry in the broader sense.’” He experiences the leadership of the Seminary of Vienne as a continuation of that calling. However, Avius preferred the terms of being sent into a particular context and ministry, a spiritual assignment of sorts.

Part of Avius’ reflective nature is to see everything in life-phases. The understanding of the particular phase he experiences professionally provide a frame of reference for his experiences as a leader. This also impacts his understanding of leadership values and the experiences of tension and motivation, and external responsibility. Avius understands leadership in commissions. The commission by God and by others have been addressed already. A final aspect to this framework is the commission of self, which is about answering the question: “Do I have really found an internal yes to it, to say, that is it?” In his reflective practices as a leader, Avius relies
on “what one could describe in secular terms as intuition, and I hope that... for me as a leader this is a good mixture between intuition and the influence of the Spirit.” This awareness and expectation of God’s presence in his leadership is an important aspect in Avius’ experiences as a reflective leader.

For Avius the aspect of self-reflection and leadership practice refers to the ideal understanding of his own function in terms of a “reflective practitioner.” Even before entering into the current position, Avius had to answer the fundamental question, which he phrased, “do I think myself capable of leadership?” The issue of self-questioning continuously accompanies him in his leadership experience. Avius himself commented on the impact of reflection on his leadership saying:

I believe, yes, that is a strength and a shadow. A strength in the sense that I try to be accountable to myself and to be honest, and to face myself and my shadows, to do that as well in conversation, when I have gained clarity about some truth also to be willing to share that with others.

The investment of others into his life leads Avius to reflect on his leadership and life to see whether or not he does them justice. He experiences a threefold effect from such reflections:

[It] occupies me, or makes me humble, or dissatisfies me. Did I make enough out of what all these people have put into me? Is this (short pause) does it measure up to it, see? Haven’t I gotten so many gifts? Am I passing on enough, or am I blocking some [of them] internally, and I could give more, achieve more, from what has been given to me, and what has been bestowed on me?

Gregory made also a brief reference to the impact of personal faith on his development and current experience. He attributes his personal desire to assume leadership responsibility to
both a “Christian ethic and ethos of responsibility.” Gregory’s path into theological education was a deeply spiritual development, and even today he perceives it as “a highly theological responsibility to further develop this college.” Gregory described his sense of calling primarily in the context of his initial career choice and the difficulties connected with that early experience. He remembered:

That was a conflict, and to endure through that, to pull through it, on my part to hold fast (uhm) to say, I see myself as being called to this path, I believe that is God’s will to walk this path, that one can interpret as a calling.

In retrospect he interprets the process that led him to his current career as a calling, which also included some change of direction at certain points in his developmental history.

Cyril believes that his work at Jerusalem has a direct connection with his calling. He observed, “I can live what God has planned for my life, what God wants for me.” This knowledge helps him to relax, because he knows that God is leading him. In Cyril’s perspective, calling is the clear guidance of God who opens doors, who confirms through internal and external means, and who gives internal peace over decisions. He understands his calling on two levels. It is first a calling to a specific region where the seminary and his church are located. It is also a calling to a certain faith community or movement within the evangelical world, to serve them, to position them in society and in global evangelicalism, and also to network churches within and beyond the borders of the group. This desire of cooperation is driven by Cyril’s conviction, “only this way alone we are able to fulfill the mission, and only together we are strong.”

During the interviews it became apparent that Cyril’s self-understanding was an important spiritual factor of his leadership experience. As the director of the school Cyril experiences his leadership as being part of the whole, as part of a leadership team, but also as the one
who cannot hide behind anyone else. This somewhat oxymoronic understanding of his position becomes apparent when he states, “in this sense, I don’t see myself here in any higher position. Yes, in a sense, I don’t know, I stand at the very top.” Other influences on his self-understanding come from his development as a leader, his up-bringing, and his status at the seminary. Cyril’s church background and membership in a certain group of evangelicals is important to his self-understanding as well in that it provides both a sense of identity and obligation. In his actions he often engages in the reflective exercise of assessing his motives. From the role model of the Apostle Paul Cyril learned the importance of relaxation in leadership. This relaxation comes basically from acknowledging that God has the final authority. It is a letting go of things and not trying to do everything in one’s own strength. For Cyril, however, relaxation does not necessarily mean to do nothing, but to be engaged in a variety of activities. To rest means to do something else.

Cyril confessed that his tasks and ministry were negatively impacted if he lacked in prayer and Bible study. The Bible is of foundational importance to Cyril’s life and ministry and its study is a natural exercise for him. It has a real impact on his leadership experience. That is a great motivation and source of meaning for him. Furthermore, his faith is important for making decisions, because Cyril believes that God can guide him in those processes. Cyril also sees a direct connection of his spiritual life and his classroom performance. For him that means to be able to teach with conviction and passion. He said, “what I experience personally will have impact on the other individual or on the community.” Through his example he hopes to build a spiritual community at Jerusalem Seminary.

Personal faith is a primary guide and source of strength for Theophilus. It was his faith that first had led him into theological college studies, and then to a foreign country as a mission-
ary. The international experience was formative to his theological and spiritual perspective. The study of the Bible, alone or in community, is his primary source for spiritual living, to which he adds regular worship service attendance and a personal prayer life. For Theophilus correct theological thinking, which is developed through education, is closely linked to personal faith. He frequently takes quiet times, prayer walks, and retreats into a house of silence. Prayer is also a constant companion in Theophilus’ leadership activities.

In the academization process, Theophilus increasingly comes into contact with non-Christians, which encourages him to live a consistent testimony of his faith. Theophilus understands calling as serving God with his gifts and talents regardless of the context. Thus, his calling is the conviction that motivates him to keep working. He asserted, “I am called to be here, even if it is hard at times.”

For Theophilus calling is a personal, inner experience, a “fundamental feeling,” as he phrased it. However, for him external affirmation certainly is part of understanding one’s calling. Early in his personal development Theophilus sensed the call towards full-time ministry in some form, which led him to study theology. His understanding of calling has changed over time, as it evolved from a thought pattern of attaching the calling to a specific place and time into a broad vision of a “calling in theological teaching.” Later he added “bridge-builder” to the description of his personal calling. Overall, Theophilus frames his role as being “called to the ministry.”

For Methodius his personal faith is the single most important influence on his current experience as well. His conversion experience initiated the development towards his current occupation. The decision to go into full-time ministry was a purely spiritual decision that Methodius understood as following his spiritual calling. Methodius only mentioned the aspect of calling in the context of his choice to enter into full-time ministry. Methodius acknowledged that his con-
tinued ministry in church leadership has two effects for him. He explained, “this always gives me some ground traction, but I have also realized it gives me a bit credibility.” A value in his approach to teaching is the exchange of practice and theory. He experiences this especially in his local church ministry.

His personal faith had a strong influence on Benedict’s personal development. Even today spiritual exercises are important for him such as “regular Bible reading, regular prayer, regular church attendance, and regular ministry in the church…. I believe it is these that constitute the relationship with God.” The Bible takes an especially important role in his spiritual life. He said, “when I want to get to know God, that is to spiritually know God, to know him deeply, I believe above all this happens through the Word of God.”

A second aspect of his personal spiritual life is fellowship and connections. For Benedict this is expressed in church community, in spiritual community with staff, and to be held accountable by trusted individuals. When asked about the priority of fellowship and connection in his spiritual life Benedict answered, “for me that is very important.” Benedict experiences his current role as the fulfillment of a spiritual calling. He acknowledged, “that’s what got me into full-time ministry in the first place.”

Benedict considers both the teaching and leading role at the Seminary of Nursia as a calling. From this knowledge he gleans a sense of responsibility and security. This inner security of knowing to be at his place of calling, and being reminded of that fact by his wife and friends, is what has helped him through times when he doubted his calling. Knowing that he lives out what he is called to makes his experience meaningful. Benedict explained, “why do I believe that it is meaningful what I am doing? (uhm) Well, I actually, I derive it strongly, so I thought the last few days, from this sense of calling.”
Summary of Structural Descriptions

These four themes describe the meanings and essences of the phenomenon from the structural perspective (Moustakas, 1994). They include all aspects of the participants’ description about how they experience the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries (Creswell, 2013). As lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe, they are experiencing their leadership as a responsibility, with its negative dimensions of burden, stress, and tensions, with its positive dimensions of positive family influences and unique motivation, and as a spiritual calling.

Essential Descriptions

Instead of offering recipes of leadership that might or might not work in other contexts, this study sought to find out what is really carrying the burden of leadership in the participating institution by describing what is essential to the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe. In other words, the primary finding of this study was the description of what parts of the participants’ experiences relate to the transcendent reality of the phenomenon without which it would cease to be what it is. It sought to describe the true being of a thing (van Manen, 1990; Willard, 1984).

In this section the previously developed descriptions of what the participants experienced and how they experienced the phenomenon of leadership at their respective seminaries is synthesized into essential descriptions. The textural and structural descriptions were already descriptions of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon from different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). This synthesis, as a result of an intuitive and reflective integration of the textural and structural descriptions, now constitutes a combined description of the meaning and essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). This description is catego-
rized into essential themes that phenomenologically reduce the experience, or portions thereof, to its most universal basic form (Husserl, 2012).

I found that leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe is experienced as a spiritual, meaningful, and relational phenomenon that is primarily influenced by academization, professionalization, and diversification. Three aspects seemed to be at the core of the participants’ lived experience as lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. The first aspect is a holistic integration of spirituality into their professional and personal lives. The second aspect concerns the significance and meaningfulness of their work, and finally, relationship as the main process of leadership. These three aspects have a profound impact on the lead administrators’ leadership, but especially on how they respond to the influences professionalization, academization, and diversification of their own role and also of the institutions they lead.

As a result of the phenomenological analysis, six areas could be identified as essential to the participants’ experiences as lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. These areas of essential experience include spirituality, significance and meaning, relationship, professionalization, academization, and diversification. For structural clarity the six areas are grouped into essential experiences for the first three areas, which have a more personal or internal context, and essential influences for the last three areas, which have a more external or organizational context. Within each area several statements have been synthesized from the textural and structural descriptions. These statements are considered the essential themes of the lead-administrators’ lived experience with the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe.
Essential Experiences of the Phenomenon of Leading a Seminary

The essential experiences of the phenomenon are described in the areas of spirituality, significance and meaning, and relationship.

**The essential experience of spirituality.** In the area of spirituality, the essential experience of the participants can be described in terms of their holistic integration of personal faith, their leadership with a sense of spiritual calling, their leadership that flows from a sense of spiritual responsibility, and spiritual values that are formed through personal faith and life-experience.

*A holistic integration of personal spirituality.* The presumably most visible essential aspect to the participants’ experience of the phenomenon of leading Evangelical seminaries is the holistic integration of their personal spirituality into every aspect of their lives. Faith is connected with their personal development and identity as leaders, their understanding of calling, their leadership style and values, their leadership practice, the relationships they build and maintain, the personal vision and passion for life and ministry, and their private and organizational decision-making processes. The participants are spiritual people and want to be perceived as such, even in their professional and academic leadership capacity. They defined their personal spirituality through a personal relationship with the God of the Bible. This relationship is built and maintained primarily through the study of the Scriptures, a prayer life, and living in Christian community. Personal spirituality is their primary source of meaning, motivation, and identity. From it follows the sense of spiritual calling, spiritual responsibility, and their values.

**Leading with a sense of spiritual calling.** The understanding of their current occupation as the result, or fulfillment, of their spiritual calling is a common essential aspect to the participants’ experience. Each leader provided a unique perspective on how they perceived and articu-
lated their calling. The concept basically refers to the general reality of being called into a relationship with God. In a more focused sense, all participants agreed that the relationship with God was the foundation for their specific calling or commission to the full-time ministry. This calling is also experienced as a spiritual reality, and it is expressed through their leadership in the context of theological education or ministry training. At their seminaries participants exercise their calling with a sense of accountability to the one who called them, and with the expectation of his guidance. Being called provides for the participants a sense of meaning, motivation, inner peace, and personal vision, but also with a sense of responsibility.

*Spiritual leadership that flows out of spiritual responsibility.* Each participant described themselves as a spiritual leader. This is an essential aspect of the phenomenon, since the participants see spiritual leadership as guiding in what they do, but also as defining for how they experience their role. For the participating lead-administrators, spirituality flowed out of their being. They identified strongly with a personal faith and spiritual values, which translate into a sense of calling and responsibility, but also into practical spiritual values and an integration of spirituality into their leadership practice. Avius expressed this notion perhaps the clearest, “I could not separate leadership and management tasks from the pastoral dimension. For me that belongs together.”

As spiritual leaders the participants assume responsibility for the mission of the school, they spiritual atmosphere at the institutions, and the spiritual formation of the students. The integrate opportunities for spirituality into the seminary either formally through specific events, or informally through intentional integration into the classroom. Most lead administrators in this study described how prayer and seeking guidance in the Bible are integral parts of their profes-
sional and academic leadership practice. From their sense of spiritual responsibility also flowed the desire to lead in the community of a team of spiritual leaders, and with spiritual values.

*Spiritual values that flow out of personal spirituality and life-experience.* An essential aspect to the participants’ experience is their focus on values. These leadership values have spiritual origin, and they influence the lead-administrators practice and their expectations towards the teams they lead. As a consequence, these values also influence the corporate culture of each seminary. Each lead administrator felt the need to promote a spiritual Christian community within their organizations. They accomplished this by implementing spiritually formational elements into institutional life on student, staff, faculty, and leadership levels, but also by leading a spiritual life as an example themselves.

The participants repeatedly referenced two particular values that seemed to be essential to their experience. These were the values of trust and freedom. I observed a circularity in the way these values are linked together. Trust is the foundational attitude that finds expression in giving or experiencing freedom. This freedom to act, to develop, to try out, and to operate self-responsibly and autonomously needs in turn to be acted out faithfully in order to not betray the trust that was extended in the first place. The lead administrators described this circularity in the contexts of their own development and their current leadership. While growing as leaders, they were the recipients of trust and freedom. As leaders today they continue to experience the same from stakeholders and supervisory boards, but now they also extend trust and freedom to others while expecting the recipients to act with integrity.

