

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN FAITH-BASED HIGHER
EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Prospectus Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership

by

Michael Charles Walker

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

African American women hold unique experiences in the pursuit of leadership roles within faith-based colleges and universities. Since leadership occurs within a cultural context, there is sound reason to explore if transformational leadership behavior could positively impact the lived experiences of African American women within faith-based colleges and universities who seek to enter into leadership roles. The survey was cross-sectional with data collected at one period and returned to the researcher. This research design utilized qualitative interview as the means of data collection. Five open-ended research questions guided the research study. Women were qualified for sampling with employment at a Christian college or university located in the eastern, midwestern, southern and western regions of the United States with active participation in or not in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU).

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the lived experiences among African American women seeking leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions. The study sought to discover if African American women perceive the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organizational culture and leadership structure of faith-based higher education institutions in their pursuit of leadership positions.

Keywords: African American Women, Higher Education, Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Women in Higher Education

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the African American women pursuing, holding or previously held leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Without your unique gifts and distinct skillsets, a true void would exist in faith-based higher education. Your strength, tenacity, resilience and courage are an example to all who follow in your footsteps. Most of all, this dissertation is dedicated to my mother Valerie Denise Solomon who inquired of me to consider doing a work for Black women.

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To all of my ancestors who endured the dark hours of slavery and relentless heat of Jim Crowism... a very special thanks to each of you, I stand on your shoulders and sacrifices. Without your faith, deeds, strength and hope this journey would not be possible. Each of you suffered intensely, experienced unfair treatment, denial and dishonoring of your God-given dignity so that one day I could experience the freedom you never tasted. I am the product of your deepest hopes.

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List of Abbreviations

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)

Executive Leadership Development Institute (ELDI)

Historically Black College and University (HBCU)

Leadership Development Institute (LDI)

Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ)

Women's Leadership Development Initiative (WLDI)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

This phenomenological qualitative research study is concerned with transformational leadership, organizational culture, and the lived experiences of African American women seeking or holding leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions. The study examined transformational leadership behavior, theological framework for transformational leadership, perspectives of organizational culture, and perceived barriers to entering leadership positions among African American women employed in faith-based higher education. African American women hold unique experiences in their pursuit of leadership roles within faith-based colleges and universities. There is sound reason to explore if the presence of transformational leadership behavior within faith-based higher education organizational culture could positively impact the lived experiences of African American women seeking to enter into leadership roles.

Background to the Problem

The subject of women in leadership is not without ample examination among researchers. Although women have gained ground in the recent decade, women continue to lag behind men in occupying leadership roles in colleges and universities participating in the Council for Christian colleges and universities (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Leadership and diversity intersect along the journey of solidifying culture within organizations. Livermore (2016) asserted, “in order to be a culture, there has to be a pattern of thinking and behavior that distinguishes it from other groups” (p. 9). Hackman and Johnson defined organizational culture as assumptions, values, and symbols which provide an organization’s unique way of seeing the world (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Closer examination of Hackman and Johnson’s analysis of organizational culture

suggests: (1) assumptions are foundational to culture, serving as beliefs about human relationships; (2) values serve as the canon for behavior; and (3) symbols act as visible demonstrations of an organization's assumptions and values (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Culture, then, is an inherent aspect of any organization and impacts the pipeline to leadership positions.

Women in leadership and the gap between men and women in leadership is of primary concern among researchers focused upon faith-based colleges and universities participating in the CCCU (Longman & Anderson, 2012). Davis and Maldonado (2015) posited, "Women are scarce in top leadership positions and the managerial parity between men and women continues on a downward trajectory" (p. 50). The CCCU, "a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world with campuses in more than 150 countries in the U.S. and Canada and nearly 30 more from an additional 18 countries" (CCCU, 2018) is one of the robust faith-based higher education associations in the world. With more than 520,000 students enrolled globally, 445,000 students enrolled in the U.S. annually, and 72,000 faculty and staff employed in the U.S. annually (CCCU, 2018) colleges and universities participating in the CCCU represent 14% or 140 of 1,000 private higher education institutions in United States identified as religiously affiliated. Within the leadership structure of the CCCU Association, the office of the President, Interim Vice President of Educational Programs, and Senior Vice President for Government & External Relations are held by women (CCCU, 2018). Even more, the Board of Directors was comprised of seventeen individuals with women holding three positions (CCCU, 2018).

Leadership in faith-based higher education institutions occurs within cultural context, Longman and Lafreniere (2012) contended, "the cultural context of faith-based institutions of

higher education historically have limited women from entering top level leadership positions” (p. 45). Recent research shined a light on current thoughts centered around the matter of gender bias in faith-based higher education institutions. One faculty member at a CCCU institution stated, “at conservative religious institutions, women face a stained-glass ceiling, with the Bible and church tradition routinely used to justify gender discrimination” (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 49). At a foundational level, intentional steps could be taken to address perceived gender inequities of faculty at CCCU institutions by allowing more women into the ranks of leadership positions. Research revealed women face real barriers to leadership positions and such barriers will not disappear without intentionality on the part of organizational leaders involved with appointing persons to leadership positions.

Recent research on organizational culture and women leadership experiences revealed there is grounds for further research studies to better understand lived experiences among women other than Caucasian. Based upon the literature review, the gap in the research is a detailed study of the lived experiences of African American women in leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions.

Statement of the Problem

An effort to progress African American women into leadership roles in faith-based higher education warrants leaders and leadership behaviors which remove barriers to leadership. De Pree (2004) noted, “leaders owe people space, space in the sense of freedom. Freedom in the sense of enabling our gifts to be exercised” (p. 16). Hackman and Johnson (2009) argued, “leadership seems to be linked to what it means to be human” (p. 5). Lingenfelter (2008) suggested leading is, “building trust within relational community, defining a compelling vision for life, stepping out ahead, calling others to follow, and empowering those who follow” (p. 16-

18). Leadership, then, is affording others to exercise their gifts to participate in achieving a compelling vision. The practice of Christian leadership occurs in a host of settings with its most basic objective being to exemplify a theological approach to leadership. In this perspective, leadership interlocks integrity, faithfulness, service, mission, power, and compromise. From a practical perspective, the problem enunciates the need to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of African American women in pursuit of and holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions.

Researchers unearthed; among women faculty it is understood the pathway to leadership positions appears to be limited due to the normalized acceptance of leadership being a male-normed role (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008). Without exploring the lived experiences of African American women seeking or holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions it is possible to overlook important concepts which could be implemented to bring the proportion of African American women in leadership positions into alignment with the proportion of men and Caucasian women holding leadership positions. Faith-based higher education institutions participating in the CCCU maintain a mission statement which is Christ-centered, are anchored in historic Christian faith, and fulltime faculty members and administrators profess faith in Christ (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). This phenomenological research study could afford faculty, administrators and board members to benefit from deeper understanding of the lived experiences of African American women seeking leadership positions at faith-based higher education institutions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to understand the lived experiences of African American women holding and in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based

higher education institutions. Participants in this study were employed with faith-based higher education institutions of varying denominational affiliations which include Mennonite, Inter-Denominational, African Methodist Episcopal, Church of Christ, Non-Denominational, American Baptist, and Evangelical Covenant. The study sought to discover if African American women perceive the presence of transformational leadership behavior in their lived experiences within the organizational culture and leadership structure of faith-based higher education institutions in their pursuit of leadership roles.

Research Questions

This research problem consisted of five questions to guide the study.

These questions were:

RQ1. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences when pursuing leadership positions?

RQ2. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organization in their pursuit of leadership positions?

RQ3. How do African American women describe their experience with leadership development or mentorship initiatives in faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ4. How do African American women describe their motivation for seeking leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ5. How do African American women describe their organizational fit in faith-based higher education institutions?

Assumptions and Delimitations

This research study was conducted with foundational assumptions which are listed below.

Research Assumptions

1. Faith-based higher education institutions possess apparent organizational culture.

2. Faith-based higher education institutions foster some form of leadership development or mentorship initiatives.
3. African American women could be made leaders, meaning leadership could be learned.
4. African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions face distinct experiences which could be articulated best by African American women.
5. Faith-based institutions hold to some form of theological interpretation of leadership which is observable by African American women employed in such institutions.
6. African American women desire to experience promotion and gain access to leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions.
7. African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions possess the capacity to discern organizational fit and organizational culture.
8. Critical Race Theory and Feminist Theory are academically viable foundational sociological theories for this research, and while discussed and evaluated, and shall not be validated as part of this study.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This study was delimited to African American women employed at faith-based higher education institutions within the United States from the start of 2013 through the close of 2018. African American women not employed in faith-based colleges and universities during this period were excluded from the study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions are given as clarification for this study.

1. *Christian Education*: “The integrated field of theology and social science that understands itself to be in the service of the church” (Estep, et.al., 2008, p. 41).
2. *Christian Theology*: “A discipline of study that seeks to understand the God revealed in the Bible and to provide Christian understanding of reality. It seeks to understand God’s creation, particularly human beings and their condition, and God’s redemptive work in relation to humankind” (Erickson, 2013, p. 3).
3. *Culture*: “Shared pattern of beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, and attitudes which distinguishes one group from another” (Livermore, 2016, p. 8).

4. *Faith-Based Higher Education Institution*: Christ-centered degree granting four-year higher education institution with Christian beliefs that is affiliated or non-affiliated with a church or denomination.
5. *Leader*: “[A person which] leads others to some goal (large or small) that the others might not have achieved unless the leader forced, modeled, motivated, or guided them into doing so” (Sampson, 2011, p. ix).
6. *Leadership*: “An influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes. The four essential elements are: (1) the influence relationship is multidirectional, (2) the influence is non-coercive, (3) it involves meaningful change toward a purpose, and (4) followers are active participants” (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016, p. 5).
7. *Organizational Culture*: “[a] pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Longman, et.al., 2018, p. 2).
8. *Organizational Fit*: “A high degree of similarity or compatibility between an organization and an individual” (Longman, et.al., 2018, p. 5).
9. *Transformational Leadership*: “A process that motivates people by appealing to higher ideals and moral values, defining and articulating a vision for the future, and forming a base of credibility” (Tucker & Russell, 2004, p. 103).
10. *Transformational Leadership Behavior*: “[The ability] to connect with the follower’s own sense of motivation, elevates the interests of people, listens to others, encourages others, assists others in their development, and shares power with others” (Tucker & Russell, 2004, p. 105).
11. *Transformational Leadership Themes*: “(1) questioning assumptions and promoting non-traditional thinking, and (2) a focus on follower development – desires for followers to become leaders themselves” (Tucker & Russell, 2004, p. 104).

Significance of the Study

The foundational objective of the research study was to discover how African American women serving on faculties at faith-based higher education institutions described their realities and lived experiences with organizational culture in seeking leadership positions. This study contributes to previous research centered around the subject of African American women in

leadership, organizational culture, barriers to women in leadership, and gender realities for women in faith-based higher education. Research supports the basic conclusion...women continue to face barriers and work within male-normed leadership structures in pursuit of leadership roles within faith-based higher education institutions (Longman, et.al., 2018). In a recent study, the Pew Research Center discovered, “about six-in-ten say a major reason why women are underrepresented in high political offices and top executive positions in business is women have to do more to prove themselves than men” (Parker, et.al., 2015, p. 9). Even more, studies revealed women in faith-based higher education institutions are faced with navigating cultural norms which view men as more suitable for leadership, exclude women from strategic discussion, and foster environments of tokenism (Longman & Anderson, 2016). Faith-based higher education institutions are Christ-centered, hold mission statements which are rooted in Christian beliefs, and enjoy the privilege of uniting with other faith-based higher education institutions for the purpose of advancing Christian faith and intellect (CCCU, 2018). Since Chief Academic Officers, Presidents, and Board of Directors are typically involved to some extent in the selection of executive leaders, it is necessary to determine if African American women in faith-based higher education institutions view persons holding such positions as transformational leaders who participate in removing barriers to African American women holding leadership positions.

This research contributes to the practice of transformational leadership by exploring how its principles could be applied in organizational leadership to increase the number of African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education. This study provides a deeper understanding of lived experiences of African American women in faith-based

higher education and provides a framework for improving the number of African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions.

Summary of the Design

Qualitative research design holds specific design characteristics. According to Creswell (2014), “these [qualitative] designs focus on data collection, analysis, and writing” (p. 187). “Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming down from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted using a four-phase process. Women were qualified for sampling with employment at a Christian college or university located in the eastern, midwestern, southern and western regions of the United States with active or inactive participation in the CCCU. The sample consisted of African American women not employed at the same institution. Phase 1 consisted of delivering a letter via postage delivery along with a copy of the letter delivered via email to African American women employed with faith-based higher education institutions to present the nature of the study, request participation in the study, and obtain demographic data. Demographic data of each prospective participant was collected with the use of a 6-question demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire included a ten-day response period. The survey was cross-sectional with data collected at one period and returned to the researcher. Phase 2 consisted of sending a follow-up email to all prospective participants which did not complete the initial inquiry and questionnaire. The follow-up email included a five-day response period.

Qualitative research design typically employs four data collection types – qualitative observation, qualitative interviews, qualitative documents and qualitative audio and visual materials (Creswell, 2014). This research design utilized qualitative interview as the means of

data collection. Qualitative interview afforded the researcher with options of data collection such as face-to-face interviews, telephone research interviews, focus group research interviews, and email internet interviews (Creswell, 2014). Phase 3 consisted of the researcher conducting 20 to 30-minute qualitative interviews of each participant with the use of seven open-ended interview questions which were delivered to each participant two weeks prior to the scheduled interview. Phase 4 consisted of the researcher employing NVivo software to analyze the collected data and conducting member checking for accuracy of findings.

Qualitative email interviews are not without limitations; therefore, it is important to mention data collection limitations include: (1) all participants may not be equally articulate or receptive; (2) data is not collected in the natural setting; and (3) information is filtered through the views of the participants (Creswell, 2014). Validity and reliability are of primary concern for qualitative research designs. According to Creswell, abounding terms related to this matter are trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this research design used the validity and reliability strategy known as member checking to determine the accuracy of the findings. Member checking for this research design consisted of the researcher sharing major findings and themes in the final report with participants and conducting follow-up interviews to determine if the participants believed the findings were accurate.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review provides an examination of foundational literature related to the topic of transformational leadership and African American women seeking leadership positions in Christian colleges and universities. Additionally, literature related to the subject of women in leadership shall be observed in view of the phenomenon of African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education. Theological, theoretical, and empirical literature related to the concept of transformational leadership, and women and African American women in leadership positions in educational leadership in higher education shall be explored. The literature review includes the definition and historical development of transformational leadership, transformational leadership behaviors, biblical foundation for transformational leadership, and an evaluation of women in senior executive leadership roles.

The literature review accomplishes several tasks which include: (1) framing the research problem; (2) reviewing related literature of the research topic; (3) establishing the basis for comparing and contrasting the findings of the research study (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research according to Creswell:

...explores and defines the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem; a process which involve emerging questions and procedures, collecting data in the participants setting, analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell, 2014, p. 246-247)

The literature is a means of demonstrating the author's knowledge about a particular field of study; to provide a framework for new findings and identifies previous research in order to establish new research findings (Randolph, 2009). The review of literature involved in this study provides a theological framework, theoretical framework, and rationale of related literature

which pertained to lived realities among African American women seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education.

Theological Framework

Theological Anthropology and African American Women

How do Christians and those leading Christian organizations approach the subject of women in leadership? More specifically, how do colleges and universities participating or not participating in the CCCU address the matter of women in leadership roles. Ledbetter, et.al. (2016), explored the modern-day challenge of leadership through the lens of the apostle Paul's idea of community. The authors contend, "Paul's idea of community is a form of organization that creates and leverages a strong center of community as well as the centrality of faith-based values is critical to understanding individual or particular actions" (p. xx). The centrality of faith-based values, then, is paramount to how leadership is defined, practiced, improved and shared within organizations and institutions. The need to grasp what is meant by faith-based values and how such values are demonstrated in the area of leadership and leadership development for women is necessary if there is to be any potential for increased numbers of African American women into leadership positions in higher education. Faith in Christ informs leadership which stimulates the necessity to understand the meaning of leadership and which aspects of leadership are necessary for the successful development of future leaders in faith-based higher education. For instance, if organizational leaders, professors, and students within faith-based higher education are to experience maximum development; transformational leadership could be incorporated into the larger scope of leadership development within faith-based educational settings. Transformational leadership can be learned (Miller, 2009) which also means it can be applied in the area of women in leadership...specifically African American women in leadership

in faith-based higher education. Application of transformational leadership would require every aspect of the organizational structure including the Board of Directors/Trustees to be made available for the inclusion of African American women in leadership positions through the use of transformational leadership behaviors.

The challenge with proposing a Christian worldview to solve for contemporary cultural problems is this: culture changes rapidly, there is no one sense of right or wrong, and creative independent thinking is often an uphill journey to topple traditional norms. Even more, the shifting perceptions of normative reality continue to evolve apart from the critical mandate to correct obvious inequities. Although contemporary cultural problems are challenging to solve, biblical principles offer hope and a means for addressing the most challenging cultural problems which include racial reconciliation (Jn. 13:34; Acts 10:34-35; Gal. 3:28). Historically, Christian worldview has challenged cultural problems in America. For instance, slavery, racial prejudice, racial oppression, and segregation were cultural problems which required reconstruction of the social order. The Gospel anchored in God's saving work (Jn. 3:16; 1 Pt. 1:23, 25, 2:9; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:17; Thess. 2:12), the divine truth all people are created in the image of God without prejudice (Gen. 1:26-27; Gal. 3:28), and the belief liberty, justice and removing race-based and gender-based oppression in society is the will of God (Exod. 3:4-10, 13:17-22; Lev. 19:15; Prov. 31:8-9; Isa. 1:17; Am. 5:24; Mic. 6:8; Lk. 4:18-19) led to Christians such as Harriett Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and John Lewis engaging in the work of reconstructing social order in America to improve the living conditions of enslaved, poor and disenfranchised people. In order to offer a way forward for the advancement of more African American women into leadership positions in faith-based higher education there is the need to address a central foundational aspect within the Christian worldview...theological anthropology.

Even though there is not an exhaustive definition of human creation within the Bible, the biblical account of human creation (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; 5:1-2; 9:6) does speak of humanity's origin, relation to God, and God's view of humanity. It is important to draw distinction between the social concept of race and the human race as defined in Scripture. The secular approach to humanity distinguishes individuals based upon race. This approach has created deep sociological issues with one of the chief issues being racism. Racism could be understood as belief or adherence to racial superiority which includes the belief that race determines position, rights, and human value within society (McConnell, 2001). Race-based distinction of individuals is a human creation which bears no theological roots and for centuries has hindered the progress of people living together peacefully in society. Niebuhr (2013) argued, "Human society will never escape the problem of the equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods which provide for the preservation and fulfillment of human life" (p.1). If this is the case, the solution to the problem is not distinguishing individuals based upon the color of their skin. Even more, there is the need to acknowledge some basics related to skin color among humans. First and foremost, there is the need to acknowledge people do, in fact, possess different skin colors. Second, skin color is the result of genetics not social order. Third, skin color is not human life. Fourth, skin color does not determine intellectual capacity. Fifth, skin color does not inherently possess power. Sixth, skin color does not establish multiple races; there is only one race...the human race. Theologically, the one human race (Gen.1:26-27) includes both males and females. The use of race to deny equitable and peaceful existence of all people within society is sin. Therefore, women and African American women in particular possess God-given dignity which is not diminished through an election to pursue leadership roles in faith-based higher education.

The Christian view of humanity rest upon a foundational truth...all people are made in the image of God. Millard Erickson (2015) explained, “this means first, that humanity is to be understood as having originated not through a chance process of evolution, but through a conscious, purposeful act by an intelligent, infinite person. Second, the image of God is intrinsic and indispensable to humanity” (p. 179). The biblical passage Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” makes clear humans are special creatures endowed with God-given value. Within a Christian worldview (Gen. 2:22, 25; 3:12; 5:1-2), all people regardless of gender or creed hold value conferred by God which in turn is reasonable grounds for ridding society and organizations of plagues such as discrimination, exclusion, inequalities, and tokenism.

Definition of Christian Theology

In the Christian context, theology seeks to study the God of the Bible for the purpose of knowing his nature, desires and purposes for mankind and the world. Erickson defined Christian theology as,

...a discipline of study that seeks to understand the God revealed in the Bible and to provide a Christian understanding of reality. It seeks to understand God’s creation, particularly human beings and their condition, and God’s redemptive work in relation to humankind. (Erickson, 2013, p. 3)

Wayne Grudem (1994) observed Christian theology through a systematic lens, in that, theology answers the question, “what does the Bible teach us today about any given topic? Theology involves collecting and understanding all relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic” (p. 21). Johnson and Webber (1993) identify Christian theology as, “a discipline that reflects on truth” (p. x).

Although scholars do not assert a monolithic definition of theology, it is reasonable to suggest theology in the Christian context focuses upon the God of the Bible and all truths which are revealed in the Bible for the purpose of applying theological truth to human life. Klein, et.al. (2004), contend, “If the goal is correct understanding of communication, we need an approach and methods that are appropriate to the task. Hermeneutics provides the means for acquiring an understanding of the Scriptures;” (p. 5) it is the task of explaining the meaning of the Scriptures. Fee and Stuart (2003) conclude, “The key to good exegesis [discovering the original intended meaning], and therefore to a more intelligent reading of the Bible, is to learn to read the text carefully and to ask the right questions of the text” (p. 26). The Bible when approached with right methodology, intelligent reading, and right inquiry could reveal its truth which, then, could inform what could be grasped concerning God, the image of God in man, leadership and improving lived experiences among African American women seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education.

The Image of God and African American Women

Genesis 1:27, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” reveals the true definition of humanity. Three immediate observations rise to the surface concerning the biblical account of the creation of humanity. First, God intentionally created mankind. There is no indication that mankind is created to be less than God’s unique creature in the earth. Second, God intentionally created mankind in his image. God is observed as having intentionally inserted his imprint on humanity by creating human persons in his image. Third, God intentionally created mankind to be male and female. Both male and female are viewed as created together in the image of God while also possessing distinction. Adam and Eve were certainly formed with different methodology of God

(Gen. 2:7, 21-22), yet each was created in the image of God. According to the Scriptures, God intentionally created mankind to bear his image...an inescapable image of God in the earth. The intentionality of God in this area precedes any concept of gender norms, ethnic and race-based taxonomy. Grudem (1994) defined the meaning of the image of God as, “man is like God and would in many ways represent God” (p. 443). Erickson (2013) asserts, “every human being is God’s creature made in God’s own image. God endowed each of us with the powers of personality that make it possible to worship and serve him” (p. 473-474). Barker & Kothenberger (1994) contend, “the clue, “Let us make man in our own image” casts human relationship between man and woman as reflection of God’s own personal relationship with himself” (p. 6). The doctrine of the image of God could be understood as human persons created in God’s image, being like God, restored by God, representatives of God in the earth. Therefore, lived experiences unearthed in the literature among African American women seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education warrant theological analysis to determine if such realities could be improved through leadership exercised within a biblical and theological perspective.

The Shepherd Motif and African American Women

Within the Christian view of humanity there is no room for supporting or sustaining race or gender bias in organizational settings. African American women in higher education report feelings of race and gender bias in higher education and believe the double jeopardy of race and gender hinder the potential for advancement into leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The concept of intersectionality attempts to define the ways race and gender combine to shape the multi-dimensional employment experience of Black women (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). African American women reported race and gender stereotypes are part of the

employment experience and the negative affects to their careers include being invisible, voiceless, discriminated, isolated, undermined, treated unfairly, oppressed, challenged and demoted (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Addressing race and gender, a sort of double jeopardy for African American women in faith-based higher education calls for leaders who are courageous, independent thinkers committed to solving the problem. Although the concept of intersectionality is useful for defining the ways race and gender impact the experiences of Black women in society, it is important to mention intersectionality alone is not enough to cure societal problems associated with raced-based and gender-based identification of individuals. Matters such as equitable distribution of resources, fair methods of implementing justice, preservation of life, and just means of resolving social conflicts are important to all people and warrant theological principles aimed at transforming ideals for the betterment of society. Since Christian worldview opposes race-based identification of humans, upholds there is only one human race, and resolves liberty and justice is the will of God; intersectionality as a sole means for informing perspectives in social justice discussions is not capable of fully preventing unfair and unjust treatment of individuals or aligning social norms to the will of God.

