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A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators'

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A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators'

Experiences in Mennonite High Schools

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF

EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELING OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF ST. THOMAS

ST PAUL, MINNESOTA

by

Pamela K. Tieszen

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators' Experiences in Mennonite High Schools

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological qualitative research study investigated Mennonite women with experience leading Mennonite high schools across the United States and Canada during their first year serving in the role of principal. This study gives voice to 12 Mennonite women leaders who felt God's "call" to lead. Women leaderencountered bias due to an androcentric culture. Despite the many struggles and limited view of women in leadership, the women built campuses andacademic programs, mentored leaders, helped to transform students, and shaped communities as pioneeringleaders in Mennonite schools.

Feminist, organizational, and vocational theory provided several analytical lenses to interpret their experience. Feminist theory explained how women experienced and managed androcentric cultures in schools and communities. Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory (four frame model)explained how women's leadership styles navigated authoritarian power and political structures, and became symbolic representation for a new style of leadership in Mennonite schools. Parker Palmer's (1983/2010) vocational theory explained Mennonite women's deep sense of being called by God, and how they learned to lead in androcentric, heirarchical church structured school communities.

The findings illustrate the potential of faith-based women leaders to empower and build community. The women shaped communities found mentors, networked, and developed a new norm for women in their communities. Implications and recommendations included building continued awareness and education in schools and community churches by addressing adult gender biases within the culture as well as educating younger children in nonbiased early education programs.

Keywords: Mennonite, School, androcentric, feminist, organizational, vocational

DEDICATION

To Tyler, Aaron and Jaime!

Thank you for enduring. I love you forever and always!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My study concerns the challenges women leaders experience in a career dominated largely by men. I pursued this topic because of my personal background and professional experiences. Personally, my introduction to leadership started on my farm where women and men toiled side by side at difficult, back-breaking work. My parents treated me as a person who could do outdoor and indoor chores, and gender roles did not make much difference. Outdoor chores included baling hay, unloading bales, feeding the cattle, cultivating corn, and cleaning the barn. I also learned the indoor cleaning, cooking, canning and butchering tasks. I enjoyed the challenging outdoor work, and, even though I am female, never gave a thought to being unable to do outdoor work. Growing up in this environment gave me license to pursue what I liked and did well. While I was aware of gender roles, and what society might predetermine as acceptable professions for women, I never worried about gender as I sought a profession.

In college, in the early 1980s, I chose the teaching profession, but I chose male-dominated teaching fields: history, political science and physical education. Only a handful of women took these classes, but I liked the subjects and decided to pursue what I loved and not to worry about my chances of getting hired. In fact, throughout my career, I have not experienced any difficulty in finding positions or in getting hired in male-dominated academic fields or as an athletic coach.

As part of my teaching responsibilities, I usually coached men's and women's basketball, men's and women's track and field, and men's and women's cross-country. For two years I was the first female coach of a boy's high school basketball team—only one of two female coaches in the state at the time. I encountered many coaching situations and teaching experiences in all male departments, and, although I lacked mentors to support and advise me, I remained in the

field using my own strategies for coping. Most of these positive and negative experiences prepared me for a later career in administration.

In my initial administrative position, I served as the first female administrator in a small, rural Mennonite school's 113-year history. During these years, I sometimes found myself the only woman in a group of administrators, athletic directors, or community planning groups. Often I was chosen to be part of these groups because they needed a token woman to achieve gender balance and avoid men-only committees. My experiences defied traditional expectations for women living in small, rural communities.

My farm experience and my professional experience include a series of firsts in what have typically been men's professions. From growing up on the farm, to teaching and coaching, and finally becoming the head of a school, the series repeated itself in a pattern I could not ignore. Because of the series of firsts, I am compelled to understand the experiences of other women heads of schools in similar small, Mennonite-affiliated school settings.

My entire life experiences during my formative years came from one isolated community with little cultural or religious diversity. I spent my junior and senior year of college in an even more isolated rural community that provided little alternative to those early experiences in my home community.

While aware of the overt androcentric cultural barriers in my community, I did not anticipate the subtleties of demeaning behavior that played out in educational committee meetings. I experienced acts of discrimination by men on finance and enrollment committees and the school board while serving as an isolated woman in a school leadership role. For example, when I started in administration six years ago, Mennonite Schools Council (MSC), a group of Mennonite administrators from across the country, included mostly men. During the

past six years, the make-up of the MSC has changed to more than half women; many of those first hired were novice women administrators in the Mennonite institutions, pioneers of sorts. This situation caused me to wonder how other women serving in similar roles in faith-based schools experienced challenges in leading a school historically dominated by male administrators. The rapid change in roles from men leading Mennonite affiliated schools to the rise of women leaders stirred many questions, and I found myself most interested in understanding the experiences and stories of other women leading small, Mennonite-affiliated schools. In the next section, I explain the importance of this study of United States and Canadian Mennonite women administrators in kindergarten through grade 12 schools.

Statement of the Problem, Purpose, and Significance

My study concerns women leaders of small, Mennonite-affiliated schools and their experiences as the first women heads of schools with long histories of male leadership. The results of my study describe how women heads of schools manage their relationships with their families, boards, faculty, and constituents possibly challenging religious and cultural traditions as the first women hired by their institutions. Two key factors may affect the experiences of women heads of Mennonite-affiliated schools: (1) conservative religious beliefs and traditions about the role of women and leadership, and (2) cultural attitudes regarding gender and leadership. A unique combination of the above factors, such as religious beliefs and traditions within Mennonite-affiliated schools, affected the experiences of novice women heads of schools differently than the experience of women leaders in other faith-based or private schools with small enrollments (500 students or less).

My study of women heads of schools may contribute to literature on leadership in several ways. First, I found no contemporary studies of Mennonite women leaders in K-12 schools.

Literature on Mennonite women and education focuses on the history of women as professors in Mennonite communities at the higher education and seminary levels; for example, the journeys of Marlene Kropf and Bertha Fast Harder (Swartley & Keener, 1999) becoming professors at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary relate closely to what I expect to find in my research. Literature also reveals the life experiences of Mennonite administrators such as Lee Snyder's story of becoming president at Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio, and Shirley Hershey Showalter becoming president of Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana (Swartley & Keener, 1999).

Because literature on the contemporary experience of women leaders of K-12 Mennonite-affiliated schools does not exist, my study examines women's leadership with the combined effects of religion and gender in a relatively new field. While women gained principal and superintendent roles in public educational leadership years ago, women did not become head of school in Mennonite schools until recently. In 2008 very few Mennonite Schools Council elementary and secondary administrators were women, but by 2014 the organization was over half women. The tide turned rapidly in a six-year span.

My study examined women's experiences in leadership roles in Mennonite-affiliated high schools. They shared experiences common to women directors and superintendents in small, rural school districts and urban districts with limited resources. They faced typical barriers experienced by women in administration, such as conflicting demands on family and work responsibilities (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; Loder, 2005; Pirouznia, 2013). For example, Derrington and Sharratt (2009) found women continue to experience challenges in balancing responsibilities of childcare and demands of long hours at work. More young women delay having children to enter into administration or delay their move into administration. This is a

personal choice for young women today and represents progress because they no longer feel the decision has been made for them.

Current studies examined how androcentric culture shapes the standard norms for women as educational leaders (Dunshea, 2013; Fuller, 2014). Androcentric means "dominated by or emphasizing masculine interests or a masculine point of view" (Merriam-Webster). For example, Fuller's (2014) study found the current discourse about women leaders often is limited by perceptions of dress and body language, and based on a masculine standard of leadership. My study examines how women experience leadership as women heads of schools in Mennonite-affiliated schools, a living and working environment marked by androcentric culture.

Available mentors and professional networks for women school leaders lag behind men's educational administrative networks (Mendez-Morse, 2004). For example, Mendez-Morse (2004) found six women appointed to elementary principal positions in West Texas had parental role models, most often their mothers, but lacked professional mentors in their training. My study shows types of support women found to sustain their leadership in a difficult role.

Another barrier faced by women involves stereotypical views of women held by board members and community members (Dowell & Larwin, 2013; Kaparou & Bush, 2007; Pirouznia, 2013). For example, participants in Pirouznia's (2013) research found women were at a disadvantage in obtaining a high school principal position because board members believed women lacked the ability to discipline authoritatively. A second factor according to Pirouznia (2013) concerned the board's perceptions regarding women's lack of financial management experience.

Women leaders of Mennonite-affiliated schools faced the same and/or unique challenges due to the effects of religious and traditional views of women's roles. My study addresses a new

area of research, namely the experience of women directors of Mennonite-affiliated schools who work independently in small schools across the country. My study exposed how stereotypical views affected women heads of school and/or how religious views affected Mennonite women leaders.

My purpose in conducting a phenomenological study was to provide an understanding of the experiences of women leaders in Mennonite-affiliated schools, their communities and the greater church. Reflecting on experiences offered the women a chance to gain wisdom from their experience, and avoid becoming trapped by their circumstances. According to Bennis (1989),

> There are lessons in everything, and if you are fully deployed, you will learn most of them. Experiences are not truly yours until you think about them, analyze them, examine them, question them, reflect on them, and finally understand them. The point, once again, is to use your experiences rather than being used by them, to be the designer, not the design, so that experiences empower rather than imprison. (p. 65)

My intent is the research will provide insight for women in similar situations in faith-based schools and lend perspective to faith communities in support of women school leadership positions.

Research Question

I adopted the following research question: How do women experience and make meaning of their role as leaders in Mennonite-affiliated schools? I added sub-questions to support the investigation of my central question:

1. How do women experience the initial transition into a leadership role typically dominated by men?

2. How do cultural and religious beliefs about women affect women's opportunities to serve as well as their experience as leaders of Mennonite-affiliated schools?

3. How do "pioneering" women survive and thrive in an isolated leadership role?

The questions provide a base for consistency when interviewing the participants. Since the interviews were an open-ended inquiry based process, I asked probing questions and clarify responses. In the event the interview is less informative, I used the sub-questions.

After the definition of terms, I begin the literature review in chapter two. I read approximately 65 peer-reviewed articles and books to better understand the history and experiences of pioneering women administrators in public education, and private, faith-based schools around the world. Recent literature also focused on women of color in the United States who are filling lead administration roles for the first time. Chapter two exposes the gap found in the literature regarding women superintendents in faith based and specifically Mennonite schools.

Definition of Terms

I adopted the following terms and definitions to use in my study:

Androcentric: dominated by or emphasizing masculine interests or a masculine point of view (Androcentric, n.d.).

Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools [CAMS]: an association of 12 schools, kindergarten through seminary, that operate as an arm of the Canadian Mennonite Church system.

Civil Rights Movement: mass protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the southern United States that came to national prominence during the mid-1950s (Carson, 2017).

Civil Rights Act: Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed, prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race, religion, and national origin (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1998).

Faith-based schools: church-affiliated schools.

Feminist Theory: a movement to recognize women's rights as citizens and participating members of society (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011).

Giftings: talents bestowed by God**.**

GI Bill: Service Man's Readjustment Act of 1944: The GI Bill created a comprehensive package of benefits, including financial assistance for higher education for veterans of U.S. military service. The benefits of the GI Bill are intended to help veterans readjust to civilian life following service to their country and to encourage bright, motivated men and women to volunteer for military duty. This legislation came in two parts: the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 and the Montgomery GI Bill. (GI Bill, n.d.)

Giddens Structuration Theory: Giddens suggested human agency and social structure are in a relationship with each other, and it is the repetition of the acts of individual agents which reproduces the structure. This means that there is a social structure—traditions, institutions, moral codes, and established ways of doing things—but it also means that these can be changed when people start to ignore them, replace them, or reproduce them differently (Gauntlett, 2002).

Head of School: in Mennonite kindergarten through grade 12 school leadership, the superintendent position or lead administrator is often called head of school.

Mennonite: a member of a Protestant sect that rejects infant baptism; church organization; the doctrine of transubstantiation; and in most cases refuses military service, public office, and the

taking of oaths. For the purpose of this study, Mennonite is the religious sect of the educational institutions hiring women (Mennonite Church USA, 2014).

Mennonite Schools Council [MSC]: a group of 25 schools in the United States under Mennonite Education Agency, pre-kindergarten through high school, that relate to and function as a networking group.

Organizational Theory: organizational theory is born out of the industrial analysts' desire to be more efficient and timely in production. Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory provides four frameworks: "structural, human resources, political and the symbolic frame" (p. 5).

Private: schools funded by tuition paid by families, school fundraising and church financial support.

Small: student enrollment under 500 students.

Title VII: A Federal Act, which amends the Higher Education Act of 1965, prohibiting employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin (Civil Rights Act of 1964)

Title IX: an Educational Amendment of 1972 stating no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Mertz, 2006, p. 544).

Vocational Theory: my vocation (to use the poet′s term) is the spiritual life, the quest for God, which relies on the eye of the heart. (Palmer, 1993, p. xxiv).

Women's Rights Movements: There were 3 waves of feminist movements.

First Wave 1830 to early 1900's: women's fight for equal contract and property rights

Second Wave 1960's – 1980's: women's fight for rights in the work place, sexuality, family and reproductive rights.

Third Wave 1990's to current day: a variety of women's groups fighting for political rights through different veins of society to eliminate disparities and establish equality.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I conducted a review of research on women heads of schools in Mennonite-affiliated communities using the following search terms: *women, female, novice, first, leading, principals, superintendents, administrator, secondary, high school, Mennonite, religious, Catholic, and Protestant.* I also used the following phrases: *head of school, lead administrators, women principals, women superintendents, and faith-based schools.* I searched the following databases: Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), EBSCO, Academic Search Premier, PsychINFO (Psycnet), SocINDEX, and ATLA Religion database with ATLA serials. I found no studies directly related to the experience of women leaders in secondary Mennonite-affiliated schools. I then accessed related literature, expanding my review to include women principals and superintendents in rural and urban public schools districts since 1995. I reviewed several studies from before 1995 that provided a historical perspective of women in leadership.

The search for literature of women in the lead administrative positions revealed a significant set of literature. I reviewed approximately sixty-five peer-reviewed articles and books concerning the topic of women in educational leadership and organized review findings into five major themes: (1) a brief history of women in administration, (2) barriers to leadership, (3) women of color educational leaders, (4) support systems for women leaders and positive aspects of women leadership roles, and (5) women leadership styles and perception of power.

According to Bennis (1989), "For someone to pass on insight and perceptions of experiences, he or she must fully understand and recognize the true value of the experience" (p. 98). It is in this vein I pursued the following question: How do women experience and make meaning of their roles as leaders in Mennonite-affiliated schools? I began my review of literature with a brief history of women administrators serving as superintendents and heads of

schools. I included women superintendents, principals, and heads of schools to provide a broad collection of literature on women leaders that would offer a similar past or pattern of experiences. I also chose to include women of color and studies of women educational leaders from around the world because these studies offer the most recent literature, and like Mennonite women administrators, first came to the table in the late 20th and early 21st century. Women of color encountered similar challenges to Mennonite women leaders such as sexism and oppression. Most current studies involved women of South Africa and Israeli schools.

I begin this review with a brief look at the history of women in educational leadership, starting in the early 20th century.

A Brief History of Women in Administration

I begin the review of history by looking at numerous studies of how women progressed statistically in administration throughout the 1900s into the early 2000s. Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004) included a detailed historical review of women superintendents in their literature. In the early 1900s, women played a more prominent role in secondary educational leadership because men were serving in World War I, and the first women's movement was underway by the 1920s. According to Blount (1998), "In 1910, approximately 9 percent of the school superintendents were women and this increased to 11 percent in 1930" (p. 62).

When men returned from World War II, women's leadership opportunities dried up. The percentage of women in administration dropped dramatically below 2 percent in the 1950s and stayed there until the 1970s (Mertz, 2006). According to Glass (2000), women made progress since the 1980s but disparities still existed: "Of our nation's 13,728 superintendents, 14% today are women. Yet 72 percent of all K-12 educators in this country are women, according to the U.S. Department of Education" (p. 1).

After World War II, men went to school on the GI bill and returned to educational leadership, and women were no longer needed as leaders (Sharp, Malone, Walter & Supley, 2004). A male-dominated power structure resurfaced as men came back into the work force, and this structure also included perceptions that women were not capable of managing school districts (Dowell & Larwin, 2013). The passage of Title IX in 1972 brought awareness to the large disparity between women teachers and mostly male administrators (Mertz, 2006). While the number of women in various educational administrative positions increased dramatically over the next 30 years between 1972 and 2002, women appointments to the position of superintendent lagged (Mertz, 2006).

According to Brunner (1999), women represented over 70 percent of superintendent applicants but were only chosen 10 percent of the time (p. 319). Women superintendents filled 18-20 percent of the superintendent positions throughout the nation (Brunner & Kim, 2010, p. 277). Dowell and Larwin (2013) set the percentage of women superintendents between 12 and 22 percent (p. 54). This indicates an increase since the passage of Title IX; however, women still lag far behind in the lead administration position.

Loder (2005) discussed the difference between women of color and white women before and after the Civil Rights Movement and the challenges each group experienced. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, women of color found the step to administration unthinkable even when encouraged. The cultural barriers of the time seemed insurmountable; however, today some consider race and gender an asset (Loder, 2005). As a result of post-Civil Rights Movement change, according to Loder (2005) women of color educational leaders lost examples of activism on behalf of students. Students today do not experience activist examples found during the Civil Rights Movement. Activism for school leadership positions became less important as more

school leadership positions opened, and post-Civil Rights women educators no longer demonstrated activism.

Women of color face a dual handicap breaking the glass ceiling in being female and minority (Loder, 2005; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004) surveyed 212 women superintendents in Indiana, Illinois, and Texas and provided extensive results; statistically, women superintendents ranged at or below 10 percent of superintendents nationwide (p. 22). According to Jones and Montenegro (1985), during the 1972-73 academic year, underrepresented groups comprised only one-tenth of a percent of the nation's superintendents, a figure that rose to just under 3% in 1984-85. Statistically, women struggled to gain a foothold in educational leadership, but women of color continued to fight additional challenges. Statistics produced by Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004) indicated research participants in their three-state study of women in Illinois, Indiana, and Texas included a racial ethnic breakdown of "91.7 % White, 6.9 % Black, 0% Hispanic, and 1.4% Asian-American" (p. 33). An earlier study by Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) involved African-American women in western New York state and found participants in the study felt the significant hurdle for them involved race, not gender.

Pallidino, Haar, Grady, and Perry (2007) completed a case study of 11 novice rural superintendents with five short vignettes about their relational experiences in rural areas and their ability to conduct educational business in small-town androcentric culture. Bjork (2000) identified four phases of women school leadership after the Civil Rights Movement started in the 1960's:

The first stage occurred during the 1960s and reported descriptive information about the census counts of female school leaders. The second stage, the 1970s, resulted in reports of noteworthy female school leaders. The third stage dominated the 1980s and unearthed the factors of discrimination that prevented women's access to leadership positions. The final stage emerged in the 1990s and empowered women to identify their own perspectives as a means to study the collective experiences of female school leaders.

The four phases explain the transition of women leaders and research through the latter part of the 20th century.

A more recent emphasis in the literature includes changes to the research discourse. Before the 1990s, androcentric culture had been the standard to measure and describe women's educational research (Dunshea, 2013; Fuller, 2014). Comparisons with men leaders dominated the analysis of women leaders. Fuller (2014) completed a case study on the language used by employees when they speak about their woman teacher leaders. Typical androcentric culture discourse used prior to 1990 viewed and compared women leaders based on men's leadership styles of the past. However, after 1990, Fuller (2014) found others viewed women leaders as unique and successful in their own right without using the comparative narrative of how women lead as compared to men.

Even though the comparative narrative is not as prevalent, women still struggle to be viable candidates in the largest school districts in the county (Mertz, 2006). They often lead school districts in small, rural, economically disadvantaged school districts (Lumby & Azaola, 2011; Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004). Women appointed to a leadership role are typically known and come from within the school district (Dowell & Larwin, 2013). When school districts hire consultants to find candidates for administrative positions, these consultants often act as gatekeepers to superintendent positions and frequently restrict women candidates based on men's leadership characteristics and the qualifications expected by the governing school board (Mertz, 2006).

Mertz (2006) identified "female firsts," the first women hired by their departments between the 1980s and 1990s, and recognized increases in the number of women becoming superintendents (p. vii). According to Glass and Franceschini (2007), the percentage of female superintendents nationwide increased from approximately 12% in the late 1990s to 22% in 2006. This increase shows school districts indicates progress, but falls short of parity.

Dowell and Larwin (2013) compared men and women superintendents' compensation, career paths, and promotions in the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, and found over half of the educational administrative doctoral students were women, yet less than 25 percent actually fill superintendent positions today. The traditional mindset of school districts or board members prevents the hiring of qualified women (Dowell & Larwin, 2013). Brunner and Kim (2010) indicated women earn 57.6 percent of superintendent degrees, yet they do not access the superintendent position at the same rate. Adams and Hambright (2004) studied women in teacher leader programs and found a range of barriers preventing them from accessing or choosing educational leadership positions. Barriers included not wanting to leave teaching, difficult parents, and school board, parent and faculty politics.

According to Derrington and Sherratt (2009), at the current rate of increase women may reach an equal ratio of men in educational leadership around the year 2035. When women still represent the majority of the teachers and doctoral students, the question remains why more women do not fill superintendent roles (Dowell & Larwin, 2013). Next, I describe the barriers women experience when seeking educational leadership employment.

Barriers to Leadership

While reviewing literature on women's educational leadership, I found numerous accounts of women experiencing barriers to leadership positions beginning in the early 20th

century, most recently in South Africa and Israel. These barriers included androcentric culture (Dunshea, 2013; Fuller, 2014; Limmerick & Anderson, 1999), self-imposed barriers (Arar & Shapira, 2012; Woo, 1985), lack of experience (Kamler, 2009; Kaparou & Bush, 2007; Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004), family pressures (Loder, 2005; Pirouznia, 2013), and lack of networks and mentors (Montz & Wanat, 2008; Moorosi, 2010; Washington, Aillier, & Fione, 2007). The historical and current research revealed painful experiences across the years and across the globe.

Androcentric Culture

While women made progress throughout the 20th century in obtaining educational leadership roles, their experience developed within an androcentric culture (Limerick & Anderson, 1999). Culture played a role in women leaders' development and their leadership styles. Some of these leadership styles caused barriers for women, from the way women obtained and sustained a leadership role to how researchers conduct and report research on women leaders. According to Limerick, "Once we move beyond the classroom the masculine culture of educational administration hierarchies is firmly entrenched (as cited in Limerick & Anderson, 1999, p. 402). Pirouznia (2013) interviewed six women, three who served as principals and three who did not, and noted sex-role stereotyping as a significant barrier for women attempting administrative roles. Paechter (1998) conducted a survey of men and women principals across the United Kingdom and found how culture and expectations around gender affected women leaders:

> Perceived biological differences are translated into mutually-exclusive gender roles in which what is expected of males and females is played out. Those things particular to the masculine role (in Western society, work outside the home, aggressive behavior) are given power and status; those to the feminine (care of children, "service" jobs) are not. Generally it would appear that the status of an occupation or preference is directly related to which gender is usually associated with it.

Dunshea (2013) interviewed newly appointed women principals about their choices and experiences in rural New South Wales, Australia. Dunshea (2013) used Gidden's structuration theory to assess how new women principals describe their experience in comparison to new men principals. Women described their experience and treatment by others differently. Societal structures, particularly hierarchical male settings, provided men the necessary power to maintain dominance and authority without question (Wallace, 1991).

> Androcentric bias achieves two ends, intentional or not. By affirming that the male experience is the "right" experience, it confirms sexism by denying female experience; male voices are dominant and women in school administration are discriminated against as their voices are silenced. At the same time, the aggregation of male and female experience in the literature serves to deny that sexism exists. (Dunshea, 2013, p. 3)

Historically, men dominated the educational profession as teachers and administrators, and eventually women became teachers, but only men continued to fill the role of administrator. Women felt locked into professions of nursing or teaching (Loder, 2005). Prior to the Civil Rights Movement and Title VII of 1964, the perception of women in leadership did not match the androcentric societal structure (Loder, 2005). Androcentric culture emphasizes the male point of view, represented as the center of a culture. For example, historically, when women became pregnant, employers required them to take a year off and not come back until the child was a year old (Loder, 2005). Coleman (2005) described the effect of an androcentric culture on women:

> There are gender related issues of equity and social justice in all cultures. For example, in a small-scale study of women from nine very different countries from across the world, Cubillo & Brown (2003, p. 285) found that the women identified paternal support, peer support, self-esteem and confidence as important positive influences and that common barriers identified were: "traditional patriarchal cultures and perceived male dominance of management." (p. 17)

The androcentric social structure was a common factor in most of the studies researched for this paper in the United States (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; Funk & Polnick, 2005; Loder, 2005). International studies reinforced the androcentric theme: the United Kingdom (Coleman, 2005; Fuller, 2014), Greece (Kaparou & Bush, 2007), South Africa (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Moorosi, 2007), Women of South Africa made significant strides in educational leadership, but were expected to maintain their roles as wives and mothers. Israel (Addi-Raccah, 2006; Arar & Shapira, 2012), and Spain (Coronel, Moreno, & Corrasco, 2010). Women leaders in Israel and Spain encountered the most blatant and violent reactions as women in leadership. The research indicates a worldwide theme for women facing androcentric social structures when leading in educational institutions. Women around the world experienced barriers because of the social norms they operated within.