*The essential experience of significance and meaning.* The participants’ essential experience of significance and meaning is connected to their spiritually motivated leadership. A sense of being called, family relationships, and a sense of the significance of their role are the main
motivational sources in the experience of the participants in this study. Since the aspects of calling and relationships have been covered elsewhere, this section will describe how significance is essential to the lead administrators’ experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

The participants are motivated because they perceive their work as meaningful and significant. Each leader described the source of that feeling differently. All found it particularly meaningful to be able to contribute to the development of individuals and the local church, and for some also to have a part in the development of Christianity on a more international scale. Some lead administrators further expressed to be motivated by the opportunity to contribute to society or their field of academic expertise, and a few linked their sense of significance directly to the support of their spouses.

The leaders derive a sense of meaning from the nature and mission of the seminary they lead. They described how much they could personally identify with the mission of the school, which gave meaning to their occupation as well. There is also a certain prestige connected with being entrusted with the leadership of a seminary. This prestige and mission identification also had a negative ramification, since a common experience among the participants is a certain insecurity, even anxiety, about the long-term effects of their current decision. Admittedly, this is a burden that every decision maker is facing; however, paired with a spiritual sense of responsibility and calling for the seminary they lead and what their institutions represent, this burden seems to be unique to the lead administrators of seminaries. The participants in this study are motivated by the meaningfulness of their work, the significance of the role they have, the mission and purpose of the seminary they lead, but also by the desire to not fail and diminish their organizations’ ability to fulfill that mission and purpose.
The essential experience of relationship. The essence of relational experiences with the phenomenon are connected with the participants’ relationship and influence of their family and wife, their leadership in an organizationally flat culture, and their desire for harmony and good relationships.

Relationship and influence of family and wife. All participants spoke about the significant impact their immediate family had on their personal development, and still continues to have on their current experience as leaders. Each participant acknowledged that they would not have chosen their current career path if their wives would have had some reservations concerning such a decision. The relationship to the spouse is an essential aspect of their personal development, their identification of spiritual calling, and their continued motivation and positive perspective in their current role. The involvement of the lead-administrator’s wives with their work ranges from active participation, to supporting and advising from the background, to intentional separation of family and work to create a place of rejuvenation for the leaders. A second relationship influence are the children of the participants. Maintaining a positive relationship through intentional investments of time and interest in the children’s lives was a common expressed desire with each leader. Some acknowledged to have failed in this regard during their earlier years of leadership development, but all evaluated their current relationships with their sons and daughters favorably.

Leadership in an organizationally flat culture. The institutions had in common a flat team-leadership structure, and all participants acknowledged to lead primarily from relationship and through community. The participating seminaries were not primarily led through the mechanism of power. As spiritual community forms at the seminary, a new power dynamic is introduced. The lead administrators are figures of formal authority, but in the faith they are equal with
their students, co-workers, and faculty. These structures diminish the formal authority of the lead administrator who has to lead through persuasion and communication rather than from a position of power. Intentional communication becomes the core practice to lead in the flat-culture environment. The participants used both formal settings and informal means of communication to inform the respective stakeholders as efficiently as possible.

**Desire for harmony and good relations.** Not only are the seminaries structured to support relationship-based leadership in a flat culture, the participants reported that the practice of building relationships and maintaining a harmonious team atmosphere were also the way they wanted to lead. Four of the participating lead administrators acknowledged that interpersonal conflict is among the main stressors in their leadership experience. The need of good relationships is not only connected to the personal leadership style, but also to the spiritual leadership value system each of the lead administrators upholds as a guide for their practice. Among relationship values of transparency, integrity, respect, attentiveness, and empathy, the value of trust and leaving space for each other were the most prevalent to their experience. This indicates that the participants considered harmony and good relationships as an organizational necessity, a personal leadership preference, and a matter of spiritual identity and meaning.

**Essential Influences on the Phenomenon of Leading a Seminary**

The synthesis of the structures and textures of the phenomenon not only resulted in essential experiences, but also essential influences on the seminary leaders. These influences are categorized into professionalization and academization with their respective sub-themes. A final essential influence to the participants’ experience is described under the theme of diversification.

**The essential influences of professionalization.** Leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe is, or is increasingly becoming, a professional task. The participants
described themselves as managers, administrators, strategic planners, business managers, business leaders, executive officers, and vision casters. These roles and connected leadership practices are integrated with a personal spirituality, and are perceived as a challenge and an opportunity simultaneously. The tenor of the attitude towards professionalization among the participating lead-administrators can be summarized with the words of Theophilus, who said, “that’s just part of it.” The participants’ experience of leading evangelical seminaries in the area of professionalization is essentially influenced in terms of personal readiness and preparation, the imposition of multiple roles, and arising challenges and tensions from being a professional leader.

**Personal readiness for professional leadership.** All participants in this study share the experience of early leadership responsibility. The essential aspect to the phenomenon in this regard is the need to be prepared for professional leadership. The lead administrators in this did not begin to lead with their current position but were asked into leadership functions and position throughout their developmental years. They were seasoned and experienced leaders before they entered their current positions. However, none but one enjoyed some form of professional leadership training before becoming a lead administrator at their respective seminary. Consequently, five of the six participants did not consider themselves adequately prepared for the professional aspects of their position when they entered into the position, and some still consider this a personal weakness in their leadership skills.

One of the questions I asked each participant was about the required qualifications a hypothetical successor should have to be successful in their current position. Among other requirements each participant referenced the professional leadership aspect as a necessity for their leadership. Some included it because they had learned themselves how to lead professionally, and some mentioned it because they feel a personal inadequacy in this area. To compensate for that
area of weakness, each leader applied different strategies as they deemed necessary. They intentionally learned professional leadership practices on-the-job, delegated certain aspects within the leadership team, and some were even thinking about changing the leadership structure to alleviate themselves more from professional leadership responsibilities.

**Leadership in multiple roles.** The participants described the many roles and responsibilities that were attached to their position. In other words, for a lead administrator of an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe functioning in multiple roles essential to their experience. None of the participants is a full-time leader. The common roles that each lead-administrator has to fulfill within the seminary included professional leader, theologian, academic leader, spiritual leader, servant, networker, and teacher. However, the participants described several roles outside the borders of the seminary they lead including family man, minister to the church, board member with Christian organizations, and speaker. All leaders seemed to be able to handle a lot of stress from the amount of work and the decisions they have to make. They seem to be able to handle several different organizational structures and natures of tasks, often times having a lot of responsibility beyond their own organization. This indicated that the lead administrators in this study shared the disposition to cope well with multiple roles and tasks.

**Leading with unique challenges and tensions.** The experience of challenges and tensions is certainly not unique to the participants of this study; however, the source and nature of said influences are unique to their role as lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. Therefore, these unique challenges and tensions are an essential part of the phenomenon. As professional leaders the issue of organizational development and change management is an essential influence of the lead-administrators’ experience. For those who transitioned the seminary into state recognition or higher levels of academic accreditation, the chal-
lenge of quality and qualification becomes a tension due to the many requirements a college standing imposes. For those with lower academic level programs, the process of accreditation still is a cause for constant organizational development and quality management processes.

A continued challenge the participants face is to keep the focus of their institution on its original purpose and mission while they navigate through the changes to the educational arena, church context, and society at large. For some this is also a cause for self-reflection to determine how far they are willing to go themselves into the directions of professionalization and academization. As leaders of seminaries with an evangelical identity, the participants experience what it means to hold a minority position in the greater academic context. To position themselves and their organizations, but also to communicate effectively in these arenas, are at times tension-laden challenges.

**The essential influences of academization.** In the area of academization, the lead-administrators in this study are essentially influenced by the mission of the seminaries combined with their personal vision and passions, and by external influences from general societal realities and expectations in the religious area. The findings suggest that the decision for any form of academization essentially was dependent on these three factors including the mission of the school, the lead administrator, and external dynamics.

**Mission and motivation as guides for decision-making and accreditation.** All lead administrators considered the options for academic accreditation in light of the mission and vision of the seminary. This suggests that keeping the mission and purpose of the school is an essential aspect to the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe. The participants reported how they experienced their responsibility towards the purpose of the seminary, and described it as their task to keep the big picture in view, to promote the purpose, to
formulate visions and goals that accomplish the purpose, and to make decisions concerning academization depending on the benefit of such processes for the accomplishment of the seminary’s purpose. When considering a course of action towards academization, deciding factors included: (a) the identity of the school; (b) the target group of prospective students; (c) the target market the seminary trains for; and (d) the leader himself, where the issues of motivation, qualification, and leadership style emerged as essential facets.

All leaders identified strongly with the mission of their respective seminary and derive a certain motivation from seeing the vision of their institutions fulfilled. This identification seemed to be essential to their experience. If they perceived that a certain direction of academization was not helpful or even diminishing to the mission, they had no motivation to pursue this direction. All lead administrators found a way to integrate their personal desires or vision for their lives with that of the institutions. This aspect seems to be essential to their experience as lead administrators, since they derive a deep sense of meaning and responsibility towards the purpose of the seminary.

**Responding to external influences from church and society.** All participants share the same environmental context that poses expectations towards their leadership, provides the facts for decision-making, and also serves as an opportunity of influence. It goes without saying that responding to external influences is a common experience of leadership, even human life in general. However, the content of this experience for the participants in this study is unique to their role, and therefore constitutes an essential aspect of the phenomenon.

The leaders in this study acknowledged that changes in the theological education or higher education area were influencing their leadership. These changes were first attributed to the Bologna process, but also to changing demands of the ministries and job-demands for their grad-
uates, and an overall change in the educational behavior of young people. The essential experience of external influence is independent of these current circumstances. However, since responding to them is an essential part of being a lead administrator, the particulars of the participants’ experiences will help to understand the transcendental reality.

The orientation towards the church and religious area is a consequence of the leaders’ personal spirituality and the resulting self-perception of their role and responsibility beyond their seminaries. They defined the mission and purpose of their institutions in terms of their effectiveness of service for Christian sector, evaluated their quality and success by the applicability of their programs for the Christian ministry in its multiple forms, and they derived a sense of meaning and motivation from the contribution to the local and global church. In other words, what the churches need influences what the seminaries teach, and on which academic level they do so. The decision for programming and academic rigor are also influenced by the developments of the educational behavior in general society. With a decision for a certain academic path new external influences in form of accrediting bodies, and in some cases the academy as such, become external influences to the leadership practice and experience of seminary leaders.

**The essential influences of diversification.** The final area that essentially influences the participants’ experience of the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe concerns diversification. The participants experience a diversification of their responsibilities and areas of influence, but also an increasing diversity of the stakeholder-mix that has an expressed interest and influence on the operation of the seminary.

**A diversification responsibilities and influence.** As a result of the external dynamics discussed above, the lead administrators in this study experienced a new sense of a broader responsibility, since their area of influence is increasing as a consequence. The specific responsibilities
and areas of influence varied among the participants. Nonetheless, the influence of diversification is essential to the phenomenon of leading an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe. Beyond the responsibilities that are connected to the multiple roles described earlier, the lead administrators in this study experienced new responsibilities and increased influence in the academic and religious sectors.

On the religious side, and depending on the level of academization and program orientation, the seminaries see a more diverse group of Christian denominations and confessions represented in the student body. Due to the decentralization of education tendencies in greater society, some experience a responsibility to support the local church more directly in their own training efforts. Due to the relative prosperity and stability the seminaries in German-speaking Europe enjoy, some expressed a sense of responsibility towards global Christianity and thought about internationalization of their programs.

On the academic side new areas of responsibility and influence are introduced primarily through the academic profile that some seminaries are developing. This profile determines also how far this influence reaches. Some lead administrators stay primarily nationally and within the evangelical context, others have influence that reaches beyond the national borders, and some experience having influence and responsibility into the secular world as well.

A diversification of the stakeholder mix. The flip-side of the coin of the increased influence the participants experienced, the seminaries also gained more stakeholders. Stakeholders of the respective seminaries are defined by their expectations towards the seminary paired with a formal or informal power to influence or even hold accountable their leadership. The stakeholder mix each lead administrator interacts with is very similar among the participants but also unique to their experience as seminary leaders. This makes the stakeholder mix an essential as-
pect of the phenomenon of leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe today.

The stakeholders can be generally classified as either internal or external. Internally each seminary is supervised by a board, led by a team, staffed with faculty and staff-members, and filled with a student body.

External stakeholders include generally speaking the secular sector with governmental, accrediting agencies, and the respective academy, and the religious sector with local churches, associations, and religious organizations. In a sense other seminaries are also part of this stakeholder group, since each of the participating seminary was also part of the Conference of Bible-Believing Training Institutions (KbA), which affords them both a platform for collaboration and a place of theological accountability. However, this latter aspect was not mentioned by any of the participants.

External expectations concern issues of accreditation and academic recognition. With the process of academization the seminaries also feel an increased need to position themselves within the greater context of their respective academic field. The demands of accrediting agencies (not all of them secular), place a burden of constant accreditation on the institutions and their leaders. The academization process that is connected with it limits the programmatic flexibility at the seminaries, places higher demands on their faculty which in turn are pulled out further from active ministry, and the seminary has to become more institutionally independent from the church circles and groups they historically identified with.

Since these arenas are relatively new for the accredited seminary, a clear communication of one’s position and values becomes an important task for the lead administrators. They are well aware of the fact that being a free-church oriented or supported institution makes them somewhat a curiosity that is easily overlooked or misunderstood. Their emphasis of personal faith and the
Bible on a personal and institutional level leads to tensions that need clarification. On the other hand, some participants also considered these new points of contact as a chance to give testimony to the values and quality of education provided by their seminaries. A second important influence from secular stakeholders concerns the demands for quality management processes, academic activities, and a resulting increase of bureaucracy. Several participants expressed their desire to protect the core business and those who are carrying it out from bureaucratic overload. This also means that in many cases they as the leader take on the responsibility for accreditation procedure, or work with individual specialists within the organization.

Within the religious area of stakeholders, recruiting and placement of graduates are a very important concern for the participants. Most are motivated and influenced by this dynamic to assume leadership responsibility beyond their institutions or to network extensively with potential providers of students and future job opportunities. The changing needs of the churches and Christian organizations, as well as the current educational behavior of potential applicants are important factors in the decision-making processes of programming and accreditation. The lead-administrators acknowledged that the mission and needs of the target group gives meaning and purpose to their institutions. If the orientation of the seminary became irrelevant, the institution would cease to exist. The networks and recipients of the lead-administrators’ efforts of representation are also potential and actual sources of money and finances for the seminaries. Five of the six participants mentioned this issue as one of their major responsibilities and areas of concern as leaders.