Setting a biblical foundation for the shepherd motif begins with acknowledging God enlisted biblical authors to situate what can be observed, interpreted, and applied concerning shepherding. Laniak and Carson (2006) mentioned, “A shepherd needs God’s heart, but also a sharp, godly mind. The challenges of leadership require deep reservoirs of discernment and wisdom” (p. 22). The shepherd motif in the Old Testament includes in addition to God the shepherd (Psalm 23), human persons who in one way or another serve as shepherds to God’s flock. France (2008) contends, “God's pastoral responsibility is shared with human agents, to whom the care of the flock is delegated” (p. 5). For instance, Moses is seen as shepherd where he

served Israel as priest (Exod. 32:32), as leader (Ps. 77:20), and as prophet (Hos. 12:13). With this, it is possible to observe the shepherd motif is in certain instances multidimensional leadership of entrusted followers. Israel, God's chosen treasure (Exod.19:6) were in need of human leaders in order to bring about God's plans. According to Laniak and Carson (2006), "Biblically speaking, a human leader is none other than God leading his own people through an anointed servant" (p. 92). In Exodus 3:7-10, the commission of Moses' election to shepherd is captured. This passage reveals the following observations: First, God's chosen people (Israel) are in a state of misery and need in Egypt. Second, God has not only seen his people's misery he has decided to come down and rescue his people. Third, God's decision to rescue Israel is the result of God's concern for Israel. Fourth, Israel is unable to rescue themselves from suffering. Fifth, God will bring his people to a new land "flowing with milk and honey." Sixth, God enlisted Moses to lead his people out of oppression. Both God the shepherd and Moses the human shepherd served God's flock...leading the sheep from a period of misery to a point of safety. Shepherding in the Old Testament absolutely involved the shepherd caring for sheep, or the leader caring for the followers, who at any given moment are in need of care. The literature demonstrates African American women are in a state of need and organizational leaders in faith-based higher educational are not exempt from providing care to African American women seeking leadership roles.

The biblical passages John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" and John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" present characteristics of the good shepherd. The good shepherd (Jesus Christ) announced he is sacrificial, knows his sheep and his sheep know him. Barker and Kothenberger (1994) wrote, "The Johannine presentation [the Good Shepherd] however, is not concentrated on

one point but utilizes the allegory with a wider meaning. The teaching is based on shepherding, and several aspects are utilized to create a picture of the relation of Christ to his people” (p. 330). Shepherding certainly includes a set of activities in which Jesus is portrayed as fully committed to caring for his sheep to the point of losing his own life. John 3:16 provides some background to Jesus’ ultimate reason for dying for his sheep – love. Packer (1993) expounded on this where he wrote, “God’s love is an exercise of his goodness toward individual sinners whereby, having identified himself with their welfare, he has given the Son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know him and enjoy him in covenant relation” (p. 123). God, the (divine) shepherd loves his sheep, Jesus the (good) shepherd love his sheep, therefore, human (hired) shepherds are to love the sheep entrusted to them.

In the literature, African American women in faith-based higher education reported race and gender stereotypes are part of the employment experience and the negative affects to their careers include being invisible, voiceless, discriminated, isolated, undermined, treated unfairly, oppressed, challenged and demoted (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The realities among African American women observed in the literature is inconsistent with the foundational truth of biblical and theological leadership. In this theological framework, the doctrine of the image of God undoubtedly confirms all humans are created in the image of God possessing God-given dignity. The shepherd motif found in the Old and New Testament portray an image of leaders who are: (1) observant; (2) connected to their followers; (3) listen to their followers; (4) acknowledge and recognize the needs of their followers; (5) satisfy the needs of their followers; and (6) take on the role of caregiver of their followers. All such deeds could be categorized under one heading...love.

Summary

In this section, theological meaning and biblical foundation for the image of God and the shepherd motif were explored in light of lived experiences among African American women in the literature. In essence, it seems wherever mankind exists there also is the image of God, and where leadership is concerned the shepherd motif depicts shepherd leaders as lovers of their followers; willing to sacrificially extend themselves for the well-being of the followers. It is obvious the image of God and shepherd motif have their place in the Bible, and when considered in view of the lived experiences included in the literature reported among African American women seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education; there does not appear to be biblical or theological grounds for barriers to leadership experienced by African American women in faith-based higher education.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical lens or framework within qualitative research serves as the foundational means for understanding the research topic. Researchers employ theoretical framework to examine matters related to gender, class, and race of marginalized groups. Creswell argues theoretical lens in qualitative research takes on an advocacy perspective utilizing research questions to inform data collections means and analysis, enunciate a call to action, and call for change to issues impacting marginalized groups (Creswell, 2014). Roberts (2010) concluded, “theoretical framework provides the boundaries, or scaffolding, for the [research] study” (p. 147). There are a number of theoretical perspectives available to researchers, and some perspectives include: Feminist perspective, racialized disclosure, critical theory, queer theory, and disability inquiry (Creswell, 2014).

Critical race theory (CRT) and feminist theory shall serve as the theoretical foundation for examining realities among African American women seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education. Both, critical race theory and feminist theory are used to aid in the explanation of lived experiences among African American women in faith-based higher education, and to determine which issues are important for transformation of realities among African American women in pursuit of leadership roles.

Critical Race Theory

Women in leadership is a widely examined and discussed topic among researchers. Although women have gained ground in the recent decade, women continue to lag behind men in occupying leadership roles in colleges and universities participating in the Council for Christian colleges and universities (CCCU) (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). The gap between men and women in leadership in faith-based higher education is of primary concern, and the need to understand perceived reasons for the gap and unearthing means to close the gap are important. Within the subject of women in leadership is the phenomenon of African American women in leadership. African American women encounter unique experiences in faith-based higher education which could be characterized as gender and race stereotypes (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Creswell posits (2014), “critical theories are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class and gender” (p. 65). Critical race theory provides theoretical framework for empowering African American women and leaders of faith-based higher education institutions to move beyond perceived barriers to leadership positions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 8-11).

What is Critical Race Theory?

In order to define Critical Race Theory, it is necessary to explore its early origins. Critical Race Theory as a secular theoretical framework is the result of a perceived twofold dilemma facing People of Color marginalized by racism. Lawyers, activists, and scholars from across the U.S. in the 1970s began to realize: (1) the civil right advancement of the 1960's had begun to stall, and (2) the advancements of the civil rights era were being turned back (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Derrick Bell who served at Harvard Law School and as visiting professor of law at New York University is known as the “intellectual father figure” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 6) having authored many of the foundational texts for CRT. Critical race theory could be understood as a means to combat racism within society and organizational structures.

Critical Race theory according to Delgado and Stefancic is the process of “studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). In this sense, CRT examines a number of the same issues found in traditional civil rights discourse, and broadens the scope to include: “Economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Even more, CRT questions the foundations of liberal order, equality theory, legal reasoning, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Therefore, it is important to establish a definition of race and racism. The concept of race functions to categorize and subdivide people within society. Theories of race surfaced in the nineteenth century as cultural anthropologists sought to classify human beings according to physical criteria (Trull, 1997). The focus upon physical criteria to classify human beings opposes the theological truth there is one human race created by God in his image (Gen. 1:26-27, 3:20; 1 Cor. 15:45) and has contributed to the rise and presence of racial problems in American society and worldwide.

Secular definitions of race act as interpretations of societal forces and social concepts which determine human classification within society. For instance, Robin DiAngelo (2018) described race as a created evolving idea that is a social construct which utilizes external characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape to classify people within society (p. 15-19). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) defined race as, “a notion of a distinct biological type of human being, usually based on skin color or other physical characteristics” (p. 182). Appleby, et.al., (2011) discussed race as a concept which employs a set of physical or psychological characteristics to distinguish group members; a concept without scientific support (p. 41). The use of external characteristics to classify people within society has led to central beliefs which undergird racism.

There is no sole definition of racism and central tenets of racism are of key concern to scholars and social scientists. Moreover, some definitions of racism attempt to reduce its meaning to racial problems between Whites and Blacks, and Whites and Others in America without acknowledging racial problems exist world-wide. Trull (1997) noted, racism is the belief that certain groups or races are inherently superior to others; the belief that hereditary biology and culture are predetermined immutable differences (p. 213). This definition of racism clearly articulates racism is a moral and spiritual problem and is matter which warrants a cure. The problem of racism is spiritual, an issue of the inner person in need of transformation in order to demonstrate fruits of the Spirit...love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). Although theories, legal and civil rights efforts could be useful in understanding, exposing and limiting racism within society, the only true means for eradicating racism is transformation of the inner person through the gospel (Jn. 3:16; Ro. 5:8, 8:1-2, 10:9, 12:2). Feagin and Sikes (1994) contend, “Racism is racial prejudice backed by power and

resources” (p. 4). In this view, racism in the broadest sense is prejudice and discrimination against individuals with the use of power (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 3). This view of racism acknowledges racial prejudice exists within humanity but does not turn into racism without the support of power and resources. DiAngelo (2018) argued, “racism is a system; a racial group’s collective prejudice backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control” (p. 20-21). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) defined racism as, “any program or practice of discrimination, segregation, persecution, or mistreatment based on membership in a race or ethnic group” (p. 183). Definitions of racism by DiAngelo, Feagin and Sikes, and Delgado and Stefancic intentionally couple together racial prejudice, power, law, systems and institutions. Although these definitions are included to provide a sense of the variations employed among scholars and social scientists who define racism; it is important to note these definitions do, in fact, present a slippery slope. With these definitions there is the potential to label all members of a group in power as practitioners of racism which is inappropriate.

Prejudice and discrimination contribute to mistreatment of people; therefore, it is necessary to briefly discuss prejudice and discrimination. People from all walks of life are subject to possessing prejudice to some extent. Trull (1997) noted “prejudice thrives on inadequate knowledge, usually categorizing a whole group of people by characteristics that may fit only a few” (p. 213). DiAngelo (2018) explained:

...prejudice is pre-judgement about another person based on the social groups to which that person belongs. Prejudice consists of the thoughts and feelings, including stereotypes, attitudes, and generalizations that are based on little or no experience and then are projected onto everyone from that group. Our prejudices tend to be shared because we swim in the same cultural waters and absorb the same messages” (p. 19).

Prejudice is sin and attempts to affix prejudice to a single group of people in society is erroneous and inconsistent with Scripture for all people are guilty of sin (Ro. 3:23). Social scientists and

scholars define discrimination as action based on prejudice which yield mistreatment of individuals as a result of membership in a particular people group (Trull, 1997; Appleby, et.al., 2011; DiAngelo, 2018). The truth is: racial prejudice and discrimination oppose love (Gal. 5:14), unity (Gal. 3:28), impartiality (Ro. 2:11), and fair treatment of individuals (Matt. 7:12).

McCoy and Rodricks (2015) contend, “critical theory is a form of race-based oppositional scholarship; a theoretical framework which examines unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, and gendered lines” (p. 5). Cornel West (1994) argues, “structures and behavior are inseparable, and institutions and values go hand in hand” (p. 18). Since CRT is a secular theoretical framework inclusive of numerous themes, narratives, assumptions, spin off movements, and a focus on the examination of oppression in society and institutions based on race, it is important to mention certain tenets of CRT could be used as an acceptable theoretical perspective to explore lived experiences of African Americans and other people groups while other tenets of CRT bear no usefulness. Critical Race Theory is not on par with or superior to Scripture and in no way could CRT fully cure racial problems. Although CRT is a secular theoretical framework it is necessary to explore biblical support for the use of certain tenets of CRT to understand the lived experiences of African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education institutions. At the heart of CRT is the exploration and analysis of oppression on the basis of race. The racial problem in America is complex and throughout American history Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Jewish persons have experienced racial prejudice and discrimination (Trull, 1997). Historically, race relations in America have struggled to live up to the ideal “all men are created equal” and theories of race contributed to centuries of chattel slavery of Africans, the Civil War between northern and southern states, segregation, and the Civil Rights

Movement. Even more, race relations in America have not aligned to the most fundamental theological truth: all people are made in the image of God with God given rights (Gen. 1:26-28).

The most obvious theological support for use of certain tenets of CRT to understand lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education is its opposition to mistreatment of individuals on the basis of race and societal adherence to the social concept of race. Christian theology and Scripture affirm one human race and does not acknowledge or support classifying individuals in society based upon race (Gen. 1:26-27, 3:20, 5:1-2, 9:6; Acts 17:26a). There is one human race possessing dignity, value and worth given by God. In multiple areas of Scripture, it is clearly stated “God shows no impartiality” or God is “no respecter of persons” (Ro. 2:11; Acts 10:34; Eph. 6:9; James 2:1-9; Col. 3:25). The biblical theme of no partiality or no respecter of persons affirms favoritism or impartiality based upon skin color, hair texture, eye shape or any external characteristics is sin. Prejudice and discrimination against any individual or group of people based upon their race is inconsistent with theological truth.

The biblical imperative to “love your neighbor” which is observed in both testaments (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:43-44, 22:37, 39; Ro. 13:9) affirms all people are deserving of love. The imperative to love all people is God’s plan for human relations which affirms all people possess dignity, worth and value. Christ demonstrated loving your neighbor is limitless as he sacrificed his life on the cross for the sins of all people (Isa. 53:1-12; Jn. 3:16; Ro. 5:8; Php. 2:6-8; Heb. 9:12; 1 Pt. 2:24). Furthermore, the Great Commission affirms human equality: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). The Great Commission and Gospel of Jesus Christ is inclusive of all people situated in any part of the world. In no way does the Gospel

of Jesus Christ deny human equality or support prejudice and discrimination against people. Even more, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of the clearest demonstrations in Scripture that no person is excluded from God's invitation to salvation and redemption. Therefore, where race-based prejudice, discrimination, and the social construct of race exist within American society certain tenets of CRT as a theoretical perspective are useful to explore and grasp the meaning of the lived experiences of individuals.

Key Tenets

Central to critical race theorists is a fundamental belief...racism is the normal usual way of doing business in society and is the everyday experience of most people of color in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). McCoy and Rodricks (2015) identify this as the permanence of racism, "an endemic and permanent aspect of People of Color's experiences" (p. 6).

Furthermore, critical race theorists acknowledge American societal systems includes what Delgado and Stefancic (2017) termed, "white-over-color" ascendancy...the psychic and material reality of the white dominant group (p. 8).

Tenet 1 – Ordinarity

The first tenet of critical race theory (ordinarity) acknowledges racism is difficult to address, cure, and is often not acknowledged (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Within this tenet is a firm denial of color-blindness or formal conceptions of equality since critical race theorists tend to believe curing the most blatant and engrained forms of institutional racism need to be exposed, disrupted, and eliminated in all structures governing political, economic and social domains (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). The belief that formal color-blind rules which insist on the same treatment of all persons only serve to remedy the flagrant forms discrimination is commonplace (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Even though the ordinarity tenet acknowledges racism is

difficult to cure and racism should be exposed and eliminated, its emphasis upon racism is ordinary limits its usefulness in understanding and curing racism. The chief limitation is this: no one people group in society is monolithic, and the presence of racism in society does not rise to the level of condemning all members of the dominant people group in society as racist. This tenet could aid in exposing racism; however, the ordinariness tenet runs the risk of committing sin in an attempt to expose sin. This tenet is not useful in gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education.

Tenet 2 – Interest Convergence or Material Determinism

Derrick Bell, the intellectual father of critical race theory proposed, *Brown v. Board of Education* “may have resulted more for the self-interest of elite whites than from a desire to help blacks” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Bell believed racism served a bifold agenda; to advance the material interests of elite whites, and to advance the physical interest of working-class whites (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Economic, social, and political progress of People of Color, then, is contingent upon aligning their interests with persons in power (McCoy & Rodrick, 2015). People of Color are afforded the opportunity to advance their interests if the group is capable of aligning with the interests of powerful White people. Interest convergence or material determinism tenet implies all elite whites and working-class whites as benefactors of racism. Racism is viewed as advancing the agenda of certain white people on the basis of group membership and interest. This tenet suggests all elite and working-class whites are invested in racism; a belief which is incorrect. While it is possible to acknowledge all people possess prejudice it is not appropriate to claim all individuals within a certain people group are invested in racism. Therefore, this tenet is not useful in gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education.

Tenet 3 – Social Construction

The social construction tenet according to Delgado and Stefancic (2017) holds, “race and races are products of social thought and relations – they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (p. 9). Critical race theorists, then, are very concerned with the consequences of differential racism, and pseudo-permanent characteristics of race – “the idea that each race has its own origins and ever-evolving history” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Along this continuum, critical race theorists are also concerned with examining intersectionality; the intersection of gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and forms of oppressions to influence experiences of People of Color (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). The tenet of social construction is useful in gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education.

Tenet 4 – Unique Voice of Color

The voice of color tenet asserts, the result of different histories and experiences with oppression enables People of Color and other oppressed people groups to best communicate to Whites experiences unique to people who encounter racism, gender inequalities and unfair distribution of power White counterparts may not know (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The practice and work of storytelling provide for narrating everyday lived experiences from a personal perspective. In other words, People of color and other people groups possess a unique story of their lived experiences and are best equipped to provide unique perspective of their experiences in American society. The tenet of unique voice is useful in gaining in understanding of how African American women in faith-based higher education define and describe their lived experiences on a personal and corporate level.

Feminist Theory

Theoretical perspectives in qualitative research provide researchers with the means to explore broad explanations of culture-sharing behavior, attitudes of people, gender inequalities experienced within institutions, and misrecognition or misrepresentation of persons as a consequence of gender difference (Burke, 2014; Creswell, 2014). In one sense, researchers employ certain theoretical perspectives to discover gender narratives which could advance the progress of genders identified as oppressed, disenfranchised, or powerless for the purpose of disclosing recommendations to improve the lives and society of persons impacted by gender bias. Feminist theory is situated to explore the condition of marginalized women in society.

According to John Creswell,

feminist perspectives view as problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations. Research topics may include policy issues related to realizing social justice for women in specific contexts or knowledge about oppressive situations for women. (Creswell, 2014, p. 64).

Therefore, feminist theory is first and foremost observed as a theoretical analysis to arrive at social justice reform within society.

What is Feminist Theory?

The challenge involved with grasping the importance of any theoretical perspective begins with establishing a foundational definition of the theory. Feminist theory explains and recommends change in social and environmental settings which contribute to problems experienced by women; propose remedy for women's intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns; and provide perspective for evaluating social and environmental experiences of women to influence the leveling of marginalization, oppression and limitations experienced by women (Coady & Lehmann, 2008). Acquiring an understanding of feminist theory begins with grasping the theory is not without struggle to equally provide voice to white and non-white women (Hooks, 2015).

Hooks (2015) contends, “White women who dominate feminist discourse, who for the most part make and articulate feminist theory, have little to no understanding of white supremacy as racial politic, of the psychological impact of class, of their political status within a racist, sexist, capitalist state” (p. 4). The condition of women collectively in United States according to Hooks is women possess choices while facing discrimination and exploitation on the basis of gender (Hooks, 2015). Hooks argued feminist theory must be defined as a movement to end sexist oppression, eradicate cultural sexism, and any other forms of oppression for long-range reform to philosophical structures (Hooks, 2015). Even though the central aim is to eradicate injustice against women found in philosophical structures of society...the point of demarcation for essential meaning of feminist theory could vary from theorist-to-theorist (Hooks, 2015). For the purpose of this research project, the foundational definition best suited for explaining the problems and proposing solutions to the complex situation of gender realities among African American women seeking leadership positions in higher education in faith-based higher education is: feminist theory is the systematic analysis of diverse problematic women’s situations which seeks to explain social and philosophical structures that contribute to the marginalization of women with a focus upon recommending reform to policies and social structures which uphold gender bias and gender constraint.

Historical Development of Feminist Theories

With the understanding feminist theories vary and the relationship between feminist theory and philosophical structures is mixed; historical development of such theories is first viewed as response to a social problem within the United States. The emergence of feminist theories rose to the surface in response to what Hooks (2015) termed, “the silent majority – women victimized by sexist oppression; mentally, physically, and spiritually beaten down

women who are, in fact, powerless persons in American life” (p. 1). The need to address discrimination and oppression of non-white women in the United States is especially challenging since the class structure in American society was shaped by suppressing the needs and perspectives of non-white women (Hooks, 2015). Historically, women collectively faced sexist oppression, the struggle to bond together in sisterhood, and the challenge of determining how to use power once attained (Hooks, 2015). The development of feminist theory could be viewed as a theoretical framework to provide voice to the most basic desire of women...to be free with equal justice for all in the United States. Any attempt to balance equality for both, men and women in society will require deep commitment to change the status quo, elimination of oppressive systems, and willingness to rethink and reshape the liberation of women (Hooks, 2015).

Feminist Theory and Power

In American society, power is generally equated with domination and control over people or things, and powerlessness is typically attributed to any person or group subject to forms of injustice, discrimination, disenfranchisement, and oppression (Hooks, 2015). Powerless persons are in need of social justice reform to be moved from marginalized to empowered within society. Conversely, persons in power are the target of social justice reform efforts since the exercise of power to end social inequalities, eradicate oppressive policies, and redistribute wealth and power rests within their reach. Among feminist theorists, analyzing the use of power is approached by varied angles. Hooks (2015), contended, “women cannot gain much power on the terms set by the existing social structure without undermining the struggle to end sexist oppression” (p. 86). In essence, eradicating sexist and gender oppression within the American social structure does not solely rest on women obtaining positions of power. The work of removing such oppression

begins with the most basic personal power...to strongly resist any definition of reality postured by persons in power or within institutions which constrains women to the margins of society. Feminist theory seeks to transform culture by eradicating systems of oppression and constraint within society.