Wallace (1991) researched women leaders in Catholic Church administration settings previously held only by men and used Gidden's structuration theory to explain how this particular structure of dominance excludes half the human race. Wallace's (1991) study was a church-related study and informs my study. Wallace described the androcentric and hierarchical structure of the Church and the way it affects others:

> The Catholic Church as an institution is the personification of a hierarchical system based on patriarchy, where men who are considered superior hold all the positions of power. A belief in patriarchy guarantees a dominant position for males because the primacy of their authority is unquestioned. (p. 294)

Wallace (1991) and Dunshea (2013) described the rationale for androcentric culture, arguing researchers often overlook entrenched barriers of the existing power structure in studies of women leaders. These "automatic" barriers challenged new women administrators in school communities but are long-existing androcentric social norms of the community (Dunshea, 2013).

A second androcentric cultural issue recognized by Fuller (2014) concerned research language constructs used when describing women educational leaders. Researchers use an androcentric style when conducting research and analyzing the data using an androcentric style of language and description that does not represent women's unique leadership style as compared to men's leadership. Fuller (2014) recognized the individuality of gender constructs and how perception and application of constructs to men and women in leadership affect research. When conducting research, Fuller (2014) found a completely new perspective or description of leadership when analyzing results if the former androcentric-style standard was peeled away. Current studies recognized the importance of describing women's leadership without using the typical androgynous educational leadership style (Fuller, 2014). Kruger (1996) noted it was time to move beyond the "antiquated and longstanding 'men-are-autocratic' and 'women-are-nurturing' dichotomies." Androcentric-style language constructs and research standards were prevalent within the literature.

Descriptions of experiences within the androcentric culture were also common in the literature. Limerick and Anderson (1999) offered a secondary principal's description of her experience to illustrate the difficulties of leading in an androcentric culture:

> She had been faced with the task of implementing reforms in the face of resistance from many on her staff. Her perception was that this was a resistance engendered not only by the reforms but also because she was a woman in a culture that saw leaders as men: "I've found some very old males at (this school) who've been there for donkey years in classified positions, and they've found it very difficult to deal with a woman" (Margaret, secondary principal). (pp. 406-407)

In remote west Texas small towns, patriarchal and androcentric systems affected women administrators (Wallin, 2003). The notion that women were unable to handle discipline and athletics was pervasive. Likewise, Coleman (2005) found discrimination existed against women applicants for leadership positions because women board members believed that women

could not discipline boys, and this might have a negative effect on athletics.

Similarly, Montz and Wanat (2008) noted the existence of good ol' boys clubs and how withholding information from women colleagues blocked women's success. Men in leadership sometimes used a hostile or intentional exclusion of information during communication, preventing women leaders from succeeding (Montz & Wanat, 2008). Kathryn, a participant in a case study of women leaders conducted by Fennel (2008), noted that early in her career attending leadership meetings made up primarily of men, Kathryn was met with an unwelcome atmosphere. Kathryn adeptly refocused group efforts toward positive change for students versus gender leadership issues. Garn and Brown (2008) interviewed 15 women superintendents from a southern state, and participants described how men uncomfortable with women in leadership roles openly challenged and questioned their authority.

Fitzgerald (2003) researched women of color in leadership in New Zealand and Australia in a male-dominated culture and described the effects of this culture on women: "Particular attention should be paid to minority women. These women confront complex contradictions due to their gender and ethnicity" (p. 439). Bloom and Erlandson (2003) studied three African-American women educational leaders' experiences in the American patriarchal culture, an experience different from White women or White men. Participants emphasized the metaphor of visibility and described the difficulty in gaining recognition for African-American women in educational leadership settings. Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) argued that African-American structural framework or "race" standard norms were based on White standards like the androcentric framework women in leadership experienced.

In much of scholarly literature, White male educational leadership becomes the standard for women's leadership skills (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Dunshea, 2013; Kaparou & Bush,

2007). Androcentric cultural behavior impacted all aspects of the educational community (Wallin, 2003). The educational setting mirrors societal roles for men and women who received the power and control based on societal norms (Wallin, 2003).

African-American, African, Latino, and Asian literature in this review revealed how each race and ethnic group adapted under individual circumstances within their own cultural standards (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). However, individualized cultural standards seldom match the framework developed and understood by greater society (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) revealed how the "White" leadership standard became the standard for women leaders of color.

Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) advanced another existing framework: how race and ethnic diversity affect perceptions of leaders and leadership. Within the African-American community, women education leaders used their own style of leadership to assist their students. Witherspoon and Arnold's (2010) participants used their spirituality and community resources and relationships to bring social justice and change on behalf of students.

Wallin (2003) found "non-women" (women not holding leadership roles) within the school community were sometimes the worst offenders toward women in leadership. "Non-women" maintained the androcentric norms and structure and treated women administrators with as much or more disrespect than men. According to Dana and Bourisaw, "Not all the gender bias comes from men. . . . Strong evidence exists that women do not support other women in getting and keeping a superintendency. The reasons are directly aligned with endemic cultural biases regarding men's and women's roles" (p. 29). Garn and Brown (2008) provided a participant's experience:

> I had a lady who came to me when I was first hired and threw a Bible down on my desk and said, "You're a woman, you have no right to be in a place of authority." That was really interesting. And I said, "Let me tell you, I'm a Christian and I believe the Lord gives us different talents and I want to help the school, and I want to be of service . . ." And I got by with that one, but she was after me the whole time. I could take up our whole entire time telling you stories like that one. (p. 65)

Coleman's (2005) research revealed parents wanted to know whether women principals were going to be proper mothers to their own children. Another participant shared when she became pregnant, it was other women who expected her to quit and stay home.

Addi-Raccah (2006) studied Arab and Jewish women educational leaders and stated women leaders distance themselves from other women so as not to cause undue threat when advancing their positions. According to Graves and Powell (1995), Arab women who promote Arab men to leadership positions also distance themselves from their own gender to engage in a higher status. Both examples reveal the theme of women's complicated journeys when accessing and sustaining leadership and isolation as a result of men and women who treat women leaders disrespectfully.

Another aspect of androcentric culture is the style of leadership developed by women leaders. After the Civil Rights Movement, women began filling lead administrator roles, often with the cultural expectation that they adopt the men's leadership characteristics (Loder, 2005). According to Mestry and Schmidt (2012), "The principals in our study disclosed that in order to be accepted by the relevant role-players in the community, they [women] had to adopt an authoritarian style of leadership, which apparently was the only recognized leadership style available" (p. 544). The following passage by Schmuck (1996) described the frustrations of role versus gender:

Women who have achieved positions which are held predominantly by men have realized, consciously or unconsciously, that there are social roles and expectations governing the role of females from the culture. They must become "abnormal" women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to aspire to the socially prescribed role of leader. And because they do not fit the expectations of the attributes of leaders, they are also "abnormal" administrators. Their position as administrators makes them "insiders" to the organization, but their abnormal status as women makes them "outsiders" in their organizations. (p. 356)

Funk and Polnick (2005) synthesized 30 years of research determining women's best leadership practices and barriers women leaders experienced. Campbell (1993) found evidence that women adopted male leadership styles, but it came at a cost for women leaders and the school community because it affected the women leaders' effectiveness (p. 64). Women leaders who adopted male leadership styles for purposes of acceptance in the school community came off as unappealing, unfeminine, and untrue to self. Fennel (1999) discovered school communities reacted negatively to women leaders adopting masculine forms of power over others.

Addi-Raccah (2006) determined women "acted like men" to improve their chances of selection for a leadership position. Mimicking male leadership styles does not allow women's natural leadership style to develop, but contemporary women leaders in South Africa felt the male leadership style was the only recognized style of leadership (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012).

In Limerick and Anderson's study (1999), a participant claimed women felt compelled to adopt the worst male behavior leadership characteristics to succeed in male-dominated administrations. Women leader role models did not exist, and the only competitive advantage was to mimic men's leadership styles. Limerick and Anderson (1999) studied 23 women leaders who attempted to break from the "blokey" leadership style and gain a foothold in the education profession without becoming a part of the "blokey" lifestyle or leadership style. Women leaders modeling masculine leadership styles found themselves conflicted when

parenting roles interfered (Limerick & Anderson, 1999).

Limerick and Anderson's (1999) participants described the difficulty of raising a young family and aspiring to be an administrator, two often conflicting roles. Going home after work to raise children instead of socializing with the men did not establish a reputation as "one of the boys" when attempting to access an administrative role: "[Women] adopted the male model and overcompensated for their femaleness, rather than saying, 'I'm going to develop my own style,'" said one participant (Limmerick & Anderson, 1999, p. 411). The only available alternative for women trying to attain a leadership position without women role models was modeling leadership styles after men (Limmerick & Anderson, 1999). Brunner (1998) created a list of women's best leadership strategies, and one important strategy called for women to remain feminine and find communication strategies effective in an androcentric culture.

Androcentric culture acted as one barrier for men and women leaders trapped by cultural norms because both genders follow societal gender norms in educational settings. These norms affected the individual women who intended to become leaders or unintentionally found themselves in leadership positions. Thus far, I have covered the theme of androcentric, cultivated barriers in this literature review; the next section focuses on women's self-imposed barriers.

Self-imposed Barriers

Woo (1985) studied 450 women at the Center for Women in Educational Leadership in North Carolina. Many of the participants were women who experienced the women's movement in the 1960s. Woo (1985) summarized the findings, saying, "Women's biggest enemies are probably themselves. We have not as yet been conditioned to be ambitious and determined (not from birth on, at any rate). We've had to learn it as we get older" (p. 286). Woo (1985) found

women became more self-aware with the ever increasing opportunities in administration. But as recently as 2009, Derrington and Sharratt (2009) included "self-imposed" in their list of barriers to positions of leadership. Other barriers noted in the research included societal discrimination barriers, family responsibilities, and inability to relocate.

A more current finding determined some women preferred not to take advantage of education administrative opportunities (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). Fani, a participant, stated, "I believe we have equal career opportunities, but we do not make good use of it" (p. 226). Coleman (2005) interviewed men and women principals who stated they never planned to become principals, believing they were not good enough. Most participants found themselves in the position after a head of school suddenly resigned. Arar and Shpira (2012) noted similar self-confidence issues with candidates and the personal barriers faced by women looking to leadership positions. Self-imposed barriers and lack of self-confidence created obstacles for women. In addition, women lacked specific experiences when accessing leadership roles.

Lack of Experience

Kamler (2009) completed a study on a decade of Long Island superintendent searches and found women applicants lacked instructional leadership experience and financial management experience. Boards tended to shy away from women candidates due to a perceived lack of experience. Women lacked access to leadership roles to gain experience in financial management and facilities, according to Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004). Community perceptions prevented women from accessing leadership roles because community members thought women lacked the skills needed to manage schools (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). Likewise, Montz and Wanat's (2008) study of 36 women found boards perceived women as lacking the skills to manage schools. Washington, Aliller, and Fiene (2007) researched women leaders in

Kentucky, a state focused on improving student achievement. Even though some thought

women lacked instructional and curriculum skills, they still expected women to improve scores

in the district. While women lacked financial and facility management skills (Kamler, 2009),

boards perceived women candidates as more likely to succeed at nurturing students and leading

student achievement (Washington, Aliller & Fiene, 2007). However, Washington, Aliller and

Fiene's (2007) results indicated that women were capable managers and advocated for both

children and reforms successfully.

Numerous researchers found women were hired in rural, urban, and inner-city

environments where it is more difficult to attract male candidates (Dunshea, 2013; Kamler, 2009;

Montz & Wanat, 2008; Washington, Aliller, & Fiene, 2007). Women often enter superintendent

positions in remote locations or in inner-city schools with socio-economic challenges. Most

women of color find themselves placed in urban or rural school districts and socio-economically

challenged schools, creating more challenges for successful leadership (Garza, Jr., 2008;

Mendez-Morse, 2004; Mogadime, Mentz, Armstrong, & Holtam, 2010).

Peters (2012) studied two women leaders in financially challenged, urban schools and

both left their positions due to extreme stresses after only one year in the position. Wurshen and

Sherman (2008) studied a diverse group of minority women across the eastern United States,

many of them serving by choice in economically (high risk/high need) challenged schools. The

participants intentionally chose to serve in such schools to change children's educational

experience. Lack of experience and placement in rural or urban school districts with socio-

economic difficulties challenged women in leadership roles. According to McFadden and Smith

(2003), once women reached the "tipping point" and filled more administrative roles than men,

the status of school principal became a lesser valued position in society.

Some women also lacked experience in the education political arena. Hill and Ragland (1995) found many women in educational administration do not exhibit the political savvy necessary for success when advancing through the ranks to higher positions. Garza (2008) wrote an autoethnography on her experience as a Hispanic woman superintendent in a small Texas town. Garza (2008) recognized her own errors and inability to politically navigate the school board and faculty in a small community. Garza (2008) found with time and experience, she learned valuable lessons developing her own leadership style regarding navigation of controversy and politics.

While inexperience exists, especially for novice women leaders who enter leadership through different routes than men (Moorosi, 2010), many women are more educated and better prepared than male candidates (Brunner & Kim, 2010). Other barriers women leaders experience include the responsibilities of home and child-care (Kaparou & Bush, 2007).

Family Pressures

After the Civil-Rights era, women pursued administrative careers more frequently; however, social structures still expected the administrator's full-time focus to be on school with little time left for personal and family life, which affected women leaders significantly (Loder, 2005). Some of the greatest barriers faced by women include caring for young children and family and home responsibilities (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). Coleman (2005) surveyed principals in the United Kingdom and found employers dismissed young women with families as viable candidates because of their many dual responsibilities at work and home.

In Pirouznia's (2013) study of Ohio women principals, participants delayed or chose not to be superintendents; they saw the decision as a choice and not a barrier. Loder (2005) described this as a life-course strategy of choosing the transition times into leadership to balance

family, children, and career. Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004) also found similar results

in their research; women delayed going into administration because of young children. Pirouznia

(2013) found research participants believed they were less likely to be promoted if they had

families who competed for their time. Lumby and Azaola (2011) noted a participant, Marie, felt

her single status worked to her advantage. Marie thought not having a family and children

responsibilities helped her compete more successfully than women passed over because of their

family responsibilities. According to Loder (2005), Black women administrators chose to put

family choices before career choices unlike White women, who chose career over family. Black

women faced unthinkable challenges with a heavily androcentric social structure and

unsupportive husbands and families (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012; Moorosi, 2007). Moorosi (2007)

noted the challenges in organizational structure and on the personal home front. Androcentric

organizational structure and cultural patterns were so pervasive that South African women had to

meet expectations at school and home if married. However, many Black women in South Africa

must work for economic resources and do not have the alternative of delaying leadership

opportunities. Moorosi (2007) emphasized the need for balance within South African women

leaders' work and personal lives, especially since the South African system is not yet ready to

alter its structure.

As more women leaders entered administration, flexibility for young families and elder care

were factors slow to change (Loder, 2005). In a similar vein, Howard and Mallory (2008) found

women principals' husbands caught in a framework where male principals' spouses socialized by

going shopping, while men administrators socialized by playing golf. Husbands of women

administrators lacked an acceptable societal framework. Adams and Hambright (2004) and

Coronel, Moreno, and Carrasco (2010) found women administrators worked harder than men in

like positions to cover responsibilities at home and work. Women tended to overextend themselves in an effort to establish respect in the field (Coronel, Moreno, & Carrasco, 2010).

Lack of Networks and Mentors

Moorosi (2010) found women lacked support networks to provide assistance when navigating the gateway to leadership. Women lacked educational networks and experienced isolation at home and in their school community when looking to advance their careers in educational leadership (Moorosi, 2007). Montz and Wanat (2008) and Washington, Aillier, and Fione (2007) found women believed networking enabled them to find a position, but the absence of networks for women was problematic.

Mertz (2006) and Pirouznia (2013) found men served as gatekeepers when women were accessing administrative positions. Men often held school district board positions empowered with choosing the lead administrator, or men served in top positions within the district office and appointed other men to leadership positions. Former male administrators created a model which boards followed when hiring a new candidate. Mendez-Morse (2004) noted recruitment and mentoring as issues related to aspiring women leaders. Mendez-Morse (2004) studied six Mexican-American elementary principals who became leaders without a mentor or advocate to assist them when navigating the educational hiring system. All six participants took cautious steps from teacher to assistant principal and then head principals within their respective schools (Mendez-Morse, 2004).

When women lacked mentors, they constructed their own ideal mentorship model from positive and negative experiences along their journey (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Their mothers all acted as role models and mentors but not in the educational sense. Women lacked mentors and support systems, but women of color experienced the lack of support even more acutely

(Mendez-Morse, 2004). Allen, Jacobsen, and Lomotey (1995) stated, "If the field of school administration is ever to become more representative of the larger population it serves, then practitioners and academicians alike must take seriously the responsibility of mentoring and sponsoring highly qualified female and African-American aspirants" (p. 421). Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) stated the importance of support for marginalized women of color.

Brunner and Kim (2010), countering the literature norm, found women actually were mentored more than men and entered the superintendency only five years later than men (p. 298). Perhaps the argument about having a lack of network support is universal. Another contradicting message on women administrators found by Brunner and Kim (2010) was many women entered the superintendency through the central office. This experience exposed women to budgets and financial plans, helping women gain skills in financial management (Brunner & Kim, 2010).

Kamler (2009) completed a study on superintendent search consultants over the course of a decade and noted the change in how consultants pursued women superintendent candidates from 1995-2005. Consultants rarely pursued women candidates due to board requests for specific masculine leadership characteristics (Kamler, 2009). However, according to Grogan and Brunner (2005), women were more likely than men to be hired through a search consultant. Occasionally, women candidates applied from within the district as a known entity (Arar & Shapira, 2012). If appointed, the women's former experience within the district helped them make a smoother transition to becoming trusted women leaders.

Women leaders experienced loneliness and isolation based on Montz and Wanat's (2008) study. Woo (1985) found "many women expressed a desire to forsake their positions of power in order to ally themselves with less powerful groups" (p. 287). At the same time, women in the

Brunner (1998) study recognized the importance of remaining private and retreated in an attempt to protect their self-image. It seemed a double-edged sword: a need for privacy and a need for trusted socialization. Morris (1999) described Bertha, a participant's struggle with isolation and loneliness, even when attending national conferences; she was the lone Black woman, suffering from a gender and racial isolation.

Adams and Hambright (2004) surveyed women in teacher leader programs, asking why women doctoral students were not applying for administrative positions. Forty-four percent of women avoided administration because of all the hardships experienced. Participants listed difficult parents, students, and staff; politics; licensure and education; and time commitment. About 35 percent of participants were somewhat interested in administration because of the salary incentive, and others mentioned the ability to initiate change (Adams & Hambright, 2004). However, the majority of women students believed a move to administration was not worth the increased stress. Derrington and Sharratt (2009) replicated a study from 1993 on female superintendents in the state of Washington and found similar barriers for women leaders today, but found the emphasis had shifted from the first study 14 years earlier. Derrington and Sharratt (2009) stated there were fewer female superintendents today due to the numerous barriers faced by women, such as self-imposed barriers, problematic relocation, stress and lack of support from school community, and finding a balance between family and work responsibilities (pp. 9-10). Women avoid superintendent roles due to lack of support and competing roles (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009).

The studies reviewed found many barriers, but many of the women participants in the research acknowledged their support systems, methods of coping and positive use of women's leadership skills.

Support Systems for Women Leaders and Positive Aspects of Women in Leadership Roles

Kamler (2009) identified lack of mentoring as one of the key issues deterring female candidates from rising to the superintendency. However, acknowledging a shift from earlier years, he also indicated a significant change in superintendents and central office personnel encouraging women to consider leadership positions. Allen, Jacobson and Lomotey (1995) researched African-American women in regard to mentors and sponsors. Mentors provided encouragement and support, while sponsors provided assistance in breaking into the network, allowing African-American women access to a position. The Allen, Jacobson and Lomotey (1995) study also indicated mentors and sponsors were in short supply, but when they did exist they provided a strong support for new candidates. Garn and Brown (2008) found when superintendents vacated their position, they could tap potential candidates on the shoulder and offer new women candidates an avenue of support to gain a foothold in leadership. This method proved successful as either formal or informal mentoring. One African-American participant in the Loder (2005) study described her gender and diversity as a positive when becoming a district administrator. Women in administration needed support from other educational leaders, male and female (Funk & Polnick, 2005). Pirouznia (2013) found women who accessed a leadership position with the support of supervisors or via a network experienced less trauma and had fewer negative feelings about their administrative journey.

Women who broke into educational leadership often had the support of a strong mother figure and role model in their developmental years (Coleman, 2005). A study by Arar and Shapira (2012) of two Arab women who gained principal positions exemplifies this family development model. Mendez-Morse (2004) also found mothers were role models for leadership. Mendez-Morse (2004) studied participants who constructed positive role models from different

sources, picking and choosing positive leadership characteristics. Fennel's (2008) case study of Kathryn, a very successful administrator, sought out characteristics of Kathryn's life contributing to her success. Kathryn related that caring parents and quality mentors, including women teachers, played major roles. Later, women colleagues' encouragement and support contributed to her decision to move into leadership.

The review of literature often indicated that women educational leaders relied on family and particularly their spouses for support (Loder, 2005; Woo, 1985; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). However, one study by Howard and Mallory (2008) interviewed women who refused to rely on their husbands, particularly in public, because it made them appear weak. Women leaders avoided this persona at all costs. Loder (2005) described the typical family when navigating child-care responsibilities. White women often had spousal support, and Black women often used extended family support within the home to assist with childcare.

Funk and Polnick's (2005) research summarized a list of healthy ways to alleviate stress, including exercise, meditation, friends and hobbies as essentials to providing balance in an administrator's life. Life balance offered a healthier alternative, a richer work experience, and the ability to handle crisis more effectively.

In Eckman's (2003) study, one woman principal stated, "I'm very proud of being a high school principal. I'm very aware when I walk down the halls of being a role model for girls" (p. 191). Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) surveyed 38 women administrators, and they named acting as role models for young women as the main reason for entering leadership.

Oplatka and Mimon (2008) interviewed 15 Israeli women principals and related their opinions on job satisfaction versus dissatisfaction. Results indicated the women were positively motivated by dissatisfaction, contrary to men's views of dissatisfaction. Women educational

leaders used this dissatisfaction as a prompt to improve the environment or their own

relationships for the betterment of the student experience (Oplatka & Mimon, 2008). Oplatka

and Mimon's (2008) study served as another example of the androcentric social discourse used

when researching job satisfaction and dissatisfaction and finding very different gender results.

Women's leadership style tended to be relational and collaborative and can be seen as a

positive leadership quality. Funk (1993) explained,

> Overall, female advantages indicate that female school leaders "see leadership as a
> shared process in which all work together toward synergy and [all] view the work-team
> of the school as a family, treating people with respect not telling them what needs to be
> done." (p. 41)

Lessons learned by women were a gift to the next generation of female leaders (Funk &

Polnick, 2005). According to Broodryk (2005), South African women principals used a cultural

term, "Ubuntu," in their native South African language to describe their leadership style,

meaning spirituality, interdependence, and unity. The term translated as "I am a person through

other people" (p. 1).

Another example of a woman's leadership is in Garza's (2008) autoethnograpic study of

her first year as a superintendent in a small, rural, Texas school district. Her experience was

riddled with community politics. Garza chose to uphold social justice for students and rise above

the rumor mills and political controversies during serious political battles within the school

community. Her positive takeaway on the year was that her naiveté was not all bad; sometimes

it provided a cushion or buffer about what might happen next, allowing her to look on situations

positively instead of anxiously. According to Harris and Ballenger (2004),

> These women coped with their deferred dreams of not being able to pursue their desired aspirations by later embracing the vocation of teaching as a divine calling from God. Their response is consistent with prior literature on the salience of religion and spirituality in the lives of African-American women (Mattis, 1997; Turner & Bagley, 2000), particularly recent work citing spirituality as a critical lens through which women school leaders create meaning out of their work and are empowered to confront the daily struggles and challenges associated with leadership.

Harris and Ballenger (2004) describe how women of color coped with the delay of their dreams, but saw their work as a divine calling and faced the challenges because they were empowered by a higher calling.

Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) researched four African-American principals in urban schools and their notion of care. All four leaders fought social injustices based on race to provide students with equal opportunity. Their leadership styles intersected with the Black church leaders in their community based on the importance and care of each individual student in their school. The participating women believed their experiences were rooted in their spiritual values and personal religious journeys (Witherspoon & Arnold, 2010). Wallin's (2003) participants referred to their faith as a form of support in their journey as administrators in remote west Texas. Brunner's (1998) participants acknowledged that their faith in God also provided a form of retreat.

Bloom and Erlandson's (2003) research of African-American women revealed the earliest leaders recognized a spiritual foundation within family, church, and community. Faith provided a sense of caring for students, and an avenue for becoming who women leaders were meant to become. The participant's faith was an element of her success. Mogadime, Mentz, Armstrong and Holtam's (2010) participants also considered their leadership a higher calling and found a source of strength in that vein. Study participants felt they were an extension of God's caring for students:

All three women referenced their motivation for becoming a school principal based on a higher call. They envisioned their leadership role as determined by a higher design or a higher power beyond human control that they also described as their destiny. (p. 815)

Women Leadership Styles and Perception of Power

From the earlier days of Women's Studies, Woo (1985) found that women's least likely reason to enter administration was for power purposes. Women's strengths were found in communication and community relations (Kamler, 2009). Sharp, Malone, Walter and Supley (2004) also found evidence of differing leadership styles between men and women school leaders. Men functioned with an authoritarian leadership style, and women tended to be more collaborative. Limerick and Anderson's (1999) study pointed to women carrying the emotional load during times of change in the school system because they are the emotional care-givers during difficult times. The study participants also felt women administrators were not as tied to power and ego, and in an educational setting experiencing change, women were better able to assist the system change than men. According to Eckman (2003), "Women are much less concerned about power and . . . have less of that kind of ego connected to it" (p. 193).