**Summary of Essential Descriptions**

The essential themes that resulted from the synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions are phenomenological reductions of the experience to its most universal basic form
(Husserl, 2012). These themes transcend the context and time and give the phenomenon its identity. The area of essential experiences included the themes of (a) spirituality that is holistically integrated and find expression in a sense of spiritual calling, spiritual responsibility, and spiritual values, (b) significance and meaning, which are motivators in their role, and (c) relationship in the context of family and wife, a flat organizational culture, and a desire for harmony and good relations. In the area of essential influence these included (a) professionalization as it relates to personal readiness, multiple roles, and unique challenges and tensions, (b) academization where mission and motivation guide decision-making and accreditation, and where external influences come from church and society, and (c) diversification of responsibilities and influence, as well as the stakeholder mix.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the phenomenological analysis process and described the meanings and essences of seminary leadership from three different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). The textural perspective described what the participants are experiencing, the structural perspective described how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon, and the essential descriptions combined the previous perspectives to develop the most basic and universal themes of the experience (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 2012). Texturally the participants described their experience as lead administrators at evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe as leading spiritually with spiritual leadership and values, leading collaboratively in shared leadership structures and community, leading professionally that influences their role and practice, and leading academically through decision-making and specific action steps for organizational change. Structurally the lead administrators experience the phenomenon on one hand as
responsibility, burden, stress, and tension. On the other hand, they experience leadership with positive influence of family, with strong motivation, and as a spiritual calling.

The synthesized essential experiences relate first to the experience of spirituality as a holistic integration, spiritual calling, spiritual responsibility, and spiritual values. Second, the lead administrators experience significance and meaning that motivates their leadership role. Third, they experience relationships through the influence of family and wife, the flat organizational culture at their seminaries, and a desire for harmony and good relations. The fourth aspect introduces the essential experiences of professionalization that relates to the personal readiness of the participants for professional leadership, their multiple roles, and a unique set of challenges and tensions. Fifth, they experience essential influences of academization where the mission and motivation are primary guides for decision-making and accreditation, and where the lead administrators are responding to external influences from church and society. The final influence describes how diversification of responsibilities, influence, and stakeholders are essential to the phenomenon.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand leadership through the description of the lived experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. In this chapter, I first summarize the findings of this study as they relate to the five research questions. The Discussion synthesizes the findings with the literature review from Chapter Two and relates to both the background and the theoretical framework of this investigation. From the findings implications are developed for theory and practice. No study is without limitations, and the ones pertaining to this dissertation are addressed in the areas of methodical and researcher limitations. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research, a summary, and a personal epilogue.

Summary of Findings

For this study six participants were interviewed in three interview cycles. During these cycles the lead administrators described their personal development as leaders and their current experiences leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. Additionally, each participant completed a questionnaire related to the theoretical frameworks of spiritual leadership theory (SLT; Fry, 2014), spirituality at the workplace (SWQ; Ashmos, & Duchon, 2000), and servant leadership theory (SLQ; Ingram, 2003). Finally, I observed them in their leadership capacity, took fieldnotes, created a research journal, and developed memos during the analysis process, all of which became additional data sources for analysis and triangulation (Creswell, 2013). In the following section the research questions are briefly answered in light of the findings.

1. How do participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?
The answer to this question is found in the essential descriptions of the phenomenon. The meaning of the participants’ experience relates to spirituality, significance, relationships, professionalization, academization, and diversification. On a spiritual level, being a lead administrator means to be able to integrate a personal spirituality with the professional experience by living out personal faith and calling through spiritual disciplines of Bible study and prayer, through exercising spiritual leadership guided by spiritual values, through building a spiritual community through transparency and approachability, and by leading with intuition and spiritual guidance.

On the level of significance, being a lead administrator of an evangelical seminary means to be motivated by: (a) the mission of the school; (b) the meaningful work of the graduates; (c) the opportunity to help others and develop people; (d) the perspective of contributing to the church and global Christianity; (e) the meaningful nature of their daily tasks, and (f) the alignment of their duties with their personal gift-mix.

On the level of relationship, being a seminary leader means: (a) to lead in a team and in a flat organization that requires collaboration; (b) to intentionally communicate and inform all stakeholders; (c) to experience the highest stress from damaged relationships; (d) to live with a need for trust, freedom, and harmony, and (e) to lead less from positional power and more through persuasion and motivation. The professionalization process means for the participants: (a) to increasingly take on the role of the manager or administrator; (b) to lead organizations through change; (c) to keep the operation focused on the mission; (d) to rely on the team to shoulder the increasing leadership demands; and (e) in some cases to overcome personal conflicts or feelings of inadequacy. On the level of academization, being a lead administrator means to make decisions about the academic future, to deal with external influences that demand or promote certain decisions, or those influences that arise as the result of a certain academic direc-
tion, and to stay true to the mission of the school through all of that. Finally, on the level of diversification the seminary leaders experience of a change or their role and responsibility with a resulting diversification of their influence, a more diverse stakeholder mix, and also the opportunity for new networking and cooperation.

2. What are the roles that lead administrators identify as pertaining to their position?

This question guided the second interview cycle and was intended to help build a framework of roles, within which both the participants and I can make sense of their experiences. The essential sub-theme of leadership in multiple roles, which is part of the theme of essential influences of professionalization, provides the most comprehensive answer to this research question. A lead administrator of an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe functions in multiple roles. As part-time leaders they fulfill certain roles inside the organization and also beyond their seminaries. Within the seminary they are professional leaders, theologians, academic leaders, spiritual leaders, servants, networkers, and teachers. Outside the borders of the seminary they are family men, ministers to the church, board members with Christian organizations, and speakers. I found that the lead administrators in this study seemed to cope well with their multiple roles and tasks.

3. How do the lead administrators describe their path of leadership development, and how they arrived where they presently are?

This question guided the first interview cycle and sought to help the participants to make sense of their experience based on their past. Knowing their personal stories also helped me to join their experience (van Manen, 1990; Willard, 1984). Findings related to the participants’ sense of calling, their readiness for professional leadership, and their relationships with their wives describe the aspects of their leadership development that continue to influence their cur-
rent experience. Common experiences of each participant include early leadership opportunities in the church context, mentor figures, and several previous formal leadership positions before becoming the lead administrator of a seminary. All attributed their career-choice to a sense of divine calling, and all made specific career-related decisions together with their spouses. Five of the six participants admitted that their previous leadership development did not fully prepare them for the professional aspects, and in part the academic aspects, of their current position.

4. What influences on their present experiences, attitudes, and behaviors do lead administrators identify?

This question related to the current circumstances of the participants’ experiences, which were explored during the second interview cycle. All three forms of phenomenological description include portions that answer this research question, whereby the textural theme of leading academically does it most comprehensively. In this theme the lead administrators identified the changes in the educational arena in Europe, the developments in the areas of Christian ministry, and the overall educational behavior as influencing factors. The structural theme of responsibility provides another dimension, for here lead administrators additionally identified internal sources, their understanding of their role, associations connected with spirituality, personal expectations, and a sense of responsibility for larger groups of people or institutions as influencers of their experience. Finally, the essential themes of influences of academization and diversification provide the most universal answer. In addition to external and church-related influences, the leaders identified (a) their personal sense of calling, (b) the mission of the seminary they lead, and again (c) external and church-related influences as well as a diversification of their responsibilities, sphere of influence, and stakeholder mix of their organizations as important influences on their leadership experience.
5. What role did personal spirituality play in the lead administrators’ decision to assume their position, and how does their understanding of spirituality impact their continued leadership?

This question came out of the framework of spiritual leadership theory and workplace spirituality, and guided the first interview cycle. The expectation for this research question was to guide the interviews in such a way, as to encourage the participants to make sense of their personal spirituality in the context of their experiences as lead administrators. During these first interviews, I asked the questions on how personal spirituality impacted their development, and how this personal spirituality was expressed in their lives. In the last interviews, I reintroduced the topic by asking, how the lead administrators would describe themselves as spiritual leaders. However, the aspect of personal spirituality was brought up by the participants in many other aspects during all of our conversations. The findings that answer this research question are found in the textural, structural, and essential descriptions of the participants’ experience with the phenomenon of leading evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

Personal spirituality played a significant role in the lead administrators’ leadership development and in their decision to assume their current position. The structural theme of spiritual calling provides the best answer to the question of the impact of personal spirituality on the participants’ past and present experiences. Because of their personal spirituality, the lead administrators experience their leadership as a spiritual calling. This sense of being called was a guiding factor in their career choices and development, but also continues to impact the participants’ current leadership.

The structural theme of leading spiritually describes how the participants’ understanding of spirituality impacts their continued leadership. Their spiritual leadership is inseparably con-
ected with their personal spirituality, which translates into spiritual leadership practices and values. The structural themes of responsibility and motivation also describe the continued influence of personal spirituality on the lead administrators’ leadership. The spiritual dimension of their role is a source of motivation and meaning, but also the source of a sense of responsibility.

The essential theme of the experience of spirituality synthesizes the related themes that answer this research question on the most universal level of the phenomenon (Husserl, 2012). Spirituality is connected to the participants’ experience of the phenomenon in that personal spirituality is holistically integrated into every aspect of their lives. From it flow the sense of spiritual calling into a relationship with God and into full-time ministry. This spiritual calling is fulfilled in their role as lead administrators at their respective seminaries, and it provides for the participants a sense of meaning, motivation, inner peace, personal vision, a sense of spiritual responsibility, and source for spiritual leadership values.

The brief summary of the findings showed how each research question was answered by the textures and structures, as well as the essential themes of the phenomenon. The first research question was the most comprehensive while questions two, three, four, and five enrich the answer to the first question, and give more in-depth meaning to the description.

**Discussion**

This section discusses the findings related to the background and literature, as well as the theoretical framework that guided this study. The findings corroborated many of the statements from the literature, contradicted them in rare cases, and made some contributions as well. The theoretical framework was partially supported and partially questioned by the participants of this study.
Discussion of Findings Related to Background and Literature

In this section, I discuss findings that fully corroborated the literature, and unexpected and interesting findings that were not covered by the literature reviewed for this study.

**Corroborating the Literature.** The findings of this study corroborated many aspects that were found in the literature. This section will show how the participants’ descriptions supported what had been written in the area of theological education, educational leadership, and professional leadership. The experiences of the lead administrators in this study will then be compared to the literature on evangelicalism in German-speaking Europe and the dynamics of spirituality and academics at evangelical seminaries.

**Theological education and educational leadership.** The findings of this study supported the claim of the literature, that evangelical seminaries are challenged in the context of market orientation, the Bologna Process in Europe, and the educational needs of the global church (Ott, 2013; Steinke, 2011; Stortz, 2011; Werner, 2011). The theme of essential influences of academization reflects this reality. Leaders are influenced in their decision-making by the needs of the church on a national and global level, as well as the Bologna Process in Europe. The seminaries included in this study increasingly operate church- or market-oriented in their program content and format. The ongoing Bologna Process in the European higher education area presents both challenges and opportunities for the seminaries. The lead administrators and their teams are particularly dealing with the issue of academic accreditation. Because of the opportunity of accreditation, agencies on the European level such as the EEAA (European Evangelical Accreditation Agency), or the precedence of evangelical seminaries receiving college recognition on a national level, the leaders that participated in this study had to come to terms with the issue of academization. All leaders asserted that they have been influenced by these developments, but the respons-
es and solutions are different with each seminary. The participants acknowledged how comparability and employability, which are core aspects of the Bologna Process (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006), influence their decisions towards the academic development of the seminaries they are called to lead.

These developments have led to an increase of quality management and accreditation processes, and a change of the lead administrators’ roles from a pastoral leader to a pastoral administrator, or even CEO. This supports Ott’s (2011) observation that questions of quality assurance are matters for senior leaders. It must be added, that all leaders still see their role as spiritual leaders in their organizations, which they seek to balance with their more administrative tasks. These findings also support Gillespie’s (2004) observation, that leaders of institutions of theological education are both spiritual leaders and educators of spiritual leaders while administrating faith-based organizations. Furthermore, this study corroborated the literature in that the participants are functioning in multiple roles, as described in the essential sub-theme of leadership in multiple roles, while leading their institutions through national and global changes.

**Professional leadership.** Ott (2013) observed that the educational paradigm-shift poses challenges to the seminary leadership that influences their leadership tasks, leadership style, and organizational models. The participants corroborated the literature as they described their tasks in terms of vision casting, vision realization, evaluation of current situations, perceiving past and future paths, context analysis, and theological expertise.

This study both confirmed and contradicted Scherle’s (2008) observations of the developments in spiritual leadership. Scherle asserted that old organizational structures and forms of operations are no longer effective. Several participants described how they adjusted the structures and process within their seminaries to address the needs of the present, in some cases even
changing the seminary on a foundational level. However, Scherle’s observation that the changed structures required a new theological basis was not confirmed by the lead administrators in this study. None of them answered positively when I posed the question if they felt any pressure to compromise theologically in light of economic viability.

The review of the literature in Chapter Two briefly introduced the development of seminary presidency in the USA. The assumption was made that due to the historic influences of American evangelicals on seminaries in German-speaking Europe, the past developments in the US would have some influence on the current experience of the lead administrators that were part of this study. Even though this aspect did not appear to be significant enough to be considered essential to their experience, several participants referenced the developments of US seminary leadership and even compared the current processes of academization and professionalization with those that had previously occurred in the US.

**Evangelicalism in German-speaking Europe.** The literature on current issues with Evangelicals reveals internal discussions over doctrine and ministry approaches (e.g. Gushee, 2012; Pierard & Elwell, 2002). Two participants spoke to this issue as they expressed their desire to connect and build bridges between evangelical camps. Using the strategic position and influence of their seminaries, they work towards cooperation and understanding between the new and old evangelicals. Another aspect of the literature briefly touched on the public perception of evangelicals in German-speaking Europe in general. In this area of the world, the evangelicals are a religious minority group that is often misunderstood for their fundamental beliefs and consequent spirituality. Several participants acknowledged this challenge. Since evangelicals are not always understood, they feel the need to communicate very intentionally, explain their positions
clearly, and advocate for the academic and religious validity of the evangelical faith community and its training institutions.