Feminist theory seeks to transform culture in order to eliminate inequalities within society, however it is important to mention feminist theory will never fully eradicate inequalities of women in society. Since all people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23) race-based prejudice, gender-based inequalities, discrimination and the like shall exist as a result of the work of sin within the earth (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:16-19; Rom. 3:9-18; Gal. 5:17-21). Christian theology affirms every person regardless of race, gender, tribe or creed possess inherent dignity, value and worth given by God which deserves respect (Gen.1:26-27, 9:6). Therefore, it is essential to discuss womanhood from a biblical perspective. First, women are full participants in human equality. According to Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." This verse affirms women are distinct from men, and both men and women equally share God's image. Womanhood at its most foundational level is human equality in the image of God. Second, women are stewards responsible to God: "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, over the livestock, and all animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Gen. 1:26). Both men and women are equally granted stewardship of God's creation which further establishes the divine truth...men and women equally share God's image. Third, women are responsible to God. After Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil God said to the woman: "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be

for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). God held Eve responsible for her role in eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Fourth, women are not second-class human beings. It is apparent Gen. 3:16 describes a distinct difference in the relationship between men and women after the fall into sin: “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” but it does not mean women are inferior to men. The creation narratives of humanity (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:15-22; 5:1-2) present a consistent view of God’s plan and thoughts for men and women, both male and female are made in the image of God equally responsible to God. With Gen. 3:16 in view, did command women are second class to men? The statement, “and he will rule over you” when observed in literary context does not reveal God commanded Adam to rule over Eve. Fee and Stuart (2003) contend, “literary context means first that words only have meaning in sentences, and second that biblical sentences for the most part only have clear meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences” (p. 27). Klein, et.al., (2004) argue, “a basic principle of biblical hermeneutics is that the intended meaning of any passage is the meaning that is consistent with the sense of literary context in which it occurs” (p. 214). It seems God’s words to Eve describe a shift in how men and women relate to one another as a result of the work of sin. The literary context surrounding Gen. 3:16 does not support in any manner God deemed women less valuable or second class to men. Any presence of women relegated to second class human status or male domination of women is sin at work not the command of God. Fifth, women are suitable for leadership. There are numerous observations in Scripture where women are mentioned as leaders In the Old Testament, female leaders include prophetess Miriam (Exod. 15:20-21) a spiritual leader; Zipporah, Moses’ wife acted in the role of priest (Exod. 4); Deborah, a judge of Israel (Judg. 4); prophetess Huldah, proclaimed a message against Israel’s idolatrous lifestyle along with a message of hope (2 Ki. 22:14-20; 2 Ch. 34:22-28). In the

New Testament, Priscilla taught the way of God (Acts 18:26); and Phoebe is mentioned as a deacon or minister and servant leader in the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1-2). Sixth, women are suitable for spiritual giftedness. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to all of God's people according to his purposes (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; Eph. 4:11-16) and by no means does Scripture demonstrate women are excluded from receiving spiritual gifts or deemed unqualified for spiritual giftedness. Seventh, taking on the role of wife or mother does not render women second class to men. In Scripture the role of wife and mother is reserved for women (Gen. 2:24-25; 4:1-2; Pr. 31:10-31; Eph. 6:21-33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pt. 3:1-7). Scripture demonstrates women take on each role, and the role of wife includes how wives are to relate to their husband and vice versa. Wives relating to their husband according to Scripture does not equate to marginalizing women, dominating women, abusing women, subjecting women to sexism, reducing women to childbearing and childrearing, excluding women from public life, and excluding woman from ministry and spiritual giftedness. Women are created in the image of God, responsible to God fully deserving of respect.

Although this brief biblical perspective of womanhood does not answer every question related to womanhood, it does demonstrate Christian theology of womanhood affirms women are not second-class human beings to men, women are equal to men in dignity, value and worth, deserving respect. Women are not disqualified from spiritual giftedness, ministry and servant leadership roles in Christian ministry. The roles of wife and mother do not deem women subservient to men; women are made in the image of God and responsible to God. The work of sin impairs relationships between men and women. Any attempt to deny women dignity and respect or any effort to render women second class human beings is the work of sin.

In Critique of Critical Theory

Race and race relations is difficult to discuss and address. There are no shortage of scholars, theorists and activists devoted to understanding the nature of racism in American society and closing the gap of perceived race-based inequality and oppressions experienced by marginalized groups. Critical race theory seeks to examine and transform the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The chief goal of critical theory is to study the use of power and resources which adversely impact marginalized groups. Fundamental to critical theory is the belief; racism is the normal usual way of doing business in society and is the everyday experience of most people in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory, then, functions as a race-based theory which condemns all American societal systems to practitioners of racism. American societal systems are painted with a broad brush which equates to persons in power within American societal systems are racist. It is not possible to lay this claim at the steps of American societal systems apart from branding people who make up such systems as racists. Diangelo (2018) contends, "Racism is deeply embedded in the fabric of our society. It is not limited to a single act or person" (p. 22). With this in mind, racism is fluid and is not easily assigned to people or American societal systems. America has a long and complicated history with race and racism; however, it is unreasonable to broadly characterize persons in power or American societal systems as inherently racist. Even more, the singular focus of critical race theory to identify, label and eradicate racism within American society warrants reason for the researcher to critique CRT fundamental positions of group identity, ordinariness, and social construction with theological perspectives and biblical worldview.

Individual Identity is Distinct from Group Identity

Within American society individuals make up groups, teams, and organizations which naturally create a context for relational dynamics which are both positive and negative. With critical theory in view, the central question is: does group or organizational membership supersede individual identity? According to Scripture, mankind is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). At the most basic level, Christian theology holds a view of human nature which upholds all people are individuals created by God in his image and likeness. This in no way suggests people are not in relationship with each other, it does imply human relationships are the result of individuals relating to one another. Erickson contends (2015), “By virtue of our origin, we have a kinship with the rest of God’s creation, and in particular with the entire human race” (p. 183). Grudem (1994) asserted, “The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God” (p. 442). Even though it is possible for a person to be a member of a group or organization this does not diminish the theological truth...men and women are individuals created in the image and likeness of God.

Critical race theory with its focus on examining the relationship of race, racism, and power in American societal systems does not uphold individual identity exists distinct from group or organizational membership. Critical race theory rejects individual identity in order to identity and label American societal systems as racist. With intentionality, critical race theory deems individual identity absorbed into group identity to the degree individual identity is dependent upon group membership. Shenvi and Sawyer contend critical theorists’ denial of the possibility of individual identity paves the way for rendering all people who hold dominant positions or who are not part of oppressed groups racist (Shenvi & Sawyer, 2020). Inequality, discrimination, oppression and the like do exist within American society and create real

adversities for people, however denying the role of individual identity for the purpose of contending racism is the normal way of doing business in America is inherently flawed for a few reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, all people are created in the image and likeness of God inherently possessing dignity and identity apart from group membership. Second, individuals possess the ability to rationalize and contemplate apart from group membership. Genesis 2:15-17 provides a concise view of an individual distinctly equipped by God to rationalize and contemplate apart from group membership. Third, Genesis 2:23 demonstrates individuals possess the ability to engage in relationship with others without discarding their individual identity. Critical race theory's denial of individual identity apart from group identity undermines absolute truth and creates broad latitude to inaccurately label individuals as racists on account of their membership or role in American societal systems.

The Moral Solution and Ordinarity

Critical race theorists acknowledge racism is difficult to address, cure and is often not acknowledged (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), a condition known as ordinariness. Building upon the foundational belief racism is the usual way of doing business, critical theorists seek to eliminate racism through political and cultural means (Shenvi & Sawyer, 2020). The basic question is how do we eliminate racism in American society? Susannah Heschel argued,

The question ought to shift from ways of eliminating racism by changing laws, opening opportunities, and combating biases to ways of asking why racism continues to be both appealing to people and abhorrent to us, even as racism is increasingly evanescent and difficult to identify as such. (Heschel, 2015, p. 3).

Focusing upon why racism continues to exist and appeal to people shift the attention from elimination of racism within systems to understanding racism at the individual level and makes way for a moral solution. Critical race theorists cite racism is wrong and the researcher agrees with this position. Racism is wrong because it is sin. Keller noted, "Sin is anything that falls

short of God's will and glory, that violates his law and his character" (Keller, 2020). For the critical theorist, curing racism is accomplished with political action and removing racism through cultural reformation. Significant attention is placed upon identifying the lived experiences of marginalized groups for the purpose of satisfying the basic assumption... American societal systems are racist. Combating racism, then, for critical theorists is galvanizing legislation, courts and culture as tools which rid society of racism. The challenge with this position among critical theorists is enormous energy and attention is given to using policy and law to combat racism without giving equal attention to combating racism at an individual level with use of moral reformation. In other words, individual identity is once again dismissed for the purpose of elevating group identity. Therefore, the efforts of combating racism are primarily aimed at groups not individuals and does not take into account the possibility for a moral solution and the human capacity to change without political and legislative action. Even more, this approach inherently suggests law and public policy are the sole means to create change within individuals which is not true where theological truth is concerned. Jesus stated, there are two primary commands; first, love God with all your heart, soul, and mind; second, love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:37-40). Both commands are achievable, exist apart from legislature and public policy, and establish a moral standard among people. Biblical love as presented by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40 boils down to how people are to love God and how people are to love others. Loving others has to do with treating others as ourselves. Embedded in the command to love others as yourselves is treat others justly...do not mistreat others. Mistreating people on account of their race or gender is a violation of the law of God which means there is significant reason for a theological moral solution to this dilemma. Keller is correct, treating people unfairly or

unequally on the basis of race is sin (Keller, 2020). God does not show partiality on the basis of race or ethnicity (Deut. 10:17) and does not sanction people to do so.

Combating racism in American society is not purely an exercise of combining legislative, court and cultural action; it is grounds for invoking theological morality to solve for racism. Although the intent of critical theory is to improve race relations within American societal systems through identifying, labeling and eradicating racism, this does not address the deep need to understand why people continue to gravitate to racism and does not embrace there is a moral theological solution to racism...love others as yourself. The failure to focus upon individuals taking moral responsibility for fair treatment of others coupled with its broad claim of American societal systems are racist literally renders critical theory impossible to adequately address racism. There is no legitimate means to prove at any point in time within any aspect of American societal systems all people in dominant roles in these societal systems are racist.

Theological Justice, Social Construction and Intersectionality

Critical race theorists contend race is the product of social thought and there is a need to examine the intersections of race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientations and other forms of oppressions (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Yee (2020) explained, "Intersectionality is concerned with relations of power, and the ways that systems of power are implicated in the development, organization, and maintenance of social inequalities" (p. 17). Intersectionality is useful to critical theorists in their attempts to explain the impact of racism against marginalized people. Critical race theory asserts discrimination and oppression is wrong and the researcher agrees with this position. For discrimination and oppression to exist critical theorist imply the existence of a perceived reality, and it is important to mention perceived reality is not exempt from reconciliation against theological truth.

People participate in community and there are boundaries to how people are to relate to one another from a theological perspective. As racism is considered and debated throughout society there are real concerns among critical theorists with determining if racism is systemic or structural. At a foundational level, racism is explored as a corporate act which is supported by social structures upheld by the dominant people group who may or may not individually hold racist views and demonstrate racist behaviors (Keller, 2020). Critical race theory contends racism is everyday business in American society and American societal systems are racist this position implies any person is guilty of racism on the basis of group membership. Since critical race theorists are deeply concerned with the consequences of racism and intersectionality the researcher offers the following theological points of consideration. First, the Bible is replete with examples of individual and corporate sin (Genesis 3:6-7; Joshua 7; 2 Samuel 12; Acts 5:1-10; 7:54-59). Based upon the Bible, there is reason to conclude there is both individual and corporate sin. Racism in any form is sin, sin which could occur on an individual and corporate level. It is possible for both systemic and individual racism to exist within community, however critical race theory's efforts to broadly characterize communities in American society as racist is unfair and unjust. Second, oppression is sin; God opposes an unjust social system (Psalm 9:9; Isaiah 1:17; Proverbs 14:31; Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5; Luke 4:18-19). Critical race theorists are correct where they cite oppression is wrong and there is reason to suggest biblical justice as a means to combat oppression in communities. In theological terms, biblical justice is action that corrects oppression and injustice. Biblical justice is to be plentiful (Amos 5:24), not show partiality (Leviticus 19:15), serve as the norm in communities (Deuteronomy 16:20), speak up for the rights of marginalized people (Proverbs 31:8-9), and do no harm (Jeremiah 22:3).

The theological solution to individual and corporate sin is repentance (1 John 1:9; Matthew 3:8; Act 8:22). Theological repentance is the act of changing direction. Repentance serves as a solution to individual and corporate sin in communities because mankind is not perfect and is unable to meet God's standards of goodness apart from Christ. The reality of sin means all people are sinners (Romans 3:23). Moral goodness alone does not solve for racism or systemic racism in social structures. Dependence upon human systems or agencies will not eliminate racism and injustice from communities. Critical race theory's sole reliance upon human agency is insufficient to fully combat racism in American society. Therefore, the researcher concludes, critical race theory with all of its efforts to identify, label, and eradicate racism is not able to fully achieve its objective. The denial of individual identity, sole dependence on human agency, and no reliance upon theological truths and repentance renders critical race theory inadequate to eliminate racism from American society.

Related Literature

Leadership is a topic which is widely discussed among scholars, politicians, and school administrators. Transformational leadership is considered among scholars to be a relatively new concept in Christian education. White et.al. (2017) suggest, transformational leadership can be understood as an "approach that causes change in people and social systems" (p. 276). Cooper contends (2005), "transformational leaders are those who uplift the morale, motivation, and morals of the follower" (p. 50). For Cooper (2005), transformational leaders "move their followers to maturity and achievement through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration" (p. 50). Transformational leadership sets the needs of the follower ahead of the leader "motivating the follower past self-interest" (Cooper, 2005, p. 50). Ross and Gray (2007) defined transformational leadership in an

organizational context as “dedication to fostering growth of organizational members and enhancing their commitment by elevating their goals” (p. 180). Transformational leadership, then, “is linked to organizational learning, organizational effectiveness, and organizational culture” (Ross & Gray, 2007, p. 180).

Although among researchers there is not unanimous agreement on the definition of transformational leadership it is possible to conclude transformational leadership in Christian educational settings could be understood as a process which seeks to transform students, faculty, administration and organizational culture through inspiration, and motivation for the purpose of whole person development and organizational advancement.

Historical Development of Transformational Leadership

Philosophical basis for transformational leadership is attributed to James MacGregor Burns who is credited with establishing the difference between transactional and transformational leadership (White, et.al., 2017). Historically, political leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were classified as transformational leaders for their ability to positively inspire people to live differently while dictators which lead by fear or negativity have not been deemed transformational leaders (White, et.al. 2017).

Transformational leadership is generally identified with the fields of psychology, administration, political science, sociology, and business. However, since the 1990s, transformational leadership has been linked with education, therefore, some researchers consider transformational leadership in the field of education to be in its early stage (Eliophotou & Ioannou, 2016). Transformational leadership could be understood as a popular concept of leadership which throughout its development is best understood as leaders encouraging change and motivation through a culture of collaboration for the common good of the organization

(Eliophotou & Ioannou, 2016). Even more, the development of the concept of transformational leadership includes leadership behaviors and practices which stimulate leaders to motivate followers to achieve or exceed organizational goals (Eliophotou & Ioannou, 2016).

Biblical Foundation for Transformational Leadership

Cooper (2015) argue, Paul's leadership as transformational on the basis of Paul's leadership led to increased maturity of the individuals he served, increased maturity of the leaders he served, and increased maturity of the local churches he served. Cooper recounted Bass' assertion, "a transformational leader is one who pays attention to those who are led to such an extent that the leader understands the development needs of each" (p. 53). In this sense, Cooper (2015) contends Paul could be understood as a "leader who influenced those around him. He led not from the position of apostle, but from who he was as God's bondservant" (p. 53).

Paul's Attributed Idealized Influence

In Philippians 1:3-6 Paul stated: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Cooper (2015) reminded his readers, "Paul focused on the important issues of Christian life, and nothing was more important than his relationship with and reliance on God" (p. 52). The Christian community at Philippi held their basis of trust in Paul in the fact that both Paul and Christian community at Philippi were partners in the gospel. Paul openly shared with his followers. First, although Paul was not present with the Philippian believers, he clearly enunciated I have not forgotten you and I thank God each time I remember you. Second, Paul makes plain he continually prayed for all the believers at Philippi... prayers filled with joy. Third, Paul identified himself with the Philippian believers in the gospel as he

characterized their relationship as a partnership in the gospel. The term partnership (*koinonia*) connotes fellowship; close mutual association; participation and sharing (Swanson, 1997). Paul communicated to his followers we are in close, participatory sharing relationship; hence, the Philippian believers viewed Paul as trustworthy.

Transformational leaders are gifted and use giftedness to transform their followers. According to 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12 and Ephesians 4:12, God provides gifts to the body Christ in order that the Church might be strengthened. Leaders which are transformational use their giftedness to transform others so that a vision or mission may be accomplished. It is reasonable to mention Paul was gifted in teaching, preaching, faith, charisma, and knowledge. With devotion to Christ, it is important to note Paul did not use his gifts to fulfill a self-centered agenda; Paul used his gifts to equip others for the glory of God (Cooper, 2015) while also empowering others to move into leadership roles. Transformational leaders, then, are unselfish leaders who place the mission above personal agenda so that their followers may be transformed, and organizational advancement occurs.

Transformational Leadership Behavior

Bass and Steidlmeir (1999) inform their readers, “The morality of transformational leadership has been sharply questioned, particularly by libertarians, “grass roots” theorists, and organizational development consultants” (p. 181). Morality and ethics are of primary concern among scholars and observers of transformational leaders, particularly leaders serving in faith-based organizations.

Trull (1997) asserts, “knowledge is foundational to doing ethics, but putting theory into practice is the proof that ethics works” (p. 1). For Anderson, ethics is of vital concern for two central reasons. First, “it is nearly impossible to go for a very long period of time without being

forced to make a decision that has moral consequences. Second, we confront ethical issues in society, dealing with moral dilemmas on a regular basis” (Anderson, 2005, p. xii). Niehbur (2013) when considering the matter of man and society concluded, “human society will never escape the problem of equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods which provide preservation and fulfillment of human life” (p. 1). Therefore, transformational leaders are not afforded the opportunity to escape moral and ethical behavior while exercising leadership within organizations. Certain virtues seem warranted to define the character or at a minimum, character expectations of transformational leaders.

Ethics and Transformational Leadership

Bass and Steidlmeir argue, “the ethics of leadership rests upon three pillars: (1) the moral character of the leader; (2) the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leader’s vision, articulation, and program which followers either embrace or reject; and (3) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue” (Bass & Steidlmeir, 1999). Transformational leaders set the example and cement ethical character and action for their followers. Tradition observes normative ethics as standards of right and wrong behavior (Trull, 1997). According to Bass and Steidlmeir (1999), “moral discourse is normative; it is captured in our language of right/wrong, good/ bad, should/ought, good/evil” (p. 182). Anderson (2005) contends, “ethics must be applied to reality, and numerous worldviews exist in the real world” (p. 6). Thus, ethical behavior among transformational leaders occurs within an accepted worldview... secular or Christian. Within Christian worldview, Anderson (2005) asserts, “Christian ethics seeks to integrate philosophy with theology when the Bible is used as the foundation and the filter for the philosophical ideas and principles” (p. 20).

Behavior and Transformational Leadership

Miller contends (2009), “Specific behaviors do enable transformational process to occur between leaders and others in an organizational context. These behaviors are not complex, but they do require one vital ingredient. That ingredient is a willingness on the part of the leader to implement those behaviors, to cultivate those behaviors with deliberation” (p. 45). In order to identify transformational leadership behaviors, Miller employed the “Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) to quantitatively explore employee/colleague perceptions of leader’s behaviors; specifically zeroing in on the practical aspects of the psychological dimension of love defined as ‘empathy with action’ in an organizational context” (Miller, 2009, p. 46). Miller conducted quantitative analysis of 123 individuals “75% employees, 25 % colleagues/peers of the leaders being rated) with 64 Anglo and 59 Hispanic/Latino leader profiles (64 female, 59 male; 47% business/private sector and 53% public sector from 45 different organizations)” (Miller, 2009, p. 46).

Effective leaders within an organization tend to move the organization forward, provide inspirational communication, clearly communicate the vision for the organization, set the expectation, and manage change skillfully (Miller, 2009). Miller noted, the personal qualities of the TLQ, “consists of; ‘transparency, honesty and consistency, integrity, openness to ideas and advice, decisive, risk-taker, charismatic, in touch, analytical and creative thinker” (Miller, 2009, p. 47). Moreover, the TLQ suggests empowerment along with “personal qualities” is also a dimension of transforming leadership (Miller, 2009, p. 47). The leader’s personal qualities could be understood as internal values which enable the leader to be effective. Kalshoven, et.al., argue there are identifiable behaviors attributable to transformational leaders based on the theoretical work of Brown, et.al. The authors noted, “fairness is seen as an important element of ethical

leader behavior” (Kalshoven, et.al., 2011, p. 351). Behaviors of transformational leaders are not self-serving, rather, leader behaviors are aimed at enhancing the relationship between leader and follower. Behaviors of transformational leaders are identifiable, and where such behaviors are consistent with behavioral traits mentioned in this section the process of transformational leadership could ethically occur in organizational settings.

Evaluation of Women in Leadership

Ledbetter, et.al., (2016) explored the modern-day challenge of leadership through the lens of the apostle Paul’s idea of community. The authors contend, “Paul’s idea of community as a form of organization creates and leverages a strong center of community as well as the centrality of faith-based values as critical to understanding individual of particular actions” (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016, p. xx). The juncture of faith and leadership stimulate the necessity to understand the meaning of leadership and which components are necessary for the successful development of future leaders. If transformational leadership is to experience maximized effect on leaders, faculty, and students; leadership development must be incorporated into the larger process of transformational leadership in Christian educational settings. As mentioned elsewhere in this literature review, transformational leadership can be learned (Miller, 2009).

Grounds for Women in Leadership

In recent years, writers on leadership have departed from the past practice of not including religious sources or tradition in leadership discussions, in that, recent writings on leadership incorporate Eastern or New Age spirituality, Jewish and Christian sources (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016). Since transformational leadership in Christian educational settings is linked to distinctive Christian mission it is important to observe approaches to leadership through a Christian perspective.

Ledbetter, et.al., (2016) mentioned, “women comprise 50 percent of managerial positions; however, at the senior level only twenty-three companies in the Fortune 500 are headed by female CEOs” (p. 86). Given the most needed and valuable asset in an organization is human capital, it appears organizations have a significant opportunity for increased utilization of women in executive leadership. With the increase of women entering into universities and graduate programs with concentrations in education, public administration, and social and behavioral sciences; women are certainly receiving higher education as they prepare for the workforce (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016). In America women make up 43 percent of business programs, 60 percent of master’s degree recipients, and 52 percent of doctorates awarded (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016). As organizations examine ways of sustaining and improving upon organizational community, women in leadership is an obvious benefit to organizations.

The need for women in leadership is apparent, yet women in leadership does not occur automatically...organizational change is required. Such change begins with creating an organizational culture which embraces diversity. Ledbetter et.al., contend,

...to effect long-term, meaningful change, we have to rely on our own courage, and the best place to look for insight into managing diversity inside yourself. Culture change goes deep into both individuals and organizations. It takes courage, insight, and faith to embrace change and diversity. (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016, p. 89).

Women in leadership calls for an eradication of what James termed the “us-them mentality” (Ledbetter, et.al., 2016, p. 88) so that individuals and organizations can accept, embrace, and celebrate diversity.

Women Leadership in Faith-based Higher Education

Leadership occurs in cultural context and the cultural context of faith-based institutions of higher education historically have limited women from entering top level leadership positions

(Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). A historical review revealed the lack of women in leadership is obvious. According to Longman and Lafreniere:

Educational attainment by women has therefore increasingly provided the preparation typically required for professional advancement. However, women continue to be underrepresented in higher education senior administrative positions. According to data from the American Council on Education, the percentage of women serving as university presidents more than doubled from 9.5% in 1986 to 23% in 2006; women held 38% of the chief academic officer positions, the primary pathway into a presidency. Only 14% of the public doctoral universities and 7% of the private doctoral universities nationwide are currently led by women. Most of the women holding presidencies serve in institutions of less than 3,000 students and in community colleges. (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 46-47).

Although women have obtained educational and professional development, the gateway to top level leadership positions is narrow only allowing few women to pass into the ranks of senior executive leadership in higher education. Hence, the culture within higher education seems to favor male-oriented senior leadership and “organizational cultures that are unsupportive of women” (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 47). Kezar, et.al., assert, the chief reason women occupy far less leadership positions than men are attributed to tokenism and male-normed organizational cultures (Kezar, et.al., 2006).

The standing of faith-based Christian colleges and universities is robust and warrants examination of women in leadership at such educational institutions. The lack of women in leadership is eye-opening and seems to align with Trull’s conclusion in the treatment of women throughout generations – “there are forces working to include women and powers working to exclude women” (Trull, 1997, p. 201).

Gender Realities for Women

The challenge of career advancement of women into leadership positions in higher education remains within faith-based and non-faith-based institutions. Researchers argue the challenge is the result of traditional male-normed organizational culture which continues to

narrow the gateway for women into leadership positions and contributes to tokenism (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). Within CCCU institutions, some of the barriers to leadership reported by women include lack of role models, theological conservatism, misunderstood or disrespected leadership style, and male-dominated administrative cabinets (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). Gender realities for women are distinct from those of men and could be understood according to Hooks (2015) as the persons who are most victimized by sexist oppression; “women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically, and spiritually – women who are powerless to change their condition in life” (p. 1).