Nogay and Beebe (1997) did a comparative study on women and men principals in 76 school districts in Ohio, with 38 men and 38 women principals, their superintendents, and groups of teachers responding to a survey on 10 leadership points. Results of the study indicated women ranked higher in 8 of 10 leadership points and yet experienced resistance from staff. Women scored well on the survey given to teachers and lead administration when ranking principal qualities.

Washington, Aliller, and Fiene (2007) made a list of characteristics women found important for their leadership in Kentucky: "(a) integrity, (b) honesty, (c) trustworthiness, (d) empathy, (e) work ethic, (f) being leve1-headed, (g) being stable and strong, and (h) displaying

perseverance" (p. 273). Garn and Brown (2008) had several participants who believed women were less intimidating administrators than men, and therefore employees were more likely to approach them with questions and concerns. Mestry and Schmidt (2012) included emotional intelligence, the ability to act with sensitivity toward others while maintaining control over personal emotions, as an asset of women leaders.

A participant in the Brunner (1998) study stated, "Women who are superintendents have to be by their very nature a little bit more risk takers than the general population of women" (p. 174). Arar and Shapira (2012) told the story of two Arab women principals and their experiences relating to community religious groups. Samira (participant) shared how her car was burned one night so she could not get to school. The next year they sprayed brake fluid all over her car. Women in some cultures obviously experienced a good deal more risk than others when becoming leaders.

Katz (2006) surveyed women superintendents in four Midwestern states and then interviewed nine about the use of power. The research found women used power as an influence to effect change and empower staff to meet goals outlined by the superintendent. Women superintendents provided educational information about the direction of their goals and worked with staff developing buy-in as a use of their influence or power. Coronel, Moreno, and Carrasco (2010) studied eight women principals in Spain and found the same results: women who desired to effect change and empower their staff and students.

Fennel (1999) researched four women principals who discussed their use of power in the principal position. Each woman came to terms with her own use of power in her own way in various situations, but empowering others was effective. A life study of Kathryn revealed similar results noted by Fennel (2008). Kathryn's early childhood presented supportive family

and school experiences, which led her to pursue a life as a teacher. Kathryn's progression from teacher, collaborative teacher, to teacher leader quickly landed her in an administrative role and finally a principal position. Experience combined with self-reflection caused Kathryn to use a collaborative and shared model of leadership in her school (Fennel, 2008). Kathryn found her power came through listening to others instead of talking at colleagues. Listening is a tool of "power with" instead of "power over" leadership style (Coronel, Moreno, & Carrasco, 2010).

Witherspoon and Arnold (2010) described African-American women principals who treated their staff and students with pastoral care. Treatment of others meant caring for the whole person—mind, body, and soul—and they went the extra mile showing compassion for children in their charge. In a similar vein, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) found women of color in their study were extremely uncomfortable with the notion of power but used it to enable minority parents in their school system. Enabling parents also developed trust in the relationship and empowered the participating principal. Power became an advocate tool for the women participants, allowing them to advocate for students. Power for each of the participants was used as a service to their community (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Morris (1999) studied women principals in Trinidad and Tobago and referenced their ethic of care for students and staff and the difference in implementing goals when care entered into relationships. The participants used their power to enable others.

The review of literature emphasized women educational leaders' relationship-oriented leadership styles. According to Katz (2006), women equated power with giving and care. Women leaders demonstrate leadership strength through care and nurture. Washington, Aliller, and Fiene (2007) researched women leaders in Kentucky who put children first and considered

themselves guardians of care for children in an effort to improve children's success in their schools.

Summary of Literature Review

I reviewed scholarly literature and found that women high school education leaders made progress throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. The passage of Title VII, Title IX and the Women's Rights Movement, 1964-1975, brought inequality between men in leadership and women teachers into focus. With sweeping social changes underway, women began to take roles in leadership but not without numerous barriers.

Androcentric culture and a patriarchal structure set the guidelines and standards for women competing with men for leadership positions. The glass ceiling existed, and women experienced many barriers when seeking and keeping leadership positions. Androcentric culture set women up to imitate men's leadership styles and operate under the standard of male leadership. Self-imposed barriers meant women prevented themselves from taking a position due to lack of confidence. The earlier literature indicated women lacked financial management and facilities management experience, making them unlikely candidates to access positions of leadership. Dual responsibilities of family and work prevented many women from accessing or choosing leadership positions. Young children and long hours in the position caused many women to wait to apply or avoid the demanding positions altogether. Finally, the inability to network and lack of mentors prohibited access to leadership positions. Women research participants felt they did not have advocates who assisted with navigating the application and interview process.

Women needed family support to obtain and maintain their positions. Very supportive spouses were key to their success at work. Many women chose to remain single or not have

children if they were going to pursue leadership positions. Women who did have children used extended family support for childcare. There was a marked difference between cultures: White women waited to have children or take the position, while African-American women took advantage of extended family for support when serving in leadership positions.

The final section on women's leadership styles and women's perception of power described women's ability to lead in their own democratic, communicative, and caring way. Women participants perceived successful use of power meant giving their power away to enable others. Women emphasized listening to others and supporting students and staff to create a more unified team.

Each race and ethnic women's group adapted to educational standards and androcentric culture under individual circumstances. Women, especially women of color, found ways within their existing cultures to manage their lives, but it was seldom a framework understood by society (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). With this in mind, I turn to the gap in the literature and pursue research that might develop a framework for women leaders of Mennonite schools.

Mennonite Studies and Related Literature

I found very little literature on women's or men's leadership in religious educational institutions at the secondary level. A few Mennonite studies exist in the literature, but not relating to educational leadership. I reviewed studies pertaining to women in different leadership positions, such as pastors in the Mennonite church. Swartly and Keener (1999) compiled a series of stories on women in various church and mission leadership roles: theologians, pastors, educators (higher education) and administrators. This compilation provided a historical glimpse of what I might find in my study of Mennonite women administrators in secondary education.

Stoltzfus' (1999) book *Quiet Shouts: Stories of Lancaster Mennonite Women Leaders* described stories of women from a more conservative branch of the Mennonite Church in the Lancaster Conference in Pennsylvania. The stories belonged to women from the turn of the 20th century up to the 21st century who forged new areas of leadership within the church and church mission arenas not previously available to them. The women felt their leadership destiny was a calling from God to be in missions. These women's God-given talents or giftings developed into leadership roles. In most cases, the women's stories worked seamlessly into God's plan for their lives because they were married to missionaries or pastors or served in the absence of male leaders and caretakers (Stoltzfus, 1999). These women led lives of quiet leadership and focused on working in God's plan. The women leaders did not serve as pioneers or activists of women's rights in their churches and mission fields. The stories speak to an earlier, more conservative time than the focus of my study on Mennonite educational leaders of secondary schools but did offer historical, religious perspectives.

Wallace (1991), much like Stoltzfus (1999), studied Catholic women in remote areas who became "default" leaders in remote parishes due to the lack of available priests. These Catholic women worked in a hierarchical social structure built on male leadership in the Catholic Church. The church community's initial response to women's leadership brought opposition from some parish members, while others recognized their positive contributions. Some women leaders served as natural leaders, gaining the respect of the congregation and a community of care. Women leaders serving in remote Catholic parishes walked a seamless step to leadership because the women already participated heavily in their congregations and did not seek leadership roles for personal gain.

Karneili (2014) completed a phenomenological study of three women in Israeli private schools: Deborah, an ultra-Orthodox Jew; Sister Renee in the Catholic Franciscan Order; and Hamda, an Orthodox Muslim. Karneili (2014) argued their centralized managerial styles were very much in line with their religious organizational structure and could not be measured against 21st-century educational leadership standards. All three women exhibited a deep sense of care for their students, but in line with their religious training goals for the students. Each system's participants subscribed to a specific religious culture and standard, which could not be measured by "patterns of modern society" (p. 297).

While the books, research studies, and peer-reviewed journal articles previously mentioned touch on women in church leadership, the general literature on women leaders revealed little on church-affiliated school leadership at the secondary level. Specifically, I found no literature on women leaders of Mennonite-affiliated schools. This gap provided me a reason to conduct this study. To borrow from Coleman (2005):

> The incorporation of feminist and other theories, listening to and including the voices of women and minorities will lead to greater social justice in the vital field of education and an enrichment of the practice and theory of educational leadership. (p. 18)

This quote captured the outcome of the research I completed on faith-based Mennonite education. The literature review studies of women superintendents (Pallidino, Haar, Grady, & Perry, 2007) who lived and worked in isolated, rural communities throughout the Midwest related most closely to my research, but my study addressed the gap in the literature of women leading faith-based schools by documenting women's leadership experiences in Mennonite-affiliated secondary schools. I next turn to theory to explain how Mennonite women's leadership experiences might relate to existing theoretical frameworks.

Analytical Theory

I selected three theories to analyze my findings and form my conceptual framework based on the review of literature and my research question. I chose feminist theory because Mennonite women head of schools are pioneers in their field, and Evans' (2009) feminist theory offered perspective when defining women's equality in educational leadership. Evan's (2009) review of feminism and feminist theory regarding higher education is similar to curriculum changes and recruitment of women leaders in Mennonite schools.

Second, I chose Bolman & Deal's (2013) organizational theory because it has four lenses that evaluate the function and organizational efficiencies within an organization. The four lenses applied to the transition from men to women in leadership in Mennonite-affiliated schools offer fresh perspective and potentially some insight into the finer details of organizational function and efficiencies within the religious school community.

Finally, I chose Parker Palmer's (1983/2010; 1990; 1998) vocational theory because vocational theory explains how educators and leaders live out their work based on their faith or calling. Teachers or administrators are unable to separate themselves from their internal calling that brings meaning to their work. First, I outline the history and characteristics of feminist theory as it applies to the literature and data.

Feminist Theory

While feminist theory has existed for 200 years, it only found its way into higher education curriculum in the 1960s (Evans, 2009). Feminist theory is derived from or within the context of the social theory tradition and began primarily in the West (Evans, 2009). *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in 1792 by Mary Wollstonecraft is considered the first published work of feminist theory. Wollstonecraft's point about women's liberation and

equal role in society required an enlightened society. Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex* (1949), called women to act as individuals and not follow men passively. Wollstonecraft and de Beauvoir published 157 years apart but laid groundwork for feminist theory and feminism, respectively.

Waves of Feminism

Pasque and Nicholson (2011) described three waves of feminism history. The earliest wave began in the late 1800s and lasted into the mid-1900s and was primarily a movement to recognize women's rights as citizens and participating members of society. The second wave began around the Civil Rights era and Women's Rights movements in the 1960s and lasted until the 1990s, recognizing women as a marginal group looking for equality in education and organizational labor. The final wave began in the 1990s and continues today, recognizing women's individuality and postmodern thinking (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011). Pasque and Nicholson (2011) acknowledged the many varieties of feminist perspectives existing within the over 100-year timeline. The three waves and various perspectives throughout the history of feminism create a broad and rich feminist theory framework.

Definition and Core Assumptions

At the outset of the 1960s and 1970s, the second wave of feminism, Betty Friedan (1963) wrote *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan and several prominent authors of the time brought attention to the deeply rooted gendered social structure and the lack of women's equality in the labor force and the capitalist structure (Evans, 2009).

hooks (1984) explained the diverse history and winding road of feminist theory. The educated wife and mother who wanted more than the trappings of marriage and family needed to

express her convictions and become a participating member of society by holding a career

(hooks, 1984).

Berg (1979) described feminist theory by emphasizing women's contributing role in

society:

> It is the freedom to decide her own destiny; freedom from x-determined role; freedom
> from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to
> convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of women's right to
> individual conscience and judgement. It postulates that woman's essential worth stems
> from her common humanity and does not depend on the other relationships in her life.

Feminist theory attempted to redefine words such as "nature, gender, and rights" (Evans,

2009). This redefinition of words opened the classic disciplines to more questions about

equality, intelligence, and differences between genders.

Pasque and Nicholson (2011) listed three principles of feminist theory: "One, women

have something valuable to contribute to the world, two, due to oppression women have been

unable to reach their potential, and three, feminist research should strive to be transformational

and not just critical" (p. 11). An essay on Catholic higher education captured the essence of my

research:

> It is my hope that the in-class experience of placing personal, lived stories into
> conversation with the historical documents related to the college's founding will help the
> students see that women are, and have always been, complex and multifaceted, even if
> larger institutions and social structures have not recognized it. (Pasque & Nicholson,
> 2011, p. 65)

Applying Feminist Theory

The essential piece of giving voice to women participants' lived experiences in the

proposed research aligns with feminist theory. Reinharz (1992) explained this when she

described the process of interviewing for research: "By listening to women speak, understanding

women's membership in particular social systems, and establishing the distribution of

phenomena accessible only through sensitive interviewing, feminist interview researchers have uncovered previously neglected or misunderstood worlds of experience" (p. 44). Ultimately, the results of the interviews and the stories of the women's experiences will yield new insights. Perhaps their stories will redefine women's leadership in Mennonite schools.

Examples of Theory Based on Literature

Given the topics revealed in the literature review on barriers, androcentric culture, self-imposed barriers, leadership styles, and perception of power, feminist theory offers a new lens to examine the gender shift in Mennonite school leadership and its effects on women and members of the school community. Feminist theory helped examine societal events from a more inclusive perspective. Lather explained that feminist theory has more to offer than an examination of societal events: "Poised at the end of the twentieth century, the human sciences are in search of a discourse to help chart the journey from the present to the future" (Gitlin, 1994, p. 36).

The feminist theory of hooks (1984), Pasque and Nicholson, (2011), Reinharz (1992), and Gitlin (1994) provides historical background and support for this study. Feminist theory provides a logical way for the voices of Mennonite women administrators to be heard by redefining women in leadership and providing an equal opportunity for women leaders in Mennonite faith-based schools. I hope to uncover new perspectives to gain greater acceptance of women in the Mennonite church or other faith denominations.

A second theory, Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory, concerns the changes taking place in schools, churches and community pertaining to women leaders. Again, I introduce a brief history and characteristics of their theory that apply to a few examples from the literature review findings. It is also my hope organizational theory will apply to my study findings.

Bolman and Deal's Organizational Theory

I chose Bolman and Deal (2013) organizational theory as a second theory because it provides four lenses to evaluate women's leadership in Mennonite church-affiliated schools. Bolman and Deal (2013) began looking at new understandings and management styles in organizations in the early 1980s. In 1991, they named it "reframing organizations" (p. vii).

A historical look at society and the characteristics that brought groups together began with Emile Durkheim in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Collins, 1994). Morgan (2006) described Durkheim's traditional patterns or characteristics that bond society as "common ideals, beliefs and values" (p. 117). Durkheim offered an early socialist theory framework explaining society, but another father of sociology, Max Weber, also developed a framework for structure in the early twentieth century (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Organizational theory was born out of the industrial analysts' desire to be more efficient and timely in production. One of the early analysts, Frederick W. Taylor, was known as the "father of time and motion" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 45). Organizational theory based on Taylor's efficiency model emphasized efficiency and productivity. Taylor's is the earliest named model, but patriarchy served as the earliest form of organizational structure that used dominating and authoritarian styles of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

More current organizational theory provides a potential framework within which to analyze Mennonite women administrators and the school structures within which they operate. Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory provides four frameworks: "structural, human resources, political and the symbolic frame" (p. 5).

Definition, Core Assumptions, and Concepts

Organizational theory as defined by Bolman and Deal (2013) used the four frames to analyze an organization. The structural frame focuses on two components: the responsibilities across the organizational roles and how employees meet goals. The human resource frame views humans with two purposes: one, they function as a tool to produce a product, and two, humans serve a higher purpose when creativity, energy, and talents align with common goals in the organization. The political frame evaluates three components within organizations: power, conflict, and ethics. Finally, the symbolic frame unpacks how groups make meaning of their organization based on symbols and their meanings; a symbol could be as simple as a flag or an ethnic ritual. Each of these frames offers an opportunity to view organizations from unique perspectives and evaluate functionality of the group involved.

Using artistry, choice, and leadership, Bolman and Deal (2013) evaluated organizations so they might creatively offer solutions to complex issues faced by leadership and management. More importantly, this version of artistry offered an alternative way to think about solutions to problems in organizations, including an emotional sense about how the organization functions. Bolman and Deal (2013) offer creative alternative views leaders and managers might use to develop better conditions and more successful outcomes within the organization.

Applying Organizational Theory

Bolman and Deal's (2013) theory four-frame model applied to a school organization provides new perspectives of interpretation of structure, human resource, politics and symbols. Bolman and Deal (2013) used the Challenger Space shuttle explosion as an example of how power and decision-making plays out in the political frame. A political agenda to fund the space shuttle program drove the timeline for the shuttle launch. Contractors overlooked critical fixes to

meet deadlines, and disaster resulted. The power behind the political agenda caused an unfortunate event. Bolman and Deal's (2013) four frames of organizational theory offer potential new insights to women leaders in Mennonite-affiliated church schools.

Examples of Theory Based on the Literature Review

As an example, leadership styles analyzed by Bolman and Deal's (2013) human resource lens suggest that treating employees with an authoritarian leadership style and giving them instruction like children will cause employees to adapt and respond like children. But if women lead with an inclusive style, the employees react as members of a functional community (Morgan, 2006, p. 132). In another example, Morgan (2006) stated, "Traditional forms of organization are often dominated and shaped by male value systems" (p. 131). From the review of literature, I found that organizational theory applies to this common occurrence in educational systems and small, rural school districts.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) other theoretical lenses offer alternative perspectives to the literature and potentially the data analysis. Data could look very different if the school's educational structure were evaluated based on the structural frame. Organizational theory as it pertains to culture, specifically Mennonite, religious culture in this research, could be analyzed from any of the four frames. Next, I describe vocational theory and how it applies to my research.

Parker Palmer's Vocational Theory

Palmer's (1983) vocational theory describes the spiritual heart of persons, and how individuals relate to one another, particularly students in an educational setting to get the best result. I chose to analyze my findings using Palmer's (1983) vocational theory because "vocation" concerns what it means to live out one's life calling. Palmer (1983) explained the

difference between vocation and avocation: "My vocation (to use the poet's term) is the spiritual life, the quest for God, which relies on the eye of the heart. My avocation is my education, the quest for knowledge, which relies on the eye of the mind" (pp. xxi-xxii). Palmer recognized the relationship between a teacher or leader's work and their oneness with God and their work. The love between God and the person creates a kind of love with the power to break down barriers and transform students.

Origins

Palmer, an educator and leader, spent time in a Quaker community reflecting, contemplating, and discerning his personal circumstances and later practiced discernment with others to test the accuracy of his own direction or vocation. He also experienced a season of deep depression, which impacted his work and how he viewed personal depth and knowing. Palmer began using his discernment techniques of self-discovery and depression to develop his theory. Palmer became popular among educators for his book, *The Courage to Teach* (1998). Palmer's deep relationship with Christ and sense of spirituality formed his understanding of relationship between teacher and student. Relationship is an engaging process that opens the eyes of people, understanding and recognizing the gifts received from God. There is a knowing that happens when individuals encounter the truth in relationship. Palmer's (1998) relationship calls him to practice spiritual action in community. I explain the core concepts of vocational theory in the next sections.

Definitions, Core Assumptions and Concept

Palmer (1983) developed the core concepts of a vocational life based on truth, spirituality, action, knowing, and community. Palmer wove the concepts and spirituality into vocation and purpose of life without forcing religion or theology on the reader or practitioner.

Palmer's vocational theory informs the educator about life's calling by taking the person deeper into the concepts and recognizing more of self. The depth and reflection of self and relationship will bring change to the quality of life one is called to live. Quiet and self-reflection are key for understanding.

Palmer (1983) examined the importance of depth in relationship with Christ and with others and at the core of relationship is truth:

> Instead, truth is personal, and all truth is known in personal relationships. Jesus is a paradigm, a model of this personal truth. In him, truth, once understood as abstract, principled, propositional, suddenly takes on a human face and a human frame. (p. 48)

Understanding the depth of truth and authenticity in self and relationships with others will break down barriers, both personal and unique for each person, but ultimately build a bond where educational transformation, or action can begin. The importance of truth in relationship is critical to successful learning (Palmer, 1983).

In Palmer's (1983) book, *To Know as We are Known*, he described practicing obedience to truth, a second concept, but in later books he referenced truth as the word action.

> We can begin only by steeping ourselves in the idea of [practicing] obedience, by understanding that obedience is not a mechanical kind of truth telling but a sensitive process of feeling for the truth that exists between students and teachers, our subject and our world. (p. 92)

Palmer (1990) emphasized the inability to separate Spirit and action; it is an extension of self: "Action is more than movement; it is the movement that involves expression, discovery, re-formation of ourselves and our world. I understand action to be any way that we can co-create reality with other beings and with the Spirit" (p. 17). Action, like truth, requires individuals to recognize Spirit within their core to authentically relate to others.

Palmer (1983) explained a third core concept: knowing as loving. Palmer (1983) described "a way of knowing and educating that might heal rather than wound us or our world"

(p. 1). Palmer approached knowing with a more holistic approach, explaining the deep

connectedness of heart, and action. Palmer (1983) described how the heart and mind know:

> The mind motivated by compassion reaches out to know as the heart reaches out to love.
> Here the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of
> the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own. (p. 7-8)

The action of embracing reality and knowing involves self-reflection and awareness of

relationship. The interaction of knowing and loving must be an action of giving and receiving by

both parties.

Finally, Palmer (1998) used core concepts of truth, action and knowing to develop

knowing in community. The basics of relationship informs the knowing in community. The

relationship process requires attentiveness and is not forced, as described by Palmer (1998):

> Openness to transcendence is what distinguishes the community of truth from both
> absolutism and relativism. In this community, the process of truth-knowing and truth-
> telling is neither dictatorial nor anarchic. Instead it is a complex and eternal dance of
> intimacy and distance, of speaking and listening, of knowing and not knowing, that
> makes collaborators and co-conspirators of the knowers and the known. (p. 106)

Palmer (1998) used core concepts of truth and knowing to describe interaction in community.

This interaction within community functions from a place of shared relationship, not a harsh top-

down authoritarian style. The beauty of vocational theory is the human need to function and

relate in a more spiritual, caring relationship. Action in community ultimately changes

community.

Applying Vocational Theory

Mennonite women leaders work in faith-based atmospheres where leaders and colleagues

believe God intercedes and truth is evident. Humanity and spirituality play out in the everyday

existence of the educational system providing opportunity to practice vocational theory. The

essence of Palmer's (1983) vocational theory is a spiritually based theory that applies to the

experiences of women leaders in faith-based schools because it speaks to the participant's deep relationship with Christ. The deeper purpose, truth and knowing found in relationship results in action, transforming community. Applying vocational theory explains how faith-based education builds a richer, more holistic experience for students because the relationship between teacher and students transforms lives. Transformation is more than educating the mind; it is seeing and knowing truth with the heart that develops the whole student (Palmer, 1983). Palmer's vocational theory potentially offers a new perspective for understanding Mennonite women's reasons for choosing leadership.

Examples of Vocational Theory Based on the Literature Review

The literature review revealed potential examples of how vocational theory might apply to my research of Mennonite women leaders. Women participants in several studies (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Mogadime, Mentz, Armstrong, & Holtam, 2010; Witherspoon & Arnold, 2010) indicated strong evidence of their faith as links to a higher calling, spiritual foundation and relationship to students within in an extended church community. In the literature review, it was the women of color who voiced their connectedness to spirituality and a church community. The following examples align closely with Palmer's (1983) vocational theory. Bloom and Erlandson's (2003) research of African-American women revealed the earliest leaders recognized a spiritual foundation within family, church, and community. Faith provided a sense of caring for students and an avenue for becoming who women leaders were meant to become. South African women principals used a cultural term, "ubuntu," in their native South African language to describe their leadership style, meaning spirituality, interdependence, and unity. According to Broodryk (2005), the term translated as "I am a person through other people" (p. 1).

Finally, Mogadime, Mentz, Armstrong and Holtam's (2010) participants considered their leadership a higher calling and found a source of strength in that vein. Study participants felt they were an extension of God's caring for students:

> All three women referenced their motivation for becoming a school principal based on a higher call. They envisioned their leadership role as determined by a higher design or a higher power beyond human control that they also described as their destiny. (p. 815)

Within the African-American community women education leaders used their own style of leadership to assist their students.

In the next section I will explain why I chose qualitative research and interpretive phenomenology as well as the methodology I used for the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I chose interpretive phenomenological qualitative research method to conduct my research because of its open-ended inquiry process. From the open-ended inquiry process the researcher observes, interviews and collects data (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenological qualitative process allows for a better understanding of the "story" of women leading Mennonite schools. The recent phenomenon of more women as school leaders is worthy of exploration because of their experiences as first women leaders in kindergarten through 12th grade Mennonite schools.