The dynamics of spirituality and academics at evangelical seminaries. The literature review addressed the historical and current dynamics of spirituality versus rationality, or spiritual formation versus academic theological education. All participants acknowledged this tension but did not see a necessary conflict between the two positions. Since personal spirituality is at the center of their experience as lead administrators, the tenor among the participants was that true theology can only be known when it is first believed and experienced as true. In their view spiritual formation precedes and accompanies academic theological pursuit. This is how the participants had experienced their own theological development, and this is what they also emphasize at their seminaries through formal and informal opportunities of spiritual formation for leadership teams, staff, and students alike.

Adding to the Literature. Even though much of the literature was corroborated by the findings of this study, the phenomenological descriptions of the participants’ lived experiences also added to the literature in several instances. New insights could be gained into: (a) the nature of program diversification at evangelical seminaries; (b) expanding influence of the lead administrator; (c) the role of the lead administrator as networker and bridge; (d) the lead-administrator’s readiness for professional leadership; and (e) relationships and seminary leadership. I also found that personal spirituality was at the center of the participants’ leadership theory and practice, which has implications for theory. This aspect will be developed further in the section of implications.

The nature of program diversification at evangelical seminaries. The literature reviewed for this study emphasized the academization of seminaries in response to the develop-
ments in the market, the church, and the academic area (e.g. Ott, 2013). This study’s findings corroborated these observations; however, the participants also reported a diversification of their programs towards lay-oriented formats such as church-based Bible schools, evening seminars, online courses, etc. Furthermore, some seminaries in this study did not just get accreditation for their theological core programs, but they developed market-oriented hybrid degrees that educate towards professional careers as well. Academization is not the only, and in some instances not even the most significant, influence on the content and format of the programs evangelical seminaries offer.

**Expanding the influence of the lead administrator.** Gillespie (2004) described leaders in theological education as spiritual leaders and educators of spiritual leaders who administer faith-based organizations. As lead administrators they often assume additional roles as lead theologians and active ministers (Gillespie, 2004; Ott 2013). Each aspect of this description was reflected in the findings of this study. The participants described themselves as spiritual leaders who also teach in the classroom. Beyond their spiritual and educational responsibilities, the lead administrators also acknowledge that professional leadership practices are an essential aspect of their experience. Avius perhaps summarized this multiplicity of roles best with the term *pastoral administrator*. However, the participants also described their extended influence into both Christian and secular areas. The literature did not address the diversification of the stakeholders for the seminaries, and the connected increase of influence for the lead administrators that are a result of their seminaries’ academization. The essential description of diversification expands on this issue.

**The role of the lead administrator as networker and bridge builder.** The extended influence of the lead administrators also introduces them to the role of a networker or bridge builder.
These roles were not included in the literature. Furthermore, The participants described the challenge and opportunity to build bridges or networks in the academic arena, and to communicate effectively from their theologically evangelical position.

**The lead-administrator’s readiness for professional leadership.** The literature (e.g. Ott, 2011) acknowledged an increase of professional leadership tasks for seminary lead administrators, which was corroborated by this study. However, some participants also expressed their sense of not having been fully prepared for these new dimensions. Even though they all found solutions to cope with the increased professional tasks of leadership, all lead administrators said, that their successors should have some training in professional leadership to be successful in their role. The process of professionalization of seminary leadership seems to be an ongoing development that will require continued attention.

**Relationships and seminary leadership.** The literature did not place great emphasis on the aspect of relationship and seminary leadership. The findings, however, suggest that the experience of relationship is essential to the phenomenon. From our conversations and from my observations I could see, how the values, motivation, vision, and needs of the lead administrators are closely related to the experience of community and fellowship. The seminaries are structured in flat organizational models, the participants lead collaboratively, and they experience good relationships as the source of strength and motivation, and bad relationships as the highest cause for stress. In addition, the positive impact of the lead-administrators’ family and spouse on their development and continued leadership introduced an aspect that had formerly not been addressed in the literature.
Discussion of Findings Related to the Theoretical Framework

At the onset of this discussion of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework, I want to emphasize that phenomenological studies are not designed to verify a given theoretical position. Nevertheless, theory was appreciated in that it enlightened the practice of research, guided the deliberations during the analysis, and indicated what needed to be bracketed out through epoche (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). For reasons discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two, a theoretical framework of workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership was applied. To describe the participants in light of these theories, three questionnaires were adapted and applied for the study. The following section will discuss the results of the questionnaires in light of the qualitative findings of this study.

Findings concerning spirituality at the workplace. Workplace spirituality has been defined as “aspects of the workplace, either in the individual, the group, or the organization, that promote individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b, p. 13). To describe the participants from the perspective of workplace spirituality the spirituality at work questionnaire (SWQ, Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) was adapted. This questionnaire measured the variables of inner life, meaning and purpose in work, and a sense of connection and community.

Among the three questionnaires used in this study, the SWQ (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) received the highest average scores (see Figure 8). Moreover, all constructs of the theory were reflected in the findings. The structural theme of experiencing leadership as a responsibility relates to the corresponding construct. Inner life and contemplation describe the spirituality as identity or being on a journey. These variables are reflected in the textural, structural, and essential themes related to spirituality. The variables of connection and community describe the inner
drive for relationship. The textural theme of leading collaboratively, the structural experience of stress due to failed relationships, and the essential experience of relationship describe the participants’ experiences of connection and community. The variable of meaning is primarily described in the essential experience of significance and meaning, as well as the structural subtheme of motivation as a positive dimension of leadership.

![Figure 6: Mean Scores of the Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ)](image)

**Discussion of findings concerning spiritual leadership theory.** For the purposes of this study the basic framework of spiritual leadership theory, as developed by Fry (e.g. 2003) and supplemented by Fairholm (2011), was applied. Spiritual leadership theory is based on intrinsic motivation and introduces the constructs of hope/faith, vision, calling, membership, love, commitment, and satisfaction (Fry, 2003; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; see Figure 1). The SLT received the second highest average score among the three questionnaires applied in this study.
Figure 7: Mean Scores of the Spiritual Leadership Theory Questionnaire (SLT)

**Stronger descriptors of spiritual leadership.** As a general statement resulting from this questionnaire, the participants can be described as spiritual leaders in the sense of SLT framework (Fry, 2003; 2013). The variables love, membership, calling, inner life, commitment, and satisfaction all scored higher than the total mean of the questionnaire (M = 3.85, SD = 0.93, see Figure 7). These variables are positively describing the spiritual leadership of the participants. During the interviews all participants spoke about love, and between the six lead administrators the word was used 34 times altogether. Membership is primarily expressed in a sense of being understood and appreciated. Four participants spoke directly about feeling appreciated and appreciating others within the organization. Several phenomenological themes are also based on community and relationship. I found that the issue of being called and fulfilling that calling through the organization is essential to the experience of the participants. The high score on that variable reflects and supports this finding. The variable of inner life is primarily reflected in the textural, structural, and essential themes related to personal spirituality. Finally, the structural theme of experiencing leadership as a responsibility, and the essential subtheme of spiritual lead-
ership that flows out of spiritual responsibility describe how the participants related to the variable of commitment.

**Weaker descriptors of spiritual leadership.** The variables of vision and hope/faith (see Figure 7) scored lower than the total mean. These two variables seem to diminish the spiritual leadership of the participants. I will attempt to make the case that the low scores in these two areas are not reflective of the participants’ leadership practice and experience, but that the reasons lay elsewhere. The aspect of vision will be discussed below in the section on servant leadership theory.

The fact that hope/faith scored considerably lower in the questionnaire indicates, that the participants have a different perspective on this concept than the one espoused by Fry (2005). In their responses the participants commented in higher frequency in negative or cautionary manner on the questions related to this construct. The qualitative analysis found that personal spirituality, based on a personal faith-relationship with God, is the central essential experience of the phenomenon of seminary leadership-administration. Therefore, it is possible that the low scores on this construct were rather caused by translation issues, where functional equivalence was not fully achieved, than by the underlying concepts of the construct. I found that the leaders (a) are motivated to persevere and put in the extra effort because of what their seminaries stand for, (b) set challenging goals for the organization, and (c) are willing to invest themselves to succeed. All these are aspects of the hope/faith construct. However, I also found that the concept of spiritual responsibility before God and the stakeholders, as well as the sense of spiritual calling are stronger motivators for the leaders’ investment and planning. Finally, the idea of having faith in an organization seemed odd to some participants. The participants are motivated by what the organization stands for, and they experience a high congruence of personal vision and the mis-
sion of the seminaries they lead. However, it seems that the lead administrators in German-speaking Europe are not quickly to use the term faith to describe this connection.

**Other observations.** Spiritual leadership theory is a leadership model as intrinsic motivation (Fry, 2003) where leadership is exercised through value transfer and value congruence (Fairholm 2011). Both of these aspects were reflected in the findings of this study. The participants experienced primarily intrinsic motivation through the ability of living out their spiritual calling, positive relationships within their organization, and a sense of meaningful work. Concerning the issue of values, Fairholm (2011) asserted, “leaders identify their personal spiritual and professional values and transfer some of them to followers” (p. ix). The findings of this study support Fairholm’s supposition. The textual theme of leading spiritually contains the subtheme of leading with spiritual values. The participants described their spiritual values that guide their leadership as well as their expectations of others. For example, trust is common value with the participants. This value is transferred by the leaders by proving themselves trustworthy towards their leadership responsibility, and by extending trust to those they lead. The participants also described the expectation of value congruence. They expect their followers to honor the trust placed in them, and also to trust them as lead administrators in return.

**Discussion of findings concerning servant leadership theory.** For the purposes of this study the basic framework of servant leadership theory, as espoused by Greenleaf (1977), was applied. According to this theory, the servant leader is an active listener, exercises empathy, is motivated by healing, lives a conscious awareness, leads through persuasion, exercises skills of conceptualization and foresight, and they show a high degree of stewardship and commitment (see Figure 2). Previous studies (e.g. Irving, 2010) have found the theory to prove valid in cross-cultural contexts, provided cultural qualifications were applied to issues of terminology, power-
distance, and cultural structures. Since the participants of this study came from the German-speaking sector of Europe, the cross-cultural dynamic was of particular interest. The Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ; Ingram, 2003) had been translated into German using the process outlined above (see Chapter Three). The participants were asked to self-report their agreement with 18 questions that measured the dimensions of acceptance, credibility, encouragement, influence, relationship, and vision. The analysis of the participants’ results and comments on the SLQ indicate, that servant leadership is in some aspects understood differently in German speaking Europe than it is in North America. This puts the cross-cultural applicability of the theory at large, or at least Ingram’s (2003) interpretation of it in particular, in question. In the following section, I will investigate possible causes for the relatively low scores the participants reported on the SLQ.

![Figure 8: Mean Scores of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)](image)

Of the three questionnaires included in this study, the SLQ (Ingram, 2003) achieved the lowest mean score of $M = 3.22$, with a standard deviation of $SD = 0.84$, and a median of $Med = 3.31$ (see also Figure 8). This could indicate that either the participants are not strong servant
leaders, or the concept of servant leadership is understood differently in German-speaking Europe; the latter being the more likely reason is what I will show below. The dimensions of acceptance (M = 2.94, SD = 1.25), influence (M = 2.78; SD = 1.21), and vision (M = 2.44, SD = 1.35) scored below the total mean. Fortunately, the participants often commented on their scoring decisions, so that combined with the scores, comments, and other data sources a discussion of these findings is fruitful.

At the beginning of the discussion, I want to address an extreme outlier within the group of the six participants in this study. Avius did not respond to any of the SLQ related questions, even though they were randomly dispersed within the questions of the other two questionnaires, and thus not immediately recognizable as belonging to a separate theoretical framework. My personal observations of his leadership indicated, that Avius indeed understood himself as a servant leader. His general criticism of the SLQ questions concern the limited focus and sphere of their definition of leadership. He commented on 15 of the 18 questions, “if that is the definition – then it’s too short, too narrow. If it is one aspect of leadership then it is certainly correct, but it is just a small facet.” This indicates either a lack of functional equivalence in the translation, or that Avius would consider the constructs put forth in the questionnaire as only marginal to servant leadership. Since the other participants did not indicate translation issues to be the cause for their more negative decisions, it stands to reason that the theoretical construct of Ingram (2003) does not conform to Avius’ understanding of servant leadership. In the following section, I analyze the responses in the dimensions of influence, vision, and acceptance.

The dimension of influence. Methodius replied to the question, “Servant leadership means leading through persuasion rather than authority” (Ingram, 2003), neither agree nor disagree and commented, “sometime this way [i.e. with persuasion], sometimes that way [with au-
Avius pointed out a logical fallacy of a false dilemma with the question and argued, that persuasion and authority do not necessarily constitute polar opposites, but can complement each other. This diversion can be explained as a power-distance issue, meaning that in Methodius’ and Avius’ context a leader has enough distance to the follower, that the perception of being a servant leader is not diminished if at times authority is the force of leadership. Another explanation could be connected with the meaning of terminology. Authority, as employed in the questionnaire, was juxtaposed to persuasion as the negative of the two choices. In Methodius’ and Avius’ context authority seems not to have that negative connotation.

Another question in the dimension of influence was challenged by the participants. Ingram (2003) stated, “Servant leadership means developing others to become leaders.” Here Methodius remarked, “not everyone wants to become a leader…. I agree to the following statement: servant leadership means to help others take on responsibility.” The discrepancy could be in a different understanding of what it means to be a leader. In other words, it could be an issue of terminology. Another possible explanation would be that Ingram applied a North American value system to this question, where being a leader could be perceived as better than not being a leader. Methodius, on the other hand, would say in contrast, it is better to achieve one’s goals responsibly. It must be noted, that Greenleaf (1977) would have more likely agreed with Methodius and Avius than with Ingram. The test of servant leadership is personal growth achieved and not leadership capacity developed. In this case the most plausible explanation for the weak score in the questionnaire is that Ingram diverted from a basic assumption of the original theory.

The dimension of vision. One question of the SLQ (Ingram, 2003) reads, “servant leadership means having a clear vision for the organization’s growth.” It received a mean score of M = 1.67. All participants work in seminaries that have a vision statement. The participants also have
clarity as to how to grow the institution. Gregory expressed it, as have the other participants in some form, “I saw it actually, after analyzing all of it through and through, without any alternative that we need to do something at this point, that this is a very significant trend for the future.” Since the vision aspect is not part of Greenleaf’s (1977) theoretical framework, the participants possibly pointed out a 21st Century reinterpretation of the original servant leadership theory.