The plight of women within faith-based higher education organizational culture is not observed among researchers as an equitable environment; women are observed as existing within an organizational culture which upholds gender inequity, barriers to leadership, adversity for women, and use of biblical, theological and church traditions to justify inequitable and unfair treatment of women seeking leadership positions (Diehl, 2014; Longman & Anderson, 2011).

Women and Adversity

Diehl conducted a qualitative study to discover the meaning of adversity for women leaders in higher education. Since extensive research demonstrates women seeking leadership positions comes with facing barriers and glass ceiling effect, Diehl sought to unearth how barriers and adversity impacted women in pursuit of leadership positions. Diehl identified barriers affecting the advancement of women into leadership positions included: work-family conflict, communication style, tokenism, exclusion from informal networks, lack of mentorship opportunities, lack of sponsoring, the dynamic that women get disappeared in organizations, salary inequalities, gender discrimination, work harassment, cultural constraints on women’s choices, and gender stereotyping (Diehl, 2014). De Pree (2004) resolved,

leaders are responsible for effectiveness; effectiveness comes about through enabling others to reach their potential – both personal potential and their corporate or institutional potential (p. 19-20).

The gender-based barriers to leadership Diehl identified represent an indictment upon higher education organizational structure which appears to foster pseudo-effectiveness for the sake of keeping with male-dominated leadership structure.

Participants in Diehl's study included 26 women from Mid-Atlantic institutions who held the position of president, provost, and vice president; ranging in age from 39 to 79 with an average of 20 years worked in higher education administration (Diehl, 2014). Women in the study identified 21 distinct types of adversity which included both personal and professional adversities which contributed to establishing meanings of adversity on micro, meso, and macro levels (Diehl, 2014). On a micro level, the women concluded experience with adversity framed meaning for their identity, self-esteem, and power. According to Diehl, "participants used their experience with adversity to analyze themselves (*self-analysis*), accept themselves (*self-acceptance*), define themselves (*self-definition*), and gain *perspective* over what is important in life" (Diehl, 2014, p. 56). Adversity contributed to both positive and negative aspects of self-esteem. From a positive aspect, participants developed self-confidence and pride, and from a negative aspect, participants possessed feelings of insecurity (Diehl, 2014). In the area of power, some women experienced lack of control over certain aspects of their lives and other women experienced empowerment and new opportunity (Diehl, 2014).

On a meso level, participants revealed their experiences with adversity had a direct impact on connections in their lives. Connections were identified as either, loss, relationship stress, relationship strengthening, and support for others (Diehl, 2014). The positive aspects of relationship strengthening include support for others, developing empathy, patience, and

encouragement of others (Diehl, 2014). The negative aspects of loss could be understood as losing connections as a result of difficult and challenging circumstances (job loss, death, jealousy); and relationship stress could be understood as adversity which creates strain on relationships with family, especially spouses or partners (Diehl, 2014).

On a macro level, adversities experienced by the participants impacted their worldview to some extent. It is important to mention; worldview is difficult to define apart from the deep meaning of culture in an individual's life. Hiebert (2008) defined worldview as:

the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives. It encompasses people's images or maps of the reality of all things that they use for living their lives. It is the cosmos thought to be true, desirable, and moral by a community of people. (p. 25-26).

Worldview, then, is an individual's beliefs, feelings, and values; as a person encounters experiences, he/she filters such experiences through their worldview and then, make decisions related to their experiences which then, produce behaviors (Hiebert, 2008). The women in the study disclosed experiences with adversity created a sense of disillusionment in some instances and optimism in other instances. Disillusionment occurred as a result of experienced adversity not matching pre-existing worldviews (Diehl, 2014). Experienced adversity produced optimism largely as some participants filtered adversities through pre-existing faith or beliefs (Diehl, 2014). Women viewed negative experiences as a potential for positive outcomes. In essence, adversities experienced by women leaders in higher education include both positive and negative effects. Women do construct meaning of barriers and adversities, and use adversities for self-improvement, empowerment, and strengthening.

African American Women Gender Realities

Gender-based barriers to leadership for women is well-documented among researchers, and there is focus among researchers to identify how the intersection of race, class, and gender impact African American women in higher education and corporate America. Walkington presented a critical overview of the sociological research on black women's experiences as faculty in higher education. Walkington (2017) argued, "intersecting power systems [race and sexism] result in a socially constructed and complex set of social inequalities for people like black women faculty in higher education" (p. 51). The intersecting power systems function as a system of oppression within black women's experiences in higher education; race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability are relational markers utilized by scholars to understand these experiences among black women (Walkington, 2017). Scholars utilize intersectionality "as an analytical tool to better be able to understand which patterns persist in black women's experiences in higher education" (Walkington, 2017, p. 52). Davis and Maldonado contend, some research on African American women experiences in higher education are generally focused upon barriers to career advancement and equal opportunity rather than focusing upon individual experiences, thus yielding a void of research on how African American women experience leadership and develop as leaders (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

With a focus upon sociological scholarship between 1995 and 2015 of black women faculty experiences in higher education, Walkington's study unearthed three themes: workplace discrimination, unequal access to resources, and strategies for resistance (Walkington, 2017). According to Walkington (2017), workplace discrimination is "rooted in racist, sexist, and classist notions from the era of chattel slavery about black women as undeserving recipients of affirmative action and lacking workplace productivity" (p. 52). Hooks (2015) described the

general condition of black women in the United States as; “an unusual position in this society, for not only are we collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group” (p. 16). Hence, the experiences of black women in higher education would include gender-based discrimination common to all women while also possessing gender experiences unique to black women.

Workplace discrimination resonated as central to black women faculty experiences within higher education according to Walkington’s study. Walkington (2017) mentioned, “black women faculty face a double-bind of racial and gender discrimination at every level of academic life” (p. 52). Black women faculty in the workplace are viewed as less capable, rarely holding administrative positions, and faced with encountering the image of the Mammy – giving deference to white faculty (Walkington, 2017). Research discovered black women experiences in higher education were described as; cheap and unvalued labor, exploited in race-specific positions, and racial and gender subordinate (Walkington, 2017). Among some scholars, this is known as the value problem. Davis and Maldonado asserted, African American women are treated differently, labor in unsupportive systems, are required to perform at higher levels than male counterparts and expected to perform in gender-stereotyped roles (Davis and Maldonado, 2015). Fundamental to workplace discrimination reported by black women faculty is the reality perhaps black women in higher education are undervalued by the institutions they serve.

Since leadership positions in higher education continue to be male-dominated, black women encounter what some scholars termed “tokenism” According to Walkington (2017),

...as tokens, black women find it harder to gain credibility, are more isolated and peripheral, face misconceptions of their role and identity in their departments and face more personal stress. As tokens black women are deemed an outsider within. (p. 55).

Black women, then, are marginalized within higher education, they are what Collins termed “strangers and marginal intellectuals” (Walkington, 2017, p. 55). Although African American women in higher education believe equality of opportunity is their right (Davis & Maldonado, 2015), without a shift in social and cultural organizational norms these women shall continue to experience gender-based discrimination along with the intersection of race, gender, and class presenting real barriers to equality and career advancement.

African American Women and Double Jeopardy

Davis and Maldonado (2015) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to explore the intersectionality of race and gender for African American women in the academy. The participants were African American women in senior leadership positions holding the title of president, vice president, or dean in both four-year and two-year colleges. The study participants totaled five with all participants being in the United States. Seven interview questions were framed to the answer to the primary research question: “*In what ways did race and gender identities inform African American women leadership development experiences?*” (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 56). The study revealed five themes from the experiences of African American women who “confirmed that race and gender informed their development as leaders in academia” (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 57). The first theme is predestined for success. Within this theme, African American women disclosed family and extended family were influential in their lives, parents and family provided strong guidance and support in their development, and family members provided a strong foundation for success (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The second theme is sponsorship from the unexpected. Sponsorship is understood to mean opening doors to promotion (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The participants in the study reported sponsors from unexpected individuals played a key role in their career advancement. Many of the

participants noted sponsorship came from White men. Davis and Maldonado (2015) noted, “white males are often sponsors for women of color by virtue of their predominance and access to senior level positions; they are in position to have the decision-making authority to provide opportunities for women of color” (p 58). The third theme is double jeopardy of race and gender. Collins concluded race and gender are inseparable (Davis & Maldonado, 2015) and participants disclosed they faced the double jeopardy of race and gender in spite of their leadership abilities; therefore, these women were faced with developing the fortitude and determination to rise above this adversity and move into leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The fourth theme is learning how to play the game. The study confirmed the participants were shut out of informal networks, effectively excluded from the “good old boys” club. In the workplace, the participants shared they understood the difference between how men played the game and how they should play the game...the playing field is not level, however African American women believe they need a seat at the table (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). The fifth theme is pay it forward. Participants stressed the need to provide guidance to other African American women - mentor other African American women “for the growth and success of future African women in leadership roles” (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 60).

The participants rose to leadership positions in the face of the double jeopardy of race and gender. Therefore, it appears African American women who seek to enter leadership positions in higher education will need to establish key relationships, learn how to play the game and not allow the double jeopardy of race and gender to quench their aspiration for leadership positions.

Advancing Women into Leadership Roles

Scholars are focused upon identifying paths to leadership for women in higher education. As previously mentioned in this literature review, women face barriers and adversities to leadership positions in higher education which are often rooted in gender-based discrimination, workplace discrimination, workplace harassment, and sexist oppression. Women face the difficult challenge of navigating career advancements within an organizational environment which does not afford women the same fair treatment as men who are based upon well-documented research efforts...the standard occupant of leadership positions in higher education.

Leadership Development

Recognizing the need to put forth an effort to close the gap between men and women in leadership positions, in 1996 the CCCU developed the Leadership Development Institutes (LDI)... “a collaborative work in developing future leadership for Christian higher education” (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 50). The efforts led to the creation of the Executive Leadership Development Institute (ELDI), a program designed to provide professional “development for newer presidents, newer chief academic officers, and emerging leaders” (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 50). In 2005, Longman and Lafreniere conducted a study to examine the success and effectiveness of the ELDI. The study included 71 participants who participated in the ELDI between 1998- 2004 with the survey questions aimed at allowing participants to describe outcomes of the Women’s Leadership Development Initiatives (WLDI) program and “to disclose the single most important beneficial impact of the WLDI” (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012).

The study unearthed eight key themes among the participants:

- (1) the benefit of getting to know other women;
- (2) mentoring/shadowing experience;
- (3) the opportunity to form ongoing professional relationships;
- (4) appreciation for the opportunity to interact with others who shared similar commitments;
- (5) time to focus, reflect, and clarify their personal sense of calling

to the academic profession and/or to leadership; (6) finding encouragement to press on in spite of resistance to women in leadership in Christian higher education; (7) acknowledging the value of women in leadership in Christian higher education; and (8) heightened confidence in their personal leadership ability. (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012, p. 54-55).

Barnes when examining the pathway for millennial African American women into leadership positions in higher education concluded mentors provide career guidance, provide guidance in risk management, and act as role models (Barnes, 2017) Further data from Longman and Lafreniere's study revealed: (a) leadership development initiatives add positive value to organizational culture; (b) effective leadership development programs target specific audiences and meet specific needs; (c) known data related to effective leadership development programs could benefit leadership professionals; (d) internal and external validation of talents and awareness benefits emerging leaders; and (e) mentoring and shadowing are transformational experiences for WLDI participants (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). Leadership development programming aimed at developing future women leaders within faith-based higher education adds significant value to organizational culture and the participants of leadership programs. Well-designed and strategic leadership development programs could expand the number of women holding leadership positions in higher education and provide emerging leaders with needed development for the overall improvement of leadership professionals. Since it is well-documented among researchers the stained-glass ceiling does exist within faith-based higher education, improving organizational culture is within reach with the implementation of leadership development programs and a commitment to inclusivity of women into the ranks of leadership positions. Inclusivity should be understood as promoting effective diversity within the organization through eliminating gender-based discrimination, workplace discrimination, race-based and class-based oppression. Organizational inclusivity, then, seeks to diversify the organization by launching initiatives which support women in leadership, policies

which widen the gateway for women into leadership positions, overhauling organizational culture to support women in leadership, and leveling the playing field among men and women within organization, thereby affording the organization to sustain new realities for equalities for all within the organization.

Rationale for the Study and the Gap in the Literature

The foundational rationale for the research study was to discover how African American women serving on faculties at faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences within organizational culture, and how transformational leadership behaviors could improve the advancement of African American women into leadership positions in faith-based higher education. This study contributes to previous research centered around the subject of women in leadership, African American women gender realities, organizational culture, barriers to women in leadership, and gender realities for women in faith-based higher education. Recent research supports the basic conclusion...women continue to face barriers known as the stained-glass ceiling and concrete-wall, and work within male-normed leadership structures in pursuit of leadership roles within faith-based higher education institutions (Longman, et.al., 2019).

Empirical findings revealed women in faith-based higher education are faced with navigating cultural norms which view men as more suitable for leadership, exclude women from strategic discussion, and foster environments of tokenism (Longman & Anderson, 2016). Faith-based higher education institutions participating in the CCCU are Christ-centered, hold mission statements rooted in Christian beliefs, and enjoy the privilege of uniting with other faith-based higher education institutions for the purpose of advancing Christian faith and intellect (CCCU, 2018). This study could be used to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education, since these women possess unique

gender-based and race-based experiences. Even more, the study could provide a framework for improving the number of African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions.

The literature review unearthed women collectively face significant obstacles in the pursuit of gender equity and inclusion in American society. Research demonstrated although the CCCU is a robust association, women employed at colleges and universities participating in the CCCU report experiencing barriers to leadership. Scholars (Diehl, 2014; Longman & Lafreniere, 2012) reported the gap between men and women in leadership is wide and closing the gap will require intentional efforts to place more women into leadership positions. In the literature, recent studies of gender experiences of women in faith-based higher education focused upon improving organizational culture, the benefits of women's leadership development initiatives, and adversities to entering leadership positions. Most of the studies in the literature did not capture the unique experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education. Collectively, women share in the struggle for equity and inclusion in American society, and much of the literature related to women seeking or holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education aimed at discovering and interpreting women experiences without specifically focusing upon the experiences of African American women. Although the data in the literature is meaningful and valuable, the gap in the research is a detailed study of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education who pursue or hold leadership positions. Even more, a study of the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education is needed to understand how African American women ascribe meaning to their experiences with the pursuit of leadership positions in faith-based higher education.

Profile of the Current Study

As identified in the literature review, African American women experienced gender-based and race-based discrimination in the workplace, and overall, women face significant barriers to leadership which are not common for men in higher education. In this chapter the author presented a theological framework for the study which examined theological meaning and biblical foundation for the image of God and the shepherd motif in light of gender realities among African American women in higher education. The theoretical framework for the study explored critical race theory and feminist theory and identified each theory as best suited to narrate the experiences of African American women seeking leadership positions in higher education.

The scope of the literature review observed the meaning of transformational leadership, transformational leadership behaviors, an evaluation of women in leadership and gender realities among women seeking leadership positions. Data in the literature revealed the positive effects of transformational leadership, leadership development programs for women, and confirmed African American women face unique barriers to leadership positions which include being faced with navigating organizational cultures in higher education which harbor issues of discrimination, racism, and sexism.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design Synopsis

This chapter describes the research methodology approach used to conduct the study. Rational and descriptions for the methodology include the research design synopsis, setting, participants, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, and chapter summary. The qualitative study focused upon African American women lived experiences in pursuit of leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions.

The Problem

The topic of women in leadership continues to remain a subject of interest among researchers. Although women have gained ground in the recent decade, women trail far behind men in occupying leadership roles in colleges and universities participating in the Council for Christian colleges and universities (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Leadership in faith-based higher education institutions occurs within cultural context with male-normed leadership structures and theological commitments perceived as normative. Limited numbers of women in leadership roles warrants discovering how African American women describe lived experiences in pursuit of leadership positions in faith-based higher education.

Purpose Statement

This phenomenological research study sought to understand the lived experiences of African American women seeking leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions. The study sought to discover if African American women perceive the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organizational culture and leadership structure of faith-based higher education institutions as it pertains to increasing the number of

African American women in leadership roles.

Research Questions

The study sought to discover the lived experiences of African American seeking leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions guided by five research questions.

These questions were:

RQ1. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences when pursuing leadership positions?

RQ2. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organization in their pursuit of leadership positions?

RQ3. How do African American women describe their experience with leadership development or mentorship initiatives in faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ4. How do African American women describe their motivation for seeking leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ5. How do African American women describe their organizational fit in faith-based higher education institutions?

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study utilized phenomenological research design to discover how African American women in faith-based higher education understand their reality in pursuit of leadership roles. The general characteristics of qualitative research design include data collection, analysis, and writing. According to Creswell, qualitative research explores the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem, building upon themes which emerge from research questions, and include an element for the researcher to interpret the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research tends to include philosophical assumptions which are (1) constructivist - individuals or groups understand the world through subjective meanings of their experiences, or (2) transformative - an action agenda which includes

a political agenda to signal for reform which changes the experiences of an individual's or group's life or work (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenological design utilizes stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation to describe the essence of an individual's lived experiences with a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research began to appear in the 1990s with its origin traced to anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and evaluation (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) identified the following characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Collect data in the natural setting of the participant.
2. The key instrument of data collection is the researcher.
3. Data collection occurs through multiple sources.
4. Data analysis is both inductive and deductive.
5. Participants disclose the meaning of experiences.
6. The research process is emergent.
7. The role of researcher potentially shapes the interpretations and meaning of the data.
8. The researcher develops a picture of the problem.

In qualitative research, typical implementation processes include narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2014).

Typical implementation processes according to Creswell (2014) are described as:

1. Narrative research - studies which employ use of individuals stories about the lives or experiences.
2. Phenomenological research - participants describes experiences of a phenomenon and the researcher describes the actual experiences of the participants.
3. Grounded theory - theory is grounded in the participant's perspective.
4. Ethnography - researcher studies shared patterns of a cultural group in a natural setting during a prolonged period of time.

5. Case study - researcher analyzes a program, process, or one or more persons as a case.

The study was qualitative since the researcher sought to understand the lived experiences among African American women holding or pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Qualitative researchers according to Creswell, focus upon “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014). The way African American women describe their lived experiences, make meaning of their experiences, and perceive the presence of transformational leadership within the organizational setting aligns with qualitative research approach with use of phenomenological design.

Setting

Creswell (2014) identified the single most important characteristic of qualitative research is the natural setting. Natural setting could be understood as “the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study” (Creswell, 2014, p. 185). The setting for the participants in this qualitative study was faith-based colleges and universities situated in California, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. Distinctives of the colleges and universities include African Methodist Episcopal, American Baptist, Christian Churches and Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant, Inter-Denominational, Mennonite, Multi-Denominational, and Non-Denominational. Faith-based higher education institutions participating in the CCCU are Christ-centered, hold mission statements which are rooted in Christian beliefs, and enjoy the privilege of uniting with other faith-based higher education institutions for the purpose of advancing Christian faith and intellect (CCCU, 2018). The foundational reason for selecting these institutions is the CCCU is comprised of more than 180 colleges and universities worldwide, more than 520,000 students worldwide, more than 90,000 faculty and staff, and reported fiscal year 2018-2019 revenue of \$12.3 million, up 2.4% from

fiscal year 2018-2019 (CCCU, 2018). More specifically, each CCCU institution shares three basic commitments:

- (1) biblical truth - integrating the Holy Scriptures—divinely inspired, true, and authoritative—throughout all aspects of the institution, including teaching and research, (2) Christian formation - fostering Christian virtues rooted in the Scriptures and nurtured through the institution’s curricular and co-curricular programs, and (3) gospel witness - actively committed to advancing God’s redemptive purposes in the world by graduating students who live and share the Gospel in word and deed. (CCCU, 2018).

The setting was comprised of eleven faith-based colleges and universities which offer 4 year undergraduate, master and doctoral degree programs. African American women at each college and university worked within an organizational setting which is structured to predominantly male-oriented leadership with African American women in leadership and senior leadership roles. Table 1 provides demographic overview of the research participant settings.

Table 1

Participant Setting Demographics

Institution Type	Distinctive	Classification	Location	President	Student Population
University	Inter-Denominational	Private	California	White Male	6,000>
University	Inter-Denominational	Private	Oregon	White Male	635
University	Church of Christ	Private	Texas	White Male	5,200>
University	Evangelical Covenant	Private	Illinois	White Female	2,900>
University	Mennonite	Private	Virginia	White Female	1,300>
College	African Methodist Episcopal	Private/HBCU	Texas	Black Male	Undisclosed
University	Non-Denominational	Private	California	Black Male	4,200>

College	American Baptist	Private	Pennsylvania	White Female	Undisclosed
University	American Baptist	Private	Pennsylvania	White Female	3,100
University	Christian Churches & Church of Christ	Private	California	White Male	8,800>
College	Inter-Denominational	Private	Illinois	White Male	3,000>

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of African American women in faith-based higher education, who, at the time of the study served in executive level leadership positions generally known as the president's cabinet or senior executive leadership team. The women held positions such as chief diversity officer, chief intercultural officer, dean, executive assistant to the president, and vice president. These women were selected for the study since their roles in leadership are determined by the colleges and universities to be senior executive leadership and each participant serves in the president's cabinet. The researcher obtained additional demographic data for each participant to include age, ethnicity, number of years in career field, and years of experience in leadership roles which is described in narrative form. A short questionnaire was distributed to a group of African American women holding senior leadership roles to identify who would be willing to be interviewed for the study.

Qualitative research employs use of theory in a number of ways which lead to a basis of explaining behavior and attitudes, and could include variables, constructs, and hypotheses. (Creswell, 2014). Since explanations within qualitative research tend to be broad, they act as theories (Creswell, 2014). Theoretical lens or perspective provides an encompassing view of gender, class and race, and morphs into a transformative lens which frames the sort of questions

researchers ask which influences how data is collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2014). Roberts concluded (2010), “theoretical framework provides the boundaries, or scaffolding, for the [research] study” (p. 147). Even more, theoretical framework informs the reader with exact content which defines the focus of the study and eliminates the potential for the study to acquire an unimportant quality (Roberts, 2010, p. 147). There are a number of theoretical perspectives available to researchers, and some perspectives include: Feminist perspective, racialized disclosure, critical theory, queer theory, and disability inquiry (Creswell, 2014). Critical race theory and feminist theory served as the theoretical foundation for examining realities among African American women in seeking leadership positions in faith-based higher education. Both, critical race theory and feminist theory were used to aid in the explanation of lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education, and to determine which issues are important for transformation of perceived barriers, if any to leadership roles held by African American women.