Phenomenological Qualitative Research

Qualitative research allows for a better understanding of an issue or problem (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative methods applied to the research because it is the only way to understand and interpret the human complexities of the women's stories and nuances of their personal experience. Qualitative research provides an avenue for the social, human element to understand the Mennonite women's experience as pioneers in their field. Therefore, I chose qualitative research methods to capture the women's leadership experiences, voices, and gain meaning.

In my question to participants, I wanted to understand how women heads of school experience and make meaning of their role as leaders in Mennonite-affiliated schools. Qualitative research methods allowed me to ask the question about their experiences as the first woman leader in their respective schools and simply listen and record the unique stories of Mennonite women leaders. I wanted to learn about the participants through an unstructured and open-ended interview process.

According to Creswell (2014), the key characteristics of qualitative research methods include "natural setting, researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive and

deductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, reflexivity, and holistic account" (pp. 185-186). The natural setting involved Mennonite schools and community, and I served as the key researcher recording the stories of 12 Mennonite women leaders. As researcher, I interviewed participants, took notes about the interview and observed their facial expressions and body language via Skype when possible. Recordings, transcripts and notes served as the principal data collected.

Emergent design (Creswell, 2014) allows the researcher opportunity to hold the data loosely and allow for shift and change during the process should the data reveal new perspectives. Interviews remained relatively consistent; participants shared their experience, and I asked probing questions or clarification on comments. One or two interviews had elements of inconsistent data, but typically the women's responses were consistent.

I spent time reading the transcripts and listening to the recordings, and this allowed me to reflect on the experiences of the participants. Data analysis took two forms, inductive and deductive reasoning, providing two perspectives when searching for participant meaning (Creswell, 2014). After analyzing the data, patterns began to emerge in the data, but as project researcher, my personal reflection and interpretation played a role in the outcome of the participants' voice. The story of the participants and research questions allowed for an interpretation of the findings. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described phenomenology as a method developing meaning from common events or experiences of individuals.

Phenomenology

I adopted phenomenology with the qualitative research tradition because the participants were all women who experienced the same phenomenon. Mennonite women led Mennonite schools for the first time in their schools' history. I wanted to understand the commonalities and

differences of pioneering women in Mennonite schools. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) explained phenomenology as a philosophical approach to the study of experience" (p. 11). Creswell (2007) defined qualitative research as "assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). The purpose of phenomenological qualitative research is to give voice to participants' stories, because society, in this case Mennonite communities, learn from an underrepresented or oppressed group (Creswell, 2014). The interpretation of the themes from the data and the use of theory developed meaning and voice for a group of women in Mennonite communities.

Creswell (2007) defined phenomenological study as "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 57). Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological research approach requires the researcher to reflect on the shared experience of participants and find structure and meaning in the phenomenon: "Reflection provides a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and syntheses needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience" (p. 47). Personal reflection on the gathered stories allowed me to focus on the key elements of collected data.

Phenomenological research emphasizes the participants' thoughts and experiences and requires researchers to attempt an unbiased interpretation and reflection of the shared communication (Creswell, 2014). Moustakas (1994) reflected on the challenges of adopting this methodology and the benefits of reflecting on the phenomenon: "This connectedness between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within me in reflective thought and awareness, is in truth a wondrous gift of being human" (p. 65). The intimate exchange between the participant telling their story and the researcher absorbing and translating a meaningful

message is a trusting relationship that yields growth and wisdom for both parties. Qualitative researchers reflect the complexity of the participants' stories in their description and interpretation of experience (Wolcott, 2009). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) described the researcher capturing the lived experiences of the participant through interaction in an interview. The relationship between participant and researcher offers a rich exchange, a vulnerability of sharing, being heard, and interpretation.

Phenomenology offers hope for social change through appreciation of human experience, much like in *Fahrenheit 451*. Bradbury (1951) stated, the objective of the learning process is to liberate the participants from their external and internal oppression; to make them capable of changing their reality, their lives, and the society they live in. Selecting qualitative research and phenomenology with the qualitative tradition allowed me to focus on the description and interpretation of women's experience to cause change in Mennonite communities.

In the next section I describe the specific procedures used to conduct my study. I followed the application process of the University of St. Thomas' Institutional Review Board. The guidelines prepared me for the selection of participants, interview procedure, data collection and analysis, transcription, organization, coding, analysis, themes, and ethical considerations. Each step in the process revealed new information about participants' stories. The research process revealed the central themes found in women's experiences leading Mennonite schools.

University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board

I requested approval from the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct my study. I sought permission because my study involved human subjects. The IRB completed an ethical review of the proposed research, examining the methods I proposed to protect participants from undue harm (see Appendix A).

I provided an abstract and summary of the proposed research and outlined the step-by-step methods for phenomenological, qualitative research. The IRB process required information about the participants and the vulnerability and safety throughout the interview process. I completed questions regarding existing relationship and conflicts of interest. For the benefit of the participants, I summarized the process and created a list of what the participant might expect. I explained the risks and benefits for the participant and provided contact for counseling services at the University of St. Thomas if participants needed to report a problem or seek assistance.

The IRB application required me to develop an awareness of confidentiality and ethical procedures required in every phase of my study. As part of the application, I determined the level of mental risk for women participants during interviews. Each participant required a consent form with an outline of the study and a procedure in the event they felt unsafe or chose to discontinue the study. I briefed participants on security guidelines for identity protection and they signed a consent form, which is kept on file. I stored recordings and transcripts securely on my computer with a password. I locked all written materials securely in a file cabinet. Files are securely maintained for one year following dissertation completion.

Selection and Recruitment of Participants

After receiving IRB approval, I followed the procedures outlined in my application to select and recruit Mennonite women leaders. I recruited women who formerly served or are currently serving as the first women leaders in their respective Mennonite schools. Several schools did not have women who were officially chosen as head of school but served as the interim while the school conducted a search for head of school. I chose the snowball or chain selection process for inquiry by identifying "cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). One of the

participants is in a leadership position at a church agency (disclosing the name would

compromise the participant's anonymity) and connected me to many of the participants. She

also recommended them based on their experiences as first women leaders in Mennonite schools.

I knew several women, either former or current heads of school, because of my own involvement

in these circles of leadership. I identified women leaders through the Mennonite Schools

Council (MSC), the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) and the Canadian Association of

Mennonite Schools (CAMS). I contacted women leaders who agreed to participate and provided

valuable experiences for the research. These women leaders knew other first-time women heads

of school fitting the criteria and assisted with the snowball selection process. In some cases, I

asked questions of current school leaders to determine if there was an early woman leader. One

former woman leader passed away some years ago. I contacted 13 women, and 12 agreed to

participate in the study. I interviewed 12 Mennonite women head of schools, 11 secondary and

one elementary. Table 3A provides the participant and school pseudonyms used in the research.

Participant Pseudonym	School Pseudonym
Amy	Smith School
Val	Trail School
Heidi	North School
Vicki	West School
Jill	Thomas School
Lori	East School
Lori	Ford School
Kelly	Ridge School
Leanne	Mountain School
Alice	South School
Barbara	River Bend School
Sharon	Forest School

Table 3A. Participant and School Pseudonyms

I sent participants an email explaining the summary of the research project completed

during the IRB process and requested their participation. If they agreed to participate, I sent an

informed consent form, process outline, and the study's purpose and goal via snail mail. They

returned the signed consent form via the stamped self-addressed envelope enclosed. We then

continued an email conversation to find a date for an interview via skype or phone. I gave each

participant a pseudonym, and her identity remains private. I took care to maintain privacy and

anonymity, and changed stories to protect the women because the Mennonite world is small.

Upon receiving the participants' consent, I informed them of their rights as participants as

prescribed by the IRB guidelines and then conducted interviews by Skype or phone at an

agreeable time for both the participant and me. I audio recorded Skype and phone interviews

using iFree Skype Recorder and MP3 Skype Recorder on my computer and a Voice Record Pro

App on my cell phone. I sent audio files for transcription to Rev.com. Rev.com returned

transcripts within in 24 to 48 hours. Rev's Terms of Use includes a confidentiality policy (see

Appendix B).

Identities of the participants remained anonymous and protected because the Mennonite

world is small, and the women's stories could easily be identified by those who worked in

Mennonite education. I used pseudonyms for both the participant and the school name, as noted

in Table 3A.

I stored the transcripts in individual participant files on my computer, secured by

password. All electronic and transcribed documents will be destroyed one year after completion

of the dissertation approval.

Interview Procedure and Questions

I interviewed 12 women participants using one essential question. I asked them to share

their experience as the first woman head of school. The central question and the purpose of the

interview involved understanding the experiences of women hired for the first time in Mennonite

schools. Creswell (2014) argued qualitative research requires a more exploratory approach to interview questions. I began the interview with a conversation regarding their understanding as a volunteer participating in the research. I provided introductory information about the study and made sure participants understood their rights according to IRB guidelines. We reviewed the rules of participation, and then I had a conversation to put the volunteer at ease and develop a rapport with her (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

I conducted the interviews via Skype or cell phone at the convenience of the volunteer. I used the speaker feature and recorded using iFree Skype Recorder and MP3 Skype Recorder on my computer and a Voice Record Pro App on my cell phone. I conducted the interviews in private in order to protect the volunteers and maintain confidentiality.

After I completed the opening comments, I reviewed the IRB guidelines with participants before starting, checking for understanding of the process and safety as a participant. Then I began with the lead question. I asked participants the following research question: How do or did you as head of school experience and make meaning of your role as a leader in a Mennonite-affiliated school? The lead question and probing and clarifying questions were open-ended and invited the participant to share at will about their experiences. The women usually touched on the sub questions without my prompting, but I identified a small set of supporting sub-questions in the event the participant shared only a short response to the central question (Creswell, 2014). My sub questions included: (1) How did you as head of school experience the initial transition as the first woman into leadership? (2) How did cultural and religious beliefs of the community affect your leadership as the first woman in the position? and (3) How did you survive and thrive as a pioneering woman in your school community? (see Appendix C for additional questions) I probed deeper into the details and encouraged the participant to elaborate for more vital and rich

data (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). I conducted the interview with care and sensitivity, allowing adequate time for the participant to respond and craft her response (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggested that good interviews produce excellent data filled with stories of the participant's experience. Participants gave good interviews, requiring the researcher to be engaged and attentive, acknowledging the experiences of the individual.

My previous administrative experience provided me with the expertise to conduct the interviews with depth and flexibility, probing into background and detail of the participant responses. Interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. At the close of the interview, I explained the procedure for receiving the transcribed interview and allowed time for questions. Finally, I thanked them for their time and willingness to share their experiences.

I sent a transcription of the audio recordings via email to the participants for their review asking them to check for accuracy and make additions or subtractions before I used the transcripts for research analysis. One participant edited their comments and another participant sent a follow up email with an additional story because they remembered more information after the interview. Participants had an opportunity to discontinue participating if they felt uncomfortable with the process. Follow-up interviews for clarification were not necessary. Participants were interested in the research and requested an opportunity to read the study upon approval. They will receive a link to the completed study.

Data Collection and Analysis

My research data consisted of stories gathered in a series of 12 interviews with first women in administrative roles previously held by men in Mennonite schools. The data collection included notes by the researcher during the interviews, recordings of the Skype or phone interviews and the transcripts. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) referred to data as "the rough

materials researchers collect from the world they are studying; data are the particulars that form the basis of analysis" (p. 117). In the following sections, I outline the process I used for analysis: transcription, organization, coding the data, analysis and theme development. I developed a holistic view of the women's experiences to better tell their story and interpret their message.

Transcription

After I conducted the interviews, I sent recordings to Rev.com. I chose not to transcribe the interviews due to time constraints. The transcriber recorded or registered gaps or pauses, which allowed for better interpretation of the meaning. Quality of transcriptions varied depending upon the transcriber assigned to the project.

Bazely (2013) described the benefits of detailed interview notes, describing the participant and their actions and demeanor. In addition to the audio recording and transcription, I made a few notes about the interview with each participant. These three pieces from each participant became the data on which I conducted my research.

I stored both written transcriptions and audio recordings of interviews securely on my personal computer and will continue to do so until one year after dissertation completion. The notes, audio recordings and transcriptions are private and confidential and are password protected on my computer. After receiving all the transcriptions from the participants after their review, I began the process of organization and analysis.

Organization

According to Bazely (2013), the most important part of data collection and analysis is the organizational system used to sort the data. The how, when, and why of each interview was organized and prepared as important steps to analyzing my research. Background information is

critical in understanding the participant's story (Bazely, 2013). I included notes regarding

additional emotional or environmental characteristics I observed when interviewing.

I anticipated the organizational work of collecting, categorizing, and detailing the data

using a purchased program named HyperResearch on my computer for the benefit of coding. I

loaded the transcripts into HyperResearch, and the data analysis software made the coding

process much easier. I chose not to use any visuals, such as pictures, in order to maintain the

confidentiality of the participants. I examined the data using several methods. HyperResearch

assisted me in identifying significant words, statements and elements of meaning and

recognizing descriptions revealing commonalities among the participants' experiences (Creswell,

2014). Once HyperResearch helped identify commonalities in the data, I began coding.

Coding

After collecting the data, I began the coding process. According to Rossman and Rallis

(2012), coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks. After organizing the

data, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest searching through the data and looking for patterns and

regularities and finding words and phrases appropriate for codes. I examined the data from

different theoretical perspectives and reflected on which patterns and codes most effectively told

the story of the women interviewed. In the interest of time, I used the HyperResearch program

to assist in recognizing like words and phrases. The HyperResearch software was instrumental

in visually recognizing potential codes and overlapping quotes. After recognizing the patterns

and key words, appropriate quotes were set as major codes in the HyperResearch software. The

software allowed easy access to themes in the transcriptions and provided support for a themed

result in the dissertation.

Data Analysis

Bazely (2013) outlined the read, reflect, play, and explore strategy. In addition, Bazely (2013) suggested the researcher allow time to process and analyze the work. Allowing space to reflect on different perspectives allowed for creative paths to be illuminated in the process. As a researcher, I analyzed the data to better understand the cross-references, divergent themes, and disparities of the participants' stories. I choose quotes representing an appropriate story or data to highlight the essence of the research. Creswell (2014) explained "essence" as a part of the researcher's compilation of the data and the holistic story woven from the data. The stories revealed commonalities and occasionally divergent themes.

I used three theories to analyze the data: feminist theory, organizational theory and vocational theory. Feminist theory provided a lens for analysis of the participant's struggle with an androcentric culture and standards for leadership. Organizational theory offered an analysis of the data, looking at power structures, resources and political symbols. Finally, I used vocational theory to analyze the women's call to serve in Mennonite schools. Each theory offered a new perspective of how the themes might emerge and tell a common story for the betterment of society.

Themes

Upon completion of the analysis, I determined potential themes, such as being called by God, difficult challenges, and board chairs and relationships. I used the themes to write the dissertation based on regular patterns in the data or unusual, interesting bits of data to emphasize the main themes and tell the women's story. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) asked the researcher to consider how to use the themes and disparities, but also consider the audience and who may take

an interest in the project. In chapters four and five, I summarize the themes with support from the data.

Weaving the women's stories based on the themes found in the data, I presented a rich in-depth story of women pioneer leaders in their respective schools. Reporting the findings in descriptive and narrative form, I portrayed the participants' experiences for the reader in the final work.

Researcher Position

I acknowledge my personal bias in this research since I was the first woman hired as Mennonite head of school in a small, rural Midwest town, and now for the second time, at another Mennonite school on the east coast. Given my history, I knew other women leaders in the role for the first time. Some of the women I interviewed were colleagues; MSC administrators meet two to three times per year, and I served as an elected member-at-large and then vice president as a member of the MSC executive team for a few years while I was a member of this group. Knowing others assisted me in finding participants; however, as a researcher, I come to the project with personal biases and a personal lens that potentially affects the research themes.

I attempted impartial and fair interviews with each participant and was vigilant about my responses so as not to lead or guide participants into my personal biases. I intentionally used an open-ended inquiry process, so as not to influence participants. My lead question asked participants about their experience as first-time administrators. Admittedly, conversations about women in leadership in Mennonite schools existed before this research began, but it was one of the reasons it piqued my interest to conduct this study.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2014) explained the seriousness of ethical issues at all stages of the process: data collection, analysis, and publication of the final research. He emphasized the importance of engendering trust between the researcher and the participants while safeguarding the participants' integrity during the data-gathering process. I made every effort to establish a comfortable setting for the participants. One challenge I encountered was the risk for the women and their institutions because the Mennonite world is small, and their stories could be familiar to anyone reading my research. As a result, I followed the protocol of the IRB process and gave pseudonyms to participants and their institutions. I completed an application, scripts and general consent forms to the satisfaction of the chair and IRB committee in order to carry out ethical research. I used proper forms included in Appendix A when contacting a participant.

For my research to be reliable, I followed consistent research protocol with other researchers in the phenomenology field and typical research projects (Creswell, 2014). Creswell and Miller (2000) described validity as one of the strengths in qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. Steps described by Creswell (2014) to aid in the analysis process involve full descriptions of interviews and transcriptions, enough self-reflection to recognize personal biases, recognition of data that runs contrary to the themes, extra time spent on the data or with the participant, peer assistance with reflective processing or debriefing, and finally using an editor to review the project. Reliability and validity offer credibility to the research. Each of these steps required time and reflection to process and analyze the data effectively. Applying various perspectives over time to the data allowed for unexpected themes to evolve as part of the holistic view.

Limitations

The greatest limitation was participant time availability. The interviews felt limited by time constraints. Interview expectations were between 60 and 90 minutes. Scheduling an interview was a challenge, and occasionally some participants forgot and we needed to reschedule. Often the Skype interviews were interrupted or recorded poorly, making transcription quality poor. Time constraints for participants was another concern. These women were busy professionals and did not want to spend time on IRB guidelines or reviewing transcripts. They often said they trusted my judgment.

Another limitation included quality of transcripts. Depending on the recording quality and the transcriber skills, the returned transcript was lacking detail. Overall, I found sufficient data to support the themes.

Summary

I chose the qualitative phenomenological research method because it allowed the Mennonite women participants to tell their authentic stories. This allowed me to use qualitative methods to collect the data by Skype and audio recording. Once I collected the data, I used HyperResearch software to assist with coding and developing themes. The qualitative method used to review the transcriptions and audio recordings from different perspectives resulted in similar findings known as themes.

After I analyzed the data using three theories—feminist theory, organizational theory and vocational theory—I developed themes explaining how the theory applied and made meaning of the data and stories. I gave ethical consideration to the women participants, telling their stories according to IRB guidelines.

       In chapters four and five I describe the experiences and stories, challenges and joys of

Mennonite women leaders as they led in their school and church communities for the first time.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CALL TO LEADERSHIP

Swartley and Keener (1999) in their book *She Has Done a Good Thing: Mennonite Women Tell their Stories* examined how women quietly came to leadership positions within church missions and other branches of the Mennonite church. My study tells the story of 12 women in education and their ability to become leaders in Mennonite schools. It also describes how they successfully continue to lead the transition of women in educational leadership across Canada and the United States. Initially, I contacted 13 women and all but one replied enthusiastically that they would share their story. When participants paused for reflection on their personal stories, many chose their words carefully, not wanting to incriminate others yet knowing they needed to tell their stories because by telling their stories growth for all would occur.

I conducted a phenomenological study of 12 women who served or are serving as lead administrators in Mennonite schools. These schools fall into two organizations Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools [CAMS] operating under Mennonite Church Canada. In the United States, Mennonite Schools Council [MSC] operates under the Mennonite Education Agency [MEA], a branch of the greater Mennonite Church USA [MCUSA].

Two major themes developed as the interviews unfolded. The first theme was the women's chronological story of their path to leadership. Ten of the 12 women came from within their systems before being named lead administrators. Church and community environments were significant factors for the boards and the women leaders in their respective schools. Finally, the women talked about their family responsibilities in addition to their heavy loads at school. The spiritual call, church and community environment and family lie in the personal realm of what the women experienced.

The second theme developed around the ways women navigated gender challenges, using their personal leadership styles. One area that offered women a chance to work with colleagues but also served as a source of contention was the school's combined organizational group: CAMS and MSC. Finally, the positive outcomes of being the first woman administrator in Mennonite schools included mentoring others, building trust, finding a support system and maintaining personal mental health, shaping a new community and reflecting on what it meant to be the first woman in a leadership position. The first and second themes build a strong case for women in leadership in faith-based schools. As respected contributing members of their school and church communities, these women established voice and leadership visibility leading the way for others.

In this chapter, I tell the story of how Mennonite women administrators felt called to lead Mennonite schools out of their previous experience, and the board's role in determining women's leadership in the school community, and church community environment. Finally, I address the challenge of leading and taking care of family responsibilities. The call to lead gave the women the strength to take on the new challenges and to sustain them through the difficult times in leadership because they felt God was with them in the journey.

Called to Lead from a Range of Roles

In this section I describe how women felt God moved them in the direction of leadership. Seven of the 12 women interviewed spoke of their call to leadership, meaning that most of these women experienced the Spirit calling or moving them to leadership in their school. The women shared their very personal call to lead, each unique. The call to lead came through prayer, conversations with mentors, and their respected work as teachers and default leaders within the school, or, sometimes through "taps on the shoulder" by board members, colleagues or

community members who felt they were the person for the job. They also felt affirmation in mysterious ways, such as the feeling of knowing when it was time to leave the previous position and take on the new challenge. Val, who leads at Trail School, had the feeling of knowing the timing and God's call.

Val was working for a nonprofit outside of education when she felt moved by the Spirit to look for something different. Her husband served on the local Mennonite Trail school board, and they were searching for an assistant administrator. The board chair suggested to Val's husband that she consider applying. Val had been out of education for quite a few years and was apprehensive even though she felt the call to leave her nonprofit position. The confirmation came for Val when others affirmed her and also suggested she apply. "God didn't speak to me in this audible voice, but I really felt like I heard from Him that when He was ready to move me [to the school], He would move me." Val's husband also supported the call and said, "Well, does God have to hit you over the head?"

After the board chose Val as the candidate for the position, she felt her call affirmed. "I guess I felt like that was pretty clear that God led me to that position. I feel like, okay, this is where God has me now." Val served as an assistant administrator for seven years before the head administrator position opened. The outgoing administrator encouraged Val to apply for the lead position, and while she did not feel ready to lead the entire system, the board asked her to fill in as interim. "I agreed to be the interim person. Then when I started, then I felt like, you know what, I can do this. This is good, and then I applied." The interview process took six months, and finally the board offered Val the permanent head administrator position. Val loves her work and is content leading where she serves as a head administrator in a Pre K through 12 system. Val stated, "This is where God called me, and I'm not looking to go somewhere else."

Being attentive to God's call requires an ongoing, close relationship with God. Val speaks to her mindfulness of remaining in her position. "Sometimes I think when I pray, keep me open to where you want me to be, but I'm not praying and fasting every year when my contract comes out. I'm just, 'Okay, I'm on.'" The women leaders interviewed often referenced prayer as part of the discernment for accepting the position, maintaining day to day operations, and sometimes the only way to walk through very difficult journeys.

Amy moved to a Mennonite community where Smith School was well established and steeped in Mennonite traditional male leadership. Amy began as a teacher and assistant administrator within the system, but not without clear warning from others about what leadership should look like.

> When I came in to the community and started by teaching part-time and then when the assistant administrator role opened and I had been taking course work toward my principal certificate, I decided to apply much to the discouragement of my colleagues on faculty at that time. Especially women were very clear with me that there was no way that I would ever have an opportunity in leadership and they just wanted me to know because I was headed down a road toward high disappointment because that was not going to happen in this particular community, in this particular faith-based school.

The board chose Amy as assistant principal after she found success as a teacher and assistant administrator giving her opportunities to work on capital projects and faculty and staff grievances. Smith School offered sabbaticals, and Amy was asked to step in as the interim lead administrator while the lead administrator was on sabbatical. The faculty and staff grievance issue remained contentious while the lead administrator was away, and Amy successfully led the faculty and board through a process to resolve the grievance. The lead administrator expected to return, but Amy's skills handling the grievance issue gave the board a reason to pause. Amy offered to leave because the grievance issue was unethical, and she felt she could not continue under the former leadership's practice of perpetuating the grievance.

Instead, the board invited Amy to stay and continue her work and released the former administrator. During this time, Amy also paused because a woman as lead administrator in this community meant a significant shift for church and school. Amy sought discernment with a mentor who knew the community well and affirmed her desire to continue in leadership.

> Before I left he said, "Amy, you must do it. You will carry the mission forward. You have to do it." It was that kind of a very personal encounter with him and I haven't said that to many people because it's too holy. It was a holy moment but it was an affirmation for me to go forward because I knew the community, I knew their perspective of women in leadership. I knew, I knew, I knew. I stepped in anyway.

Amy began as the lead administrator knowing the difficulties before her, but she thought of her calling as a sustaining force during challenging times.

> I think calling is important and if I hadn't felt a personal call to do this, I don't think I would have endured it or sustained it or done well because it's not always easy and that has to come from others and I think it's also a spiritual knowing that you . . . in your really rough times you fall back on and you say, "No, but I got it. I'm still here."

Amy added later, "My life has been like that, that I have this sense of knowing." Amy became a seasoned leader in her school and community because of the challenges she faced over the years.