The statement, “servant leadership means providing the leadership that is needed,” also received a mean score of M = 1.67. Methodius’ comment sheds some light on this issue when he wrote, “this is a truism that holds true for all types of leadership.” The indication here is not that the participants would disagree with the statement, but that they would not contribute it exclusively to servant leadership.

**The dimension of acceptance.** Five out of six participants agreed with the statement that, “servant leadership means listening receptively and openly, without judging” (Ingram, 2003). However, the statement “servant leadership means placing the needs of others first” received a mean score of M = 1.66. Both questions relate to the construct of acceptance. Avius’ comment indicates a possible reason for the low score, as he considered the statement to be a not very helpful reduction. Even though the needs demand much the leader’s attentiveness and care, they are not the primary focus of leadership. In the interviews it became clear, that all participants care for their co-workers on a professional, personal, and spiritual level. However, they are not ready to forget their obligation towards the organization as well. During an interview this became evident when Avius said:

The conflict is where the responsibility for the task, for the firm as a whole comes into friction with the responsibility and the respect for the individual. As long as that runs
synchronous that is a positive dynamic and a good flow, but if that begins to have friction, it becomes more difficult. But then that is exactly where the leader is called upon. In this case I have to allow for the possibility that the participants in this study understood the concept but disagreed with its preeminence for leadership practice. They accept others, but the perspective of organization influences their acceptance.

**Summary of the Discussion**

The discussion of the findings showed that this study corroborates much of the relevant literature, especially in the context of theological education, educational leadership, professional leadership, and the dynamics of spirituality and academics at evangelical seminaries. Furthermore, the findings add to the literature in several areas: (a) program diversification at evangelical seminaries; (b) the expanding role of the lead administrator; (c) relationships and seminary leadership; (d) the role as networker and bridge builder; and (e) readiness for professional leadership. The discussion of the findings related to the theoretical framework showed that workplace spirituality was fully reflected in the participants’ experience. Spiritual leadership theory showed also strong connections to the lead administrators’ descriptions of their experience with the phenomenon. The theory of servant leadership, however, required a more detailed discussion, since the participants seemed to partially disagree with the way it was presented through the questionnaire. Possible causes for the low identification with this theory included translation related issues, a different understanding of the core concepts of servant leadership, and in one case even a divergence from the theory’s ideal.

**Implications**

In this section, I address theoretical and practical implications of the study. The theoretical implications point towards the possibility that the framework of the three separate theories
could be integrated when one assumes a leader who leads from the basis of personal spirituality. Practical implications address future developments of the academization, professionalization, and diversification process, and implications this might have on spiritual leadership and institutional spirituality at evangelical seminaries.

**Implications for Theory**

This study used workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership theory, and servant leadership as the theoretical framework. I found that each theory for itself did not sufficiently encompass the experience of the participants. With the introduction of personal spirituality as the source of leadership, a combination of the three theories could potentially create a fuller picture, and thus become the basis of a new theory of leadership in the religious education context (see Figure 9).

![Integrating the Theoretical Framework](image)

*Figure 9: Integrating the Theoretical Framework*

This study shows, that lead administrators of evangelical seminaries lead from a personal spirituality, which also provides the basis for their leadership values. These values are best ex-
pressed in the context of servant leadership. As servant leaders, however, they strive to accomplish within their organizations the goals that spiritual leadership theory describes best, which in the end result in a corporate culture of intentional workplace spirituality.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study suggest practical implications for lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. These implications come from the academization and professionalization processes, as well as the practices as spiritual leaders. Academization and professionalization were found to be separate, but related processes. An increase of academic programs and accreditations seemed to always bring increased professional requirements with it. On the other hand, the participants also described the influence of professionalization on their experience independent of academic processes, but as a result of institutional growth and a general increase of bureaucratic requirements in the sector of education. Future studies will have to bring more clarity into these dynamics. However, in this study certain implications can be derived from said processes.

Implications for practice from the academization process. Some participants considered a continued academic development an existential issue for their seminary. Others would not go that far, but still kept an open mind towards further academization in the future. The Bologna Process and the increasing demand for training for employability indicate, that evangelical seminaries will have to keep a close watch on these issues and potentially make organizational or programmatic adjustments to be able to continue to train their students for the targeted areas of ministry and employment, or to stay in business at all. In these developments, the lead administrators are increasingly challenged to evaluate the options in light of the seminary’s future, but also of its mission, vision, and corporate culture. For some seminaries that have strong ties with
Christian organizations or groups of churches, the academization process will potentially mean a growing institutional independence. This is required by the principle of scientific freedom, which could also lead to tensions between the seminaries and religious stakeholders. Finally, the increasing academization of evangelical seminaries will create the demand for higher educated faculty that is actively involved in research.

**Implications for practice from the professionalization process.** The professionalization of the lead-administrator’s role is the result of intentional academic developments, institutional growth, programmatic diversity, and a general increase of bureaucratic complexity. Academic accreditations result in demands for quality assurance processes and clear organizational structures. Institutional growth complicates decision-making and communication processes, while institutional diversification adds layers of organizational sub-structures that need additional supervision. Due to the ongoing national and international developments in the higher education area, legislation has become a very dynamic factor with changing and developing laws and regulations. The future lead administrator of evangelical seminaries will need more professional leadership skills than maybe ever before. Therefore, an almost natural implication of the ongoing processes of academization and professionalization is, that the preparation of seminary leadership should include elements in the areas of professional and educational leadership. This notion was also expressed by the lead administrators in this study.

**Implications for practice from the process of diversification.** A significant finding of this study was the essential experience of diversification for the participants. This diversification was experienced on the level of responsibilities and influence, and on the level of stakeholders. When relating the findings to the literature background, I also found that the seminaries’ process of diversifying their programs in non-academic areas was filling a gap in the literature. From the
interviews, I understood that any programmatic decision was primarily based on the seminary’s mission and vision. The new non-academic formats were meant to allow the institution yet another avenue to serve. The continued challenge for lead administrators will be to distinguish in this context between decisions based on survival and the need to sell, and service and the desire to serve.

Implications for practice as spiritual leaders. Amidst the changing roles of seminary leaders from the pastoral to the administrative, I saw how the participants desired to maintain a high level of spiritual leadership at their institutions. With the, at time inevitable, developments discussed above, the lead administrators are challenged to determine anew how the age-old riddle of faith and reason, or spirituality and rationality, can be resolved in the 21st century. The participants all testified to a vibrant personal spirituality, which they sought to integrate holistically into all aspects of their lives, and especially into the seminaries they lead. But some also reported that their new role distanced them from the student and held them more occupied with professional and academic-related tasks, so that less time is left to actively engage in shaping and developing institutional spirituality. The participants in this study each had a different approach on how to accomplish this task, and this issue will accompany the lead administrators of evangelical Seminaries in German-speaking Europe in the coming years as well.

Summary of Implications

This section introduced a new theoretical perspective on seminary leadership when the three theories used in this study are integrated on the basis of personal spirituality. Future studies will have to confirm the validity of this implication. Practical implications of the findings include organizational developments in the wake of academization, the challenges that come from program diversification, as well as leadership role developments due to the professionalization pro-
cess. All these external and internal developments have direct implications for the practice of
spiritual leaders, as the lead administrators continue to integrate personal and institutional spirit-
uality in an increasingly academic and professional environment.

Limitations

In addition to the delimitations found in Chapter One, and the limitations discussed in
Chapter Three, this section will further address methodical limitations and researcher limitations.

Methodical Limitations

The design of the study introduced some methodical limitations. The first limitation has
to do with the scope of the study. Leadership is truly a global phenomenon, and the necessary
delimitations narrowed the possible selection of leaders to a fraction of the total population. In so
doing I forewent the chance to get a full description of the phenomenon of leadership, if that is
possible at all, and had to settle for the potential to discover some of the essence. The aim of
phenomenological research is to describe the essence of a shared lived experience (Husserl,
2012) by investigating specific problems that are not quite proportionate to the general questions
(DeWarren, 2009). Focusing solely on evangelical seminaries could be interpreted as a limitation
to the generalizability of the results in this study. However, since phenomenological inquiries are
not interested universal applicability of their findings, this narrowing of the study rather consti-
tutes a necessary and beneficial delimitation than a negative limitation. Thus, this limitation is
not only inescapable, but necessary to arrive at any phenomenological description at all.

The second method-related limitation concerns the issue of temporality and essential
identity. My investigation took only a snap-shot at the experience of the participants, and it rec-
corded mostly what the lead administrators were reflecting on at the moment of the interview.
Cyril, for instance, qualified some of his statements saying, “well I am speaking from the heart
here; yes; or from my perceptions, or my thoughts.” This could be perceived as a limitation to the study, since the data are primarily subjective reflections. Since phenomenological research goes “to the things themselves” (Husserl, 2012, p. 328), in this case experiences as lead administrators, to describe the essence of the participants lived experience (Moustakas, 1994), the fact that the participants only present their own temporal perspective is rather conducive to the purpose of this study than a detriment to it. However, this reality certainly had an impact on the themes that were emphasized. I intentionally countered the problem of temporality by multiple subsequent interviews, and by triangulating the interview data with observations, the questionnaires, and my personal research memos and journals. Scholars on transcendental phenomenology also argue the very fact of temporality is required to establish identity, when an experience is intentionally carried along in the mind and deliberated upon over a period of time (Husserl, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). In this study this deliberation was guided by the Moustakas (1994) method of phenomenological analysis, and by suggestion for coding by Saldaña (2016).

**Researcher Limitations**

Since I as the researcher was the main instrument for this study, my person, attitude and skill pose a limitation to this study (van Manen, 1990; Willard, 1984). That is to say, that a different person conducting the same study would potentially reach different conclusions than I did. The two main aspects that relate to the researcher’s limitation are preparedness and prejudice.

Only the prepared researcher is able to apply the transcendental phenomenological method to the data to find the essential aspects they contain (Willard, 1984). I prepared myself for this study by reading some of Husserl’s and Heidegger’s original works, especially Husserl’s *Ideas* (2012), some of his *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1970), and from Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962). Beyond that I immersed myself in secondary literature on phenomenological research in general, and the transcendental approach in particular. Additionally, I en-
deavored to understand the background of the study through the literature, and gain working knowledge of the theoretical framework that emerged as fitting from these preparatory investigations. A final aspect to the preparation was to stay in constant communication with peers on matters of the philosophical and practical implications of this type of study.

The limitation of prejudice is harder to address, and impossible to fully overcome (van Manen, 1990). No one is ever without suppositions, since a supposition-free state is itself a supposition (Moustakas, 1994). However, Moustakas further argued that:

Recognizing the limits of a transcendental phenomenology does not reduce the value of efforts to remove our prejudices, but recognizes and accepts the importance of the epoche process in all searches for and discoveries of knowledge (p. 62).

A rigorous application of the research method developed by Moustakas (1994) helped in setting aside my own attitudes towards seminary leadership, and guided me through the study where I bracketed my ideas, connections, and sometimes feelings by recording them in memos and journal entries (Creswell, 2013). The effort of *epoche* took different shapes throughout the various phases of this investigation. During the data collection, analysis and report phases of the inquiry, I engaged in this process by positioning myself philosophically, by disclosing my motivation for investigating the topic, and by describing my prior experiences with the phenomenon of theological education and the leadership of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe.

**Epoche during the interviews.** During the interview process, *epoche* was applied by actively listening to the participants, using their definitions of terms, and by suppressing the desire to apply the theoretical frameworks I perceived applicable. Through active listening I attempted to put myself in the participants’ position as much as possible, to try and share the experience as closely as possible as it was described to me. This regularly led to questions phrased such as, “can you help me understand what it means to be you? Can you help me understand how you
experience your current role?” etc. I only was satisfied and comfortable to finish an interview cycle when I had reached a sense of preliminary understanding of the participants’ experiences. The second way how I applied *epoche* to the interview process was concerned with word definitions. At times I would ask a question that included a key term such as calling, or spirituality. Frequently participants would answer with a counter question. Cyril of Jerusalem, for instance, replied to a question about his experiences with professionalization, “what is professionalization? What do you mean by it?” Instead of giving him a working definition, the process of *epoche* required the following answer: “in the context of our conversation it will mean what you understand by it.” This allowed the participant to define the term and describe their thoughts and experiences with it.

The final act of *epoche* was expressed by a refusal to let any theoretical framework guide the line of questioning. In preparation for each interview the emphases and answers of the previous conversation would set the theme and direction for the next. Without compromising the interview guides, the semi-structured interview form (Patton, 2002) allowed me to follow the participants where they would go with a particular question. At times the participants would reference a theoretical framework themselves, which required of me to intentionally refuse to apply my understanding of said framework to form the next question, e.g. inquire about the participants’ experiences with the other constructs of the theory.

During the analysis the acts of *epoche* took on different forms. While transcribing the interviews the mind begins to form themes, it makes connections, and arrives at pre-mature conclusions. To reduce the impact of such thought processes I created a memo system using the MaxQDA11 software. During the process of horizontalization, I kept reminding myself of the main research question while asking myself, “does this statement describe what it means to for
this participant to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Eu-

rope?"

**Personal investment.** Van Manen (1990) supports the notion of being invested in, or car-
ing for, the things or people we investigate. Emotional connections can quickly lead to unproduc-
tive relationships and bias (Patton, 2002). A potentially confounding reality emerged during the
duration of my study when one of the participants invited me to become a guest lecturer at his
seminary. Though it was not my intention to recommend my services to the lead administrators,
it is inevitable that throughout the conversations and times spent together relationships are
formed and they get to know me better. In one case my skills where a match for the seminary’s
needs and the arrangements were made. The data, however, can be considered as trustworthy as
with the other participants since it was gathered and initially analyzed before the offer was made.

**Summary of Limitations**

The methodical limitations of this study included issues of the scope of the study and
temporality and essential identity. I have shown how the narrow scope of the study was used for
the benefit of the study, and how temporality becomes an important aspect in phenomenological
investigations. The researcher limitations are connected to preparedness and prejudice. I am con-

fident that my intuited, directed, and repeated looking at the phenomenon achieved the level of
quality that led to a worthy description of its essence (Moustakas, 1994). This was achieved by
an increasing awareness of my own position, a well-established knowledge of the related litera-
ture, a growing competency in phenomenological research, and an acute awareness of my per-
sonal investment in the topic.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study investigated the phenomenon of lead-administration within specific delimitations. It is recommended to change those delimitations for a future phenomenology to enrich the data from new perspectives to establish a better description of the essence of the phenomenon. Furthermore, I recommend a case-study or longitudinal study of a single seminary as it navigates through the dynamics of the higher education area in German-speaking Europe. Such a study would include the perspectives of all stakeholders in addition to those of the lead administrators.