Upon identifying participants through the use of a short questionnaire the researcher employed convenience sampling to select participants which met the study criteria and who consented to the study (Creswell, 2014). The process began by sending a short questionnaire to eleven African American women in senior leadership roles in faith-based colleges and universities which were situated in California, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. Additionally, a snowball technique was employed where consenting participants were presented with an opportunity to refer other potential participants for the purpose of increasing the number of participants in the study to 10 to 15 participants. Thirty-one participants were identified for the study with eleven African American women consenting to participate in the study.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research is observed as inquirer engaging in the experience of the participants with an aim of interpreting the meaning participants ascribe to their experience (Creswell, 2014). Creswell explained researchers are tasked with identifying the biases, values, and personal background which impact their interpretations included in the study (Creswell, 2014). Conducting a study on the lived experiences of African American women in faith-based higher education could be attributed to personal and professional experiences. The researcher is an important component in qualitative research and Mehra (2002) explained it is not possible for the researcher to separate from the topic or participants in the study. The researcher is an African American male who has served in leadership and senior leadership roles in faith-based and non-profit organizations and associations...in a number of instances as the sole African American on the leadership team. The educational experiences of the researcher in undergraduate, master and doctoral studies occurred at a college or university where African American women were not represented in significant number in senior or executive leadership roles. Since the researcher has deep experience serving on leadership teams in faith-based and non-profit organizations as the sole African American, the researcher actively listened to participants, remained open to contrary findings in the study, and honestly reported the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher is the primary researcher for the study and filed an application with Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). In no event did the researcher proceed with collecting or analyzing data prior to receiving IRB approval. The IRB, according to Creswell, "exists on campuses because of federal regulations that provide protection against

human rights violations” (Creswell, 2014, p. 95). In addition to the IRB application, the researcher provided each participant with an informed consent form for signature to agree to the provisions of the study (Creswell, 2014). Sarantakos (2005) highlighted informed consent forms include the following set of elements:

1. Identify the researcher.
2. Identify the sponsoring institution.
3. Identify the purpose of the study.
4. Identify the benefits for the participants.
5. Identify the level and type of participant involvement.
6. Notification of risks to participants.
7. The agreement of confidentiality to participants.
8. Assurance the participant can withdraw at any time.
9. Provide names of persons to contact if questions arise.

Ethical considerations performed by the researcher served to protect participants, preserve integrity of the research, and shield against misconduct (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data collection in qualitative research, according to Creswell (2014) include “setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials” (p. 189). Qualitative researchers approach data collection in a structured manner; a specific plan or protocol is predetermined for the purpose of recording data during the observational period (Creswell, 2014). Intentional sampling, data generation, data collection and analysis followed by coding and analysis comprise the aggregate process of the design plan. In qualitative research, researchers could conduct face-

to-face interviews with participants, telephone interviews, use focus group interviews, or E-mail internet interviews. Interviews employ open-ended questions in limited number and seek to unearth perspectives and beliefs of the participants (Creswell, 2014).

The importance of matching participants to research questions could not be understated among experts. Failure on the part of the researcher to do so could lead to inadequate research findings. Creswell explained the data collection procedure as multi-step process including: (1) purposefully selected sites or individuals for the study, (2) determining the number of sites and individuals to be included in the study, and (3) identifying the types of data to be collected (Creswell, 2014). Review of the literature related to observation, interview, and other documents revealed observation entails the researcher observing participants in their setting, taking field notes in an unstructured or semi-structured manner, and the researcher presenting participants with open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014).

Collection Methods

Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to participating in and completing an interview. The researcher delivered the informed consent form to each participant via email delivery for the participant to sign and return to the researcher. Interviews used in qualitative research yield the following advantages: (1) face-to-face and telephone interviews are beneficial when there is an inability to directly observe the participant, (2) focus group interviews allow the participants to provide historical background, and (3) E-mail internet interviews provide the researcher with control over the questioning (Creswell, 2014). The researcher used unstructured and open-ended questions to allow the participants to openly and freely provide their perspectives (Creswell, 2014).

Instruments and Protocols

Qualitative interviews were conducted in the study. The researcher scheduled with each participant a 30-minute interview conducted via Cisco Webex or Zoom video conference call web-based meeting which was recorded. During the interview, the researcher used seven unstructured and open-ended questions to allow the participants to describe their experiences and gender realities in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based education. Additionally, the researcher delivered the interview questions to each participant at least two weeks prior to the scheduled interview between the researcher and the participant. The purpose of the interview questions was to allow the researcher to learn and understand the meaning participants ascribe to their experiences with organizational culture and their lived experiences in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The interview questions are included in Appendix D. The researcher delivered to each participant via email a 6-question questionnaire to discover background information and included a ten-day response period. The demographic questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Procedures

Collection procedures for qualitative research identify selected sites or individuals for the study (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 189). Data collection for the study consisted of qualitative interviews; administering unstructured and open-ended questions presented by the researcher to the participants via Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference web-based video call for the purpose of obtaining the participants perspectives. Qualitative interview data collection was

selected because this form of data collection is specifically aimed at allowing the participant to share their perspectives and opinions, historical background, and is useful as the researcher is not able to conduct face-to-face meetings with the participants in a physical setting. Qualitative reliability was achieved by the researcher through documenting the steps of the procedures (Creswell, 2014) with use of a database in order to create a means for others to follow the procedures. Transcripts used for data collection were checked numerous times for accuracy to eliminate apparent errors, establish and maintain consistent clusters of themes to ensure drift does not occur (Creswell, 2014). The interview questions and questionnaire were developed with the goal of producing the necessary data to complete the study. The field test was completed with review and input of a maximum of three experts in the field with results from the field experts incorporated into the survey and questionnaire to ensure the research purpose is achieved. To assist the data collection phase, the researcher recorded Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference meetings via audio recording and a reflective journal was kept by the researcher to record field notes. The researcher maintained respect for the privacy, anonymity, and liberty of each participant by assigning fictitious names or aliases with use of separate profiles for each participant stored in secure files, and ensuring each participant they are not required to participate in the study and could determine to not participate in the study at any point.

Data Analysis

Data analysis integrates with other parts of the qualitative study by deconstructing the data and reconstructing the data in order to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2014). Data analysis affords the researcher the opportunity to mine the data...to determine which data is used in the qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). An important question in phenomenological design is:

How will the data be analyzed? Creswell asserted the basic purpose of data analysis is to dissect and reconstruct the data to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2014).

A known form of data analysis in phenomenological method is horizontalizing the data which affords the researcher to establish meaning of clustered themes (Moustakas, 1994). Clustered themes were used by the researcher to eliminate duplicate and overlapping statements to develop textural descriptions of the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Analysis Methods

The researcher used the following steps to manage the data collected and identify significant patterns and themes which emerged from the data. All Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference recordings employed during the interviews were transcribed within one week of data collection. The researcher read, reviewed, and reflected upon the data to consider the overall meaning of the data. Creswell suggested qualitative researchers employ this step to record general thoughts and frame ideas about the data (Creswell, 2014). Even more, Creswell asserted, data in qualitative research requires coding; the process of organizing the data, bracketing chunks and assigning a word to represent a category (Creswell, 2014). The researcher clustered the data and developed descriptions which emerged from the data of the lived experiences among African women in leadership in faith-based higher education. Description terminology is typically related to the phenomenological analysis and this study aligned with individual textural-structural descriptions. Individual textural-structural descriptions utilize eliminating invariant constituents, clustering and thematizing, identifying themes, constructing textural descriptions, construction of individual structural descriptions, and constructing research participant textural-structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). With this set of activities, the researcher was able to categorize and provide meaning of the data. In this phase, the researcher reviewed and refined

characteristics of the themes and reassessed meanings which construct the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher remained open to developing unexpected and unusual themes which may not have been anticipated at the start of the study. This process was used to develop a description of each theme, participants and analysis of each theme. The researcher used narrative discussion to present significant patterns, relationships or themes which emerged from the study. Visuals and figures were used to deepen the description of significant themes. Qualitative validity according to Creswell (2014) is, “[the] means that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures” (p. 201). Microsoft word files were created for all interviews, questionnaires, documents, and journal entries. Additionally, all files were stored on external hard drives which only the researcher had access to. The researcher performed qualitative validity by clarifying the researcher’s biases in narrative form with use of reflexivity, and the researcher used participant checking and presented final themes or specific descriptions to allow the participants to determine whether the themes and descriptions are accurate. Finally, the researcher included a summary of the data.

Trustworthiness

Credibility. Credibility was achieved by (1) conducting the interviews in a safe and non-threatening environment and manner for the participants, (2) interview questions were presented in written form without deviation and follow up probing questions were used where deemed necessary, and (3) final themes and descriptions were delivered to the participants to determine whether findings are accurate.

Dependability. Dependability in the study was achieved by outlining how the study shall be conducted so that the reader can replicate the study. An audit log was used to ensure

retention of records used in the study. The audit log included the steps taken with the participants, researcher bias, and decisions made related to the research in the audit log.

Confirmability. Confirmability was achieved in the study with use of reflexive journaling. The journal was created to disclose researcher bias and aided the researcher in maintaining awareness of personal biases. Even more, disclosing the researcher's bias in a journal served to prevent the researcher's biases from drifting into the research process. Regular entries were made to the journal.

Transferability. The researcher was able to determine whether transferability is applicable once the study is completed and analyzed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the purpose of this phenomenological study which was to gain insight into the lived experiences of African American women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The data was collected through one-on-one interviews with the use of unstructured open-ended questions. Additionally, the researcher administered a questionnaire to each participant to obtain demographic data for the study in order to gain insight into each participant's professional and personal background. Finally, the researcher used horizontalizing to develop textural descriptions to explain the findings of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Qualitative research centers on data collection, analysis, and writing. The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African American women holding and pursuing leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions. This study used qualitative approach which focused on 30-minute semi-structured interviews where seven open-ended questions were presented to each participant for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the research findings which includes a summary of the compilation and protocol and measures, demographic and sample data, data analysis and findings, and an evaluation of the research design gathered from eleven African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education. This chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

This study utilized qualitative approach and phenomenological implementation to understand the lived experiences of African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education. The methodology provided participants with an opportunity to express their lived experiences which impacted and influenced their career path into leadership roles. The protocol used semi-structured interviews with use of seven open-ended questions which assisted the researcher in gaining data for analysis. Through the data analysis process, the researcher identified emergent themes. Even more, the researcher identified common strategies, common perceptions of gender realities to pursuing leadership roles, and common experiences among African American women holding leadership positions in faith-based higher education. The experiences of eleven African American women leaders were used to explore each research question.

Demographic and Sample Data

Thirty-one African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education institutions were identified for the study. Five potential participants declined to participate in the study, fifteen potential participants did not respond to the invitation to participate in the study, and eleven African American women in leadership in roles accepted invitation to participate in the study. Each of the eleven African American women completed and returned consent forms to the researcher. The researcher gathered data from each participant to gain an understanding of their contextual demographics. At the time of the study, participants were employed in leadership positions with active membership in the president's cabinet (chief diversity officer, chief intercultural engagement officer, dean, executive dean, executive assistant to the president, and vice president) in faith-based higher education institutions.

The following demographic and sample data provides an overview of the characteristics of eleven African American women leaders who participated in the study. To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned a pseudonym and institutions where participants were employed are referred to as four-year, public, private or independent. The following pseudonyms are used throughout the remainder of the study: Participant 1 - Agatha, Participant 2 - Althea, Participant 3 - Charlette, Participant 4 - Felicia, and Participant 5 - Florence, Participant 6 - Gloria, Participant 7 - Harriet, Participant - 8 Loretta, Participant 9 - Ruth, Participant 10 - Shirley, and Participant 11 - Virginia.

Table 2 provides a biographical sketch of the participants in the study. The information included in this table was gathered from the Questionnaire Tool (see Appendix B) which was completed by each participant.

Table 2*Biographical Sketch*

Participant	Age Range Entered Leadership	Time in Current Position	Time in Leadership Positions	Time in Career Field	Highest Degree
Agatha	35-44	3 Years	12 Years	15 Years	MS
Althea	45-54	3 Years	5 Years	20 Years	PhD
Charlette	45-54	1 Year	4 Years	30 Years	PhD
Felicia	35-44	1 Year	25 Years	37 Years	MS
Florence	35-44	2 Years	12 Years	12 Years	MDiv
Gloria	25-34	4 Years	16 Years	18 Years	PhD
Harriet	25-34	6 Years	20 Years	26 Years	MA
Loretta	55-Older	1 Year	14 Years	2 Years	MS
Ruth	35-44	3 Years	5 Years	20 Years	EdD
Shirley	45-54	6 Years	22 Years	46 Years	EdD
Virginia	25-34	2 Years	20 Years	20 Years	EdD

The demographic data revealed 72% of the participants entered leadership roles at the age of 35 or later. Even though the average time in career field among participants was 22 years, only two participants held their current leadership role for more than 5 years. Among participants 73% have been in their current role 3 years or less. There appeared to be some correlation between the number of years in career field and number of years in leadership roles among participants. Among African American women leaders surveyed, 44% of participants with 20 or more years in career field had at least 10 years of leadership experience. One participant among African American women leaders had 30 years in career field with 4 years of leadership experience. Another leader among African American women leaders surveyed had 15 years in career field with 12 years in leadership roles which demonstrated there is wide variation between the number of years African American women leaders have in career field and leadership experience. The experiences of these eleven African American women in leadership in faith-

based higher education were used to explore each research question. The following section explores data analysis, findings, and emergent themes which describe the participant's perceptions of their lived experiences and journey into leadership positions.

Data Analysis and Findings

The individual interviews and data obtained from the eleven African American women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education revealed a number of emergent themes. The themes include race and gender actualities, leadership paradigm among senior leaders, leadership inspiration, pathways to mentorship, acquired wisdom, organizational experiences, and advice to African American women. The following participant responses provide a means for interpretative analysis of the emerging themes. The researcher presented seven interview questions and the seven themes which emerged from the participant interviews aided in answering the five research questions.

Theme 1 Race and Gender Actualities. The first theme which emerged from the participant interviews is race and gender actualities of African American women in faith-based higher education. Nearly all of the participants shared with the researcher race and gender certainly, if not absolutely impacted their career and progression to leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Participants described lived experiences which resulted in their description and meaning of race and gender actualities. The women discussed the impact of their race and gender in different ways. Eight out of eleven participants described their careers were negatively impacted race and gender while two out of eleven participants were able to identify how their race and gender positively impacted their career and career progression. One participant described the reality of carrying the implications of her race and gender into the space of faith-based higher education. Race and gender create concrete dilemmas for African American

women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Agatha described such dilemmas as the challenge of possessing identity in a work environment where you are treated as a “wife at work” on one hand while on the other hand viewed as failing to reach accomplishments on account of your race and gender. Agatha stated, “Yes, I think it [race and gender] is definitely something I have learned to embrace. I would say as a young female in leadership, people attribute the lack of what you are able to accomplish to those characteristics.” Agatha shared:

Working for a boss where you are feeling like a wife at work; where you are taking care of a lot of the housework of the office behind the scenes and working really hard, and people not seeing that; attributing [your work] to the boss and not batting an eye or thinking about it. I’ve had to learn how to embrace and take hold of my identity and my gender in the environment in which I work.

For another participant, race and gender in the work environment means being the only African American women in leadership, resisting gender norms, and being perceived as less threatening than African American men.

Virginia conveyed:

It has impacted my progression. As diversity is trending, people will sometimes look for women of color; they choose black women because they believe they are less threatening than black men in some of these roles. Gender roles impact how you do your job, so I resist those tendencies and I do my job. I think it makes it more difficult as a woman and a person of color. When I say difficult, difficult because you are trying to defy people’s expectations.

Shirley discussed the impact of race and gender and resolved both have absolutely impacted her progression into leadership roles in her career. For Shirley, race and gender mean carrying the threat of being overlooked for promotions and the ever-present necessity to adapt to every situation on account of race and gender. Shirley shared:

I know beyond the shadow of a doubt I have been overlooked for positions because I am female, and I am African American. As African American women we are uniquely made by God; our history in this nation has taught us to be adaptable. As people of color in this nation we have had to adapt in every situation. Faith-based higher education is no different.

Charlette discussed race and gender as having impacted her career progression in both, positive and negative terms. In positive terms, race and gender leads to increased opportunity to hold leadership roles and generally colleagues find it easier to collaborate with women. In negative terms, race and gender means intense scrutiny when pursuing promotions and leadership roles, false assumptions by white persons related to information African American women should know, and the reality of having decisions not automatically trusted without vetting performed by white persons. For instance, Charlette mentioned, “I think that my tenure and promotion was an incidence where, I feel pretty strongly if I were not female or if I were male or if I were white my portfolio would not have been scrutinized to the level [it] was scrutinized.”

Charlette stated:

Sometimes I think it is assumed by white people or white men that everyone knows [certain] information and the fact is everyone does not know. It depends on who is involved in those watercooler conversations. I think sometimes people do not automatically assume that black women can be trusted to make decisions without everything being vetted in some way or another. I think those are hinderances.

On a positive side, I think that it is easier for people to collaborate with women in general; I have never had any issues collaborating with people because I think they do not mind collaborating with women and I think that has been really helpful. This is kind of a positive and a negative. The fact is there are so few black women on my campus it puts me in a position where I have more access to leadership, I think. So, that’s kind of a positive and negative but I guess more of a negative. But it has contributed to me being in leadership only because there are so few [African American women]; I mean there are two black women on my campus...female professors on a campus of close to 5,000 students.

Loretta elaborated on the impact of race and gender with reflection upon work output, and the pace other colleagues tend to progress and move upward in career progression. In a real sense, Loretta described race and gender for African American women as carrying the burden of having to work harder than others. Loretta shared:

Absolutely, gender has impacted my path to leadership roles...that is very common. It is not a story you have not heard a million times, but women have to work harder, let’s say

African American women have to work harder. So, when you combine those two, African American women may not [progress] at the same pace as other women with the same education and it requires an approach a little bit differently so you can move along that continuum. It is learning to be skillful in navigating to make that happen.

Harriet reflected on the impact of race and gender to career progression and concluded both create a context where delayed inclusion and entry into leadership roles is an actuality that could be experienced. Race and gender are perceived as the reason promotion is slow and the hiring of black women is rare in faith-based higher education institutions.

Harriet added:

Absolutely, for years I worked and tried to get into management but could not do so I was pigeonholed. For instance, I was the only African American in my division for 20 years. I completed budgets, hired staff and even sat on hiring committees and no other African Americans were hired.

Ruth resolved race and gender of black women signal change within white male leadership structures in faith-based higher education; change that is not actually desired.

Ruth shared:

I think in Christian higher education the normal progression is [for] white males. Due to historical implications and the thought in faith-based higher education organizations especially in the CCCU; it is a white male dominated world and people are comfortable with this and would like it to remain in place. Therefore, when you see a black women or person of color that means change or progression. From my experience, white males in Christian higher education say they want change, but they really do not want change.

Felicia discussed race and gender by describing African American women as a double minority in the view of white women in pursuit of leadership positions. As African American women and white women compete for leadership positions, gender is a hindrance and race, at times, serves as a key that opens doors into leadership for African American women.

Felicia stated:

Well in so far as gender, I feel I have had more opportunities because I am a woman. I see fewer men of color in cabinet level, dean level and above than I see women of color in those areas. I feel like maybe the women of color are [viewed as] less threatening than

men of color; let's say African American men. [This] has impacted me positively because I am a woman, especially dealing with the racial dynamic that I am an African American woman. In so far as being a person of color, I feel it has been a detriment because I am a person of color. I think most of the issues and concerns come from white women more so than white men. I feel that white women have more of a concern that black women are getting the chance to hold the [leadership] position because she is a double minority. Therefore, African American women are more of a threat to white women than they would ever be to a white man.

Althea noted African American women become targets of the dominant culture to hold leadership positions which mean race and gender combine to yield a positive outcome in certain contexts without shielding African American women from experiencing race and gender adversity.

Althea shared:

On the one hand, I do not think I would be in higher education or an executive if I was not specifically organized to be a diversity worker. I do not think I would have been targeted for executive leadership without that affinity. In some ways that has been helpful, and it has also pigeonholed me into one specific skillset which is not my greatest skillset. Being a woman, a person of color, and being young have all been major factors [for] people questioning if I am executive material.

Gloria shared:

I would say in my personal experience I think my race and gender has not impacted me negatively that I am aware of. I am not saying I do not believe that it does not happen. I believe higher education is a space where black women are in leadership and have historically been in leadership. I do not believe I have stood out as much as black women in other fields. I will say because I was a math major in school, I did experience what gender bias could look like, so I know [it] when I see [it] from being the only female in math and in a math class. I don't think [race and gender] has been an issue for me personally because I moved along in a field that is comfortable for black females in my time at the community college and since I have been at Paul Quinn.

Florence stated:

I believe we are embodied beings and race and gender enter into all of our interactions as [do] our bodies. The bias that comes along with being a woman and a woman of color I think joined me in a lot of spaces. This is my second year in my role as dean of students; I come into this role immediately following pastoring a congregation and before that in a different role in higher education. So, yes all of the impacts of identity I think have shaped leadership for me.

Race and gender present certain actualities for African American women in pursuit of career advancement and occupancy of leadership roles. There is a consensus among the majority of African American women in leadership roles...race and gender absolutely impacted their career advancement. The impact to career advancement is primarily negative and appears to occur at varying faith-based higher education institutions and among different African American women. Meaning, the negative impact of race and gender exists on a macro level in faith-based higher education since none of the African American women possess the exact employment history, education attainment and pathway to leadership roles. At times, African American women are moved into leadership roles in faith-based higher education as a result of the intentional efforts of the dominant culture of the institution. Some African American women are in leadership roles in faith-based higher education on the account there are so few African American women on faculty which leads to more access to leadership roles. This does not appear to remove the hazards of being African American and female in leadership in faith-based higher education.

African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education experience the hazards of not receiving credit for their work, the struggle of maintaining identity and gender confidence in the work environment, being passed over for promotions, and experiencing slow progression into leadership roles. There seems to be the actuality of causing the boss to look good while remaining highly adaptive in the challenging context of faith-based higher education work environments. One of the participants shared the Scriptures are weaponized against African American women to uphold and sustain male-normed leadership. Imposing gender roles in the work environment creates added difficulty for African American women attempting to complete their duties. Difficulty is understood as being faced with defying the expectations of others,

working harder than others, and navigating strategies and schemes to keep gender norms in the work environment.

Race and gender actualities in faith-based higher education create the necessity for African American women to take hold of their identity since both, race and gender are foundational to defining an African American woman's identity. African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education should remain true to their identity and believe at their core they possess what is needed to fulfill their roles in leadership according to nearly half of the participants. In faith-based higher education, African American women are not always included in informal networks where information sharing occurs which creates added difficulty to fulfilling their roles in leadership. Even more, decision-making of African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education is not readily trusted, resulting in the need to understand their decisions must be vetted in some way prior to being accepted. Although race and gender do yield some positive impact to career progression, both can primarily be a hindrance to African American women seeking promotions and leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Together, race and gender appear to add difficulty to pursuing and holding their leadership roles among African American women. The participants understand their experiences as a result of their race and gender to be unique and distinct from members of the dominant culture.

Theme 2 Leadership Paradigm Among Senior Leaders. To gain insight into the participants experiences with transformational leadership behaviors in faith-based higher education the researcher asked the participants: How would you describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior among senior executive leaders in faith-based higher

education? A majority of participant responses disclosed transformational leadership behaviors among senior leadership in faith-based higher education is desirable but not fully realized.

Shirley shared:

Transformational leadership in faith-based institutions at the top level from my experience has been spoken of, proclaimed, acknowledged but in my opinion has fallen short of being actualized.

Shirley explained:

We always say we are innovative; we always say take risks; we always say we're known for being entrepreneurial, but we're not. We are within a certain framework and it's all done to maintain what we already are. We don't want to shift our identity; we don't want to shift our mission and I don't believe mission drift is a good thing for a university. I think, we think of transformational leadership, but we practice in our words and only in our actions to the degree that we have maintained the status quo. It might look different but it's not.

Virginia stated:

I would describe [transformational leadership] as on the surface they use words laid with the Scriptures but beneath the surface they are deeply committed to white supremacy and the status quo. That has been my experience. There is a deep commitment to patriarchy. They will say that you should be submissive and sub-servant; you say sexism and we say we are following Scripture. It's important we do not listen to words; we need to hold people accountable to their actions.

Charlette spoke of transformational leadership behaviors positively in terms of two leadership traits witnessed among senior leaders in faith-based higher education. Charlette shared transformational leadership behaviors of senior leaders in her experience has been observed in the form of two leadership traits.

Charlette mentioned:

Leadership Trait #1 - Personality: Definitely because we are faith-based it is personality, a lot of it is personality - because we are faith-based being able to speak in the language of our faith has been really important. People can resonate with that language.