Lori's story of pursuing leadership is a bit different because she is one of the few participants who did not move up within a school system. While she had been a teacher and teacher leader in her previous school, she pursued an assistant leadership position at Ford School in a different Mennonite community, but did not get the position. When Lori interviewed for the assistant position, it felt predetermined, and when the board chair called to inform Lori she was not the chosen candidate for the position, she asked if that was the case. The board chair confirmed that it was, but that she was a strong surprise and gave them reason to reconsider. The following year the lead administrative position opened at Ford School and the board asked Lori to apply. She saw little point in applying since they did not hire her for the assistant position the year before, but Lori ultimately applied and became the lead administrator at Ford School.

Lori's questions from the interview the previous year and direct style seemed to be positive

characteristics for the board.

Lori's internal motivation for going into Mennonite administration was the ultimate

opportunity to demonstrate faith integration in leadership.

> I went in wanting to get into administration. I wanted to stay working in the private system. I want to stay working in the Mennonite system because I thought it had just so many possibilities of good work, like meaningful work that impacted both my life and other lives, and an ability to not cut out a piece that was important in terms of spiritual connection. That plays a big part in people's lives. I think we speak about it or we don't.

Lori received affirmation from her sister: "I talked with Joellen and other people and she

said, 'Yeah, you need to go. That makes it hard for us, personally, but you need to go.' She

said, 'These opportunities . . .' because there aren't that many Mennonite schools." Lori cared

deeply about her work and her strong sense of active leadership because of her internal spiritual

motivation. Her strong convictions and her sister's affirmation were key to her taking the

position at Ford School.

Alice shared Lori's desire to live out her faith values as a leader of a Mennonite school.

Alice's strong faith principles led her to teach at South School.

> I was interested in this school when it was just starting out, and I joined three years later. I had grasped the flame of it just because it so truly represented what I thought of the Christian teacher I wanted to portray. I wanted to be in a place where my faith was made real and where I was free to discuss it. That was very important to me.

As Alice grew into a teacher leader, her dedication and commitment at South School became

apparent to others.

> The school I was part of was very much part of my heart. I think people saw in me a champion for the school and for what I believe we could offer children and young people, and how we can train them up for Kingdom work. That goal, in itself, I think people really saw in me.

Alice felt her transition to leadership was a result of her devotion to the school and ability to articulate the vision. "I was very well-connected with the community and the stakeholders and the children and the parents, and I think that made for an easier transition in many ways because I was a known quantity." Alice felt supported by the parents during her time of transition,

> I remember parents coming up to me and saying, "We're so relieved it's you," rather than someone who came in who didn't know the school or the community and might take it in a direction that had not been forged before that. They saw that there would be continuity and understanding of what the community was like.

As a result of Alice's convictions and her connectedness, she became lead administrator at South Schools, and she expressed minimal difficulty within the church and school community.

Like Val, Kelly's history was in nonprofit work outside of education. She was very successful at her previous work and recruited to work at Ridge School as an assistant administrator. Kelly's strong skill set of working successfully with others brought colleagues to her by default when crisis developed, much like Amy experienced at her school. In the absence of respected leadership, faculty and staff find leadership. This was Kelly's case. The assistant position was stressful under current leadership, and Kelly was struggling with the idea of returning to work and decided to do some reflecting while on vacation.

> We were on our anniversary week . . . We just were having a good time, I had a good week during the day. I could not sleep well at night because the thought kept coming to me that I was supposed to be interim administrator at Ridge School and that was like, where is that coming from? I haven't even signed my contract to go back and there's no way I'm going to be interim administrator. I knew that they had said that [an interim] would be the next step because it was a little late to get a new administrator. I finally shared that with my husband one day and I said, "I have just not been able to sleep at night," and I told him what my thoughts were. He said, "You don't have to go back again." It was Friday that week, Friday night. I finally said, "Okay God, if this is you talking to me, then I'll agree but of course, somebody's got to come to me. I'm not going to offer this." We got back home and the following Friday I got a phone call . . . I knew what he was going to ask. He said, "Would you be willing . . . ?" I already told the Lord that I would, reluctantly. I took that position August 1.

Kelly served as an interim lead administrator until the board asked her to fill the permanent position. The board chair told Kelly, "We spent most of our meeting in prayer, praying about who God was calling, and we all agreed it was you." Kelly's response to the permanent position call by the board was more prayer, but after a period of listening, she heard God's response: "God said to Moses, 'Who made your mouth. I'll give you the wisdom.'" Kelly spoke openly and candidly about her relationship with God and her sense of knowing His call. As with some of the other women, God's leading was not always what the women were striving for, but Kelly found herself as lead administrator for numerous years until she felt God release her from Ridge School.

Sharon, native to her school and community was student, teacher and assistant administrator at Forest School before entering into the application process for lead administrator. Like many other participants in the study, she was a well-known applicant who had developed successfully within the school system. Sharon subtly mentioned her call and response: "I try to be attentive to vocation and calling and the voices of those that surround me and so here we are." Sharon's call recognized the voices around her and she spoke of the affirmation from families when she received the lead role: "Like I said, I think the number of parents that I've received support from in terms of specifically being female, how their sons and their daughters really need to see these things." Sharon feels supported, yet there are challenging individuals within the community who present opposition. Sharon struggles with some of the constituency's inability to make the shift and their responses to women in leadership.

Barbara served as a teacher and decided to get her administrative degree years earlier just because she had an interest in school administration, not because she was intentionally pursuing administration. Very few positions were available for women when Barbara received her degree.

Then Barbara exited education for some time for family care reasons, and when she was ready to

return, River Bend Mennonite School, where her brother-in-law served on the board, had

openings. He encouraged her to apply. She went back to teaching and then several years later

the head administrator position opened.

> Then there was an opening for the principal. The rest of the staff asked me to apply for
> it. . . . I prayed about it, and I had read a poem . . . that really hit me at the time and after
> praying about it, did apply for it. I told the board when I had my interview that if after a
> year I really wanted to go back in the classroom, I would really appreciate that and of
> course they agreed. I never looked back. I never was interested in going back again. I
> thoroughly enjoyed being in leadership and the day-to-day never knowing what you were
> going to encounter.

Barbara served 14 years with very low turnover in staff. She built a new school and a new

program during her successful tenure.

While seven of the participants spoke openly about their call and affirmation from God,

the remaining four participants became leaders out of necessity, default or recruitment because of

their ability. The women became administrators because they offered strong leadership

characteristics and had past success within the school the school community.

Leanne filled various roles within Mountain School and developed leadership skills with

faculty while still a teacher. Leanne took a year of leave for family reasons and while away used

her time to do educational research and complete more administrative course work. Her leave

went so well that the school established a sabbatical, giving others a chance for renewal and

growth. Leanne wrote up her findings and shared her results; she garnered respect from

colleagues, current administration and board members. Leanne found herself as interim

administrator when the current principal went on sabbatical. "Then the next year the principal

was given his year of leave. I was asked to be the acting principal." Leanne's colleagues

respected her, and she had pursued more than one advanced administrative degree. She was the obvious choice for interim.

Jill has a long history of service at Thomas School; she began as a teacher and transitioned into an assistant administrator role. Jill found herself in the interim lead position unexpectedly when the head administrator left.

> I remember the principal coming into my office. . . . We had not talked about it. He says, "You understand that because person X left, you are going to have to be the principal in fall." I just burst into tears . . . I am not sure I want this. It was not that I am not sure I can do it, it was like I do not know if I want this. I do not know if I want to carry the load of leader . . . that kind of leadership. I do not know if I want to carry the burden of being the first female. . . . I am not ready to be the first female charting this path for all of the women who were going to come after me who are sure to eventually be school leaders in this place. I need to . . . to study. I need to work at this. I need to get some courses and some tools. I am not ready to be a trail-blazer, and so I just sort of put my head down and went and did my thing.

Jill experienced a strong emotional reaction to the initial default interim position. As Jill reflected on her first experience as interim, all the initial fears and burdens came to light. She felt unprepared, and yet she put her head down and "did her thing!" Jill had assistant administrative experience and was willing to serve in the interim role.

> Thankfully I have a school community who's incredibly supportive. There were a number of other colleagues who I'd worked with for a number of years. It would have been different had I been stepping into a brand-new school, and into a community that I didn't know, and staff that I didn't know, or students that I didn't know.

As much as it is reassuring for the board to have a qualified, capable person in the seat, it is also reassuring for the women who step in rather unexpectedly to know their staff and school.

Vicki had student roots at West School, but her career was as a successful administrator in the public domain. Through a series of unusual events, Vicki became the permanent lead administrator at West School. Her broad experience in the public sector made her an appealing choice.

> It was posted and then they didn't have anybody. During which I was approached by several people and had coffee with them where they wanted to talk to me about maybe considering applying because of my experience and my involvement with West and my connection to it.

After being in the public sector for most of her career, the flip to private education was a bit of a shift, but Vicki's years of experience offered West School fresh perspective.

Heidi served as a long-time teacher leader at North School. More than one lead administrator transition did not go well prior to Heidi's being chosen.

> There had been a big kerfuffle in the school; it almost didn't open up. . . . Never mind the politics, just please open the school and let us do our thing, and so we did. By the time I became principal some of those wounds had not healed properly . . . it's a new era, we will begin, all of us need to get along.

Heidi began her years as administrator at North School like many other interim women leaders during a time of difficult transition, but she led with determination to bring stability back to North.

In summary, nine of the 12 women worked within their school systems as teachers or assistant administrators prior to becoming lead administrators with many of them serving as interim lead administrator before being asked to continue in their position permanently. Most of the women showed strength and skill in leadership areas before becoming leaders. Clearly this reduced the risk for the boards when calling women to lead their school. Val, Amy, Sharon, Kelly, Jill and Leanne served as assistant principal, principal or other front office administrators before becoming lead administrators. Heidi, Lori, Barbara, and Alice served as teachers before becoming lead administrators without officially serving in a lesser administrative role. Val, Amy, Leanne, Kelly and Jill served as interim leaders. Leanne and Jill served twice as interim administrators, but did not apply for the lead administrative role. Leanne did not desire the lead

role and returned to work in assistant administration. One of the 12 women became the first woman lead administrator at two different schools.

Each of the women leaders experienced initial board support and many of them shared their story of being hired because it offered more context to their story. The next section about the board's role in determining women leaders identifies board make up and school communities as experienced by the women participants.

Board Determining the Role of Women as Leaders within the School Community

The board members play an obvious part of the women's story because they control and retain the decision making power; yet, they are often ill prepared to do their job well. Often new board members come in with a poor understanding of what it is to be a board member. The women in leadership are faced with how to assist the board when there is already a gender shift and decision making hangs in the balance.

Nine of the 12 women navigating new leadership roles told stories of their board and board chair relationships. These relationships are critical to survival as a leader and typically run deep, and the women felt compelled to share their experiences. As first time women leaders in Mennonite Schools, they often experienced opposition either from colleagues or at times male board members.

As a woman who has been in leadership for some time, Val spoke at length about her board relationships and her views of the board came from a place of understanding and wisdom. She is currently working with her fourth board chair, and women board members are difficult to find.

Our board, it's still disproportionately male and has been, and I don't think that's intentional, but I just think its women not having the confidence to assume that role. . . . This board president will be very open to women being on the board as we recruit and look, and I think he's a little more conscious. [A former board chair] I really wish he could've been on longer because he was very aware that he has daughters and he often talked about having good role models for his daughters. He's very aware of helping women become successful, so it would've been nice to have his influence, but his daughters were graduating and he was ready to move on.

Val spent more time describing her relationship with board chairs than about faculty related issues, because she recognized her role demanded a healthy partnership given the size of the system and the weight of her position. Val navigated the continuum of expectations and circumstances with her board chairs with grace even when they did not favor women in leadership.

Amy spoke mostly in positive terms about her boards, but there were certainly times of frustration and near demise between her and the board. Describing the beginning of her tenure, she said: "My first board chair was female with a group of male leaders . . . who went to the wall for me. I had made sure they were donors . . . they wanted to help." At a later date in Amy's tenure the board chair suffered health related issues affecting his leadership. "Thankfully I was able to work with him through that period and the board actually responded to him in ways that we're able to come out with God's best energy moving forward." But in the end Amy rationalized her board experiences: "Anyway, boards are wise, they discern these things and if they had gotten rid of me, they would have been very appropriate for sure, but in God's mystery I was still there and finished well." Amy was one of the early women in leadership. She also had a long tenure; therefore, she experienced the challenges and realities of administration and board relations.

Jill, in her second interim leadership position, is experiencing a new board chair who comes from a conservative congregation. When board chair leadership changes, especially if it

involves a shift to a more conservative individual, concerns increase. Women leaders are unsure

of a new chair's stance concerning women in leadership, and they have to learn how to navigate

the new power structure. However, Jill described her chair as being on the more liberal side of

the continuum, and he has been supportive. Jill went on to say that the first few months have

been encouraging.

> He is new to the role, and he knows that I know the role that the board plays better than
> he does. He has been quite comfortable to say, "I am going to come to you with
> questions and I am going to be looking to you for some guidance, because I have some
> really strong ideas of what I would like to do."

The initial concern about her board chair's potential conservative stance has eased and they are

focused on positive changes for their school. Having been an assistant administrator for some

time, Jill recognized the weight of the board chair's relationship to her success as a leader and

ultimately the school's ability to function well amidst all the transitions.

In Lori's first tenure with the board at Ford School, she quickly realized the need for

board training and provided some basic guidelines and direction. While board members at

private schools are well intended, they often come without experience. "Our board, a group of

really good people. . . . We need to actually have a board orientation so that we can talk of what

the role of the board is." Lori shared that her inexperienced board members thought their role

was to bring hearsay to board meetings and then made decisions based on hearsay.

> "It's not your place as a board member to come and vent about a teacher you didn't like
> because your kid didn't like. That's not your job." We put together a board orientation
> package of what it means to be a board member.

The frustrations of inexperienced board members was a dynamic some women as new leaders in

conservative communities found really challenging. Not only were the women figuring out their

leadership role, but when they found their boards' unhealthy stance toward their responsibilities,

the women had to walk a fine line to find assistance. Lori was not alone when the topic of board

training and orientation came up; we will hear from others later.

The gender balance of Lori's first board at Ford School shifted over time to reflect some

of her own ideals about gender balance in schools.

> Even as we had worked hard with parity of staff, we worked hard to get parity of board
> so that . . . that was a bit of a campaign, because, again, I just felt when people look at a
> school, they should see a balance of men and women.

It was not uncommon for Lori to give prospective parents a list of board members, because

parents looked to see if the board was gender equitable before deciding to send their children to

Ford School. Lori felt the gender balance message should start at the top.

Lori's second board experience at East School was more positive and offered a more

gender equitable board.

> There was a total balance of men and women on the board. The chair was a woman. The
> vice chair was a woman. There were I think 15 members, so they had seven women and
> eight men, which was just a shift.

Lori reflected on the second board more positively. It was one less management piece as a new

leader. While Lori emphasized gender balance and board training with her boards, she did not

offer stories of serious challenges. She only referenced the board positively during her

interview, so it is unclear if she was that proactive with the board or chose not to include

specifics.

Sharon, a new lead administrator at Forest School, also experienced a gender equitable

board as she began her role in leadership: "I think we have five women and six men. We don't

have a ton of age spread in there . . . parents of students from grade six to grade 12 and maybe

just graduated. It's a volunteer board."

Kelly's relationship with the board was the most challenging experience of her tenure for two reasons: one, board members were inexperienced, and two, their conservative nature about women in leadership resulted in serious challenges. Previous board experience and skills were not criteria for becoming board members, therefore the cycle kept repeating. Additionally, when the search committee chose Kelly and handed her off to the board, board members were unsure about a woman in leadership.

> The search committee . . . simply told the board who they had chosen and expected the board to approve it, which they did, but I found out much later there was not approval. People were struggling with the fact that they had chosen a woman. . . . The ones on the board who I found out later had just been so surprised and not pleasantly surprised it was a woman, didn't say a lot.

Board member's initial silence fed into a culture of passive aggressive problems Kelly faced after the honeymoon phase ended. Kelly struggled with her board as time went on because of their conservative views on women in leadership, their controlling nature, and unhealthy practices.

Board members were unprepared for board leadership. "They thought it was their duty to go out there listening to parents who were dissatisfied and bring all that to the board meeting." Kelly had extensive board involvement from her previous work in nonprofits and service to other organizations. The challenge became how to help board leadership lead effectively when she had more experience than the board, and they had reservations about women in leadership. This story resembled Lori's board struggle, and both women found ways to provide guidance.

Heidi experienced a completely different type of board than most of the other participants. Heidi and board members worked at reaching their goals together at North School. Heidi said this about her board: "That's how task oriented we were, and I did it together with the board. We worked shoulder to shoulder . . . physically and also strategically . . . no, it was very

positive." Heidi's board was involved and supportive of major projects that Heidi initiated

during her tenure. Heidi's relationship with the board was collaborative and positive.

Continuing on a positive note, Barbara at River Bend Mennonite School, like Heidi, had

a positive and supportive board during her leadership experience.

> The board was very accepting. I had a wonderful, laid-back board. The nice thing about the small school, I did not have a lot of machinery that I had to put in. I didn't have a lot of hoops to jump through to start new programs or to do new things that hadn't been done before.

Barbara felt the small school and board were advantages when working together to accomplish

projects. Their size and personality of the board tended to give them more flexibility with

startup projects or programs.

South School board and Alice shared a positive working relationship early in her

leadership years.

> I think as a woman in leadership, I was incredibly lucky and the first three board chairs I had were all women. They were strong, independent, well-versed women who I easily connected with and who I had a great working relationship with. . . . I was set up for success.

But Alice's experience changed over time, much like Amy's experience at Smith School, and she

did not share the details about her final experiences with her board, but did feel the board gender

make up played a role in her exiting her position. "A big part of it was a board that consisted of

only one woman and eight men, and things just went awry there." The disappointment and

negativity remained with Alice today, and she chose not to share that part of her story.

Finally, Sharon at Forest School described her board as supportive, which seemed

obvious because they had just hired her as lead administrator, so the confidence in relationship is

strong. However, Sharon does get questions asking if the board is supportive of her.

> People will congratulate me on the job and then simultaneously they'll ask me if the board is supportive. I'm just flabbergasted when that happens and I respond with, "Are you asking me if the board is supportive of me?" then I just say, "The board is the group who has hired me."

It is still early in Sharon's tenure, so she did not comment further on her relationship with the board.

It is fairly evident that Mennonite boards struggled with deciding to put their own, known, women into leadership. The board would more easily ask the women to serve as interim administrator, but then take six months or more to make a decision about moving them to the permanent lead position. Candidates often felt that boards wrestled with putting women into the leadership role because they did not know how the constituency would react. Val, Jill, Kelly and Lori recognized the predicament of the board and acknowledged it was a difficult choice but did not seem to resent the situation or the amount of time it took to discern how the community would react to a woman leader. Val shared this comment about her experience. "I think the people who interviewed me were good with it, but I think they were just assessing whether or not the community was ready for a female to lead the school."

The experience shared earlier about Lori's interview that felt predetermined also lent itself to ask the question if the deciding factor was her gender. In the follow-up phone conversation with the board chair, Lori asked,

> "Was some of the hesitation because I was a woman?" He said he honestly didn't think so. They had had a vice principal for a term who was a woman, and they said she had done well. So he didn't think the gender piece came into it.

Lori and the board chair managed a candid conversation about the predetermined decision and gender factor when she was not the chosen candidate, and the board chair felt gender was not a factor in the board members' determination.

In an interview a year later at the same school for the head position, Lori asked the board a direct question about how a male assistant principal might be affected by a new woman in leadership. The board responded that a balance in gender leadership would be healthy and offer new perspectives. The male assistant principal was a candidate for the position as well, and Lori recognized not only the challenge of being the first woman but the first woman chosen over the assistant principal who had been there 20 years.

> Because I don't want to walk into a situation where I'm not only trying to establish myself as the new leader of the school, but I am not battling a concentrated effort on the part of teachers who thought the decision should have gone a different way.

The committee responded to say that they thought administration and faculty would handle a woman in leadership. Lori shared this because her first-year challenges included this exact scenario, and gender definitely was a factor.

In some cases the women leaders, like Val and Kelly, felt empathy for their boards as they discerned the women's hire or move from interim to permanent leader. They recognized they were trying to make the best decision for the school community. The women's work ethic and capable leadership made them attractive to the board. The women's move to leadership came with varying degrees of trust and expectations from their boards.

A Mennonite church community frames the tenor of its schools. Most churches in a given area will range from liberal to conservative, but some areas are more isolated and can present with ultra-conservative views. This affects school boards because they are made up of various church representatives who are also parents, so service to the school as a board member becomes complicated. To complicate matters even further, many of the supporting donors attend the local churches, and decision-making and funding might be affected by a woman leader.

The church environment in the school communities is very important because it helps establish the main culture of the schools. Local churches or conferences often established the schools, and therefore the social and political structure of these entities became part of the school system. In the next section I describe what the women shared about their church communities and church-related experiences.

Church and Community Environment

Participants related closely to their church community because in addition to financial support, local churches drove student enrollment. The local church community is a key part of school success. Six participants shared experiences with churches, church conferences and school environments. Each church and school community seemed unique, ranging from extremely conservative to more liberal and accepting of women in leadership. Some church communities were slow to accept women in leadership and yet found trusted and capable women within their schools to lead. In this section, I offer more context to the women participant experiences by sharing the story of the church communities these women navigated daily.

Amy, one of the earlier women in Mennonite school leadership found herself navigating new territory. Amy's community was traditional and did not allow women in leadership in their churches.

> There would have been a strong number of leaders that would have been clear that the biblical mandate is for men to lead especially in church, in [church] conferences and up to that point, there were not any women in congregational leadership, conference leadership or school leadership. I was trying to think whether the elementary school had a woman leader but that was seen a little bit differently because that was children. . . . The church would have been clear about the roles, the role of women.

In Mennonite schools, it is often expected that leadership will offer updates on their school or bring a message at local supporting churches, but given the time frame of Amy's

tenure, churches were not prepared to handle what it meant when Amy came to church to share about her school.

> I would say church challenges were a surprise. The deeply held biblical perspective of the role of women . . . one of the first times I went to one of our big churches they asked me to give an update about school. It wasn't anything to do with preaching or anything spiritual, but then when it came time for me to speak, everyone had been speaking from the podium, and I immediately got up and went to the podium, and they literally blocked me out and walked me down to the floor.

Amy continued her story by describing another experience with wider church conference leadership. The conversation between Amy and a church conference leader was short and clear and went on for years.

> He said, "Just don't expect my support." Amy said, "What? This school is a mission of ministry of this conference. What does that mean?" He didn't really have to say because I was a female and he didn't have to. He didn't even have to speak about it.

Another church-related story involved Amy's school board and a local church board. Amy surmised that the meeting dealt with her leadership and the school; they did not invite her to attend the meeting, but she went anyway.

> I went to sit down at the table beside the assistant pastor who had kids at the school, and he elbowed me off the table and told me I couldn't sit at the table. If I wanted to stay in the room, I could sit back by the wall, and I was not allowed to speak at all. No speaking. The meeting went on for three hours, and they said things about the school that I didn't recognize . . . they made up their own stories, and I just sat there and shook my head with a smirk on my face.

The Smith School community Amy worked in was very traditional and withheld church ordination while Amy led the school. In some Mennonite schools, educational leaders are supported by their conference leadership through licensure and ordination as head of school, but during Amy's leadership the conference withheld ordination.

> I'm the only administrator that has not been invited by the congregation or by the conference to be licensed and ordained for ministry. All former [school administrators] would have been seen as part of the ministry of the conference and of the church, local church. Everyone would have been ordained. Now that my successor came in, immediately he was ordained.

Amy recalled these stories with pain because her treatment by church leadership impacted her life. In a church community one would expect church support for church-related educational leadership, but the church community caused more ill will than good for its school leader.

Jill's Thomas School community mirrored the local pastoral transition of women into church leadership. It seemed that rural churches struggled to find pastors and when it took longer than anticipated to fill the position, churches asked local women to serve as interim and found positive results.

> Then the community realizes actually you're kind of okay; maybe we'll just keep you. Lots of the churches in this area who've embraced a female pastor haven't gone looking for one. . . . Friends of mine who are in those kinds of leadership roles in more urban centers have had very different experiences.

Lori echoed Jill's thoughts on rural versus urban and the rural school's choice to hire women, even in more conservative church environments.

> The small town [East School and North School], which you would think would be, and I think really is more conservative theologically, had less trouble hiring women as leaders. It's a real . . . I don't know that I can offer any insight to that, but it's interesting. I have to say, to hear this conservative theology and yet you look around at the school, and you also look around the churches in that area and there are women pastors, more of them than in some of the urban settings.

Jill went on to describe her local church community and identify challenges women in leadership faced.

> Some of our community was, and still is, quite conservative . . . what we call the society churches, the churches that support us prayerfully, financially, all of that. We just know that there are some communities that support us that are just really still quite cautious about it.

Jill described her own congregation's experience with women in leadership. "For the last ten years, outside of a few guests who I could count on one hand, I'm the only female who has stepped behind the pulpit in my home congregation to deliver a message." Jill explained that at least a third of her congregation is very uncomfortable with women delivering a sermon. "They're concerned about whether or not this is a matter of fellowship or salvation for them . . . There are some who are completely convinced that the Bible speaks very clearly that women cannot teach men in a public setting." While Jill shared her own congregation's history, it is not unlike other churches in her school community. Jill explained how school leadership handles school visits to churches when lead administrators are expected to bring a message or at minimum a school update.