The role of the wife in the life and work of a top leader warrants a closer investigation. The literature consulted for this study did not offer any indicators for the influence of family and wife on the experience of the lead administrators of evangelical seminaries. However, this study showed that the participants considered their relationship with their family and wives an essential influence to their experience. I would recommend any form of qualitative investigation into the lived experiences of seminary lead-administrator’s wives.

The mixed responses to the servant leadership questionnaire (SLQ; Ingram, 2003) encourage future research into the development of said instrument. I recommend a quantitative study to validate the SLQ in the European context, and subsequently to investigate the claim, that servant leadership theory is universally applicable (Irving, 2010). Furthermore, even the other two questionnaires applied in this study were more conclusive in their result, they were not verified for quantitative investigation into their related theories. The purpose of the questionnaire on servant leadership theory (SLT; Fry, 2014) and spirituality at the workplace (SWQ; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) was purely descriptive, the results are not valid for statistical investigation. Future research could verify the SLT and SWQ to allow for the same quantitative investigation as recommended for SLQ.
This study corroborated the literature in that there is an ongoing process of academization and professionalization. In a sense, this study only provided a snap-shot of this development. I recommend, that future studies on seminary leadership should include these factors in their investigative frameworks to revise, expand, differentiate, or validate the findings of this study as they relate to professional and academic leadership and the implications for spiritual leadership.

In the context of discussing their sense of readiness for the professional aspects of their leadership positions, the participants acknowledged a lack of preparation. Looking ahead they further recognized that the process of professionalization is ongoing. The next generation of leaders will have to have more training in these areas. Future research could focus on integrating the findings of this study into leadership training curriculum, and use the identified themes as a framework for training future leaders in evangelical theological education.

During the conversations with the participants, there were some indicators of similarities of the developments of academization and professionalization with evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe and those of comparable institution in the United States. These indications are also somewhat supported by my cursory treatment of the matter in Chapter Two. I recommend that future studies investigate possible similarities between these developments, which might result in further practical insight into the dynamics and challenges into these developments, but also may shed light on the differences between the two.

I found that the lead administrators in this study maintained a high identification with the mission and purpose of the seminaries they led. This identification was connected with their personal vision and sense of calling. I further found, that this identification was a major influence on the decision-making process concerning the directions of the seminary in the area of academiza-
tion. Future research could further investigate the dynamics of sense of calling and decision-making processes.

Finally, the implications for the theoretical framework suggest a possible integration of workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership theory, and servant leadership provided the leader operates from a basis of personal spirituality (see Figure 9). Future research could investigate these possible connections to either corroborate or refute the implications I derived from the findings of this study. It is at this point that the findings concerning personal spirituality and leadership could contribute to the empirical research of seminaries that are engaged in worship studies.

Summary of Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the findings, discussions, implications, and limitations of this study, I recommend the following for further investigations: (a) repetition the study or vary some aspects of it; (b) investigation of spousal relationship and leadership; (c) verifying the questionnaires used in this investigation for statistical research; (d) inclusion of professionalization and academization as factors in future studies; (e) using this study for curriculum development in the area of leadership training; (f) tracing similarities between professionalization and academization of seminaries in the US and in German-speaking Europe; (g) investigating the connection between sense of calling and decision-making; and (h) integrating workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership theory, and servant leadership on the premise of personal spirituality.

Summary of the Study

In Chapter One, I described the general background of evangelical theological education and the global changes that influence evangelical seminaries and introduce processes of academization and professionalization to their leadership, introduced the theoretical framework
for this study, and argued the significance of this investigation developed the research questions and delimitations. I further detailed my personal story and motivation for this field of study, as well as my philosophical position.

In Chapter Two, I developed a thematic literature review that followed an inductive/deductive framework. From a review of the general background and current situation of the participants in the study, I inductively moved towards the literature pertaining to the theoretical framework. Once established, I deductively applied the framework to leadership in theological education in German-speaking Europe.

Chapter Three elaborated on the method and research design of this study. I took some time to explain the philosophical implications and assumptions of phenomenological research, and provided a rationale for my decision to apply transcendental phenomenology over the hermeneutic approach. After elaborating on the particulars of the research practices of transcendental phenomenology, I outlined the general procedures for data gathering and analysis applied in this study. The chapter concludes with descriptions of the researcher’s role, how trustworthiness of the study was ensured, and which ethical issues were considered.

Chapter Four presented the structural, textural, and essential descriptions of my research findings. I found that the lead administrators in this study described their experience texturally in terms of spiritual, collaborate, professional, and academic leadership. The structures of their experience include a sense of responsibility and the negative dimensions of burden, stress, and tensions on one side. But there were also positive dimensions of leadership in the context of family, motivation, and spiritual calling. I discovered that spirituality, and in particular personal spirituality, was the most fundamental essential experience of seminary leadership, and from it proceed all other essential experiences. These experiences include a sense of spiritual calling, spiritual
leadership, spiritual values, significance and meaning, and relationships with family and team. Next to these experiences, the influences of professionalization, academization, and diversification were found to be essential to the phenomenon of leading evangelical seminaries.

In the final chapter of my dissertation, I summarized the findings in relationship to the five research questions. The structural, textural, and essential descriptions proved to be sufficient to answer the questions in rich detail. In the discussion section, I compared the findings to the literature pertaining the background of the study and the theoretical framework of spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and servant leadership. I found that much of the literature was corroborated, but also that this study was able to add to the body of literature. In a few instances the findings did not corroborate with previous findings and theories. These instances received special consideration. From the findings and discussion, I developed specific implications for theory and practice. After acknowledging the limitations of this study, I provided a number of recommendations for future research.

**Epilogue**

In bringing my study of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe to a close, I want to add a personal note. Through the participants I entered a whole new sphere of human experience, and it would be dishonest to say that I left the conversations and subsequent periods of living with their experiences unaffected. What I learned from the few hours with them will probably shape my thinking and personal leadership development for the rest of my life.

Sitting across these influential leaders listening to their stories gave me a new perspective on leadership, on evangelical theological education, and the evangelical faith community as a whole. I was particularly impressed by their personal faith, and how they managed to integrate it
into their lives. This was also a valuable insight for the theoretical framework. The participants are leading faith-based institutions in an increasingly diverse and complex context. Personal spirituality was their point of reference, and the anchor point for meaning, motivation, and orientation. This challenged me to reevaluate my own integration of spirituality. With my background in worship studies, I continually was reminded of one of the most fundamental concepts in that area of practical theology – personal worship. Even though the participants did not use this terminology, the helped me greatly to integrate my prior knowledge about a personal worship-relationship with the praxis of leadership.

The greatest example these leaders provided for me was the relationship they have with their spouse. Each leader has a unique biography of leadership development. Their wives also assumed very diverse roles in career and ministry. However, the common acknowledgement of the participants was, that they would not be where they are today, nor be the leader they can be to their seminaries, without their wives. This encouraged me to continue to invest into the relationship with my own wife as a partner for life and leadership.
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Projected Title *Leading Evangelical Seminaries in German-speaking Europe*

Johannes Schroeder, Principal Investigator (Liberty University)

**Interview Guide Cycle I: Life History**

Guiding Question:
- How did you become a leader of an evangelical seminary?

Related Research Questions:
- How do lead administrators describe their path of leadership development and how they arrived where they presently are?
- What role did personal spirituality play in the lead administrators’ decision to assume their position, and how does their understanding of calling impact their continued leadership?

1. Tell me the story of how you became [title of participant] of [name of institution]?
   *Prompts*
   a. First ministry occupations
   b. Defining events
   c. Important mentors/relationships
   d. Education
   e. Professional/Ministry stations and positions

2. What impact did your personal spirituality have on your development?
   *Prompts*
   a. Personal faith
   b. Spiritual development
   c. Theological convictions
   d. Church/Ministry experiences
   e. Calling

3. Can you tell me about your personal spiritual life?
   *Prompts*
   a. Music and Art
   b. Important Scripture reference
   c. Fellowship and spiritual connection
   d. Spiritual refreshment

4. What else would you like to share from your personal history?

(Schedule 2nd Cycle Interview)
Interview Guide Cycle II: Contemporary Experience

Guiding Questions:
- What is it like to be a leader of an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?
- What are the details of the participants’ experience in their current roles?

Related Research Questions:
- What are the roles that lead administrators identify as pertaining to their current position?
- What influences on their present experience, attitudes, and behaviors do lead administrators identify?

1. Tell me about a typical day at work?
   Prompts
   a. Routines
   b. Activities
   c. Occupations
   d. Stress
   e. Interactions
   f. Relationships

2. How would you describe your role at [name of institution]?
   Prompts
   a. Responsibilities
   b. Expectations of others
   c. Own expectations
   d. Responsibility to the greater evangelical community

3. Which external influences and challenges do you see in your field of work?
   Prompts
   a. Higher education in Europe
   b. Bologna process
   c. Accreditation

4. What motivates you in your current position?

5. What else do you want to share about your current role as [title of participant] at [name of institution]?

(Schedule Cycle III Interview)
Interview Guide Cycle III: Sense Making

Guiding Questions:
- What does it mean to lead an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?
- How do you make sense of your role in light of your past life experience?

Related Research Question:
- How do participants describe what it means to be a lead administrator at an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?

1. How would you describe yourself as a spiritual leader?
   Prompts
   a. How does spirituality translate into the workplace?
   b. Does your work have a spiritual dimension?

2. How would you describe your leadership at [name of institution]
   Prompts
   a. Changes over time
   b. Professionalization
   c. How do you negotiate the tension between economic viability and theological purity?
   d. How do you view the concepts of love, respect, and trust in your context as a leader?

3. How should people be trained to do your job?

4. What does it mean to lead an evangelical seminary in German-speaking Europe?

5. Reflecting on our three conversations, is there something you want to add or remark?

(Inform about the member-check process)
APPENDIX B: SPIRITUALITY AT WORK QUESTIONNAIRE (SWQ)

© 2000 Donde P. Ashmos and Dennis Duchon

Instructions: Complete each question by marking the ONE answer that most closely represents your experience.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Name:

The numbering refers to the order of how they appear on the administered questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1, Part 1: Conditions for Community (α = .859)</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit, etc.).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have had numerous experiences in my job, which have resulted in personal growth.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When I have a concern, I represent it to the appropriate person.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. At work, we work together to resolve conflict in a positive way.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am evaluated fairly here.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I am encouraged to take risks at work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am valued at work for who I am.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 2, Part 1: Meaning at Work (α = .858)</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I experience joy in my work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I believe others experience joy as a result of my work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My spirit is energized by my work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I look forward to coming to work most days.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I see a connection between my work and the large social good of my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I understand what gives my work personal meaning.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 3, Part 1: Inner Life (α = .804)</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. I feel hopeful about life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My spiritual values influence the choices I make.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I consider myself a spiritual person.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Prayer is an important part of my life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I care about the spiritual health of my coworkers.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 5, Part 1: Personal Responsibility (α = .772)</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel responsible for my own growth.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel personally responsible for my behavior.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 6, Part 1: Positive Connections With Other Individuals (α = .737)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I believe others experience joy as a result of my work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My work creates meaningful work experiences for others.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. I make a difference to the people with whom I work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 7, Part 1: Contemplation ($\alpha = .689$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C: SERVANT LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (SLQ)

© 2003 Osmond C. Ingram, Jr.

Face-validity Cronbach’s α: between .9225 and .8774

Instructions: Complete each question by marking the ONE answer that most closely represents your understanding.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Name:

Conceptualization of Servant Leadership

In general, I understand that servant leadership is...

1. Listening receptively and openly, without judging

2. Encouraging questioning and challenges from others

3. Striving for a collaborative approach to decision making

4. Trusting and supporting others toward excellence

5. Accepting people as they are

6. Developing personal relationships

7. Having a clear vision for the organization’s growth

8. Being a servant to others in all situations

9. Exhibiting high moral and ethical standards by example

10. Developing others to become leaders

11. Placing the needs of others first

12. Involving others in determining goals and assessments

13. Encouraging continuous and lifelong learning

14. Providing encouragement and affirmation

15. Leading through persuasion rather than authority

16. Expressing an openness to learn from others

17. Accepting the uniqueness of individuals

18. Providing the leadership that is needed
APPENDIX D: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (SLT)

Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005

*Face-validity Cronbach’s α coefficients from .877 to .923*

All questions are answered on a five point Likert response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

**Vision**—describes the organization’s journey and why we are taking it; defines who we are and what we do.

1. I understand and am committed to my organization’s vision.
2. My workgroup has a vision statement that brings out the best in me.
3. My organization’s vision inspires my best performance.
4. I have faith in my organization’s vision for its employees.
5. My organization’s vision is clear and compelling to me.

**Hope/faith**—the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction that the organization’s vision/purpose/mission will be fulfilled.

1. I have faith in my organization and I am willing to do whatever it takes to insure that it accomplishes its mission.
2. I persevere and exert extra effort to help my organization succeed because I have faith in what it stands for.
3. I always do my best in my work because I have faith in my organization and its leaders.
4. I set challenging goals for my work because I have faith in my organization and want us to succeed.
5. I demonstrate my faith in my organization and its mission by doing everything I can to help us succeed.

**Altruistic love**—a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others.

1. My organization really cares about its people.
2. My organization is kind and considerate toward its workers, and when they are suffering, wants to do something about it.
3. The leaders in my organization walk the walk as well as talk the talk.
4. My organization is trustworthy and loyal to its employees.
5. My organization does not punish honest mistakes.
6. The leaders in my organization are honest and without false pride.
7. The leaders in my organization have the courage to stand up for their people.

**Meaning/calling**—a sense that one’s life has meaning and makes a difference.

1. The work I do is very important to me.
2. My job activities are personally meaningful to me.
3. The work I do is meaningful to me.
4. The work I do makes a difference in people’s lives.
Membership—a sense that one is understood and appreciated.

Organizational commitment—the degree of loyalty or attachment to the organization.