Leadership Trait #2 - Communication: I think a lot of it is that kind of communication with the rest of the campus. Also, the amount of communication to the whole campus I

think is really very, very, important. So, I think personality is a big part; to what extent you involve everyone is a big part of it as well.

Agatha explained:

I would say that I see snippets of it [transformational leadership], but if I'm honest I see it in mostly successful underrepresented women on campus. I really resonate with transformational leadership and it resonates with my leadership style and I see it in different leaders throughout our institution. But I would say [among] those who are in senior level positions I see it in those women...successful underrepresented women.

Loretta stated:

I think the idea of [transformational leadership] and the actual implementation are two different things. Most leaders, especially senior executives want to be categorized as a transformational leader. Like in a corporate setting, I think they get a little lost as they move from the business at hand to the people...the things not the people. To be a transformational leader it takes both, but I think a transformational leader focuses on the people first in order for that to happen. When I think of a transformational leader, I mainly think of that in a context of the people you should be leading or impacting, but that is not the whole story because the transformational leader has to manage all the other pieces to keep the organization running as well. How the transformational leader does that and still maintains transformational leadership impact becomes a matter of balancing to meet the day-to-day needs of the organization and the people...it takes balance to keep the organization running.

Harriet shared:

I have only worked at one faith-based institution. When I was hired, the university had just hired its first Hispanic President who was released a week prior to me starting my role. I believe it was because of him that I received my current role. Currently, I work for the first African American president of the university and I am the first African American to hold my position in the President's cabinet. I was the only African American in the building until the arrival of the current African American president. I am on the African American woman in the president's cabinet empowered by the president as an active member of the cabinet. This is the first time I have experienced this sort of transformational leadership in faith-based higher education.

Ruth stated:

Transformational leadership is slow; it is a buzz word. They say we want transformational leadership that is why I am choosing you. For instance, I was offered my current position; I did not seek this position and the person [a male] who spoke with me about the position thought I could be in senior in leadership. He mentioned he had observed me, and everybody liked me. When I asked why me, his exact words were, I see you as a transformational leader. My interpretation of that statement was, you're a black

woman, a black woman everybody likes, and I need a black woman. I think people will accept you because you are nice, you smile, and you are not confrontational. I think they believe they want a black woman until they get one. I think certain types of leaders are allowed to be transformational while other transformational leadership behavior is questioned and challenged. Transformational leadership is more desired than actualized.

Felicia shared:

I have worked in non-Christian higher education in Chicago and the dynamic of professional development and mentoring young staff is more prevalent in that context than I have seen in Christian higher education. I mentor and support my team as a cabinet member to expose them to different opportunities and make sure they have the tools they need because I have a passion for higher education. If I am going to pave the way for them to continue in this area, I need to show the things I have sought and found out for myself. I do not necessarily see that coming from the president as a priority because we are an institution that is tuition-based. So, it is all about getting the students in, making sure we have the money, ensuring the endowment and the budget are in good shape particularly during the pandemic. I believe it depends on the leader whether or not they feel a transformational engagement with staff is important to them. This also deals with their own self-reflection from the standpoint that the leader feels engaging in transformational leadership will cause their career to rise. I often find in Christian higher education senior leaders lead based on their own self-assurance. If they have self-assurance, then they want to build others up.

Althea stated:

To be very, very candid with you; I think what I see for the most part is mediocre white men and there is no transformational leadership within that [paradigm]. I have many peers across higher education that cause me to squint my eyes as I think how did you get here? For as much as I am called articulate, you are not. It is very disheartening to watch [mediocre white men] lead their teams because I would not say it is transformational. I would not even say it is good leadership best practices. I would say it is management not leadership.

Gloria discussed transformational leadership behaviors among senior executives in a positive manner:

I have been at Paul Quinn for almost 11 years and my current male president is the first male direct supervisor I have had since I have been in higher education. His leadership style is different, but he has also allowed me to learn and do different things. I think my president believes I can be trusted to learn new things, be asked to do new things and circle back to figure out how we do this and what did we learn from this, so it does not have to be brand new the next time.

Florence shared:

I think there is a natural choice which is to preserve the institution or the people that make up the institution. There is a regular reckoning that I think happens; the default is for systems to preserve themselves and so there is a reckoning that has to occur in the cycle of decision-making to say no we are going to choose people and not the system. I have witnessed this resolve itself well and not well. There are a lot of choices that are made to preserve the system...I think for the sake of long-term sustainability of the system.

Among the participants, 82% described the presence of transformational leadership behaviors among senior executives in faith-based higher education as hardly existent, surface level at best. Transformational leadership behaviors as a whole among senior executive leaders in faith-based higher education appears to be overshadowed by what some of the participants described as commitments to patriarchy, white supremacy, sexism, maintaining the status quo, and underrepresented women in leadership displaying transformational leadership behaviors. Transformational leadership behaviors in faith-based higher education could be seen as leadership traits described as personality, communication, empowerment, and trust in staff. Data obtained from the participants disclose transformational leadership behaviors among senior executive leaders is intentional, a sort of risk taking that empowers and builds up persons subjected to the leadership of the leader. The lived experiences of the majority of participants reveal transformational leadership behaviors among senior executives in faith-based higher education is lacking as a result of organizational commitment to eliminate status quo leadership paradigms.

Theme 3 Pathways to Mentorship. The majority of participants unanimously agreed mentorship is paramount to career progression in faith-based higher education for African American women. The women described mentorship in the context of pathways which exist

inside and outside of the organization. Mentorship is both formal and informal, strategic, God-ordained, and included male and female mentors...some white and others black.

Charlette shared:

I have a couple of people I kind of use as mentors. On my campus there has been a white woman, she is not my dean, but she was interested [and] she answered all of my questions. She would answer my questions, she would encourage me, she would see things in me that I did not see. She would be frustrated on my behalf when she saw things not going my way, when she saw discrimination. I definitely think that mentorship is huge. I have someone outside of my campus, she has been encouraging in a different way. She is an older black woman, and she has been kind of like a yes you can do it, you are going to be fine kind of person.

Mentorship could be both formal and informal which provides an opportunity for African American women to experience affirmation, encouragement, and reflection. A small number of the participants noted peers could serve as mentors where they are willing to share information and participate in problem-solving.

Agatha shared:

I always had informal mentors and one formal person who said I want to be your mentor. Often times when I heard mentorship I would get really frustrated because I couldn't find that person that I felt could really understand all aspects of who I am and could help me. And then I realized it was not just one person, but it could be multiple people who I could look to...to help navigate different parts of me.

I would say I have had informal mentors that have really helped propel and encourage or just affirm, yep you are not crazy; yes, you should do that; and so, it has really been a blessing to reflect on this question. I would say traditionally you would think of someone who knows more than you, but peers can help you process in real time similar experiences in different spaces...to say we are going to figure this out. I consider that person a mentor. There have been men and women across my journey that I feel have helped me.

Virginia stated:

Every place I have went I had mentors often white women. I have worked for two female presidents, one who was black; she was instrumental in my development. Early in my 20s she promoted me to an interim position, she spoke life into me about what she thought my potential and capabilities were. Most of my roles as I transitioned in places throughout higher education included a lot of female [mentors]; they have been very

instrumental. I have had a lot of white female mentors and I have usually sought out black female mentors.

Shirley shared:

Mentoring has been a phenomenal force in my progression in higher education. And it has not been institutional mentoring, but it has been God-ordained mentoring. A number of my mentors have been white males who mentored and did not even know they were mentoring me I don't believe. [White male leaders] throughout my entire stay at [one] institution was always making a way for me, paving a way for me; whispering something in my ear, just giving me a tidbit of information that would help. I have had that at just about every institution I've been in. And it's been unintentional but God-ordained.

Loretta spoke of mentorship as connected to the African American woman's assertion and initiative to identify and secure mentors.

Loretta mentioned:

I did not have [mentoring] for a long time. I had to identify on my own people I thought who could become mentors and truly go after them. The biggest difference in the corporate setting and the faith-based setting as well is, we do not have many people on a senior leader [level] who are available that can act as mentors. I think in faith-based education it is a bit different now, but I think you have to drive that in most instances. I think the burden is in on the mentee to find someone who can act in that role.

Harriet shared:

[Mentoring] was not through the normal higher education roads. My development came through pastors and other leaders in other sectors...outside leadership development was my path. I had to fight a lot of racism.

Ruth stated:

I had to find my own mentor. I have experienced leadership development from an external network with a black woman I met who was in higher education. In my doctoral program I was introduced to a white male who played a role in my development.

Felicia spoke of mentorship in view of the need to understand there should be a strategic approach to mentorship and white male mentors should be sought out.

Felicia shared:

I sought white men as mentors because they are where I want to be. If I can have a white male as a mentor to help me understand how they think which also helps me navigate the

university and higher education. There is a need to understand how the white dominant culture thinks. The white dominant culture has to reach the point of trusting you, this is when you begin to excel. An African American woman is seen as someone who is trusted when the white dominant culture can communicate with you, meet with you and you understand them...you are perceived as non-threatening; now you can be trusted. In that trusting relationship you can cultivate to the point when you want to move somewhere, they will write a recommendation or reference letter for you. Selecting mentors is a strategic matter and it is not always easy for African American women. In 37 years, I have only had one black female mentor and one white female mentor. My mentors mostly have been white men. White women are intimidated by African American women, so they will only share so much information. White men on the other hand are not intimidated by African American women and will share information.

Althea mentioned:

I did not have any professional development opportunities or other people of color who went before me to take me under their wings...I wish I did. I use [leadership development tools] for my staff, but I did not have that. My journey looks like a fluke accident.

Florence shared:

I have always been resourced well and guided well by leaders of the church. I would say this is less true in my higher education resources. I do not know of many African American women who are in leadership in institutions. I have not interacted much with women, black women or women of color who are in my role at faith-based institutions. That does not discount what I know to be true in the encouragement of my own upbringing and relationships in the church but not specifically in the role that I am in.

Nearly all of the participants agree mentorship is appreciated, instrumental to career development, and leads to career progression. Mentors are not age, race or gender exclusive; participants reported mentorship included black and white females, white males, and peers who were instrumental to career progression. Mentorship provides an opportunity for a safe context for African American women to share information and receive feedback whether formal or informal which aids in personal and professional development and enhances career progression.

Theme 4 Leadership Inspiration. The significant amount of the participants linked motivations for seeking leadership roles to serving or pleasing God. There appears to be a deep sense of spirituality among the participants and at a foundational level God is the reason and

provider for their occupancy of leadership roles. For the participants, leadership in faith-based higher education is an extension of their vocation very much a matter of faith and service to God... a fulfillment of God's call on their lives. Leadership in faith-based higher education for the women is rooted in Christ. Inspiration for leadership roles is not purely cognitive or ambition; it is first and foremost service to Christ and God. Unlike the majority of participants, Charlette did not describe herself as one who is inspired to seek leadership roles although she does accept leadership roles with intentionality and purpose.

Charlette stated:

First of all, I rarely seek leadership roles. I mean, I am an introvert and I just rarely seek myself...it has to be something that is really important to me if I seek it. The leadership positions that I have been in for the most part have been because someone higher up has recognized something in me that is needed and has asked me and invited me into certain roles.

I can answer what is my motivation for accepting leadership roles. I think it is because I just want the best for an organization. And [I] recognize everyone in the organization cannot be best served if there is not representation. One group cannot effectively decide for everyone in a way that includes everyone. So sometimes I feel like it is kind of my duty almost to represent the people who are not being heard...whose voices are not being heard.

Shirley shared:

My motivation is I want to go heaven. My path has been designed by the Lord. I am here because I was called to this and God has worked miracles and I tell everybody because I am called to this.

Virginia noted:

My motivation is Christ and God. I am thrilled to not be able to just rely on worldly wisdom. I came up with this phrase; spirit-led evidenced based when I came to the college. My hope was there is so much division in the world and if Christians cannot come to a place of mutual understanding; unity, love, and work out conflicts I wonder what the hope for the world is if we have God and we can't figure it out.

Agatha explained:

I really am a person that is first and foremost driven by faith. I've seen God's hand and favor and that has been true in testimony in my life. I believe the steps of the righteous

are ordered by God. I really am saddened and burdened by seeing the lack of equity within our communities and so I do believe in some way education can be an equalizer. Also, the opportunities to help people grow and be rooted in our faith really attracts me to faith-based higher education.

Motivation for working in faith-based higher education is connected to perceiving there is an opportunity to create value in the organization.

Loretta shared:

I attended a faith-based institution, I always liked education. To let go of my experience in the corporate setting and move into the faith-based higher education setting was always a bit daunting to me. I knew this institution, I knew their values and their needs, and I wanted to operate in a faith-based setting. When the opportunity presented, I accepted.

Harriet mentioned:

Through prayer and seeing God's hand opening these avenues and doors for me. I can see now how he was getting me ready at the previous non-Christian higher education institution for my current role.

Florence stated:

I live into my job as vocation. As a Dean of Students of a faith-based institution, part of my work is to help shape community and leaders who help make up our community. This is an extension of my call to ministry.

Working in faith-based higher education for some African American women derives from a deep sense of the opportunity to fulfill a ministry assignment, the desire to help students, the goal to change senior level leadership models, and a desire to help the institution.

Ruth stated:

My motivation was service, for me this work was ministry. It was justice oriented and serving students. My longevity at my current institution has more to do with the Other Mother Theory; I have felt an obligation to remain with multiple 4-year groups of students.

Felicia stated:

I am an artist at heart with an undergrad degree in graphics. For three years during my undergrad studies, I worked in student services which gave me information most students

did not have. A whole world was opened up to me and it may made feel like I needed to give back to other students. I began to pursue different areas in leadership because I wanted to pave a way for others and help them understand higher education can be a very giving and rewarding career and you need someone to talk to and help you navigate higher education.

Althea mentioned:

I knew that something different needed to be modeled. I have a deep conviction that the leadership of the past is not the leadership that is going to retain future innovative talent. I want to be at the top echelons of leadership. Transformational leadership is a big part of why I do what I do to hopefully change the game of leadership and what is acceptable.

Gloria stated:

I went to Paul Quinn with the goal of rebuilding Paul Quinn, and I believed the city of Dallas needed an institution like Paul Quinn, that students here in the community deserved to have a school such as Paul Quinn as a strong institution. I made a conscious decision to come to Paul Quinn to help and assist knowing the school was not at its strongest position in history.

Inspiration for accepting leadership roles is largely personal. There is a personal desire to be a high achiever within the institution, help improve the standing of the institution, pave a way for others, provide representation for African Americans and African American women in leadership, and to represent people whose voices are not being heard. Pursuit of leadership roles among a large number of participants in leadership is deeply rooted in purposeful living for the Lord. Motivation for leadership is linked to the belief of being spirit-led; not totally dependent upon human wisdom, but also guided by the spirit of God. Working in faith-based higher education is not solely a cognitive exercise for some African American women in leadership, it is more specifically an aspect of their spiritual journey through submission to God.

Theme 5 Organizational Experiences. The participants discussed organizational culture and organizational fit in faith-based higher education in a manner which demonstrated African American women possess unique perspectives with this emergent theme. Participants described organizational culture and organizational fit openly, explaining real challenges African American

women face when navigating organizational culture and encountering organizational fit in faith-based higher education.

Shirley explained:

Each organization has its own culture and there are many, many cultures within the organization. University has a culture and each school and college have a culture. But for a person coming into an organization, I think in the interview process ask as many questions as you can as deeply as you can into the culture of the university. And then in the culture in which you are to operate. Even then, be open to new discoveries because you are not going to get it all. Keep your eyes open, ask many questions and decide whether [higher education is the place for you].

Virginia stated:

As far as organizational fit: I have not necessarily felt like an outsider because I am a woman of color. I would notice that initially but as I kind of felt comfortable it was not always something that was always pressing on my mind, but sometimes it would be. Most people don't share your worldview and there is always a possibility of tension as a result of microaggression, stereotype threat...just people being exposed or under-exposed. Organizational culture and the black woman are not really a good fit from my experience.

I interview people when they are leaving the university, that is part of my duty in my role to learn why they are leaving with the goal of institutional effectiveness. [On one interview with a black woman] she said, "everything about the college says your cultural capital is an older white heterosexual married male." She said, "I don't fit any of those descriptions." She was a single black female; she is not older, she is not white, she is not male, and she felt there was no cultural fit. Other black women have said the exact same thing.

Alumni of the college do not fit if they come back to the college to work. It's something about the environment that signals there is not a sense of belonging for black women in higher education. It's signaled by our presence; it's signaled by how people engage with us. I would say [for] black women it's the rejection sometimes. I mean, people who can withstand that rejection or I should say stand up under that rejection are women who have been socialized into the environment; you know how to navigate it and deal with it and it's not to say that it's ever acceptable. But it does weigh on you spiritually, physically, emotionally and in ways that we exist as a people to be healthy. At the same time people just learn to deal with it.

Agatha shared:

Organizational culture to me as I think about faith-based higher education, or I would say the CCCU or Christian schools they are first and foremost majority white and they are

conservative and these things play into the organizational culture. There is a hint of a corporate and professional world within these organizations as well, but they also have this conflict where they sometimes act as business and sometimes act as a church. This is something people need to understand and know some of the nuances.

In general, you will have to be a person that learns to pay attention to the organizational culture. For [African American women], white people are very nice and not direct, so you will think you are going in the right direction and you could be wrong, and they would not tell you because they are nice. There is so much that makes up a culture; really culture is made up of values, beliefs and symbols; those are the things that will help identify what is the organizational culture.

As far as organizational fit, I do not like that word at all. I've seen it be used in some not appropriate and professional ways. To me, if I can speak frankly, it is more like you basically have to be like us which is problematic. We do not have to be the same to work together. I believe there has to be commonality and foundational values we share. I have found organizational fit often has to [do] with be just like us which is to assimilate to majority culture.

Charlette mentioned:

Let me say something about culture; for African American women the culture needs to be open enough to accept the insights and views of African American women. I think the culture needs to be open, I feel like it needs to be stable. There needs to be a foundation and culture of acceptance and a culture of appreciation for difference and diversity. There needs to be a culture to grow, wanting to succeed, wanting to shift. The culture needs to be able to hold [black women truth-tellers] without breaking in light of the truth that black women often bring.

In terms of fit, the difficulty is the organization wants the black woman to fit. The organization does not necessarily want to mold and shift to accommodate black women; they want black women to fit. So, I don't think that fit is the goal. I don't want to fit in, I want to be accepted and I want to be part of the team, but in order for that to happen the culture has to accept it and the culture has to want this.

When black women attempt to fit into a culture that is not ready for them a couple of things might happen: (1) the black woman might leave; I've seen that lots of times here; (2) the black woman is just quiet or passive and sits back and watches; faculty just stays in our own silo in our professional field; (3) Maybe there's conflict and maybe that black woman is tokenized. Those are the problems with fit. I've heard my organization talk about is this person the right fit. At the beginning, I would say let me think about if that person is the right fit. Now, I immediately question what do you mean by fit? Who are you trying to fit into what? And if you are looking for a good fit; what are we not seeing if we are looking for fit? And do we want to change?

It seems like faith-based higher education is so steeped in tradition, white Christianity to the point that we think white Christianity is Christianity. Because we are so steeped in that tradition it becomes the culture and black women often, very often asked to fit into [white Christian culture]. And if they don't fit there is an issue. But I think it is absolutely necessary for black women to be a part of the culture, so that, the culture can mold, reshape and have enough flexibility to not ask people to fit but to be able to accommodate. It is a better, more-lively place if black women are flourishing, that's just my opinion.

Loretta identified organizational culture in faith-based higher education does present some advantage to African American women.

Loretta mentioned:

I think for a faith-based higher education institution you are already ahead of the game. We have the same basic beliefs in Christianity which I think is an advantage. On the other hand, I think faith-based education may be similar to secular settings in that you have primarily male and Caucasian culture so you may have the same battle as you would in a secular organization. To be accepted, recognized and brought aboard as a woman of color; it may be better in that you can start a dialogue in what we believe in and our commonality. And pray and hope it is a dialogue that is accepted.

Harriet considered organizational culture and organizational fit and shared:

I am the only African American women in leadership on campus right now. We are going through a process with diversity issues. We had one other African American woman, but she had to fight so much, she was viewed as combative, and I believe they worked to get her out. She too was pigeonholed. I expected to come in and be accepted but I was actually invisible. The current president came in and gave authority to my voice and to helped others progress and move along to accept African Americans in leadership. So, the president is African American, I am African American, and my assistant is African American, and we have that extra burden to make sure everything that comes out is exceptional and exemplary because people are always looking. I sit on multiple committees and in many instances, I am the representative of the president. This occurred through building a relationship with the president.

Ruth shared:

Racism and micro-aggressions peak their ugly heads out from time-to-time. Black women are not monolithic, so, for me I am one of those persons who can adapt to my environment. Even when I do not feel like summoning my polite articulate self, I can do it. I think it is different for everyone, but for me the culture of the institution was extremely white male. From the music, the environment, the worship style...everything. So, in my role as a multicultural student senior leader I was able to create opportunities for students to have other experiences within that white dominant culture. Inviting

speakers and creating different scenarios in the community to make it palatable. I turn off the organizational culture when I leave and go home. Therefore, it was not a good fit for me, and I knew it was not always a good fit for the students. Creating opportunities for us to create a culture within a culture has worked. For [African American women] aspiring to leadership, it can be challenging; these environments can have a negative impact on your mental and physical health if you are not a strong person. The institution does not want expansion to include black women...they want the window dressing. Black women are given “just enough” to do their jobs and once transformation starts to take place leadership will make efforts to slowdown the transformational efforts.

Felicia stated:

It is definitely like putting a square peg into a round hole. The systemic racism is evident. As a cabinet member I had to keep in mind this a game that needed to be played and I needed my job and paycheck. I was not going to allow them to knock me off my square. It is difficult and African American women must understand the nuances of navigating the systemic racism. For example, my second day on the job as a cabinet member a white faculty member told me a black joke and thought it was funny. My reaction made him not speak to me for a year. In Christian higher education you will often find legacy students who believe they are entitled. You will encounter those who believe you have the job just because you are an African American woman not because you have credentials for the position. I have dealt with a lot of racism as an African American woman and person of color. You must develop work life balance; you must be able to leave work at work. You wear a mask when working at a predominantly white institution especially a white Christian institution. There were times when I was silent in the workplace. There was a time in my career when I pondered if white Christians in Christian higher education celebrated the same Jesus as myself. I have felt stabbed in the back in the name of Jesus. Some white Christians use a mantra “I don’t see your color” and I tell them to see my color.

Althea discussed organizational culture as a game which is played, and for the African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education there is the need to play the long game.

Althea stated:

I would say it is a long game of assimilating without losing your soul. What I mean by that is, if you are in faith-based higher education you are signing up to be an only. Meaning you are probably going to be the only woman of color in the circles you run in or one of very few. Your voice is not the majority voice so you must assimilate enough to be heard, to codeswitch in a way that you are palatable but to do that without losing your identity or becoming part of the oppression.

I would not pretend that a person could come in and be themselves in a situation like I am in as the only person of color. I am the only person of color on the president’s council, the only person of color Vice President. I am the first in a lot of ways and I am the

youngest. I would not pretend that me coming into that situation will change the organization, but I have to figure out how to hopefully change it over time. I must remain trusted and palatable long enough to get that work done. I cannot come in and say this whole thing is a dumpster fire and everything needs to change. This will get me out as soon as I come in.

It is a long game, and it has to do with assimilating without losing yourself and recognize what I am doing. For example, I am codeswitching so I can get this done for this marginalized group when I should be able to say the “what for” without codeswitching. I cannot do that so I will recognize what I am doing so I do not intentionally become part of the harm that an oppressive system can be. Codeswitching is needed in Christian higher education especially if you are working in a diversity field. If you are being truthful to work fully in the field to deal with race, gender, sexuality... a lot of that runs up against Christian conservative ideals. Therefore, if you are fully immersed in that work you cannot just come back into conservative evangelicalism without codeswitching or you will be viewed as radical or liberal.