> There are a number of churches that we visit every year, and for the most part our churches will be quite comfortable with me being up at the front behind the pulpit and bringing the message. There are a few churches where we have to decide . . . whether or not A, we're going to go there this year, or B, whether or not I'm going to be the one to bring the message, or if somebody else on our leadership team who just happens to be male [will bring the message].

Jill summed it up by sharing her personal stance on her school leadership and church relationship.

> I want to be really cognizant of the reputation of our school, and the health of our school. I don't want to put our school at risk. For me to do that as my own person, and for me to do it personally is an easy thing, but I also want to make sure that I'm taking good care of the school. I don't want the school to be hurt because I can be a bull in china shop, so to speak.

South School's church community where Alice serves was more ecumenical and a smaller, rural area much like Jill and Lori's schools. "We were not in a strong Mennonite community, so our Mennonite population was always in the 10 to 20 percent range. . . . It would make us very clear and specific about who we were and what we were about." While Alice learned to articulate clearly the Mennonite mission and values of the school, she did not

experience the difficulties of a church community at odds over theology and women in

leadership. The school community accepted Alice, and she had a long tenure.

Leanne, like Amy, was another early interim leader at Mountain School. While the

person she replaced was a pastor, she was not an ordained leader in the church. Leanne had

opportunities to share at the school internally but did not mention speaking in churches.

> I think there were a few chapels that I did that felt good and seemed appropriate because I was in an interim capacity in both of these situations . . . I just remember that it was a good opportunity and a good experience for me to have that chance to bring together the leadership element with both the faculty and the student's involvement there. It was another opportunity of those years.

Leanne did not mention any frustrations or concerns in regard to her surrounding church

community. Given the years she served, she did not seem to have an expectation that she should

have given a message to be shared in churches.

Kelly described the Ridge church and school community and her hiring process: "This

small, rural, conservative community, I was the first female assistant principal, too, and they

reacted to that, too. There were people that struggled with that. I guess that's the man's world."

As mentioned earlier, Ridge School's search committee recommendation of Kelly as school

leader caused the board grief, but some board members did not vocalize their concerns which

caused underlying complications particularly in her second year of leadership.

Vicki described the student body makeup of the West School Mennonite community.

> We had a lot of students who were not from a Mennonite background at all. They just wanted their children number one to be in a private school. Number two be in a small school. Number three be in a school that had a strong academic reputation within the university community . . . maybe 45 or 50% of the kids were Mennonite or coming from a . . . an Anabaptist kind of perspective or a faith-based perspective. The rest were community or international students. You can't just speak to one side of your constituency. You have to talk to everybody and have to have something to offer.

While surrounded by a broad range of Mennonites, Vicki had a more ecumenical student body, like Alice. Church tensions did not run nearly as high in these two communities as they did in Kelly's and Jill's.

Vicki described the spectrum from ultra-conservative congregations to the liberal local university community that impacted West School. She also said the type of criticism she experienced was typical within Mennonite schools across both the United States and Canada. "For some of the more conservative Mennonite congregations. West School wasn't quite conservative enough in its approach. [They] perceived it as being a more liberal view of the faith . . . that's not different from any other Mennonite schools." Vicki described the church community this way, "We have such a wide range of Mennonite churches and congregations, from the Amish . . . It goes from that end of the continuum right up to University [considered liberal]."

Just as church community theology affects schools, so parents think it their right to question school administration or faculty about their personal values and daily activities. Some parents questioned Vicki about her personal faith. "When parents saw me, a woman, made leader of a Mennonite school, they felt obligated to challenge or assure themselves and others that the school was "safe" for their children." Vicki offered one of her personal stories of being scrutinized by a parent.

> I got a phone call and it was actually a woman, a mom, she had three kids at our school and I had actually grown up with her. . . . She wanted to know my faith statement. That was really important for her and she wanted to know . . . Well part of it was when I was a kid I wasn't a wild child or anything but I just . . . I embraced life and every experience that it threw in my path. I think for some of the people that knew me when I was a kid and a young teenager, they saw me as being not "principalish" for the West School. Because, I mean they had a 35-year-old view of who I was as a human being and as a Christian human being.

In summary, each of these women had to determine if they wanted to move into leadership given the context and theology continuum of their church communities. It was a risk for each of them and their school community. Being a woman in leadership in some of these communities gave the women a reason to consider their school's health within the community or their own personal agenda. Most of the women compromised their personal agenda to protect the school and yet in their leadership they found ways to push the boundaries.

The women participants were daughters, sisters, mothers, and wives and the conflicting roles affected family decisions and those relationships. Next I share the stories of the women participants' personal lives and family responsibilities as they managed work and family.

Family Responsibilities

The women participants served their schools and communities and yet maintained family relationships and responsibilities. The challenges of leading and taking care of family relate closely to the findings in the literature review. Six of the women participants mentioned their families as part of their load management but rarely elaborated about their family responsibilities. Three of the six focused on their children and care responsibilities and the other two referred to parents and siblings who needed care. One more had a successful spouse whom she followed when reassigned away from the community for longer periods of time.

Amy, a leader at school, took classes and had a young family.

> Part of it was that in raising my family and running a school . . . when I was offered leadership, things at church, I just felt like, "No, my focus needed to stay with school, and with family." I was also in grad school. There was a lot going on at night.

Amy attended church regularly, but did not take on extra responsibilities related to church. Given the nature of Mennonite communities, an unwritten expectation may be that leaders are involved in their church community.

Val talked about her immediate family's commitment to be with aging parents: "That's a long-term commitment just to make sure that they have somebody with them." Commitments to her parents caused her family to move physically closer to her parents, which in turn meant a longer commute to work and determined how Val spent weekends and evenings. She considered the balance of school responsibilities and family responsibilities carefully.

Lori shared the difficult decision to move a long distance from her home community when a family member was suffering illness. The whole family processed the opportunity for Lori to accept the leadership opportunity: "You need to go. That makes it hard for us, personally, but you need to go." She said, "These opportunities . . . [are rare given the number of Mennonite schools]." Later, Lori made another leadership move closer to home. "In part it was because my parents were aging." Lori was better able to assist siblings with care for her elderly parents.

Heidi's leadership role at North School meant she wore many hats. "I still taught a full load the first two years. I was full time in the classroom and this principal stuff happened after hours, on weekends and so on, and I had a child also." Heidi tried to balance life and family but usually found herself giving the school priority.

> In hindsight I think that my family maybe suffered a little bit. I have a very supportive husband and I don't think that my son suffered because we took trips two weeks at a time and I tried as best I could to play ball with him and other things, but it wasn't a normal family life.

Sacrificing family time to stay on top of school business was not out of the ordinary for women leaders.

As a young woman in leadership, Sharon dealt with school and family differently than older study participants. Sharon admittedly found it hard not to react when people asked her personal questions about her husband or children and told her how they felt about her position.

"I have a particularly strong reaction to those things that I try to deal with diplomatically."

Sharon brought up her trials with school parents or staff regarding her own family more than

once during our interview.

> Early on staff people wondered, how is your husband with all of this or your poor
> children, do they miss you a lot? Those kinds of questions constantly are just so
> disappointing. What ends up happening is you figure out the best way to respond or not
> respond.

Throughout Sharon's interview, family was a significant theme for her, but she was new in her

position so it was not uncommon for her to hear, "Wow, that's a big undertaking for someone

with a young family." Sharon felt that people would not have made the same comments to men

in her position, but, because she is a woman and mother, the constituency seemed to think her

family was missing out. "I don't think in those terms . . . It's not a function of whether you've

just gotten a big job or not. It's just the function of being a parent and separating those is

difficult." It was one thing for Sharon to be chosen for the lead administrative position; it was

another for her to diplomatically and tactfully respond to the inappropriate gender-biased

questions.

Leanne only mentioned in passing, "My husband was being relocated for a period of

time. I of course went with him and visited schools in that area." Leanne talked about this type

of family transition during her career as a given. She seemed to take the leave in stride and used

this time to her advantage, doing research or returning to more advanced course work.

Most of the participants shared these thoughts of family as part of an explanation

regarding another topic. The women clearly tried to protect family time for their spouse or

children, but they did not mention family as a deterrent to their position or with regret in regard

to care. Since participants led the conversation based on what they thought was important about

their experience, they only mentioned family in passing.

Summary

Chapter four described each of the women's unique personal history of attaining their position and developing as a leader. Their church and school community shape and continue to shape their stories. Mennonite women leaders experienced leadership in Mennonite schools across various geographic locations with challenging and supportive church environments. These communities found women who served them within the unwritten cultural guidelines. The women believed in their school communities and protected the structure and at the same time challenged the edges in order to bring growth to the community.

Chapter four developed the range of depth and breadth these women leaders brought to their leadership roles, board relationships, church and school communities and families. The participants' growth experiences included taking the risk to step in and lead as the first women in Mennonite schools. The women found courage and strength in taking on the risk. This sets the landscape for chapter five as I explore more closely how these women navigated challenging situations and successfully learned to lead.

CHAPTER FIVE: PIONEER WOMEN LEADERS

Chapter five tells the story of Mennonite women's leadership and communication styles. It includes stories of men and women who opposed women in leadership and how these women leaders resolved the opposition. The opposition to women in leadership is an important theme in the findings because it identifies the breakdown in relationship and culture. The women participants fully accepted the risk of building new relationships and shifting the power structure in the community by successfully resolving conflict. Finally, the participants share their stories of support, opportunities to mentor others and their positive ways of building trust and shaping community during their time of leadership.

Resistance to Women in Leadership

All of the women participants shared their personal style of leadership not through a direct description of their power and leadership style but stories of difficult challenges. Each participant gained experience as a result of challenging events, but their wisdom and skill were evident in their navigation. For most of the women, the stories of opposition began when they entered into leadership within the system prior to becoming head administrators, but they experienced opposition both before and after becoming head administrators. Opposition to Mennonite women in leadership usually came in three types: jealousy of not being chosen as the leader, biblical mandates opposing women in leadership, or both. When the women told their stories, they often did not know which of the opposing forces played a role, but they usually surmised their gender was a factor.

Leanne, one of the earliest first women Mennonite educational leaders, made a deliberate decision to lead her school when asked because she wanted to make a difference. When I asked Leanne why she did not decline the offer to become the first woman interim, her response was

this: "I did think about that. I guess I thought, I'd like the opportunity." While some of the

women felt God's call to lead, some chose to lead because of the opportunity it presented; no

doubt there was more reflection and deliberation than they chose to share. Had Leanne known

what was to come, her decision to lead might have been very different.

Colleague Resistance

Leanne experienced an exceptionally harsh reaction when Mountain Mennonite School

announced she was the new interim head of the school when the former administrator went on

sabbatical. After Leanne became interim principal, the male assistant principal resigned. The

former principal reassigned the assistant principal as the development director so he did not have

to report to Leanne. Leanne had previously worked very closely with the assistant principal and

shared how it felt when he turned against her so quickly:

> Anyway, that colored the year right from the beginning . . . he would no longer talk to
> me. In other words he would not allow me to supervise him as director of development .
> . . we had been friends. We had gotten along very well. Now he refused. He just didn't
> do anything to raise money. . . . Anyway, I didn't fire him, but the principal that followed
> me did fire him.

Leanne's story became even more complicated when the principal who was going on

leave hired the new assistant principal who would be supervised by Leanne. The assistant

principal's responsibilities included morning supervision of the hallways before school started,

but he chose to sit in his office and do his devotions instead of monitoring the hallway. The

board encouraged Leanne to work with him and motivate him, but she did so without success.

Leanne said, "It seemed like he could not take orders from a woman."

Leanne's experience included two particularly difficult challenges that happened

immediately upon her being announced as the interim leader of Mountain School. She had

demonstrated her ability as a teacher leader and assistant administrator, but when the

announcement came, male administrative colleagues struggled to handle the power shift of a woman in leadership. Leanne was diplomatic and worked closely with the board during her year as acting principal, but she said more than once how difficult that year of leadership actually was, in part because she did not feel she had full authority to make decisions. Maybe because of the time that passed since Leanne served or because of her diplomatic nature she only shared that she worked closely with her board during those difficult times, so it remains unclear how she navigated the challenges.

Val shared two experiences when she felt opposition. The first experience was with a female teacher and the second was with a board chair; both were clearly opposed to women in leadership.

> When I became [an assistant] administrator, there was one teacher who did not leave immediately but really expressed concerns both to me and to other people about having a woman in authority. . . . She was a woman, and she just felt like that was not the right way, the right order. I think [a woman] as the head of school, she just felt that wasn't God's will.

The female teacher's vocal opposition and refusal to cooperate led to a leadership decision for the woman to leave the school.

Val talked at length about her board and board chair relationships and described an incident with her most recent board chair who felt men should be in leadership positions. His term as chair was ending, and the next qualified person to take his place was a woman. The woman board member did not want the position. Val said, "[The current board chair] agreed to stay on a year longer, and I know that's why it was because he just really didn't want a female in that role."

Val went on to explain if a woman had stepped in as a board chair, the top school administration and board leadership would have been all women; only women would be on stage

granting diplomas at the end of the year. Val admits the women in administration pondered the

possibility: "We talked, we laughed about that. That would be a lot of fun." Val took the board

chair's behavior in stride; perhaps being a product of the community allowed her to understand

the board chair's decision to stay. By now, Val is a seasoned administrator and described herself

this way:

> I definitely have more confidence now. I feel like I understand the role, and I feel like I understand myself in the role because again, when I look at areas . . . I don't feel so inadequate. I can trust that, I know I need to work at this. I know I probably need to do this hard thing, but we'll get it figured out. It'll work.

Val was no longer threatened by these experiences. Trusted relationships are evident between

her and the board, and she is aware of her weaknesses as a leader. She acknowledges that a

competent administrative team that complements one another is critical for the school's success.

Amy's traditional Mennonite church community made leadership for a woman more

challenging. Amy's challenges ranged from dress code for women to men who refused to listen

or communicate. Amy explained a dress code challenge, perhaps minor but incredibly

frustrating:

> When I became assistant principal, I had come in as part-time faculty teaching physical education. I would come in in the afternoons and would be able to wear sweats to teach, but if I came early and went in the cafeteria to eat, I had to wear a skirt and I was supposed to wear hose and heels and a skirt. Then I would get to rush down and change my clothes for my teaching assignment.

As a woman in leadership, she was told what to wear.

Community Resistance

Another particularly difficult challenge for Amy was community businessmen and church

leadership men's response to women in leadership. The men demonstrated blatant disrespect,

ignoring and stonewalling. A construction project on campus made this painfully apparent.

Amy found that if men did not want to cooperate, they did not have to. Amy described the local

contractor's behavior and her ultimate decision to end the contract agreement:

> Then we got to the point where he refused to listen to me in meetings even though I'm
> leading the school. He would not look at me; he wouldn't listen to me. I had no voice.
> One day, I met him in the front foyer and he said, "You should have been a man." I
> basically said, "You're fired." . . . I had a female board chair and she and I had the
> courage to change construction managers, and that was highly contentious in this
> community.

The board supported the decision and supported Amy through the construction project and

transition of contractors. While the construction manager was a quick fix by firing, it did not

solve residual fall out and other community men who tried to stonewall some of her decisions.

Amy explained how she worked collaboratively with faculty and administration

throughout her years of leadership to develop other leaders:

> One of the things I started to do was to work with leaders first and then to work toward
> establishing some committees that would empower faculty to have a voice and do some
> of this work that was long overdue.

Leading for the betterment of the staff motivated Amy:

> There's also that balance in leadership between humility and passion for healthier
> systems for people . . . it was not about me being the leader. It was about the systems and
> the people being healthy. Having the opportunity to engage theology, to stretch
> academically but you got to treat your people with respect and your professionals with
> high respect. . . . A leader has the ability to facilitate change or movement or vision. To
> me, there's no vision if it's not the shared vision and the shared community.

For all the difficulties Amy experienced as an early woman in leadership, the positives

outweighed the challenges. She was motivated to mentor others and build a stronger system

through collaboration.

Administrator Resistance

Lori competed with an internal male assistant principal for the head position of Ford

School, and she was chosen as the head administrator. This situation became problematic in

several ways during her first year in administration at the school. The assistant principal kept asking Lori why she was chosen for the position and he was not. In addition to the assistant principal's questions, he had three male colleagues who also resisted Lori's leadership as a result of the board's decision to hire Lori instead of their friend and colleague. There were at least four questioning sessions between Lori and the assistant principal. Lori made every attempt to resolve the issue and redirect, but ultimately this situation became more challenging:

> On the fourth occasion, I just said, "Jim, I can't have this conversation with you again, because all it's doing is making me second guess everything I do. . . . You need to make a decision by the end of this year, because you have to decide, 'I'm here and I'm going to be happy in the vice principal's role. I'm going to work hard in the vice principal's role. I'm going to work hard with Lori and we're going to be a team and do this,' or you have to decide that, 'I think I should have been principal,' and you need to look elsewhere then."

Lori's patience and direct communication skills finally resolved the issue. The assistant principal left at the end of the year for another head principal position, and then she visited with the three male colleagues. "The rest stayed, and I honestly do think we had a stronger relationship for actually being frank and open about it and for saying, 'You have to decide [to stay or go].'" After Jim left, Lori had to fill the position, and she recommended one of Jim's friends. Lori encouraged the friend to go visit with Jim, the outgoing assistant, so he was comfortable and Jim was onboard. Lori's wisdom about relationship meant taking care of the men's previous and ongoing relationship during their leadership transition. Lori sent the male assistant to visit with Jim.

> "You need to go and you need to talk to Jim, because you're going to be worried about that, how Jim would feel if you took . . ." I said, "I respect your friendship and I don't want to damage that, but here are the reasons why I think you will do really well on this job. . . . I think you have the connection with students. You have the connection with parents. You listen well. You're not swayed very easily . . . I think you'd be really strong."

Upon conversation with Jim, the male colleague accepted the position, and he and Lori balanced each other well in their four years together. As a leader, Lori thought about which internal person could provide a balance to her personality, and also how to advance a colleague who could have been potentially very difficult. Lori's efforts helped develop trust at the beginning of her tenure as an administrator.

Faculty Resistance

Another example of resistance Lori experienced shortly after arriving at Ford School included a broader number of faculty. Lori attempted to establish consistent faith practices in the classroom and pulled together faculty and student representatives to collaborate on ways to improve but met with unexpected resistance. Lori reflected on how that situation challenged her as a new leader, saying, "It just made me realize I had to take some things slower in terms of having staff trust me as a leader." While Lori was asking them to look at ways to integrate faith differently or more effectively, the faculty was reacting to her as a new leader: "I think as the year progressed and they recognized that my style was probably a fair bit different than the previous administrator, it was far more collaborative." Lori continued to work at faith integration in a slower, more measured effort throughout the year, allowing the faculty to buy into the process. This challenge presented an opportunity to pause and reconsider how she was leading, and she recognized the time factor in developing relationships first. Lori shared other examples of times she made leadership decisions which demonstrate her thoughtfulness when working with the staff. It was important to her to establish relationship first and then empower the others to do good work. While Lori resolved conflict issues and shared her experiences, she was not talking about her leadership style, but her intuitive leadership style kept emerging through her description of the relationship needs of faculty and staff.

At West School, Vicki did not feel the same kind of pressures as Leanne, Amy or Lori since her staff seemed more familiar with or more open to women in leadership. "I can't say that it was gender based because I think it was a staff that was pretty used to having a lot of strong female voices on the staff." However, Vicki did remember encounters with parents as being more difficult. The conservative segment of the surrounding church community at West could present more complicated conflict.

> There were some cultures that are definitely very male-dominated cultures, and there I would get some real push back, and it was because I was a woman. That was no question. They didn't like the decision. They wouldn't have liked it anymore if it had been a man, but they probably came on stronger with me because I was a woman and they thought maybe they could bully me into changing my mind or something.

Vicki described how some members of the community and school staff assessed women leaders concerning the topic of disciplining students: "They perceive you're not tough enough and you're not tough enough because you're a woman." Given Vicki's past experience in the public environment, she took this type of pushback in stride.

Vicki started her position as West School experienced declining enrollment and financial challenges. Vicki's first task required her to balance the faculty to student ratio and get enrollment back on track.

> "I'm your new principal. I'm here to revitalize and maybe give some new energy and some new ideas, but you're only going to be working half-time next year, not full-time." It was a very, very difficult beginning for me because it was heartbreaking.

Vicki's ability to manage this initial challenge demonstrated her skills and more senior wisdom about how others perceived her. Vicki needed a quick fix for the enrollment and financial situation and came from a system that would have been less collaborative in nature. I did not hear her speak about collaborative methods as a leader. Her tenure at West was relatively short due to health.

You learn to tune out some of the nay saying because it's just not worth investing your emotional energy. Because if you start taking it all on it just becomes overwhelming. It doesn't matter how much experience you have when people come at you aggressively or are throwing slings and arrows so to speak, you still bleed from those wounds.

Alice shared very few significant challenges in comparison to previously mentioned participants, but at South School she found some male faculty struggled with the transition to a woman in leadership. Alice recognized that the men were experiencing change and were uncomfortable with women in leadership. Alice used the same direct style of confrontation with the male faculty members:

I brought one of the male teachers aside and said, "Why is it that I have been in this role for a year, yet you still consider the past principal to be your principal?" He agreed with me. He said, "You're right. I have held on to what was in the past." I'm not sure what the reasoning was behind it. I was less . . . I was softer around the edges . . . I was not as harsh in lines in the sand. Perhaps he liked the clarity of a male perspective.

Alice acknowledged that her leadership style was different from the previous administrator and may have been a factor in the male faculty member's inability to get on board. She reflected on the fact that while her style was "softer," it might have caused a lack of "clarity," which she referenced as a male perspective.

Disrespect Toward Women

Barbara at River Bend and Jill at Thomas School both experienced stories of disrespect when men called or visited schools. Their immediate assumption was the principals were secretaries because they were women. Barbara shared an example.

I went to the door, and he assumed I was the secretary of course. He asked me if the principal was there. . . . He was trying to sell some of their [Bob Jones] curriculum. Well, of course, he did not endear himself to me at the time. I knew very well knowing where he came from and why he would not have thought at all that I was anybody in leadership.

Barbara chuckled as she shared this story. She was long past any hard feelings over this kind of interaction. Barbara was another one of the earlier women in leadership, and society's social norms were a fact of life.

Barbara encountered a school-wide serious potential health threat that challenged her and showed her leadership style. It was the early years of this health-related scare, so education about the disease was limited and fears ran high amongst parents. The school had a child who presented a threat, but this information was protected. Somehow a parent found out and spread the word. Barbara immediately called in a local, trusted physician who could inform and put fears to rest. Barbara also brought in a representative from the county health department.

> I scheduled a meeting with the parents for that week one night. I also had somebody come as a mediator to be the neutral person so that nobody . . . I was sure that this parent who was calling everybody was going to come in on a rampage and want to take over the meeting and that kind of thing.

While the parent who spread the word did not do any favors on behalf of school or parents, Barbara resolved the issue as gracefully as she could under the circumstances. The example speaks to her thoughtful leadership style and care for students, faculty and parents. Barbara went on to talk about her faculty.

> We kind of operated like a family. . . . We respected and valued opinions, but yet we certainly were able to call people if things needed to be improved. I think most of the things were by consensus that if we had decisions to make, it could have been made. . . . I think if you would ask my faculty, they would have felt that I listened to their ideas and was willing to accept things from them too.

Barbara's collaborative efforts were evident in her leadership style and positive demeanor. Obviously she respected her faculty and staff, and it was mutual given the low level of turnover she experienced in her tenure.

Like Barbara, Jill met with men's lack of understanding encountering her as a lead administrator when calling the school with a concern. Jill found these situations agitating but

managed to maintain her composure and offer the caller options. With more important things to get done, picking an argument over such things with the caller was not necessary. Jill shared an example of how she responded to men when they called the school and found a woman in leadership: "Either they share their concern with you, or you invite them to call back at another time. I'm your only option right now, so you've got to decide how important it is to share right now or call back." Jill did not exactly laugh it off like Barbara, but Jill is in the midst of her second interim leadership position, and the frustrations are more current than they were for Barbara. She realizes it can be innocent enough, but when men decide they do not want to talk to her, she has to rise above the insult. Jill recognizes the battle is not worth the effort when there is more important work to be done: "This is about doing what is best for the school. This is about making sure that our kids are safe and educated and growing into strong leaders for tomorrow."

Because of Jill's transition into the head position at school, there are assistant positions vacant, so there are male teachers shifting into teacher leader positions who offer administrative support. Jill shared about one of the men filling the teacher leader role and how he created a new challenge for her:

> He uses all the right language in terms of what women can and cannot do, and where they can fit, and all of that. I have to be the most careful with him in terms of how I speak, when I speak, how bold I am in a meeting.

While he undercut Jill's leadership, it seemed that there were subtleties she noticed. Jill experienced hyper awareness in her leadership role and the line she has to walk as a woman leader in a conservative environment.

Jill contemplated leadership styles and how she related to her faculty, staff and parents. She recognized how her delivery made a difference and reflected on the effectiveness of caring

for others. Jill vacillated between a soft or bold approach and the challenge of being misunderstood, because there is an expectation of how women should lead.

> If I can lead well, if I can lead authentically, if I can lead in ways that show care and compassion for others, then that is going to be the bigger impact than whether or not I pounded you into submission because I am the boss.

Aside from all the different ways one can lead, Jill summed it up this way: "In the end, we need to get the work done, and we need to make sure that the place is running."