Productivity—efficiency in producing results, benefits, or profits.
## APPENDIX E: SURVEY KEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Original position and Questions</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Construct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. I experience joy in my work.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. Listening receptively and openly, without judging</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1. The leaders in my organization “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk.”</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10. Developing others to become leaders</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10. I have had numerous experiences in my job, which have resulted in personal growth.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10. The leaders in my organization are honest and without false pride.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11. I understand what gives my work personal meaning.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11. Placing the needs of others first.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>12. I feel responsible for my own growth.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12. Involving others in determining goals and assessments.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12. My organization is trustworthy and loyal to its employees.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13. Encouraging continuous and lifelong learning.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>13. I feel personally responsible for my behavior.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13. I seek guidance on how to live a good life from people including the wisdom of people I respect, of great teachers/writings, and from my Higher Self or a Higher Power.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Inner Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14. Providing encouragement and affirmation.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>14. The work I do is meaningful to me.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>14. When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>15. I persevere and exert extra effort to help my organization succeed because I have faith in what it stands for.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Hope/Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>15. Leading through persuasion rather than authority.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>15. When I have a concern, I represent it to the appropriate person.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>16. At work, we work together to resolve conflict in a positive way.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>16. Expressing an openness to learn from others.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>16. I demonstrate my faith in my organization and its mission by doing everything I can do help us succeed.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Hope/Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>17. Accepting the uniqueness of individuals</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>17. I am evaluated fairly here.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>17. The work I do is very important to me.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
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<td>28</td>
<td>18. I am encouraged to take risks at work.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>18. I understand and am committed to my organization’s vision.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
<td>Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>18. Providing the leadership that is needed.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>Vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. I am valued at work for who I am.  
2. Encouraging questioning and challenges from others  
2. I believe others experience joy as a result of my work.  
2. I believe others experience joy as a result of my work.  
2. The work I do makes a difference in people’s lives.  
20. I feel hopeful about life.  
21. I feel I am valued as a person in my job.  
21. My spiritual values influence the choices I make.  
22. I consider myself a spiritual person.  
22. The leaders in my organization have the courage to stand up for their people.  
23. My job activities are personally meaningful to me.  
23. Prayer is an important part of my life.  
24. I am satisfied with my life.  
24. I care about the spiritual health of my coworkers.  
25. I maintain an attitude of gratitude even when faced with difficulties.  
25. Meditation is an important part of my life.  
26. My organization has a vision statement that brings out the best in me.  
26. Personal reflection is an important part of my life.  
27. In most ways my life is ideal.  
28. My organization’s vision is clear and compelling to me.  
3. I feel my organization appreciates me and my work.  
3. My work creates meaningful work experiences for others.  
3. Striving for a collaborative approach to decision making.  
30. My organization’s vision inspires my best performance.  
31. My organization is kind and considerate toward its workers, and when they are suffering, wants to do something about it.  
34. I maintain an inner life or reflective practice (e.g., spending time in nature, prayer, meditation, reading inspirational literature, yoga, observing religious traditions, writing in a journal).  
35. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.  
36. I set challenging goals for my work because I have faith in my organization and want us to succeed.  
37. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great place to work for.  
38. I have compassion for the hopes and fears of all people, regardless of how they view the world based on their culture and past experiences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>4. I feel like “part of the family” in this organization.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>4. My spirit is energized by my work.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>4. Trusting and supporting others toward excellence</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>40. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>5. Accepting people as they are.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>5. I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit, etc.).</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>5. I know and can describe my purpose and mission in life.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>6. Developing personal relationships.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>6. The conditions of my life are excellent.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>6. The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>7. Having a clear vision for the organization’s growth</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>7. I look forward to coming to work most days.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>7. I really feel as if my organization’s problems are my own.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>8. Being a servant to others in all situations.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>8. I have faith in my organization and I am willing to “do whatever it takes” to ensure that it accomplishes its mission.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>8. I see a connection between my work and the large social good of my community.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>9. Exhibiting high moral and ethical standards by example.</td>
<td>SLQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>9. I feel my organization demonstrates respect for me, and my work.</td>
<td>SLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>9. I make a difference to the people with whom I work.</td>
<td>SWQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX F: EXCERPT OF SURVEY FORM (GERMAN)**

**Spiritualität und Dienst am Arbeitsplatz**

Willkommen zu meiner Umfrage zur "Spiritualität und Dienst am Arbeitsplatz"

Dieser Fragebogen ist Teil der Datenerhebung, die ich im Zuge meiner Doktorarbeit durchführe. Der Vorsatz dieser phänomenologischen Studie ist es, durch die Beschreibung der Erfahrungen von Hauptadministratoren evangelikaler Seminare in Deutschland, Einsicht in das Phänomen der Führung zu erhalten.

Die Ergebnisse dieses Fragebogens werden vertraulich behandelt, und nur anonym an Dritte weitergegeben.

In diesem Fragebogen gibt es keine "richtigen" oder "falschen" Antworten. Die Beantwortung der Fragen beruht ganz auf persönlicher Einschätzung.

Johannes Schröder, Doktorand an der Liberty University

1. **Kontaktangaben (mit * gekennzeichnete Felder bitte ausfüllen)**
   - Name*
   - Organisation*
   - Strasse/Nr.
   - Stadt
   - Email
   - Telefon

2 bis 11. **Fragen 2 bis 11**

   - **2. Ich habe Freude an meiner Arbeit.**
     | Stimme nicht zu | Stimme eher nicht zu | Weder noch | Stimme eher zu | Stimme zu | keine Antwort |
     |-----------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
     |                 |                      |            |               |           |              |
     Kommentar

   - **3. Dienend zu leiten bedeutet anderen offen und empfänglich zuzuhören, ohne vorschnell zu urteilen.**
     | Stimme nicht zu | Stimme eher nicht zu | Weder noch | Stimme eher zu | Stimme zu | keine Antwort |
     |-----------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
     |                 |                      |            |               |           |              |
     Kommentar

   - **4. Die Führungskräfte in meiner Organisation handeln ihren Worten entsprechend.**
     | Stimme nicht zu | Stimme eher nicht zu | Weder noch | Stimme eher zu | Stimme zu | keine Antwort |
     |-----------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
     |                 |                      |            |               |           |              |
     Kommentar
APPENDIX G: PERMISSIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES

Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ) (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)

Received on December 1, 2014

Johannes,

Yes, please feel free to use the scale for research purposes. I assume you will use a translation and back-translation procedure to best ensure the meaning of the items. We’d very much appreciate you telling us what you find. Good luck with your study.

Regards,

D2

Dennis Duchon, Ph.D.
E.J. Faulkner Professor of Management
Department of Management
College of Business Administration
University of Nebraska
(402) 472-3999

Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLT) (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005)

Received on November 26, 2014

Johannes,

You are more than welcome to use our survey. However, it's gone through several revisions. Attached is the latest. Also attached is a review that was recently published that may help.

I also suggest you peruse our IISL site and read the SL book to get a better feel for how to use our model, methods, and tools.

http://iispiritualleadership.com/
http://iispiritualleadership.com/resources/

If you have not planned to do so I suggest you backtranslate the survey from German back to English. If you need help on the back English translation I will be happy to help you with that.
Hope this helps,

Jody

Louis W. (Jody) Fry, Ph.D.

Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Ingram, 2003)

Received on November 28

Dear Johannes,

Thank you for your email regarding the Servant Leadership Questionnaire. I am pleased to give your permission to use the instrument and to make the modifications indicated in your email. Your study sound very interesting.

I would appreciate receiving your conclusions via email, if that would be possible.

Sincerely,
Osmond C. Ingram, Jr.

Sent from my iPad
APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Leading Evangelical Seminaries in German-Speaking Europe: A Transcendental Phenomenology
Principal Investigator: Johannes Schroeder
Liberty University
Education Department

You are invited to be in a research study of seminary leadership in German-speaking Europe. You have been invited to participate in this study, because of your experiences as a top leader at an evangelical seminary in the 21st century, and because the seminary you lead has obtained, or is in the process of obtaining, some form of program accreditation or state certification. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Johannes Schröder, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

PART 1: INFORMATION SHEET

1. Purpose
The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand leadership through the description of the experiences of lead administrators of evangelical seminaries in German-speaking Europe. At this stage in the research the “lead administrator” will be generally defined as the person who assumes the highest hierarchical position within the structure of the organization. Throughout this study the term “seminary” will be used to describe any institution that provides formal theological or ministerial training. The term “evangelical” is used to describe those protestant faith groups that can be identified by theological distinctives expressed in their statements of faith.

2. Voluntary Nature of the Study
The participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to continue participating in the study at any time. You also may refuse to answer any question posed during the interviews. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Liberty University.

3. Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

Agree to be interviewed as many as three times, with each interview being audio-recorded. This interview cycle is preferably scheduled within the span of two weeks. You have the option to choose from one of three interview formats:

1. Face-to-Face interviews only
2. Online-based interviews only (using videoconferencing software)
3. Blending of both face-to-face and online-based formats
In the first interview you will respond to open ended questions about your life experiences, the second time will be about your contemporary experiences, and a third the conversation will focus on making sense of your experience. Each interview should take between 45 and 60 minutes. The researcher leaves open the possibility to contact you beyond the interviews should follow-up questions arise.

Complete the Spirituality at Work Questionnaire (SWQ), which will be used for descriptive purposes. The researcher reserves the opportunity to observe and take notes any public function where you exercise your role as a leader. The researcher will analyze public documents that are related to your organization or that you have published.

Review the findings of the study. The researcher will not include any findings or descriptions of your experience as a leader in the research report until you have had the chance to review the analytic descriptions of the data pertaining to your organization and yourself. The process of member-checks requires of you to validate, revise, or expand on the structural and textural descriptions in a timely fashion once the researcher has made them available.

4. Compensation
You will not receive any compensation as a result of participating in this study.

5. Risks and Benefits of being in the Study
The study has several risks, none of which involve anything beyond what you would experience in everyday life. However, even though your name and identity will be completely hidden, there is the possibility that despite all precautions taken and pseudonyms used, someone reading the final report may recognize the details of your descriptions.

6. Confidentiality
The researcher will be sensitive to omit any detail that you share “off-the-record”, or express discomfort with the thought of having it shared. The final report of this study will substitute the names of participants and institutions by pseudonyms, and will omit any telling details from the report. The code sheet linking my personal identity with my data will be securely kept in locked files separated from all other data.

The researcher cannot guarantee absolute privacy when using video-based online communication services. The researcher will not willfully endanger the privacy of the participants, but also cannot be held responsible for any infringing actions by the service provider.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. Research records in print format will be stored securely in locked file cabinets, or in data files with password protection. Only Johannes Schroeder and his advisor, Dr. Frederick Milacci, will have access to the audio files. Audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed word for word, and both data formats will be securely kept in a locked file, and will be destroyed 10 years after the end of the study.

7. Contacts and Questions
The researcher conducting this study is Johannes Schroeder. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at (0 60 21) 8 30 66, or jschroeder2@liberty.edu.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are pro-
ected from harm. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**PART II: STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

*(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)*

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

*Participant Signature:* ________________________  *Date:* __________________

I have discussed this form with the participant and have answered any questions posed to me.

*Signature of Investigator:* ________________________  *Date:* __________________
APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (GERMAN)

Einverständniserklärung
Evangelikale Seminare im deutschsprachigen Europa leiten – Eine transzendentale phänomenologische Studie
Hauptverantwortlicher Forscher: Johannes Schroeder
Liberty University
Education Department


Johannes Schröder, Doktorand für den Doctor of Education der Liberty University, ist allein für den Inhalt dieser Studie verantwortlich.

TEIL 1: INFORMATION

1. Vorsatz dieser Studie
Der Vorsatz dieser phänomenologischen Studie ist es, durch die Beschreibung der Erfahrungen von Hauptadministratoren evangelikaler Seminare in Deutschland, Einsicht in das Phänomen der Führung zu erhalten. An diesem Punkt der Forschung wird der „Hauptadministrator“ als die Person definiert, die innerhalb der organisatorischen Struktur hierarchisch an der höchsten Stelle steht. Der Begriff „Seminar“ bezeichnet in dieser Studie solche Institute, die theologische oder gemeind dienstliche Ausbildung durchführen. Der Begriff „Evangelikal“ wird gebraucht, um die protestantischen Glaubensgemeinschaften zu beschreiben, die durch ihr Glaubensbekenntnis eine evangelikale theologische Haltung erkennen lassen.

2. Freiwilligkeit der Teilnahme an dieser Studie
Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist freiwillig. Sie können jederzeit Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie beenden. Alle Sie betreffenden Daten werden am Zeitpunkt Ihres Rückzugs vernichtet. Sie dürfen die Antwort auf jede Frage, die Ihnen während des Studienverlaufs gestellt wird, verweigern. Ihre Entscheidung, ob sie an der Studie teilnehmen oder nicht, wird keine Auswirkung auf Ihre derzeitige, oder womöglich zukünftige, Beziehung zu der Liberty University haben.

3. Verlauf dieser Studie
Wenn Sie der Teilnahme an dieser Studie zustimmen, würde ich Sie um ihrer Kooperation in folgenden Elementen bitten:
Erklären Sie sich bitte dazu bereit, von mir interviewt werden, um dadurch zu einem wichtigen Bestandteil dieser Studie zu werden. Jedes Interview wird mit Tonaufnahmegeräten mitgeschnitten werden. Die Interviews werden in drei Phasen, bestenfalls im Zeitraum von zwei Wochen, durchgeführt werden. Sie können aus drei Formaten wählen:

1. Ausschließlich persönliche Interviews
2. Ausschließlich Online-basierte Interviews (durch Videokonferenz Software)
3. Mischung von persönlichen und Online-basierten Interviews

Im ersten Interview werden ich Sie bitten, Fragen über Ihre Lebenserfahrung beantworten. Im zweiten Interview wird es um Ihre gegenwärtigen Erfahrungen gehen, und im dritten Gespräch werden wir darauf konzentrieren, den Sinn und die Bedeutung Ihrer Erfahrungen zu ergründen. Jedes Interview sollte zwischen 45 und 60 Minuten andauern. Ich halte mir die Möglichkeit offen, Sie auch über die Interviews hinaus zu kontaktieren, sollten noch weitere Fragen oder Unklarheiten aufkommen.