It is a long game where I choose my battles. The way I describe it to young leaders I mentor is that I feel like everyone else has a machine gun with unlimited ammunition and I have a revolver with only three bullets. I better aim exactly at what I am going to hit and if I am going to spend one of those bullets, I better make sure whatever hill I am going to die on is very strategic. If I am bothered by every microaggression or frustration I will not get anything done. If I am going to go for something it better be really strategic with the long game in mind.

Gloria spoke of organizational culture with top level leadership, the board of trustees, and affiliation with the church in view.

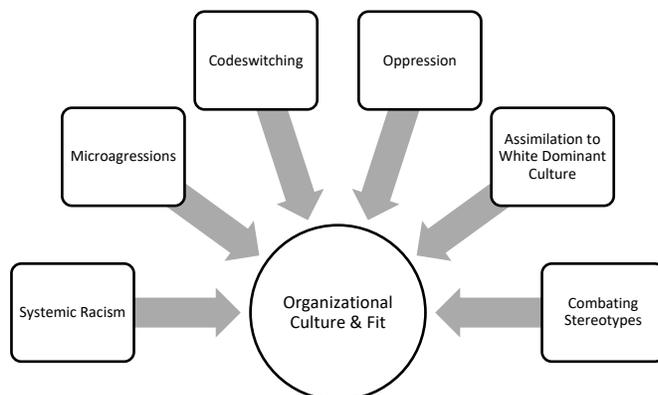
Gloria mentioned:

Organizational culture and fit are really set by the Board and leadership. They either make a conscious decision to hire black women or not to hire black women. In the south, some of the faith-based institutions are connected to the church and it is hard to separate the school from the church’s position on women in leadership. If the church does not believe women have a place in leadership, the school will most likely not place women in leadership positions.

Florence mentioned:

I do not know the whole answer to that question, in many ways I am still navigating and learning it; what I do know is we cannot conform to the folks around us. As black women we offer particular gifts to the world, to other people and we have to authentically live into that in ways that are challenging, in ways that are isolating, and in ways that become lonely. It is important that we show up as ourselves in the ways that we have been gifted in our unique identities.

Organizational culture in faith-based higher education appears to be multilayered, and organizational fit seems predicated on an individual decision of the person joining or working within the organization. Organizational culture is described as inclusive of microaggressions and stereotypes against African American women. The means of including African American women into social networks within the organization stimulate positive or negative experiences for African American women. Organizational culture and organizational fit in faith-based higher education yields an environment which carries the meaning there is not a place for African American women. From engagement to treatment, the participants shared experiencing rejection from and within the organization. It is a culture which calls for the African American woman to possess the mental, physical, and emotional fortitude to navigate the cultural environment of faith-based higher education. Organizational fit is not a term that garners favor among the participants in faith-based higher education. Organizational fit in faith-based higher education for African American women essentially boils down to assimilation or else...be like their white colleagues or there is a problem. The problem, then, is not the organization, the problem is the African American woman. Organizational culture and organizational fit among the majority of African American women participants are largely understood as contexts which yield a difficult and challenging work environment.

Figure 1*Organizational Experiences Among African American Women*

Theme 6 Acquired Wisdom. The participants when reflecting upon their career in leadership in faith-based higher education shared a number of lessons learned throughout their careers. The data indicated African American women in leadership could readily identify at least three or more important lessons learned which could be understood as acquired wisdom.

Charlette described acquired wisdom as:

1. Truth-telling - One lesson I've learned is truth is more important than making everyone happy. I learned the lesson of telling the truth; part of that is timing, part of that is who needs to hear the truth and who doesn't need to hear the truth. Part of it is how to tell the truth. Truth needs to be told in a way that can be heard. If I isolate people, they will not hear the truth.
2. Relationship Building - I feel like relationship is really important.
3. Listening - I feel listening is very important. I feel like meeting people where they are is important. One of the things I've learned is if a person is not ready then I do not have to spin my wheels. I don't have to try to convince people of anything.
4. Speaking Up - I've learned to speak up.
5. Learn the Politics - I've learned there are politics involved with leadership.
6. Learn the Decision-Making Process - there are ways that decisions should be made and are made.

7. Self-Discovery - I've learned a lot of little things and tons about myself. I think part of that is, going back to transformational leadership.

Shirley shared:

1. Know Your Sponsor - Find out who your godfather or godmother is in the organization. There is somebody that speaks for you when you are not at the table. There is someone that will call your name in a positive way when you are not at the table. And you may not know who that person is. It behooves you to find out who that person is and to nurture that relationship.
2. Know Your Identity - We are faced with a variety of circumstances nuanced from day to day, if you don't know who you are at your core - you don't know whose you are. You are doomed; your identity will be lost. You will wake up one day and not know who you are, where you are or why you are. I will say always be prepared to bring your full self to the space. We are enough, we're always trying to measure up; forget that that's fallacy, we're enough from the beginning.

Virginia added:

1. Diversity is the exception - I've learned often times diversity is the exception to Christian values - we believe in sharing but not with you. We believe people should be included but not you. Matters of justice, it looks different for groups.
2. Unique Experiences for People of Color - Typically, it is so interesting when people of color come to Christian colleges that their experiences are so unique and so varied and buried in the opposite spectrum than so many whites have.
3. Loving People is Radicle - Another thing I have learned is how radicle it is for Jesus to say love people as you love yourself. Because you cannot love nobody as yourself if you can't even imagine them as yourself. They do not have the imagination we are like them so there's no way you could treat me like you because you can't even fathom me as equal to you. So how could you treat me as equal. That's where all the stereotypes and microaggressions come into play.
4. Change is Difficult - There are people I believe who do not have the capacity to change. They do not demonstrate the will, or they have been so deeply immersed in Christian tradition that their brain cannot even go that way; they cannot even think outside of the paradigm they have been indoctrinated with...it's an indoctrination they cannot get out of.

Agatha stated:

1. Work Harder - You have to work hard because you stand out, in a lot of ways you are an anomaly. You are the only one; there's not many people like you, who talk like you, or who may respond like you in some way.
2. Code Switching is Normative - I am like bi-lingual or some people would say code switching so I can translate this is what I'm trying to say, and I know you cannot even understand that so let me give that to you in a different way. So, I think that is something I have learned.
3. Take Calculated Risks - I have also learned to take calculated risks; I know when to push and I have to know when not to push.
4. Understand the Politics - I have to understand the politics of university life or what it's going to take to get something done. Harping about some microaggression I experienced will actually slowdown the process.
5. Manage Your Emotions - I've learned how to manage my emotions; my knee jerk reaction or my flesh may want to say a or z, but I recognize there are stereotypes that come with black women. So, raising my voice or moving my head too much you can tell they are uncomfortable. Or when you are passionate or get upset; I've learned it is important to manage your emotions.
6. Confidence in Identity - I have had to battle with self-doubt and imposter syndrome as well - do I belong here? For instance, in so many ways I feel very different from those who I lead alongside.

Loretta shared:

1. Faith-First - I think my faith is first regardless of where I am.
2. Remain True to Personal Beliefs and Identity - I have to be true to what I believe in; therein lies my confidence...my ability to grow, learn and move forward.
3. Walk in my Purpose - To grow in my wisdom and to know that I am not walking alone but I am walking with God in my purpose. God has me where he wants me to be.
4. Prepare for Leadership - To be good at what you know and where you want to be is not enough...you must prepare.

Harriet shared acquired wisdom includes:

1. I Am a Christian First - Honesty, being in Christian higher education I had to learn I am a Christian first. My mindset was I am African American first, but after shifting to I am a Christian first this helped me to change my thinking.
2. Know Who You Represent - Knowing who I represent makes a big difference.

Ruth stated her acquired wisdom is:

1. There is A Good Ole Boy Network - Faith-based higher education is still the ‘good ole boy’ network; it is still the master’s house. In faith-based higher education white leaders buy into the “Make America Great Again” theme but they do not want to say it out of fear of being viewed as racist.
2. Slow Change is Desired in Faith-based Higher Education - Faith-based higher education feels like they are losing power, so they want change but not too much change. They do not want a change of the guard; they need to remain in control.
3. Mediocrity is Normal - I have learned they are not as smart as we were led to believe. We were bamboozled in a sense; I sit at the table with a lot of mediocrity.

Felicia mentioned acquired wisdom as:

1. I Can Do It - It is hard, but you can do it. Students will remind you; you are valuable.
2. Pave the Way for Others - If you do not pave the way for others you have not done your due diligence. If you do not tell them or remind them of the systemic racism you faced and give them the tools to face systemic racism, we will have less people of color in higher education.

Althea shared one primary lesson learned:

Develop External Support Networks - I have learned I ought not look to my immediate constituents for the support I need. I need to go outside of higher education, outside of the white dominant context I am in. I need support from other women of color has been the greatest lesson. I cannot do this on my own, I need to go outside the institution and in my case outside of white men and whiteness.

Gloria stated acquired wisdom is:

1. Communication is very important.
2. Ask a lot of questions.
3. Truth-telling is important.

4. Be firm once a decision is made without being rude.
5. Be respectful to others.

Florence stated acquired wisdom as:

To find my voice, to cultivate my voice, to find my help...to make that connection from loneliness. There is help in conversation and partnership in community, it is making sure I continue to access that. It is showing up differently, getting accustomed to showing up differently and making sure that even in the discomfort I root myself in the legacy of who I know black women to be. I possess confidence in my voice, in the voices of strong women that came before me and in the energy of the ancestors. I carry that with me. In the ways that it is hard to show up differently I recognize there is a community around me and that joins me. Do the work, know your stuff, and find your allies.

The participants cited a wide range of acquired wisdom gained throughout their career.

The importance of acquired wisdom appears to resonate among all participants. The importance of learning along the way to leadership roles and learning while holding leadership roles seem essential to African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education.

Theme 7 Advice for African American Women. Participants cited a wide range of recommendations for African American women aspiring to leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The participants indicated numerous recommendations derived from years in their career field and tenure in leadership roles. The emergent theme that connected with each participant is the description “advice for African American women.”

Agatha shared:

1. Do Not Quit - It can be very frustrating, but I would say don't give up because higher education needs us.
2. Develop Support Networks - I would also say develop support networks broadly, that's what I figured out after a while. You may not find that one person who truly understands your particular experience working in leadership in a predominantly white institution that can help you navigate it. Look creatively because you might not find people like yourself. But there are people who might understand to a certain extent. Allow yourself to have a support network and not just on your campus or within your field.

3. Be Versatile - I would say encourage women to be versatile and be able to think about your skillsets and how they can translate to other positions.
4. Relocate if Necessary - Be willing to relocate; so many colleagues have had great experiences when they were able to move out from where they are to allow their leadership to blossom. Sometime when you are in a place too long there can be a cap on you, and they may not appreciate you but take your hard work for granted.
5. Be Authentic - find a way to be your authentic self. I had to find my own groove, my own way of leading and it took a lot of mental and emotional work to get that place.

Charlette stated:

1. Get a mentor - the mentor does not have to be another black woman but having a mentor is helpful. Get different kinds of mentors, white male, black male, or Hispanic male. Mentorship is really good.
2. Read, Listen and Pay Attention.
3. Tell the Truth in Love - Learn how to speak the truth without offending; you do not have to water down the truth, but you do not have to offend either.
4. Undergo Self-Improvement - Work on yourself, understand what makes you tick; understand the things that bother you. Learn about yourself...learn, learn, learn.

Shirley mentioned:

1. Learn What Higher Education Is - I would say find out what higher education really is. Higher education is a wonderful space but there are nuances to it that create landmines for you. There are three segments of higher education: (1) academic side of the house; (2) administrative side of the house; and (3) student services side of the house. When you enter you must know, have some idea of where you want to land.
2. Know Which Segment of Higher Education is For You - You need to know from the beginning where you want to land because each entity has its own culture. The academic culture tends to rule, that's the public face, but even the academic side gets snatched back if the money isn't right. None of it works if we don't have students. So, figure [out] where in higher education where you want to land.
3. Teach Online - I would say no matter where you land always dabble in the academic side particularly teaching online.
4. Create Added Value - Teaching online is part of the new normal and has an acceptance it did not always have. It gives you added value as institutions face challenges and have to make cuts - you also teach...added value. Serving on

university committees that center around finances, housing or whatever it is on the administrative side gives you added value. This gives you credibility to whatever side you land on in the university.

Virginia stated:

1. Know What You Are Getting Into - I think it's important to really know what you are getting into.
2. Pray - Be ready to stay prayed up.
3. Networking - Get in a network; the people of color here have been very supportive. It's not an exclusive network but we know who to call. It would be very difficult to persist without a supportive network of people who you are not always explaining yourself to.
4. Fight Racism - It is important to take up the responsibility to fight racism. People should not look at our job as tokenism, we get to do this in ways that can impact the institution and make it better for future generations.
5. Pay Attention to Accountability - Ignore words unless they are aligned with actions; words without action are meaningless.

Loretta shared African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education need to know:

1. Faith-Based Higher Education is a Career Choice - It is an excellent choice, a good place to be and we need African American women in our faith-based institutions just like we need them in every other [area] of our economy whether corporate, political or governmental.
2. Pursue Leadership - We need to be leading in faith-based institutions because it still has some of the same things that we see in secular organizations. We need to push forward and lead well.
3. Help Others - We need to reach back to other African American women or men if we are to be successful in the faith-based environment. This how we learn.
4. Preparation - Do the best that you can and prepare for it; keep pushing for it.

Harriet shared:

1. Mentorship - Mentorship from other successful African American leaders.

2. Gain Information on the Area of Higher Education You Want to Enter - Get as much information and knowledge about the area you want to go into.
3. Pray - Pray, pray often and seek spiritual guidance.
4. Finish Your Education - Get your education.

Ruth shared:

1. Get a Mentor - Secure a mentor in a leadership role; one an African American female, and two a trusted white male; they understand how white men think and process.
2. Join a Network of Leaders - Develop a network of leaders in the institution you can trust.
3. Keep Learning and Join Committees - Always be open for an opportunity to learn and sit on committees when invited.
4. Know How You Are Perceived - It is important to remember when you are first brought on you are seen as great, doing wonderful things. As you ask questions and raise concerns you will become a threat.

Felica mentioned:

1. Develop a Trusting Relationship with a White Male Sponsor - Build trust with a white man you have seen and observed who will be your reference.
2. Study the Organization through the View of the Dominant Culture - Observe the dynamic of the institution through your lens and the dominant culture lens. Really learn to view the institution through their lens.
3. Communicate effectively.
4. Always give back.

Althea stated:

1. Join an External Support Network - I would say they need to have outside support, so they do not feel crazy all the time.
2. Assess Your Reason for Being in Faith-based Higher Education - I would also say they really need to assess why they are doing what they are doing. If you are doing what you are doing because you are there to help and you know who you are then good; if not you will realize I am going to lose myself to do this job.

3. **Develop Your Identity** - I think you need identity development to know who you are, your boundaries and when you will assimilate. Know the difference between assimilation and dishonoring yourself.
4. **Adjust Your View of Your Role and Be Excellent** - I have made a mental shift by looking at my job as very stable long-term contract. Basically, I look at my job as contract work; all the underlying stuff of the organization I do not have time for. I am not here to do that or get involved with those matters. I am here to do my job and to help my team and people around me and that is what I can control. I cannot upend the systems of patriarchy and whiteness by myself. That has been really helpful for me, to look at it as a long-term contract. This way I do not get consumed by all of the problems of higher education and the inequities. My thought is to come in and be excellent at my job.
5. **Prepare for Leadership** - The greatest preparation for me was around identity development. I learn and continue to learn what it means to be black, a black woman, and whiteness. I recognize the historical roles that black women have played. I believe if you are an African American person who did not grow up around whiteness you should academically study whiteness. This will help you have empathy for the people you are working with.

Gloria shared:

1. Spend time in the higher education environment. Find a position you can get into and learn...the idea is to learn the systems and how the environment works.
2. Diversify your skills.
3. Create Added Value - be able to teach and lead.

Florence stated:

Make sure this what you want to do. Find other black women, find your sisters and work together. The intersection of identity politics, economic politics, and religious politics that converge in this role are significant. Women aspiring to enter leadership should speak with women doing the work. Recognize all contexts are different. For some women we are seeking to balance lives as wives and women and that becomes an additional challenge in doing this work. There is need to have really clear boundaries on what is work and what is home; this helps make this life sustainable.

Overall, the participants shared a wealth of advice for African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher educations. Although there are some overlapping themes, each of the participants reflected upon their career and identified important information worthy

of sharing with up-and-coming future African American women leaders in faith-based higher education. The advice provided by the participants is useful to African American women in the context of faith-based higher education. The participants intentionally aligned their advice to African American women in the context of faith-based higher education. The goal of the participants appears to provide need-to-know information to African American women in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based higher education.

Findings

Lived Experiences When Pursuing Leadership Positions. African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences when pursuing leadership positions through the lens of individuals who are not members of the dominant culture within the institution. Although there were a small number of positive experiences identified by the participants, the women overwhelmingly described negative experiences in faith-based higher education while pursuing leadership roles. As women who are not members of the dominant culture, African American women in faith-based higher education institutions possess distinct lived experiences in these settings. As double minorities, African American women are faced with carrying unique burdens as they navigate their careers. Unique burdens include the need to work harder than white colleagues, become masters of codeswitching, and encountering the dominant culture's ideology...African American women are less threatening than African American men. The irony in the ideology is: African American women are still perceived as a threat by the dominant culture even though these women possess in many instances the highest level of educational attainment and lengthy time in career field. African American women like any other group in faith-based higher education desire to enter into leadership positions. With this in view, African American women in faith-based higher education

tend to experience a slower pace to career progression and it is nearly impossible to enter into leadership roles without the sponsorship of a white male leader who is a member of the power network. Even more, African American women must employ a strategy for entering into leadership positions that is savvy enough to afford these women to play the long game without dismantling earned trust of the dominant people group.

African American women describe their lived experiences in pursuit of leadership roles as having to face and deal with systemic racism, assimilation to dominant culture, sexism, stereotypes, and microaggressions. Since African American women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education are often the only persons of their race and gender holding leadership roles, there is the real threat of identity crisis for these women and the reality of embracing loneliness within the institution. African American women are forced to develop stamina and a means for preserving their mental, physical and emotional health as they combat matters pertaining to race, gender, and power within faith-based higher education. The tenet unique voice of color in the CRT framework contends people of color or oppressed people groups possess a unique story and are best suited to share their lived experiences within American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Fundamentally, people of color or oppressed people are in the best position of competence to provide storytelling of their lived experiences. The lived experiences of the African American women in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based higher education which participated in this study are best suited to offer a unique and telling story of what it is truly like to be an African American woman in pursuit of or holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education.

One central aspect of feminist theory is changing perspectives on power which fundamentally involves evaluating and reevaluating power and the use of power in society.

Power in American society is understood as people exercising domination and control over others (Hooks, 2015). Shifting perspectives on power entails examining the lived experiences of the powerless, defining and charting a pathway to justice, and exercising power to end domination (Hooks, 2015). The participants provided data on their lived experiences with power structures in faith-based higher education. Although many of the participants described their occupancy of leadership roles in faith-based higher education as vocation...ministry to the God, Christ and people; the women identified persons with majority power within faith-based higher education as white males. While these African American women hold senior level leadership positions and, in most cases, hold a position in the president's cabinet; the participants are not in the ranks of majority power holders. Therefore, African American women are not in position to change the use of power at their respective institution.

The narratives of the participants reveal white men are in the majority ranks of power which mean if there is to be a change in the use of power in faith-based higher education white men would need to use their power to actualize such change. In no way does this mean African American women in leadership are completely powerless in faith-based higher education; it does mean these women are allowed access to power to satisfy their role within the organization and effect change where possible. The lived experiences of the participants which include encountering sexism, systemic racism, microaggressions, slow career progression, and loneliness could not be improved by the amount of power held by these women. The dominant culture, specifically white males with power are in the best position to shift the use of power to improve the lived experiences of African American women.

Presence of Transformational Leadership Behaviors. The participants provided perspectives on the presence of transformational leadership behaviors among senior executives

based upon their lived experiences. Three out of eleven participants described the presence of transformational leadership behaviors among leaders in positive terms. For these women, their observation of transformational leadership behaviors is identified as traits categorized as communication ability, personality, trusting staff, empowering staff, and collaborating with staff. Each of these women are employed at colleges or universities where the president is a male; two of the presidents are black and one president is white. Each of the women spoke specifically of the president when discussing the presence of transformational leadership. This reveals the presence of transformational leadership behaviors demonstrated by senior leaders is not a matter of race, it is an individual decision and practice. Eight out of eleven participants described their lived experiences with the presence of transformational leadership among senior leaders as virtually non-existent. The women discussed transformational leadership behaviors with the president and members holding the highest level of leadership positions in view. These women were employed in settings where the president is either white male or white female. This means the participants lived experiences with the presence of transformational leadership are not gender specific. Even more, the women described transformational leadership behaviors among senior leaders as desirable, however the women described there is little focus on actualizing transformational leadership. Overwhelmingly, the African American women in leadership described the presence of transformational leadership behaviors among senior leaders is severely lacking.

Leadership Development or Mentor Initiatives. The majority of participants described mentorship as essential to career progression into leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The data does not reveal a monolithic approach to mentorship among the participants, however the data does reveal there are multiple forms and pathways to mentorship. Even more,

the data unearths mentorship is primarily initiated by the mentee as opposed to the mentor. This means mentee tends to drive the establishment of a mentee/mentor relationship as part of some sort of individual plan for career progression and bears the responsibility to cultivate a relationship with a mentor. The participants lived experiences with mentorship does find common ground, in that, the women described mentorship occurring through formal and informal means which includes internal and external networks. The data revealed a majority of the participants view mentorship as a propelling force to upward mobility in career progression. Many of the women were intentional to disclose there is a need for African American women in faith-based higher education to recruit white males as mentors. White male mentors were described as members of the power network, not intimidated by African American women, educators on how white men reason, and future sponsors who could write a letter of recommendation as opportunities present for career progression. The data demonstrates mentorship was foundational to career progression and leadership development for African American women holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education.

Motivations for Pursuing Leadership Roles. Participants of the study described motivations for pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education as a result of external factors, Christian service, and personal convictions. Although the majority of participants described themselves as having motivations for pursuing leadership roles, a small number of the participants described reasons they have accepted leadership roles throughout their career. Reasons for accepting leadership roles were identified as compelled to be a representative of voiceless people, perceiving there is an opportunity to add value to the institution, and simply being asked to fill a role in leadership. Conversely, the majority of women who identified themselves as possessing motivations for pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher

education described their motivations as desiring to change leadership models within the institution, pave a way for others to follow, and improve the experience of student groups within the college or university. Reasons for accepting leadership roles and possessing motivations for pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education are distinct among African American women which reveals these women are not monolithic in their inspirations to move into leadership roles. Even more, a significant number of the participants viewed their motivation for, and acceptance of leadership roles as Christian service. These women aligned their roles in faith-based higher education with Christian ministry; a deep personal conviction to serve God, Christ, and people through their occupancy of leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The African American women identity fidelity to God and Christ is a key aspect of their career progression in faith-based higher education.

Description of Organizational Fit. African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education describe their lived experiences with organizational fit in eye-opening terms. The majority of the participants described organizational fit as encountering systemic racism, oppression, microaggressions, dealing with assimilation to dominant culture, and combating diversity and inclusion norms. For these women, organizational fit equates to become like the dominant culture or be considered a threat. Becoming like the dominant culture is perceived as compliance with traditional norms and patriarchy, accepting gender norms, and not disrupting the status quo. Most of the participants do not describe their lived experiences as aligning to organizational fit at institutions in faith-based higher education. For these women, it is not possible for an African American woman to fit the organization largely as a result of the organization not truly demonstrating a desire for inclusion of African American women. One participant described this as “we want to share just not with you.” The data revealed African

American do not desire to fit the organization, these women desire to be accepted in the organization and possess a desire for the organization to be flexible enough to fully accept African American women.