One of Sharon's first major challenges as assistant principal was with a male faculty member. It was similar to Vicki's challenge by the mom who wanted to know her faith statement because she remembered Vicki in her youth. The faculty member who crossed Sharon made comments about her days as a student in the system years earlier. Now his current administrator, Sharon did not appreciate the comments and decided to call him to her office and confront him:

> I did it very firmly, very kindly, but no room for debate on what I was presenting as cannot happen again. . . . There I am wondering, how am I going to continue to support and interact with this person. By taking that situation and speaking to him directly to hopefully transform what was happening, that's what allows the forgiveness to happen. That's what allows a new relationship to emerge.

Sharon's communication style of direct confrontation immediately caused the male teacher to apologize; however, Sharon did not want to hear it because he did not come to apologize following the incident. Sharon talked about the positive results of direct communication and the ability to build a better relationship following the conversation. Almost every woman leader interviewed had a story of confrontation, but Sharon and Lori talked about being direct and the importance of helping men understand the situation.

A separate aspect to this incident between Sharon and the older male teacher included how Sharon's male principal reacted. He was very supportive and protective of Sharon and

planned to "handle it" with the teacher, but Sharon requested he not "fix it" on her behalf. While it was a complicated situation, she wanted the opportunity to establish herself as a leader. She felt that if her principal handled it for her it would have set her up to be weak and unable to lead in her own strength.

Sharon talked about the importance of presenting a competent and professional vision to her constituency. Sharon recognized her own abilities and leadership style, "a sense of your gifts and just bringing those to the table. You can serve in humility, lead in strength and in kindness. I do those things and try to put that other noise elsewhere."

Exercises in Leadership

The previous stories gave examples of challenges and wise ways women navigated the challenges, but Kelly experienced blatant mistreatment. While Kelly's first year was a "honeymoon" phase, year two presented new difficulties, and the board members who had been silent about women in leadership seemed to take out their hostility on completely different subjects in passive aggressive ways. Kelly's board took the liberty of firing employees based on community comments. This handicapped Kelly as a leader. The day after board meetings she would carry out the board's mandates and then receive the fallout from community members as if it were her decision. At the same time she could not show her opposition to the board decision. This reflected poorly on her reputation as a leader because these decisions were perceived as being hers. Faculty and staff also made a financial decision regarding a fundraiser that Kelly understood to be well received and supported. In her second year, she found out that the board was not in favor of the financial decision. Board members, either out of inexperience or community social norms, did not always share their thoughts in advance, but when criticism

was mounting against Kelly would throw in these accusations about her leadership and criticisms from fallout from their own decisions.

During Kelly's evaluation these criticisms blew up. "I get to this evaluation and it was horrific . . . I was so torn up. I'm thinking, God, what am I doing at this school? It felt like disaster. I've never experienced anything like that before or since, thank God." Though devastated, Kelly went home, gathered herself and returned to a school open house that night and welcomed families to the school. Kelly added her perspective to the devastation, saying,

"I really think the reason they could sit there and be so upset at me was because I was female." Kelly was frustrated that all of this happened under the context of Christianity where Christians say they care for each other. Little of it felt supportive.

One of the tactics used by new women leaders in Mennonite schools when they were faced with boards or men who refused to listen to them was to bring in supportive men who are able to convey the message. Men hear other men. Kelly looked for relief and found it in MEA's director of education. The director came in and provided a retreat on leadership training for the board on at least one occasion. The retreat was enough to ease the board tensions for Kelly and allow her to continue her leadership. "It changed that board," she said. Kelly picked up where the MEA director left off, attempting to assist the board to organize effective committees and build trust between committees. "But, that's not the way it was. They [the board] had to discuss all those same details and some that hadn't been discussed." However, there were improvements. The MEA director reduced the meeting time to two hours or less. "My next four years there became quite positive."

Kelly's personal conviction to stay in a difficult situation came back to God. Kelly stated that her greatest urge was to run from the situation. Her husband asked her why she would stay

given the frustrations, but Kelly responded, "because God hasn't released me." Kelly's ability to listen to God throughout her tenure was an important piece to why she stayed. "You can't lead without listening." Kelly acknowledged that she still wonders about her time in the position. "I still wonder sometimes why God took me there. Was it simply to humble me or what?" While Kelly remained in leadership during difficult times, she developed healthier ways of leading for herself, the board and the school.

Another reason Kelly continued to lead gracefully and rise above the harshness of the board was because she believed in the school and loved the students: "I particularly love the kids and enjoyed my relationship with them; preschool through grade 12." During Kelly's six years, she involved students in their chapel experiences across the grades. Another positive project included remodeling the elementary school. At that point, Kelly felt her leadership work with the school had run its course.

While Kelly experienced the most difficult experience with her board, Heidi's challenges revolved around the financial status of the school. The school nearly closed its doors, but Heidi's commitment and sacrifice along with faculty and the board turned the tide for North School. The turmoil of previous years meant there was work to be done including damage control, fundraising and strategic planning. During Heidi's tenure, she grew enrollment from 48 to 96 students and became financially solvent. Heidi also found new funding sources through which public schools provided books and other educational resources for private schools. Heidi focused on the organization: "I try to separate business from personal, and that's served me well. If the organization needs ABC, I go after ABC. It's not a personal matter at all."

Heidi found that repairing damaged relationships to be particularly rewarding and healing for both the individual and the school: "I personally went to them. I think that made all the

difference is that I took the time to go to them personally, I sought them out, and said I'm sorry

for what happened." Heidi's positive attitude and work ethic brought a culture of change.

Reconciliation made a difference in the school's recovery. Heidi's philosophy of care and

concern for others in addition to her attention to detail in all leadership areas rebuilt the school.

The details Heidi referred to included fundraising, recruitment, curriculum changes, a co-op for

special needs students, and changing to semesters while supporting faculty and staff. Heidi was

quick to say, "It's not about me, it's about them, and how can they contribute."

The women's stories of challenges were each unique, and yet themes emerged about

male-dominated social norms and how women navigate through communication and leadership.

The women navigated carefully through exceptionally difficult situations in their church

communities and schools. Their presence in leadership was highly political in some cases and

challenged communities to find new norms. In the next section, the stories of challenge continue

in the United States and Canadian Mennonite educational governing bodies. Women

experienced local challenges, but these challenges came from colleagues: men at other sister

Mennonite schools.

CAMS and MCUSA Leadership Challenges

This theme represents another level or layer of church hierarchical male dominated

structure the new women leaders had to break through. The stories were more challenging in the

Canadian educational system. Lori explained CAMS, the Canadian Association of Mennonite

Schools, and why the organization was put in place:

> I think the organization was started for a couple of reasons. It was to give support to the
> administrators so that they had a body that they could come together and talk with and
> feel support, so you weren't feeling that I'm doing this work in isolation.

Lori valued the conversation between colleagues. CAMS was a relatively small group of about

10 if everyone attended. "The first few years I attended I was usually the only woman because

the one other woman leader rarely attended." Lori qualified the character of her colleagues,

saying, "They were all really good men, like nice guys, genuinely good people. I think had

really never . . . It never crossed their minds that there was some inherent sexism in that piece."

As mentioned by the women in earlier stories, men cannot always hear women when they

speak, metaphorically, not literally, but women participants felt the literal affects. Lori found

this to be particularly true with this group of men: "I would say something at this meeting and

nobody would respond to it. Then, 10 minutes later, one of them would say the same thing and it

would get all sorts of response." The dialogue pattern frustrated Lori, but she again mentioned

what great people these men were. After sharing her frustrations with a trusted male colleague

who told her she was being "too sensitive," Lori tried another tactic during the next day of

meetings. Lori participated like usual but then drew a conversational map showing where

conversations went and who responded to comments. At the end of the day, Lori went back to

the trusted colleague who sat at the table. The map revealed the patterns and reinforced Lori's

point about the men's inability to recognize her voice as a colleague at the table.

> I don't think you guys are being deliberately sexist. I think you don't understand the
> power you have and that you take it so much for granted that when you speak, you will
> be listened to . . . I'm frustrated and saddened, because I felt dismissed, and dismissed
> just by non-response. . . . When it came to feeling that I had an equal voice in this
> discussion, it just wasn't there.

Lori again said the men were nice and had even discussed how to get the other woman to come

to meetings. Clearly the male colleagues were unaware of their power and response to women

during conversation in the meetings. Most of the administrators attending led high schools, so

subjects on the agenda rarely pertained to elementary school leaders, therefore, elementary

leaders, which were women, rarely attended.

Lori acknowledged her frustrations led to an involved conversation with her trusted

colleague. She saw no point in being passive about the situation, but if she confronted the group

in a healthy way she knew it would meet with resistance or questions about why she was so

upset. The trusted colleague took Lori's map and showed it to the group. "I think we need to

actually maybe listen and look at this. It was exactly the response I would have predicted. They

all felt very sheepish. They couldn't believe that that was happening." The group of men

became a bit more self-aware, and Lori persuaded her fellow woman colleague to attend

meetings more frequently, but the gender makeup of the group continued to be imbalanced. Lori

summarized, "I think it was absolutely male and white and middle class privileged at its finest . .

. Honestly, I don't think that changed over the 10 or 12 years that I was part of that group." Lori

chaired the group for five years of that time, and even then she felt silenced or unheard.

Lori went on to share her thoughts and feelings about CAMS and women in leadership.

> I felt sad for me because I worked through 20 years in different Mennonite schools, but I felt sad for the women who were trying to follow after, and I felt sad for the students just because I kept thinking we should have made more progress than we had made. It's 2014. We should not still have to consciously think we've got to have gender parity.

Lori eventually left Mennonite education but did her part to make a difference in gaining a voice

at the table.

Alice's story really began before Lori, Alice's colleague, came on board at CAMS. Alice

confirmed Lori's experience that CAMS provided fellowship and support from an isolated

school setting, but that it was a high school-driven agenda. Common struggles and Anabaptist or

Mennonite values were core to the group and meaningful to Alice, and she attended meetings

more regularly in her later years as administrator. Alice described the group: "They were

always a friendly, heartfelt, warm, smart group of people." Alice never mentioned that she felt

unheard at the meetings.

Sharon, a more current member of CAMS had another gender-related experience when

she became assistant principal with the CAMS team. Her principal decided to take Sharon along

to the regional CAMS meeting, and Sharon was excited about meeting the group. Upon her

arrival, another woman in the group quickly came to her and thanked her for coming because it

meant there would be another woman in leadership at the table. Sharon went on to describe the

culture:

> I couldn't believe, it was like they didn't know what to do with us because we were
> females. The jokes, the conversation, just the whole culture of what was happening was
> just unbelievable. It wasn't overtly, completely terrible. It was just that they clearly had
> never been in a company [of women].

Sharon shared another example. Her principal left the room to take a phone call and the

principal beside her tried to make a joke. He said that when Sharon's principal went out to take a

phone call, her principal was going to trade Sharon for a bus he was dealing on. "I was just like,

did he just say this. He's treating me like a commodity." Sharon felt the humor was

"chauvinistic and sexist" and maybe he would have used that humor with anyone, but she

definitely felt put down, and she had been excited about attending this group. Sharon went on to

say that the group was making progress, but she certainly is aware of her gender when she

attends.

The experience for early United States Mennonite women leaders had some similarities

to the Canadian women. During early MSC years, spouses were expected to attend leadership

meetings. All the men's wives would attend and sit quietly outside the circle and on occasion

would take a side trip while the men met. This presented a problem for Amy and her husband as

roles were reversed. Amy's husband, a fully employed spouse, was not going to take time off

work to join the rest of the women in the outer circle or on outings. This created a dilemma for them as a family, but it also created a dilemma for the MSC organization.

Vicki's perception of leadership at MSC was much like the CAMS experience already mentioned. Vicki was surprised by the number of men at the table, and for the few women that attended, how few had a voice. "I wonder how much real leadership women have within this group? I don't know." Vicki had an opportunity to visit the CAMS meetings occasionally and found the table to be mostly men as already confirmed by Sharon, Lori and Alice. Vicki had a rare opportunity to attend both MSC and CAMS and offered this comment about MSC versus CAMS: "CAMS was definitely a good old boys group." When she attended, she felt patronized or that the men were inauthentic and did not believe that women could serve in leadership.

Kelly offered positive comments about MSC because she received board training assistance from this group and leadership support. "One of the things that was super important to me was our connection with Mennonite schools, the MEA." The benefit of CAMS and MSC was the opportunity to meet with others who served with similar issues.

> When you're serving in such a small organization, you just need, you just really need all of those other people who are maybe in larger groups but they are doing the same thing, they have the same goals and we have so much to learn from them.

Kelly described MSC and the services they offer individual schools as a huge benefit to her. The two organizations accomplish many goals for their students as a whole and serve as places to encourage one another as leaders. Both MSC and CAMS are working on gender balance and sensitivity, but clearly both have work to do. All the women said how nice the men were and that most would not intentionally harm others with their comments. Unlike Lori or Sharon who challenged the social norm, the men tended not to recognize or be aware of how their comments affected the women. Sometimes the opposition the women experienced was intentional and

direct, but often the subtle types of opposition were just as frustrating. It speaks to the type of hidden aspects or undercurrent of the existing culture.

This section concludes the challenges the women described and moves on to the positive aspects of the women in Mennonite leadership, including mentoring others while they served as leaders, building trust, creating support systems and mental health, and finally shaping communities.

Mentoring Others

The discussion of the following themes shows the shift from women fighting to establish themselves as leaders to becoming successful and competent leaders in their schools. These stories highlighted their experiences. It is not uncommon for leaders to mentor others, but this group of women leaders talked about what a positive experience it was to walk along others in their schools. Seven of the 12 women interviewed spoke about mentoring opportunities.

Alice loved her work and felt she had the best position in her small community. Her work as leader kept her focused on the bigger school picture because the school physically had to move to new locations more than once under her leadership. But when not focusing on the bigger picture, Alice said, "I enjoyed mentoring teachers."

Amy found herself mentoring others and particularly faculty members throughout the years. Supporting faculty through curriculum changes and faith integration was meaningful work: "Building community, and this all came out of faculty, but it was so fun to be able to [help them] make it happen." Faculty came up with the ideas, and they needed someone to say yes and support the project. One of Amy's faculty members was working on a social issues course that included teaching students about the power imbalance between rich and poor. The culmination of the course would be to take a trip to Washington DC and actually experience the

imbalance of power by visiting with homeless people and working in soup kitchens, and then

going to congressional offices and visiting with members of Congress. At one point the teacher

questioned Amy about the reality of the course and if she would really support it. "We made it

happen and it's still happening. I don't think you could shut it down." This was rewarding for

faculty and for Amy.

Amy talked about setting up others to lead: "You got to set them up to lead even though

they're scared to lead, [but] you've got to set them up for success." Helping people "accomplish

their dreams" was meaningful and motivating work. In reality, both Amy's and the mentee's

dreams were fulfilled. Amy also brought employees onto the team who were inexperienced in

education but could contribute to marketing or other areas. They had skills but were not always

formally educated in the field. Amy hired a writer who came in and worked in publications and

another in person who trained in youth ministry, both successful. "I found ways to establish . . .

to set people up for success. These people, they're great. You should see them now." Perhaps

Amy's gift was the ability to see others in ways they could not see themselves. "They just

needed a chance to think of themselves differently than what the local community thought of

them." The mentoring paid off, the two were very successful at their work, and Amy helped to

transform their lives.

Kelly's and Lori's stories about board mentoring fit here as well. Though it was difficult,

they both brought along board chairs and board members to perform better than they had before.

Kelly shared how one board chair looked at her for guidance through the meetings. While board

mentoring did not feel as warm and positive as faculty mentoring, it did change how the board

functioned.

Val described her experience mentoring another young administrator in her system: "I think about my elementary principal; she's probably the one I put the most energy into to as far as helping develop leadership skills." Val works at building confidence in her young elementary principal and assisting her with management skills. Her elementary principal is working on a blog and asked Val, "Why should I be the one to write this?" Val supported her by explaining that she was the expert on the topic. The elementary principal believed the information about the topic should come from another expert or that everyone would know the information. Val encouraged her to be the authority on the local subject. Even though she has been in the role for a while, she needed encouragement. Val reflected on her own skills and ability as a mentor: "Can I really help her get to the next level? Do I know what I need to do?"

In her second year, Lori worked with one of the lead male faculty members to be an assistant administrator. She explained that mentoring required her to slow down, and sometimes mentoring meant learning for both Lori and her male colleague:

> I learned at some point to step back and be a little more objective. He learned to step forward and not be scared of that emotion or not to see that as necessarily a negative thing, but to look at it as an opportunity for us to discover what's behind this.

Lori's experience mentoring this assistant brought a nice balance to leadership, and they complemented each other's skills.

Heidi hired and mentored two young teachers who had college degrees but did not have their teaching credentials. She hired them with the expectation that they would return to get their teaching license. Both did complete their degrees and continue to work in education. Both were devoted to the system; one started an athletics program, and the other put in extra time on music and concerts. Today, one is a department head and the other is a principal at another school. Heidi took some pride in their success stories.

Mentoring came in many forms but brought about rewarding transitions in people. When the women talked about their challenges, they did not directly talk about their leadership style or how great they were at mentoring. Most of their comments came about indirectly or in discussing another topic, but I could hear in their voices the satisfaction they experienced when mentoring others.

Along the same lines as mentoring, the women leaders found themselves in situations in which they needed to build trust. In the next section, the women share their stories of building bridges or failing at the attempt.

Building Trust

Trust is central to relationships; this theme was an important part of the success of new women leaders and turned the tide for them. Most of the participants were known within their schools and had already established trust. However, there were five stories about building trust worth noting. Trust was an elusive and ambiguous quality in relationships, desired but complicated to achieve. Some of the stories include trust only in passing, but the new leaders clearly coveted trust.

Val had been in her position long enough to develop trust among her board, faculty, staff and parents. "That's [trust] pretty valuable to have, and I think part of that is . . . I must be doing something right in the past seven years or I wouldn't have that." Val recognized that the difficult situations over the years built as much and more trust than other things she could have done to build it. While this quote may make Val sound proud, in reality she spoke humbly and recognized her inadequacies. Val also communicated that her assistants support her work and she was grateful to them for trusting and supporting her. Val's wisdom of experience was evident in realizing her good fortune to have established trust through good times and bad.

Lori was new to her school and had a completely different set of circumstances to work with. She recognized immediately she had to work at building trust with staff. "I think, as the trust grew, that carefulness dropped." Lori developed trust through her visibility in the classroom and accessibility for conversation and questions. Faculty needed to know they were supported and that Lori "had their back with parents or the board." Lori liked to be visible in the mornings when students arrived. Visibility and accessibility in addition to Lori's direct communication style built trust in her new setting.

Vicki was known to her school community but had not worked in her school. In addition to her semi-familiarity, she suffered from health problems just as she was hired. Vicki was hired during the enrollment dip at her school, and she had to adjust the teacher load to balance the budget. Being new, suffering from health problems and adjusting teacher loads did not work in her favor to establish trust.

> That was difficult because it's hard to develop trust when people are feeling that I am working at cross purposes to them. I think they understood that it wasn't me personally, but of course I'm the new person, and I'm the one that's making these decisions.

I never got the sense that Vicki established the trust with faculty and staff she desired. Vicki had established herself as competent and accomplished in her previous work, and the team was aware of her qualifications, but she still struggled to earn her team's trust.

Kelly realized the difficult question while talking about her board experiences. "How do I develop trust when you're a woman and not the man they expected to fill the role?" She was speaking specifically of the board in this quote, but this question applies to the study as a whole. On the one hand, the search committee trusted Kelly because she was a well-known, successful leader in the area. On the other hand, the board struggled with her gender because it threatened their positions.

Heidi's work ethic, skills and drive to build North School created trust. She talked about how much was "taken for granted" and that she would just take care of these things beyond her teaching load. "In hindsight I think very much it was a lot of trust and maybe a lot was taken for granted, too, that I would do that over and above workloads." Heidi's story of how much trust her team gave her as a leader probably spurred her to success, but at a point Heidi had to shift her load to more leadership than teaching.

Some of the women came into leadership with trust already established, and others experienced hurdles, requiring more trust building. The challenges of leadership and the mostly positive experiences of mentoring and building trust required support systems or attention to the leader's own mental health. In the next section, the women share stories of those who supported them and how they found ways to disengage.

Support Systems and Mental Health

Women found support in various places, from women's church groups to spouses. At least nine of the 12 women participants mentioned their support system or how they preserved mental health. Support systems and mental health quickly became areas of emphasis because the participants recognized they would not be able to continue in their leadership work without the support of others around them. Alice explained the importance of the support person.

Alice talked about the loneliness of the leadership position and the support she received from a local, retired, male superintendent. Since Alice was new to leadership, her board had the foresight to provide, actually hire on retainer, a seasoned superintendent who worked with her throughout her tenure. "Being alone in leadership, you have nowhere to turn to, really. You're not going to explain to your faculty what's going on with the board other than the things that they have a say in." Alice maintained her relationship with the superintendent and appreciated the

board's thoughtfulness in establishing a support person. Alice went to her support person

regularly because she did not have assistants with whom to work or talk through challenges.

> That was a huge benefit in talking through issues and whether that be teachers, or discipline, or parents, or board. He was a neutral voice. He never gave me answers, much as I would have liked them at some point, but he was always willing to explore possibilities and talk about different avenues.

Alice referred to the superintendent as "a solid teammate" and appreciated the credibility he gave

to her leadership. Of the women I interviewed, Alice is the only one who spoke of an

intentionally hired support system.

Amy talked about the support she found with her community, board, and faculty: "I had

a lot of really good support from men and women in the community." While Amy experienced

some difficult challenges, she continued to emphasize that she felt supported as well. In regard

to faculty, Amy would not move on an issue unless she felt the buy in or support for the project.

Amy also acknowledged the board: "I would have had that support for sure, yeah and from the

board. I had really for most of those years, I had really good helpful board."

In the beginning of Amy's story, she said the former head of school endorsed her to take

the position despite the challenges that lay ahead in her community. "That was powerful to me."

This leader's endorsement of Amy was sustaining for her during her years of leadership.

Given the challenges males presented in church or business circles within Amy's

community, she learned to keep supportive male leaders as valuable resources. "I found that

male leader support was the key to success from early on. I was really happy that they saw in

their graciousness to jump in to the mess with me and to work together." The supportive male

leaders were board members, businessmen and others who walked the journey with her during

difficult times. "When we see each other, we have stories that are good, bad and ugly. They

make fun of me. It's well-deserved, but it was a real pleasure to have those relationships."

Amy, working in her husband's home community, provided a challenge for him and his extended family. "He had to figure out what does it mean for him to be the spouse of this female administrator, the first female administrator." Amy shared she experienced challenges along the way, but family was a huge support.

Many of the leaders interviewed did not mention friendships frequently. Amy mentioned faculty and staff relationships as being supportive, but being friends created other challenges. Amy talked about finding friendships as a leader in community. "I would say friendships can be tricky, especially female friendships, but it's really important to establish local friendship, people who have the pulse on the community, are confidential and supportive, and be your prayer support." Amy also noted that when a leader finds good friends, it might alienate others. Amy admitted that friends could be hard to come by.

Vicki talked about women and friendship. She happened into a situation in her previous position where four women were promoted to school leadership at the same time. The women became friends for life. "She referred to them as a "tight group." They still spend time together and are retired now.

Sometimes lead teachers or assistant administrators offered enough support through good communication when working through difficult challenges. Vicki mentioned a male lead teacher who would offer this response to parents. "He said, 'Well, you've already talked to Ms. Vicki and she's the principal of the school and we make these decisions together and she ultimately has the final say.' He was very good about that." Vicki appreciated his leadership and support.

On occasion, support was found through the governing education body. Kelly found support and conversation with the director of MEA who provided encouragement and board training in the most desperate of times. While the participants experienced frustrations

surrounding the church's educational support system, most participants mentioned it as a good opportunity to meet with other colleagues. Lori experienced frustrations with CAMS, but she also saw CAMS as "a very important group for me as a principal, because it really was that sense I'm not doing this work in isolation."

Down time is a necessary part of administrative life, and Val has a nice situation because she lives about a half hour from work. The distance creates enough of a barrier that she does not run into school employees or families as often on the weekend. Her weekends are a mixture of time spent with adult children, running errands, a local evening event and then just staying home or going out with close friends. Maintaining close friends is important, but Val commented, "I'm fine with not doing a whole lot." Later Val repeated how important down time on the weekend was and her desire for quiet. "I've dealt with people all week long. Let me just go somewhere where no one knows me."

As for support, Val talked about her husband. He listens to her vent, but she also said sometimes she is too tired to bother telling the whole story when she gets home. Val also has a very supportive and stable administrative team. "I think it's healthy in that it keeps our leadership team strong as we make decisions, and I think we can be pretty honest with each other, and so I think we keep up a good balance." The challenge with the support from within the administrative team is that it prevents an outside perspective.

Val used to make monthly phone calls to another administrator in a sister school for support. It was beneficial for both to touch base on school-related issues, but the other woman left her position. Finding other women in Mennonite leadership is difficult, but she has asked others to consider whom she might talk with as another support.

Most participants acknowledged individuals or groups who supported them through difficult situations. When Lori experienced the assistant administrator conflict and his ultimate departure, the board reassured her of their support as a board: "They assured me that they had confidence in the leadership I was providing, and we would go forward." They asked what her recommendation was to resolve the situation and how best she would like to move forward, and they agreed.