Als letztes möchte ich Sie noch um Ihre Mithilfe im sog. Prozess der „Teilnehmerprüfung“. Hierbei geht es darum, dass Sie meinen Befund in Form meiner analytischen Beschreibungen zur Durchsicht, Revision oder Erweiterung erhalten, und dann zeitig wieder an mich zurück senden. Ohne diese Teilnehmerprüfung werden die Ergebnisse meiner Studie, die mit Ihnen in Verbindung stehen, nicht in meinen Abschlussbericht mit aufgenommen werden, es sei denn ich habe Ihre ausdrückliche Erlaubnis dazu.

4. Vergütung oder Entschädigung
Sie erwerben durch Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie kein Anrecht auf jegliche Vergütung oder Entschädigung.

5. Risiken und Vorteile der Teilnahme an dieser Studie
Diese Studie birgt einige Risiken, die aber nicht über Ihre Alltagserfahrungen hinaus gehen sollten. Ich möchte Sie jedoch darauf hinweisen, dass trotz meiner Bemühungen Ihre Identität in meinem Bericht nicht preis zu geben, es nicht vermeidbar ist, dass andere die Details meiner Beschreibungen wiedererkennen könnten. Des Weiteren ist zu bedenken, dass eine phänomenologische Studie, die auf die Sinnformung der eigenen Erfahrungen aufbaut, zu emotional unangenehmen Gefühlen führen kann.

Die Kehrseite dieser Selbst-reflexion ist jedoch, dass sie zu einer positiven Selbst-erkenntnis führen kann. Phänomenologische Studien tragen oft dazu bei, die Erfahrungen der Teilnehmer zu bestätigen. Darüber hinaus sind jedoch keine direkten Vorteile durch die Teilnahme an dieser Studie zu erwarten.

6. Diskretion
Ich werde darauf bedacht sein, Einzelheiten die Sie mir „im Vertrauen“ mitteilen, oder es Ihnen unangenehm wäre wenn sie publik würden, auch vertraulich zu behandeln. Der Forschungsbericht wird Ihren Namen und den Namen Ihrer Organisation durch Pseudonyme ersetzen, und so weit möglich explizite Einzelheiten, die eine einfache Identifikation Ihrer Identität ermöglichen könnten, vorenthalten. Der Schlüssel für die Verbindung der von mir verwandten Pseudonyme und Ihrer Identität wird getrennt vom Datenmaterial unter Verschluss gehalten.

Falls Sie entscheiden, die Interviews durch Videokonferenz Software zu halten, kann ich keinen absoluten Datenschutz garantieren. Ich werde nicht willentlich Ihre Privatsphäre gefährden, aber ich kann auch nicht für die Aktivitäten des Videokonferenz Dienstleisters zur Verantwortung gezogen werden.


7. Kontakt und Information

Der Johannes Schröder wird diese Untersuchung durchführen. Sie dürfen ihm jegliche Frage bezüglich dieser Studie persönlich stellen, oder mit ihm telefonisch (0176-812 83432) oder per Email (jschroeder2@liberty.edu) in Kontakt treten. Sie können zudem auch jederzeit mit dem Doktorvater, Dr. Frederick Milacci, unter fmilacci@liberty.edu in Kontakt treten. Dieses Dissertationsvorhaben wurde von dem Liberty University Institutional Review Board, der Ethik Kommission meines Instituts, geprüft und genehmigt. Falls Sie Fragen oder Bedenken haben, oder mit einer Drittperson Kontakt aufnehmen möchten, dürfen Sie gern das Institutional Review Board anschreiben (1971 University Blvd., Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515; irb@liberty.edu)

Die Zweitkopie dieses Schreibens ist für Ihre persönlichen Unterlagen vorgesehen.

TEIL II: ZUSTIMMUNGSERKLÄRUNG

Ich habe die obige Information gelesen und verstanden. Ich habe auf alle meine Fragen zufriedenstellende Antwort erhalten. Ich stimme meiner Teilnahme an dieser Studie zu.

(WICHTIG: STIMMEN SIE DER TEILNAHME AN DIESESTUDIE NICHT ZU, WENN DIESE ZUM DOKUMENT KEINE IRB GENEHMIGUNGSUNTERLAGEN BEIGEFÜGT SIND!)

Der Forschende hat meine Erlaubnis im Zuge seiner Untersuchung Tonaufnahmen von mir anzufertigen. (bitte ankreuzen wenn zutreffend)

Unterschrift des Teilnehmers: ___________________ Datum: __________________

Ich habe dieses Dokument mit dem Teilnehmer besprochen und habe alle mir gestellten
Fragen beantwortet.

Unterschrift des Forschenden: _________________ Datum: _______________
APPENDIX J: EXAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Example 1

Original Question: “Servant leadership means expressing an openness to learn from others.”
Translation: “Dienende Leiterschaft bedeutet offen dazu bereit zu sein von anderen zu lernen.”
Retranslation: “Servant Leadership often means being ready to learn from others.”
Revision after Retranslation: “Dienende Leiterschaft bedeutet dazu bereit zu sein von anderen zu lernen.”
Final version after cognitive pilot interviews: “Dienend leiten bedeutet, dazu bereit zu sein, von anderen zu lernen.”

Example 2

Original Question: “My spiritual values influence the choices that I make.”
Translation: “Meine spirituellen Werte beeinflussen meine Entscheidungen.”
Retranslation: “My spiritual values influence my decisions.”
Revision after Retranslation: “Meine spirituellen Werte beeinflussen die Entscheidungen, die ich treffe.”
Final version after cognitive pilot interviews: no further revisions required.
## APPENDIX K: EXAMPLE OF THE RETRANSLATION OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Generated</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>that did not diminish my joy at all, not at all (uhm) back then, I was, of course, very young in the faith, I did not reflect much on why it did not work out, because we suddenly realized (unintelligible) it had (uhm) well, it did not shrink because we had made grave mistakes, but the people just left. we were a small team and suddenly the people were gone and so this church planting project dissolved. and it was begun very naively, we all had no idea about it, just had a heart for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>yes, but I have not reflected on this much, I could not say which elements come from my experiences in the church, which ones I adopted there (uhm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>I believe without my wife I would not be in full-time ministry today (uhm) I am very certain of it. Because she is a woman who is supporting this fully, and I already said that it is in my nature to enjoy leading but that I don’t seek out leadership opportunities (uhm) it was my wife who, well pushed almost sound to negative, but who nudged me strongly into this direction, to do this. (uhm) even today she backs up 100% what we are doing (uhm) well, even my wife... that was a very significant experience. (uhm) I don’t know what else, what else I would say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>but I did have to learn from my mistakes that I believe I have made in the first one or two years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ja, aber ich habe nicht viel darüber nachgedacht, ich könnte gar nicht sagen, welche Faktoren aus meiner Erfahrung in der Gemeinde stammen und welche ich dort übernommen habe (ähm)

Ich glaube, ohne meine Frau würde ich heute nicht im Vollzeitdienst stehen (ähm), eigentlich bin ich da ziemlich sicher. Denn sie ist eine Frau, die das total unterstützt und ich sagte ja schon, dass ich von Natur aus so bin, dass ich Freude daran habe, Menschen anzuleiten, aber ich bemühe mich nicht um Gelegenheiten zur Führung. (Ähm) Es war meine Frau, die mich drängte - das klingt fast zu negativ - bzw. die mir einen starken Anstoß in diese Richtung gab. (Ähm) Selbst heute steht sie zu 100% hinter dem, was wir tun (ähm) also, sogar meine Frau... Das war eine sehr bedeutende Erfahrung. (Ähm) Ich weiß nicht, was ich sonst noch sagen würde

Aber ich musste aus meinen Fehlern lernen, die ich, so glaube ich, in den ersten ein, zwei Jahren gemacht habe.
APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL MEMO AND RESEARCH JOURNAL

Memo connected to a question from the interview guide from August 15, 2015:
When asked about how someone should be educated for their position, they answered generally in two categories

1. Example: They used mainly the positive of their own biography and life experiences as a measure for the requirement. Here again there are two sub-categories
   a. Formal Training
   b. Character Traits and Personality
2. Deficiency: They use the lack of expertise in certain areas that they feel deficient as a suggestion for better preparation
   a. Interestingly, the deficiencies usually revolved around formal training, and not the character.

All of them agreed that management, business administration, and/or human resources are important aspects of their role, and many wished they had had more preparation in these areas of professional leadership.
All of them agreed that beyond formal education certain life experiences are crucial.

Memo connected to an interview excerpt
in this paragraph [name] summarizes the challenges with accreditation
- Foundational decisions about structure and partnerships
- Not making the decisions alone
- Intensive process requiring advice, facts, help from professionals
- Political dimension through connection with governmental ministries and the academic community
- Leading the internal team through the changes
I had the chance to visit the facility of the [name of school]. It’s a, well, modern building right next to the train station of the city. Well there are businesses in this area as far as I can see. It’s very well equipped. Nice wooden floors, nice offices…, purpose built as it seems for this school. The building is 20 years old. When you come in you first see a cafeteria, not a receptionist. Which is quite interesting, I think, they are opening with a place of fellowship. 2nd floor is for classrooms, for each year. So each tier does have their own classroom in which they have all their courses. And the 3rd floor is offices, office space, each of the six core faculty has their own small office. The leader and his vice leader have bigger offices. small but well organized library. A librarian sitting next door. all the doors are without windows. they shut quite well, and not they are very much soundproof. The build itself seems to be very quiet. even though there are apparently 70 students here I had the chance of meeting one, partially because when I arrived there were classes going on, and during their brake I had the chance to be with the faculty. One was missing, she was sick, the others were there having a break together in a special break room for faculty.

In there I could observe [name] in his role as the leader. They just came back from three days of curriculum retreat, which unfortunately did not ask a lot about in my interview, but enough towards understanding what his role was for that. We had a time of coffee and some snacks. We sat in a circle on lounge style seating. There was a conversation about, well, [name] used the time to investigate the status of one of the students, he is concerned about the progress and academic success. And so there was a brief interaction concerning that. There also was some interaction concerning some foundational things about curriculum and, they talked about preaching, the impact and the value of Greek for preparation of preaching. There was one professor or instructor who was the most talkative, talked about, a lot of insight towards his own opinions. The youngest of them was introduced to me as one who has the most diverse range of responsibilities. He interacted with the others quite a bit.

[name] didn’t seem to lead the conversation, even though I think he is most responsible for curriculum topic that this conversation was related to. It much more seemed like he was part of the group. They just discussed it on the same level, and he introduced some thoughts, but so did his vice leader and the others. I observed though that the only woman in that circle, they have two on staff, she did not talk much. She did not contribute to that conversation at all, probably because she is more into the practical church ministry, and not someone with the theological part, which this was related to. Or maybe there were some other reasons why. But she did not seem to feel uncomfortable sitting there and having the coffee together with the colleagues. I think there was a… I did not feel tension, but then of course I was there, and they might have hidden that from me.

Well [name], I could observe him in an interaction with a student on the way to his office where we would have the interview. In that time, I was… he listened intently even though he was pressed for time as he mentioned to me afterwards. That he felt that he had to negotiate my time and so the student’s request… he listened to it and found out mid-way that he wasn’t the best person to talk about that issue, but someone else would be more suitable to answer the questions, so he referred her to him. But not in a way that gave here the sense of, no I don’t want to talk to you. Because at first he agreed to a meeting with her later, but then he gave her better advice whom to talk to, where that person could be found, and, his opinion when to best approach him and how to best approach him to find the answer to her question. And so I think he was helpful to that student, but also effective in not taking too much time and not forgetting what he was about to do.
APPENDIX N: EXAMPLE LIST OF THEME-CODES

List of Codes used for the interview analysis for Theophilus of Antioch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phases of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons and Mistakes, Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift-Mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility Ext/Int</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction/Fulfillment/Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige/Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privilege</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX O: EXCERPT OF RESEARCH JOURNAL

Journal from May 19, 2015.

Today I had the opportunity to spend almost a full work day with […]. Of course it was not a usual day for him, since he did three interviews with me and also spend his lunch-time with me, and we talked informally between the interviews. I could see him briefly interact with his co-workers, the faculty, and staff, and also with some students. He seems to have a good rapport with all the faculty. The students seemed to respond to him. He tries to be inviting, open, and friendly with the students by joking a bit, but also seeking out the one-on-one interaction. He moderated the prayer meeting at the seminary. I am not sure if he does that all the time. It seemed that he felt he needed to lead through it, even though there was a lot of participation in terms of testimonies or prayer requests. I noticed that when asking others to pray for certain requests people would not immediately respond. We prayed in groups, which made distributing the prayer requests obsolete in my opinion.
APPENDIX P: EXCERPTS OF MEMOS

Leadership Style (April 15, 2015)
A common characteristic between Benedict and Theophilus seems to be that

- they can identify if a situation needs leadership
- they are willing and able to step up and lead
- they don’t have to lead, or they don’t have to have the position
- there is not desire for being at the top, but for seeing things work better/more efficiently

Both used metaphor to describe their leadership style/strength
Benedict „Bewahrer“, Theophilus „Entwickler“, Gregory uses the metaphor „Father“, Cyril as „Shepherd“

Tensions (August 8, 2015)

- Accredited schools: independence from church unions, but also needing to be close because of employer relationships and funding from church unions
- Figure of formal authority but in the faith being equal with students, co-workers, teachers (Superior and Equal)
- Tension between theory and practice, in many aspects
  - academically
  - professional leadership
  - conflict management and criticism
- Tension of role and relationship (closeness and distance)
  - leading and teaching
  - follower and leader
  - equal in Christ but with spiritual and educational responsibility
- Spiritual responsibility and Institutional responsibility (not to get too close so that too many roles are stacked)
- Tension of value
  - respect for the individual and responsibility for the organization
  - innovation and continuity
- Learning organization and leader as initiator of all change
APPENDIX Q: TEMPLATE FOR PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[Name of Participant]

[Title] [name of institution]
Address of institution

Telephone:
Fax:
Email:
Website:

COMMUNICATION INFORMATION
   Preferred form of contact:
   Availabilities:
   Meeting Location:
   1. Interview:
   2. Interview:
   3. Interview

PERSONAL BACKGROUND
   Demographics
   Gender:
   Birthday:
   Nationality:
   Family:
   Denomination:

Education

Publications

INSTITUTION
   History

Vision
   Vision statement:
   Mission statement:
   Goals:
   Target Groups:

Organization
Faculty:
Staff:
Organizational Affiliations:
Denominational Affiliations:

Programs of Study
Degrees
Extra Curriculum

NOTES
□
APPENDIX R: PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE FIGURE 1

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Apr 29, 2016

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