The participants describe the need to develop support networks, create added value, undergo self-improvement, understand the politics of the institution, and obtain knowledge of the higher education environment. All of which are for the purpose of working within the organization without losing personal identity or soul. Even more, these elements combine to create a life preserver for African American women in faith-based higher education. Encountering organizational fit for the participants means taking initiative to protect themselves from identity crisis. Dealing with organizational fit creates opportunities for learning experiences among the participants; experiences described as learning to be a truth-teller, building relationships, and developing self-confidence. The participants shared there is a deep commitment to maintaining the status quo or employing the Scriptures to explain away sexism, patriarchy and failure to transform the organization to be more inclusive of African American women or people of color in leadership roles. The majority of participants overwhelmingly view organizational fit in faith-based higher education as an unwelcomed and undesired experience.

Evaluation of the Research Design

Credibility. A 6-question questionnaire was delivered to each participant via email to obtain demographic data for the study. The questionnaire was delivered in written form along with a recruitment letter inviting each participant to participate in the study. At this stage, the researcher did not include the interview questions and shared the researcher's contact information with each participant. The questionnaire afforded the researcher to obtain general background data to develop a biographical sketch of the participants, and to determine if the

participants were eligible to participate in the study. The recruitment letter provided participants with the research subject, a brief introduction to the researcher, an overview of the protocol for the study, and expressed a signed consent form is required to participate in the study.

The researcher scheduled and conducted qualitative interviews with each participant via Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference call after receipt of the signed consent form from each participant. Seven days prior to the scheduled video conference call, the researcher delivered seven interview questions in written form via email delivery to each participant which afforded a minimum three-day review by the participant. Within five days of delivery of the interview questions the video conference call was scheduled with the participant. Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference calls were conducted and recorded with the researcher situated in a closed office with no other persons present and each participant attended the Cisco WebEx or Zoom video conference call in a private office or private area so that only the researcher and participant were present during the interview. The researcher posed open-ended questions which provided participants the opportunity to describe their lived experiences and perceptions of their personal journey into leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The participants responded to each interview question with a significant degree of candor, therefore, the researcher deemed follow-up probing questions were not needed. Within seven days of conducting the interview with each participant, the researcher transcribed the interviews and delivered a raw transcript of the interview to the participant via email. Upon analyzing the data, the researcher developed emergent themes and descriptions, and delivered in written form a copy of the emergent themes and descriptions to each participant for review to determine whether findings were accurate. All files were stored in secure external hard drives which only the researcher has access to.

Dependability. The researcher maintained an audit log during the study. The audit log affords for replication of the study and retention of records. Even more, the audit log reflects steps taken with each participant and decisions made during the study. The interview data was analyzed in several steps. First, the researcher transcribed the raw data for analysis. Second, the researcher read the data multiple times on separate occasions making notes in the data. Third, the researcher created a classification system by coding the data and assigning themes. Coding was used to manage the data and themes from the participant's perceptions and the researcher employed use of NVivo software. Fourth, the researcher performed logical analysis across the themes to develop descriptions based on the coding process. Fifth, the researcher cross analyzed all potential themes to eliminate drift. Finally, the researcher performed interpretative analysis of the findings. To ensure accuracy, the researcher delivered via email delivery in written form a copy of the emergent themes, descriptions and findings to each participant for review to determine whether findings were accurate.

Confirmability. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal during the study. Entries were made throughout the study to identify researcher biases in order to prevent such biases from drifting into the study. The reflexive journal was stored on a secure external hard drive which the researcher only has access to.

Transferability. The study revealed African American women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education possess distinct lived experiences in the work environment. Although it is possible to arrive at basic generalities in administrative office environments, the degree in which findings of this study can be generalized is limited to African American women in or pursuing leadership positions in faith-based higher education. Furthermore, findings in this

study could not be ascribed to all women in faith-based higher education since the women participating in this study describe lived experiences based on their race and gender.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data and findings of the study. Findings included seven themes that emerged from the data gathered by the researcher. The researcher interviewed the participants in a setting which allowed each participant to describe their lived experiences as African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education. The emergent themes described (a) the majority of participants believe race and gender has negatively and positively impacted their career and progression to leadership roles in faith-based higher education; (b) the majority of participants describe there is a lack of transformational leadership behavior demonstrated at top level leadership positions in faith-based higher education, top level leaders desire to be viewed as transformational leaders but transformational leadership is hardly realized; (c) the majority of participant's reflection on the role of mentorship to their professional development and career progression in faith-based higher education could be understood as essential and a force which propels career progression; (d) the majority of participant's motivation for seeking leadership roles could be viewed as an extension of vocation or deriving from deep personal convictions to make a positive difference in the leadership model in faith-based higher education and among students; (e) the participant's description and experiences with organizational culture and organizational fit in faith-based higher education are primarily understood as negative; forced to encounter and deal with systemic racism, oppression, and assimilation to white dominant culture. With the exception of two African American women in leadership at a faith-based higher education institution, the majority of participants describe negative experiences with organizational culture in faith-based higher education; (f) the

participant's reflections on lessons learned throughout their career while holding leadership roles is normative and a requirement for success; and (g) advice for other African American women aspiring to leadership roles in faith-based higher education appear to be aimed at ensuring "need to know" information is transferred to up and coming future African American female leaders in faith-based higher education. Chapter 5 will address conclusions, implications, applications, and research limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to understand the lived experiences of African American women holding and in pursuit of leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions. The study sought to discover if African American women perceive the presence of transformational leadership behavior in their lived experiences within the organizational culture and leadership structure of faith-based higher education institutions in their pursuit of leadership roles.

Research Questions

This research problem consisted of five questions to guide the study.

These questions were:

RQ1. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences when pursuing leadership positions?

RQ2. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organization in their pursuit of leadership positions?

RQ3. How do African American women describe their experience with leadership development or mentorship initiatives in faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ4. How do African American women describe their motivation for seeking leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ5. How do African American women describe their organizational fit in faith-based higher education institutions?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

All of the African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education had unique career paths, that is, no two participants possessed an identical pathway to leadership positions. The participants varied in age range, place of employment, employment history

number of years in career, number of years in leadership, and were employed with faith-based colleges and universities of varying size at the time of the study. There are seven themes which emerge from the meanings described by the women in the study. The women in the study choose to be in faith-based higher education and describe their lived experiences within faith-based higher education in personal and corporate terms. In analyzing the data obtained from the participants, the researcher was able to learn the pursuit of, and occupancy of leadership roles in faith-based higher education for African American women does include adversity and personal fulfillment.

Conclusions

Absence of Transformational Leadership at the Top Level. All of the participants described lived experiences with leadership paradigms modeled by senior leaders in faith-based higher education with a small number of participants specifically describing transformational leadership behavior traits modeled by their presidents in positive terms. Many of the participants mentioned transformational leadership is virtually non-existent at the top level of senior leadership. The theme leadership paradigm among senior leaders which emerged from the data revealed all of the participants possessed an understanding of transformational leadership and were able to articulate the presence of such leadership. Since the majority of the participants described transformational leadership as hardly present among senior level executive leaders there is reason for improved leadership behavior modeling in faith-based higher education if transformational leadership is to be actualized.

In examining the lived experiences of African American women leaders related to the presence of transformational leadership behaviors in faith-based higher education, the researcher was able to identify various reasons for the need to improve leadership behavior modeling

among senior executive leaders in faith-based higher education. The findings indicate there is a difference between desiring to be viewed as a transformational leader and actualizing transformational leadership. Many of the participants link this difference to a perceived deep commitment of the dominant culture within the institution to maintain the status quo and slow the progress of change in faith-based higher education institutions. Since each college and university where participants are employed promote a mission which is distinctly Christian, it is eye opening the majority of the participants describe transformational leadership behaviors as missing among senior executive leaders. With only three out eleven participants firmly describing the presence of transformational leadership among senior executives there appears to be a need for improved leadership modeling among senior executives in faith-based higher education.

The data revealed the majority of the participants described their lived experiences with organizational culture and organizational fit as difficult. Description of their experiences include facing systemic racism, encountering microaggressions, resisting gender norms, encountering the expectation to assimilate to the dominant culture, and experiencing loneliness. Organizational culture does not exist apart from leadership behavior modeling and leadership behavior modeling operates within the organization. The lived experiences of the African American women when they encounter organizational culture and organizational fit could be improved with transformational leadership behavior modeling among senior executive leaders within the organization.

Best Practices and Shared Experiences. The results of this study confirm mentoring, networking, and personal motivations are key reasons African American women advance into leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The race and gender actualities, leadership

inspirations, pathways to mentorship, and acquired wisdom themes combine to form best practices and shared experiences among African American women. Race and gender actualities reflect shared experiences of the participants. Many of the participants expressed African American women in faith-based higher education face the reality of being heavily scrutinized when pursuing promotion opportunities into leadership roles or being passed over for promotion into leadership roles on account their race and gender. African American women pursuing leadership roles tend to have slightly more than twenty years in career and in many instances a terminal degree or one or more master's degree. Race and gender actualities is a shared experience among participants although the participant's do not describe monolithic pathways into leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Even more, race and gender appear create unique lived experiences for African American women which are not avoidable and seem to be normative in the pursuit of leadership roles. For one participant in the study, race and gender does not present a hazard since she is employed at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with the majority of senior executive leadership positions occupied by African Americans. When compared against the experiences of the remaining participants, her experiences are distinct from the other African American women. This suggests the presence of increased numbers of African Americans in senior leadership roles that demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors could improve race and gender actualities for African American women.

The theme leadership inspirations provided additional insight into the motivations of some African American women who pursue and occupy leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Nearly half of the participants described their inspiration for pursuing leadership roles is spiritual...a deep conviction to please and serve God. Shirley stated, "My motivation is I want

to go heaven. My path has been designed by the Lord.” In this sense, it seems Shirley’s desire for eternity with God and a personal belief that her journey into leadership roles is the work of the Lord adds additional meaning to why moving into leadership occurs. Virginia said, “My motivation is Christ and God. I am thrilled to not be able to just rely on worldly wisdom.” For Virginia, occupying leadership roles call for the need to possess more than worldly wisdom. There is the added benefit of possessing spiritual wisdom on account of commitment to God and Christ. Agatha mentioned, “I really am a person that is first and foremost driven by faith; I walk by faith and not by sight.” The combination of being driven by faith and walking faith play a meaningful role in Agatha’s description of her leadership inspiration. These statements clearly disclose some African American women pursue and hold leadership roles in faith-based higher education as a result of their commitment to the Lord which confirm their place in higher education is not solely physical or selfish ambition; there is an added spiritual dimension to their presence in faith-based higher education. Ruth shared, “My motivation was service, for me this work was ministry.” Service to God and viewing leadership roles in faith-based higher education as ministry and divine assignment, an extension of their vocation is a noticeable shared experience among some African American women.

The power of mentorship in the form of sponsors, peer mentors, and formal and informal mentors appear to be foundational to professional development, leadership preparation and career progression. The participants placed significant value on establishing and cultivating relationships with men and women, white or black for the purpose of securing a mentor or sponsor. This suggests race and gender are neutralized when African American women pursue leadership positions in faith-based higher education. All of the participants linked career progression to one or more of the aforementioned forms of mentorship. Even more, obtaining

mentorship was viewed as essential to personal and professional development among the participants. The role of the mentor appears to carry certain duties described by the participants as advocating for mentees, providing guidance, encouragement and affirmation. This suggests obtaining leadership roles among African American is hardly possible without the contribution of mentors. Althea mentioned, “I did not have any professional development opportunities or other people of color who went before me to take me under their wings...I wish I did.” Although Althea described entering into leadership roles without mentorship, this appears to be an exception to the normal pathway to leadership roles for African American women in faith-based higher education.

The African American women cited membership in support networks is important to pursuing and sustaining occupancy in leadership roles in faith-based higher education. This is both a shared experience and best practice. Developing support networks is a best practice which leads to success for African American women pursuing and holding leadership roles. According to the participants, support networks, specifically support networks made up of African American women and men within faith-based higher education or other sectors provide African American women a space to depart from the environment of systemic racism, the need to assimilate, and the burden of codeswitching in order to speak plainly with persons who comprehend their communication style and accept their personhood. Inclusion in African American support networks offers the opportunity to problem-solve and share learning experiences with other African American who encountered and navigated similar experiences.

Additional best practices unearthed from the data include creating added value, obtaining knowledge of higher education, and developing self-confidence. Creating added value for a number of the participants equates to African American women availing themselves to holding

positions on committees centered around finances, administration and remaining active in the academic side of higher education through teaching courses. Added value seems to be understood among participants as a means to increase net worth of African American women working in faith-based higher education. The participants cited the importance of developing self-confidence. For the African American women, dedicating time and space to discovering self-identity is vitally important to pursuing and holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education. According to Shirley, “As an African American female never forget that you are an African American female; because as soon as you [do] just like in any situation something will happen that will remind you.” Althea stated, “I think you need identity development to know who you are, your boundaries and when you will assimilate. Know the difference between assimilation and dishonoring yourself.” Encountering systemic racism, sexism, microaggressions, patriarchy, assimilation to dominant culture, and oppression as described by the participants creates the need to absolutely possess self-identity to ward off identity crisis or loss of identity.

The best practice of obtaining knowledge of higher education acknowledges ascending into leadership roles in faith-based higher education warrants a working knowledge of higher education. One of participants stated, “Find out what higher education really is. Higher education is a wonderful space but there are nuances to it that create landmines for you” (Shirley). Another participant noted, “Gain information on the area of higher education you want to enter; get as much information and knowledge about the area you want to go into” (Harriet). Felicia stated, “Study the organization through the view of the dominant culture.” Virginia said, “Know what you are getting into.” It does not appear gaining knowledge of higher education and the segments within higher education is optional in the view of the participants. The women methodically

disclosed gaining knowledge of higher education aids in selecting the segment of higher education for employment concentration while also aiding in developing strategies for navigating the politics of higher education and hazards to career progression.

Implications

Understanding the lived experiences of African American women pursuing or holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education is necessary for improving leadership opportunities for African American women. This study provided insight into how African American women employed at faith-based colleges and universities in the East, South, Midwestern and West regions of the United States describe their lived experiences in faith-based higher education. In reference to this study, its analysis and findings, and conclusions the researcher offers the following implications for practice.

1. Faith-based higher education institutions could consider implementing a two-part annual survey of leadership behavior traits. The survey would be administered by a third-party organization with experience and expertise in gathering, coding and defining data. The survey would be anonymous and participants in part 1 of the study would include all leaders who are direct reports to senior executive leaders within the institution not holding an executive level position and are members of the president's cabinet. Participants in part 1 of the survey should rate and describe the leadership behaviors of senior executive leaders. Part two of the survey would be administered to all managers, coordinators and supervisors of the leaders that are direct reports to leaders who do not hold executive leadership roles and are not members of the president's cabinet. Participants in part 2 of the survey would rate and describe the leadership behaviors of leaders that are not senior level executive leaders. This survey

could provide a complete portrait of the rating, description and lived experiences associated with leadership behavior traits within the institution, aid in identifying if the leadership behavior traits discovered in the survey align to the institution's vision, mission and values, and aid in preparing strategic plans to improve leadership behavior traits within the institution.

2. Faith-based higher education institutions could invest in leadership and mentorship development programs administered by the institution which are designed to provide a pipeline to increased numbers of African American women entering into leadership roles. The institutions could develop a means for recording, tracking and disclosing the progress, results and impact of the leadership and mentorship development programs.
3. Faith-based higher education institutions could invest in diversity and inclusion institutes operated at the college or university level which provide discourse addressing the intersections of race and gender, obstacles to diversity and inclusion in society and organizations, use of power in society and organizations, and the social and organizational cultural factors which create adversities for African American women and people of color employed in the workplace.
4. African American women holding senior level leadership roles could develop and participate in national and regional networking institutes for African American women pursuing or holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education. The networking institutes would allow emerging leaders to convene with senior leaders to exchange best practices, professional development methodologies, common strategies, and shared experiences.

Applications

Based on the findings of the study, the following applications for practice are recommended for African American women pursuing or holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education.

1. African American women who pursue leadership roles in faith-based higher education are responsible for attaining the highest educational attainment (master or doctorate degree) and credentialing in preparation for obtaining leadership roles.
2. African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education are primarily responsible for seeking, identifying, and cultivating relationships with men and women who could serve as mentors.
3. African American women are responsible for learning as much as possible about the sectors of faith-based higher education and use the knowledge to decide if they belong in faith-based higher education.
4. African American women pursuing leadership roles should not expect monolithic pathways into leadership roles; they are responsible for engaging in fact finding efforts by convening with as many African American women leaders as possible to discover their pathways into leadership roles.
5. African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education are responsible for remaining highly adaptable. The context of facing adversities and navigating the dominant culture environment in faith-based higher education is intense and unavoidable.

6. African American women should determine if they possess the physical, mental and emotional well-being to pursue and occupy leadership roles in faith-based higher education. There are real hazards and burdens associated with the small number of African American women holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education.
7. African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education could benefit from academically studying whiteness and the intersections of race, gender and power to increase their potential to hold leadership roles and navigate the context of the dominant culture in faith-based higher education.
8. African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education are responsible for gaining deep awareness of the high potential for slower career progression on account of race and gender.
9. African American women pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education could consider taking advantage of opportunities to join internal or external support and professional development networks.
10. African American women bear responsibility for becoming aware white women could view them as a threat to their career progression; pursuing leadership roles in faith-based higher education comes with the added difficulty of navigating white women and their perceived threat of African American women double minority status.

Research Limitations

The research study was limited to African American women holding leadership positions at faith-based colleges and universities located in the South, East, Midwestern and West region within the United States. African American women not actively employed and holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions in the United States were excluded

from the study. The study did not include any actively retired African American women who previously held leadership roles in faith-based higher education. No participants were included in the study who did not occupy senior level leadership roles or active membership in the president's cabinet with a minimum of one to five years in leadership position tenure. Findings and conclusions should not be applied to African American women pursuing or holding leadership roles in nonfaith-based higher education institutions or more broadly women of color pursuing or holding leadership roles in faith-based or nonfaith-based higher education institutions.

Further Research

In reference to this study, its analysis and findings, and conclusions the researcher offers the following for further research.

1. Conduct a study designed to analyze the lived experiences of African American women pursuing and holding leadership roles in HBCUs in the North, South, East, Midwestern and West regions of the United States. This study would contribute to understanding the lived experiences African American women in contexts where African Americans are the dominant culture within the faith-based institution.
2. Conduct a national study designed to compare and contrast the lived experiences of African American women in leadership roles in faith-based and nonfaith-based higher education. This study would contribute to understanding which differences, if any, are present in the lived experiences of African American women based upon which sector of higher education African American women pursue.

3. Conduct a study designed to analyze diversity and inclusion realities for emerging African American women aspiring to leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions in the United States participating in the CCCU.
4. Conduct a study designed to discover and learn the effectiveness of mentorship or leadership development programs and initiatives deployed by faith-based higher education institutions in the United States not participating in the CCCU which are aimed at providing professional and leadership development for American women pursuing leadership roles.
5. Conduct a study designed to analyze the framework and success rate of professional development or bridge programs to leadership roles for African American women in faith-based higher education administered by colleges and universities located in the United States participating in the CCCU.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter discussed research conclusions, implications and applications for faith-based higher education institutions and African American women pursuing or holding leadership roles in faith-based higher education. Both race and gender impacted the lived experiences and career progression for most African American women that participated in the study. The recommendations in this chapter provide suggestions for faith-based higher education institutions, African American women aspiring to leadership roles in faith-based higher education and implications for further research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Consent

Title of the Project: African American Women in Leadership in Faith-Based Higher Education: A Qualitative Case

Principal Investigator: Michael C. Walker, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years old or older at the time of the study, an African American woman, employed at a faith-based higher education institution participating or not participating in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), and hold a position of executive level or senior executive level leadership. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to understand the lived experiences of African American women in leadership roles in faith-based higher education institutions participating or not participating in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The study shall also seek to discover if African American women perceive the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organizational culture and leadership structure of faith-based higher education institutions as it pertains to increasing the number of African American women in leadership roles.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Complete a 20 to 30-minute one-on-one interview with the researcher conducted via conference call telephone interview or via Skype or WebEx web-based meeting, which shall be recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

There are no direct benefits to participants in this study. The research will add to the body of research literature on African American women in leadership in faith-based higher education.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study shall be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

The researcher shall respect the privacy, confidentiality, and liberty of each participant by assigning pseudonyms and using separate profiles for each participant to be stored in password secure files. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. The interviews shall be recorded and transcribed with recordings stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher at the email/phone number included in the next paragraph. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Michael C. Walker. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED] or via email at mcwalker@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Gary Bredfeldt, Ph.D., at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix B
Questionnaire Tool

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Age

1. What was your age at the time you entered into a leadership role?
 - a. 25-34
 - b. 35-44
 - c. 45-54
 - d. 55 and over
 - e. I prefer not to answer

Employment

2. Number of years in current position? _____
3. Number of years in a leadership position? _____
4. Number of years in your career field? _____
5. What three positions did you hold prior to your current position?

College _____

Position _____

College _____

Position _____

College _____

Position _____

Education

6. What is the highest degree you have completed?
 - a. Master's degree (MA, MS, MEd, MBA, MSW) _____
 - b. Doctorate degree (PhD, EdD, JD) _____

Appendix C
Recruitment Letter

From: Michael C. Walker

To:

Subject: African American Women in Leadership in Faith-Based Higher Education: A Qualitative Study

Dear:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. The title of my research project is African American Women in Leadership in Faith-Based Higher Education: A Qualitative Study and the purpose of my research is to discover the lived experiences of African American women in leadership positions in faith-based higher education institutions participating or not participating in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be African American women in leadership or senior executive leadership roles employed at faith-based higher education institutions within the United States from the start of 2013 through the close of 2018. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire which could be completed in approximately 10 minutes. Additionally, participants will be asked to complete a 20 to 30-minute interview conducted via Skype web-based telephone or video conference call. Final themes and specific descriptions shall be provided to the participants to determine whether findings are accurate. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please complete the attached questionnaire and return it by email. The questionnaire is short, contains 6 questions and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]. Once the screening questionnaires have been reviewed, I will contact eligible participants to schedule the interview.

If you choose to participate, a consent document will be sent to you by mail or email. Participants will need to sign the consent document and return the document to me prior to the interview.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Walker

Appendix D

Interview Questionnaire

Research Questions

RQ1. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe their lived experiences when pursuing leadership positions?

RQ2. How do African American women employed in faith-based higher education institutions describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior within the organization in their pursuit of leadership positions?

RQ3. How do African American women describe their experience with leadership development or mentorship initiatives in faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ4. How do African American women describe their motivation for seeking leadership positions within faith-based higher education institutions?

RQ5. How do African American women describe their organizational fit in faith-based higher education institutions?

Interview Questions

1. Do you feel race and gender have impacted your progression to leadership roles? If so, in what ways?
2. How would you describe the presence of transformational leadership behavior among senior executive leaders in faith-based higher education?
3. Do you feel leadership development or mentor initiatives aided in your progression as an African American woman in leadership in faith-based higher education? If so, in what ways? If not, why?
4. How would you describe your motivation for seeking leadership roles in faith-based higher education?
5. How would you describe organizational culture and organizational fit for an African American woman in leadership or aspiring leadership in faith-based higher education?
6. What lessons have you learned as an African American woman in leadership in faith-based higher education?
7. What recommendations do you have for African American women aspiring to be in leadership in faith-based higher education?