Lori's support came from family members who were also in education and leadership roles. Over the holidays they could support each other.

> When we would get together at Christmas, we'd talk. The other two who were administrators in the public system would just listen with open mouths to some of the stories of what went on in private schools, with parents and with . . . but it was also just a really good resource because I would call on any one of them and say, "I don't have a clue even where to start. What would you do?"

Besides the board and family, Lori also became very connected to a group of women pastors in her community. She was invited to meet with them once a month, and they discussed "church and conference work, and young people." Their rationale for calling was that Lori had no one but men in educational circles to talk to, and they wanted to offer her another support option. "'We know that there are differences, but we just want to offer ourselves as sounding boards and as support.' That became a really important group for me over those six years."

Lori continued to reflect on the sessions with the women pastors and the importance of having support in leadership. They discussed frustrations within the church, how to motivate colleagues to stay involved, or how to resolve their frustrations with some of the men in church or community.

> The focus was always, "Okay, so this is our reality. How do we move forward with resilience and how do we refresh one another?" I thought that was just a generous piece of support from other women in leadership within the Mennonite Church that was really helpful.

Lori offered another solution to mental down time while in the midst of a busy life at school. Lori had her own chair in the music room. Sometimes the chance to go to the classroom and listen to the students offered a short respite from parents or other daily frustrations. "It was that bit of sanity."

Jill felt school community support as she stepped into the interim lead administrative position for the second time. Some of Jill's comfort was in knowing and having supportive colleagues. "Thankfully I have a school community who's incredibly supportive." Parents who wanted a female role model in their school have also reached out and told Jill: "My boys need to be able to see strong, capable women in leadership." Jill acknowledged that some families were not as excited, but maybe a balance is struck between excited and less than excited parents.

Sharon experienced similar sentiment to Jill except that even though she just started in the permanent lead position, she too was feeling community support. "I think the number of parents that I've received support from in terms of specifically being female how their sons and their daughters really need to see these things. This is so good for our community at a time." Like Jill, Sharon was enjoying the positive feedback from parents.

Finally, Leanne who experienced serious negative reactions from colleagues, still felt school community support. They realized she was dealing with difficult administrative colleagues. Leanne expressed effective support from colleagues during difficult times.

> They recognized all this going on, but they accepted me as one of their peers and they cheered me on. That made it tolerable. The other teachers and students and board members were very affirming and respectful and helpful all along the way, and parents were, too. I felt like I had support.

As I mentioned in the beginning of the section, the women found support amidst difficult times. The participants recognized the importance of having strong support and knew they would not be able to lead without their support systems.

Shaping a New Community

One of the most positive rewards of being the first women administrators was the way it transformed the community. The women built school facilities, changed curriculum, and started middle school programs. Transformation of schools came in all forms, but the greatest impact was because the women served as role models. As women leading for the first time in Mennonite schools, they shaped school communities in new ways.

Val has been a lead administrator for seven years and acknowledges she has an impact but does not spend a great deal of time thinking about how she does that. She recently had a conversation with her board chair about how leaders shape community. But Val wonders how she does this. "I think about that as I make decisions sometimes is just shaping the community. . . . My head knows I do that, but I'm just not always really convinced that I'm the one that's shaping this community." Val recognizes the kind of influence she has and the responsibility that comes with that kind of decision-making power. Val keeps her personal opinions to herself because the public interprets differently than Val might intend. "People are your friends, and even in those friendships you have to be careful sometimes about who or what you're commenting on. It's a different kind of a role." Val works at separating work and personal because she does not want a personal opinion to impact her school community negatively.

Vicki worked on shaping school curriculum and strengthening programs. Vicki's expertise in the public sector offered a new set of eyes with a fresh perspective about how the school might move forward. "I think any organization has to keep working at revitalizing itself."

The board expected Vicki to offer professional development advice because she had access to resources that the school typically could not get, being private, "unless they were actively out there looking for it, which some of them were." Occasional workshops did not offer the same kind of support to classroom teachers.

In addition to professional development, Vicki worked with the school on their private school accreditation processes, particularly in the area of assessment. As is typical of private schools, access to public resources for assessment success is limited or unavailable. Vicki attempted to create a program competitive with the local public schools. Private schools need to excel at a program or offer a different program worth the tuition payment.

> I think you have to constantly reassess where things are, where you would like them to be put into play the information that's coming to you from your constituent members, right, your families and your students and your churches. Then make a path forward. The path forward has to always be evolving.

Even though Leanne was only an interim principal for a year, she had an opportunity to assist her school and community by providing a sounding board for parents. "Very early in the year when I was the interim principal, a group of parents came and wanted to reopen the conversation about middle school." Leanne set up a board meeting for parents to state their case for a middle school. The outcome was a committee to create a plan implementing a middle school. It would be another year and a half before the middle school opened, but it was on its way. "Today the middle school is thriving, and if it were not for the middle school, the high school could hardly survive." The school continued to open grades four and five in later years. Leanne was a supporter of middle school at Mountain School. After Leanne's year as interim, the board replaced the returning principal, who was not a proponent of a middle school, so the implementation of middle school could continue. "It [middle school] brought new energy and life to the faculty." The school and community took a new shape.

Alice's South School transitioned from private and Anabaptist to a public school.

Our school eventually became a public school, an alternative program in a public school. I moved them from being a private school to receiving public funds, being part of the public school board. That in itself was a huge journey.

South School became an alternative school in a public system. The school continued to offer faith-based education with the support of public funds. The public school and South School prepared a contract with an agreement: "You as a public school will not try to change who we are as a Christian school. That piece of our being must remain steadfast. They agreed to that." Alice's school was the first of several to make the shift to public. Alice continued to articulate the cause on behalf of their school. It seemed to be a positive for all involved. Teacher pay increased by 20 percent with benefits. Tuition remained but at a reduced amount. Another positive for students included resources for special needs students. The public administrative team was available for assistance if needed. A trade-off came in the area of paperwork or red tape. With additional resources came accountability and tracking. On the whole, it was a win for Alice and South School and definitely a reshaping of school.

Amy talked about shaping community: "A leader has the ability to facilitate change, or movement, or vision. To me, there's no vision if it's not the shared vision and the shared community." Her position's ability to shape community in positive ways motivated Amy. Prior to Amy's tenure, graduates of Smith School did not necessarily strive to go to higher education. "They are great workers and they have businesses, family businesses and they had major companies, but higher education wasn't something that was seen as that's what you need to do." But during Amy's tenure there was a shift to become an excellent academic high school focused on preparing students for higher education. Preparing students for higher education was definitely shaping the community in new ways.

As for literally shaping the campus, Amy and team fulfilled numerous building projects: athletic fields with turf and a track, a maintenance building, academic center and a caretaker's house. The projects, completed one by one over the years, created a well-groomed campus.

Barbara, like Amy, built facilities because of student population growth. The school outgrew the old academic building, and the board rented space from the church next door. It was time to build a new school. While the physical reshaping took place, Barbara planned additional programming for the summer. The board supported Barbara's work. They transitioned together into a new school and new programs with relative ease.

> We could start new things. If it didn't work, you didn't keep it going. There were some really neat things. The pre-school was one. We got our accreditation while I was there. We did some very nice summer programming, and that was a great way to get us known in the community where we would have kids come in and do summer, a week at a time on different subjects. Kids would come in, and it was a way to introduce our school.

Barbara's list goes on: the expansion of middle school, and Spanish through the grades. Barbara was creative and literally shaped her school and program.

Reflections and Dreams

What does it mean for these women participants who were the first women in their school to lead? How did they see it shaping their community? Most women did not want to think too much about what kind of impact they had on their community; in fact, most would probably prefer not to draw much attention to themselves on the topic, but they offered a few thoughts on the subject.

Jill offered some questions and thoughts about being the first woman. Since Jill was interim eight years ago, she is more ready to help community be more accepting of women in leadership. "I feel I am more prepared to engage that conversation with churches or families who are uncomfortable with it . . . it is not okay to say I am not qualified because I am a female."

Jill feels some pressure to perform well because her performance might open the door for the board to consider a woman candidate for the permanent position. "I need to do my job well, but I also need to do my job as a woman well. Somehow that feels different than just doing the tasks well." Some churches within Jill's school community still chaff at women in leadership, and Jill had this to say about her ability to make change happen:

> It's this fine line to walk where, on the one hand do you upset a congregation, or do you push them beyond what they're ready for, or do you decide, you know what, it's time. It's time, and if I'm the person who gets to nudge you a little further along, then I will be that person to help nudge you along a little. I've got no end of courage for that kind of thing.

Jill presents her frustrations in the form of a question. "Like, it is 2016. Have we really come such a short distance?" While Jill is frustrated by how slowly the community moves, she is transforming community by filling the role of interim principal for the second time, and she is more able to champion women's leadership.

Sharon is only beginning her first year as the first woman head principal at Forest School. Some people comment on what a significant shift that is for the community. Sharon has a different view about being the first woman and what it means for the institution.

> I think when I think about that historically, I understand. Intellectually I know that that's an important thing for this institution. That isn't about me. That's about the history of this school. I need to be respectful of that meaning something to a lot of people.

Sharon desires to be successful but does not think that is any different than a man's desire to be successful. Sharon commented on her role as a parent. She wondered how the community will perceive her when she misses a school event to take one of her children to lessons instead; will she be judged differently? "I try to think about that more as a model of what it means to be a principal in a Christian independent school, a Mennonite school in particular because I am younger, and so I do have a family." Sharon is in a new position and clearly has reflected on being the first woman leader and all the dynamics that come with being the first.

You walk into a principal's meeting with other independent schools or public schools. When I feel my age and when I feel my gender, those are weird moments. I don't know if that's about my own insecurities or about whether that's how I'm received or questioned because they don't know me.

Other factors such as being a parent of young children and being relatively young added to Sharon's experience as the first woman leader in her school. Her comments demonstrated that she had difficulty separating gender- and age-related factors when reflecting on her experiences. She was aware that she was shaping community but like other women did not want it to be the focus of attention or basis for judgment.

Leanne's recognition of service came years later when the school was celebrating its 50-year anniversary. At a banquet recognizing long-time principals, they also recognized Leanne's service to the school for "filling in the gaps" during the years of change. Another bit of recognition came as a result of an article Leanne wrote while she was principal. The article explained that their school's core curriculum had a thread woven through it representing Christian education. Between launching the middle school, filling the gaps, and writing a meaningful article, Leanne did bring change.

Lori was a champion for gender balance in her schools. During her time in administration she worked toward parity with faculty and boards. "Over the first three years, we worked very hard at that, so by the time I left we were pretty much split at 50% women, 50% men." Gender parity was one way to shape school community.

Another way that Lori shaped her school community was through relationship.

I think my focus in those years was this is all about relationships. It's not about teaching a subject area. It's not about cramming the knowledge into kids' heads. It's about a relationship, because students learn better from those they have relationships with. Teachers support one another more if they have a relationship with each other. Impossible things happen in places where there are relationships and people feel, again, known and valued and that they have a place to belong and a place to contribute.

Relationship has to happen before transformation happens, be it academic or teaching colleagues and changing curriculum.

Vicki's thoughts on gender, race and religion, given the world's current state of hypersensitivity, recommended focus on the "common ground" instead of differences. It seems an appropriate way to close out chapter five. Most of the participants chose not to highlight their work but the work of others. As women leaders, their natural ability to nurture relationships was key to their success and shaping their communities.

Summary of Women's Leadership

Chapter five began with the opposition that each of the women faced and ended with the many positive experiences that transformed them and their communities. The themes represented here fit closely with the literature review. The androcentric culture of the literature review permeated the stories of the 12 women interviewed. The culture and structure of church and school are antiquated, and it is not easy to accept and experience leadership in a new way. The women were truly risk takers and trail-blazers and models for women and young girls in their communities.

Jill described leadership in this way: "It is just that every day has these incredible moments in it that are exhausting and invigorating all at the same time." The women's difficult challenges in the beginning of the chapter represent some of the exhausting moments of leadership, and at the end of the chapter, the women's accomplishments represent the invigorating moments. They changed programs, transformed relationships, built schools and changed lives and served as role models for students and leaders in their communities. They found support from their boards, colleagues, friends and family members. Jill said, "Then it

feels like it is something bigger than me that is happening. It is exciting to think that I get a

chance to demonstrate what I can do."

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS

I investigated the experiences of Mennonite women who served as educational leaders in their Mennonite schools and communities. In this chapter I analyze the major themes found in my research of women's leadership experiences using feminist theory (Daly, 1968; Evans, 2009; Friedman, 1963; Pasque & Nicholson, 2011; Ropers-Huilman & Shakelford, 2003) as well as organizational theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013) and vocational theory (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Palmer, 1983/2010, 1990, 1998).

I adopted feminist theory to analyze the way women experienced leadership challenges in their conservative faith-based schools. Leadership challenges for women leaders in my research included gaining leadership opportunities, promotion from interim leadership to permanent head administrators, and becoming legitimate or accepted leaders amongst faculty and boards. Women told stories concerning their "call to leadership" and the challenges they experienced when the board asked them to provide (often interim) leadership to their school. I also examine how studies described in my review of literature apply to my findings.

The Mennonite women's stories made me realize their leadership journey included not only their service to schools but also to their communities. Viewing the data from the perspective of the whole school organization, I analyzed the women's leadership journey using organizational theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Once women accepted the leadership positions, they faced structural and political challenges (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Mennonite women inherited a male-dominated leadership structure in the school, church, and community. The participants met with resistance from men and women who subscribed to the biblical directives that only men should lead. The political frame shows how power and authority is organized in the school and church based on social, cultural, and religious standards of male-dominated

leadership. Those opposed to the Mennonite women's leadership used their power and influence to marginalize or dismiss women leaders (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

The strategies Mennonite women leaders used to meet the challenges in taking on and succeeding in their role involved forming relationships and leading with integrity. Bolman and Deal's (2013) human resource and symbolic frames identify similar strategies and skills used in leadership. The women participants served as mentors to others, and also found mentors and support for themselves. Finally, women led through change, building schools and expanding curriculum and creating innovative programs. This "transformational leadership" is associated with the human resource and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Finally, I use vocational theory (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Palmer, 1983/2010, 1990, 1998) to explain how women survived and thrived in their challenging environments with strict social norms resistant to women in leadership. The women's vocation and God's calling saw them through the difficult challenges they experienced while leading. The women leaders found a sense of unity, mission, purpose and love of their work and the transformation of lives. The women developed sense of self and the use of their position to empower others in community.

In the next section I use feminist theory to explain the Mennonite women's leadership experiences. I show a pattern of gender bias experienced by Mennonite women leaders when they first began serving as assistants or directors to a lead role, and continuing as they sought to effectively serve their schools and communities.

Feminist Theory: Analysis of Women's Challenges and Effective Change

Broadly defined, feminist theory concerns the oppression of women in a man's world (Daly, 1968; de Beauvoir, 1949/2010; Friedan, 1963; Gitlin, 1994; hooks, 1984; Pasque & Nicholson, 2011; Reinharz, 1992; Ropers-Huilman, 2003). Oppression comes in all forms:

social, economic, political and familial. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949/2010) raised awareness of the inequality experienced by women and called on women to act as individuals and not follow men passively. hooks (1984) attempted to develop definition for the women's feminist movement because an undefined movement will lose its focus: "Defining feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression is crucial for the development of theory because it is a starting point indicating the direction of exploration and analysis" (p. 33). hooks (1984) explained the importance of recognizing and eliminating the social standards that cause oppression.

During the Civil Rights Era, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Mary Daly's *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968) introduced the idea of socially-imposed gender roles. Friedan (1963) focused on how society imposed gender roles, and Daly (1968) argued the church created socially imposed gender roles. Whether the church or society imposed gender roles, community views of gender affected Mennonite women's aspirations to take on the role of a legitimate educational leader in local faith-based schools. According to hooks (1984, p. 27), Daly (1968) only focused on one strain of feminism, but for the purpose of this paper, Daly's (1968) focus on the church patriarchy and domination of women help build hooks' (1984) feminist theory case.

Feminist theory as it applies to this study involves two parts: (1) women negotiating identity, and (2) women changing social norms in community. This study, like hooks' (1984) and Pasque and Nicholson's (2011), focuses part of its work on women's identity challenges. Women fulfill roles as wives, mothers, students, educators, and activists, and these roles often conflict with each other. Role conflict is in addition to the challenge women participants' face when discerning their role as activists within their communities.

Secondly, women participants in Mennonite school leadership worked toward changing the social fabric of their schools and communities. On the surface, the participants' social system is a Christian, and more specifically, Mennonite, social system. Mennonites are historically peace oriented, care for their neighbors and have built numerous service organizations around the world. Despite the value of caring and speaking against oppression, the interviews brought to light former and current-day biases about women in leadership. While peace and care for others apply in some social circles of the Mennonite church, gender equity does not necessarily exist.

Identity of Women Leaders

The women participants in my research navigated identity challenges, but with a specific additional Mennonite or religious constraint on their roles. The women experienced identity challenges due to their multitude of roles and the conflict between the roles. Being a good mother conflicts with being a school leader. These roles compete for time and energy and challenge socially acceptable standards within the Mennonite community.

Leanne and Amy were two of the earliest Mennonite women heads of school and made significant contributions in their field. Navigating identity is not how they described their experience, but ultimately, as pioneers, they faced social standard barriers. They were mothers who compromised family time to lead their schools and experienced barriers because they were "being" women change agents disrupting the social norms in the school community. Educated Mennonite women and mothers became respected heads of schools where only men had led previously. Leanne stepped in twice to lead as an interim head administrator at Mountain School. She was well educated and improved herself by obtaining advanced degrees while following her husband to other parts of the country for his position. Her leave of absence to

study other school systems added to her credibility on her return. Leanne's leadership, integrity, wisdom and grace threatened men she had previously worked with. The announcement of Leann as interim caused resignations and reshuffling of male leadership.

Amy also had advanced course work and completed a doctoral program except for the dissertation. Amy became interim administrator while her predecessor was on sabbatical and led so effectively the board asked her to remain as head of school. While the women mentioned their degrees, they only referenced the course work as preparation for themselves to develop programs and lead effectively. Study participants were well educated and well prepared to lead and showed promise within their school community.

Literature review studies stated that even if women were more educated than men, they might not be chosen for superintendent positions. Brunner (1999) discovered women represented over 70 percent of superintendent applicants but only 10 percent of the time became superintendents (p. 319). Montz and Wanat (2008) confirmed that more women superintendents hold the highest degree in education compared to men (p. 35). Regardless of the women participants' professional and academic preparation, they experienced barriers that challenged their professional identity as Mennonite head of schools.

Women experienced oppressive behaviors in various forms in my research, but one of the more difficult barriers is the use of the Bible as the "truth" or final authority about what women are allowed to do. Male and female colleagues challenged women in leadership positions because biblical directives state women should not teach in public or only men should lead. Some women colleagues in the church and school ascribed to this theology as well, challenging the participants, but more commonly male community board members and church leaders provided the most significant resistance.

The women participant's stories included church leadership, educational organizational leadership, CAMS and MSC leadership, and local board members who were examples of a male-dominated social structure. The social structure inhibited the women's voices, often in subtle ways, and ability to lead effectively, but regardless of the women's handicap, they navigated their personal identity and social norms in their communities. The participants questioned which leadership styles to use depending on how to challenge negativity and when to let comments pass and take a higher road. These choices of which battles to fight could be seen as forms of activism in their school communities. Decisions prioritizing energies and effective messaging to constituency were part of their work.

Most of the women participants worked carefully within the unwritten social standards and power structures. Kelly described an experience she had when the board evaluated her: "I really think the reason they could sit there and be so upset at me was because I was female." However, Kelly found other ways to offer board direction and leadership when she ran into the male-dominated power structures. Kelly went to MEA for assistance from another male leader. The existing male-dominated church and school power structure caused the women leader's grief but an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to position oneself strategically to make progress. In Kelly's case, she had to use other men's voices in order to be heard.

The literature review revealed the current challenges of women in school leadership in Arab countries. Arar and Shapira (2012) shared the story of two women, one whose car was burned and the following year sprayed with brake fluid. Addi-Raccah (2006) studied Arab and Jewish women educational leaders and stated that women leaders distance themselves from other women so as not to cause undue threat when advancing their positions. The challenges and oppression of the Arab and Jewish women only made them stronger leaders.

The participant's stories reflected the feminist identity issues explained by Perez: "If I make peace with who I am and who I want to be in this world, I must consider the implications within a society where inequalities are pervasive and oppressed groups are often placed in competition with each other" (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011, p. 61). The current women leaders found in my research and the literature review persevere through identity challenges, not succumbing to fear and oppression. Women chose to rise above the fear tactics that men used consciously or unconsciously to oppress them because they knew if they made the right decisions about how to interact, lead, speak and be, they could change the social perspectives in their community.

Changing Social Perspectives

The participants in my research experienced identity challenges but navigated the identity issues to become better persons called to change. The women did not use the term "activist," but each in their own way looked to make a difference for young women, male faculty, and the next generation of women leaders. The Mennonite women participants' contributions in my study included developing new programs, building facilities and effecting social change through their continued efforts of communication and their visibility as women in leadership positions.

Amy talked about shaping community: "A leader has the ability to facilitate change or movement or vision. To me, there's no vision if it's not the shared vision and the shared community." Amy found motivation in her position's ability to shape community in positive ways. As one of the earliest women leaders, Amy often found herself challenging the church community structure:

> I would say church challenges were a surprise. The deeply held biblical perspective of the role of women . . . one of the first times I went to one of our big churches they asked me to give an update about school. It wasn't anything to do with preaching or anything spiritual, but then when it came time for me to speak, everyone had been speaking from the podium, and I immediately got up and went to the podium, and they literally blocked me out and walked me down to the floor.

Amy's personality and position tended to challenge the male-dominated structure, and she shared several stories that continued to challenge men's roles in regard to business, church and school.

Leanne was only an interim principal for a year, but she had the opportunity to facilitate the conversation between the school board and parents which eventually led to adding a middle school program to the high school. Montz and Wanat (2008) found that women's human relations skills impacted the community positively (p. 41).

Jill talked about changing local male-dominated culture in more subtle ways. Jill is in her second interim position and fills the role by default. Jill spoke at length about her thought process regarding the fabric of the community and how she cares for the school while measuring her own needs for changing culture.

> I want to be really cognizant of the reputation of our school, and the health of our school. I don't want to put our school at risk. For me to do that as my own person, and for me to do it personally is an easy thing, but I also want to make sure that I'm taking good care of the school. I don't want the school to be hurt because I can be a bull in china shop, so to speak.

Jill made choices between her own personal need to bring change to the community or be a healthy role model for women in leadership within her school. Given the day and the circumstances, the choices changed to meet the needs of the situation. Jill's story mirrored many of the women participants' subtleties of decision making.

Sharon tells about an experience with a male faculty member shortly after starting in leadership. She confronted her male colleague directly:

> I did it very firmly, very kindly, but no room for debate on what I was presenting as cannot happen again. . . . There I am wondering, how am I going to continue to support and interact with this person. By taking that situation and speaking to him directly to hopefully transform what was happening, that's what allows the forgiveness to happen. That's what allows a new relationship to emerge.

This type of interaction took place with every one of the women when entering school leadership. Difficult conversations that changed the fabric of the culture in school and community. Mennonite women leaders opened men's perspective about women in leadership at least for brief moments in direct conversation, but also with the hope that the conversation went beyond the immediate interaction and developed a more accepting culture.

Despite women's difficult experiences leading in a male-dominated Mennonite culture, study participants demonstrated examples of common good for humanity and transformation of community. Lori talked about how much could be accomplished if the team worked together to implement faith practices into their classrooms curriculum. While this was a challenging task for Lori, it was the ultimate in term of worth or value in common humanity. Alice shared a similar view to Lori because she felt she was transforming children's lives:

> The school I was part of was very much part of my heart. I think people saw in me a champion for the school and for what I believe we could offer children and young people, and how we can train them up for Kingdom work.

This type of conviction existed among women participants because changing student lives was another way to address local social standards. In addition to the transformation of lives, there is a whole section in the data chapters on women mentoring others or working with their faculty to accomplish new policy or new curriculum. There seemed to be no greater reward than the value the women found in themselves, empowering others in those successful moments of relationship and walking together through difficult times or creating something positive for the good of the whole. That is the transformation for the greater good or common good.

In the literature review, Broodryk (2005) describes a term from South African culture used by women, "ubuntu" which translates, "I am a person through other people" (p. 1). According to Berg (1979), women's worth comes from common humanity allowing her to think and act freely and is not determined by an oppressive society. Women found value and purpose in leading and shared their experience as leaders to give voice and make change in their schools and communities. Feminist research strives to be transformational, not just critical (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011).

The deeply rooted gendered social structure that Wollstonecraft (Evans, 2009) described continues to be a factor for women participants when church relations play a role in school leadership. Reinharz (1992) explained that women's experiences and voice have an impact: "By listening to women speak, understanding women's membership in particular social systems, and establishing the distribution of phenomena accessible only through sensitive interviewing, feminist researchers have uncovered previously neglected or misunderstood worlds of experience" (p. 44). The small, rural, highly churched Mennonite communities with schools suddenly experience a deficit of male leadership and yet maintain the expectation that men should lead their schools. This describes Jill and Amy's experience with community church leaders. The open school leadership position with the opposing biblical directive that says women should not lead, did not prevent the door from opening. There were no available or willing male candidates for the position. Social structure transformation began to happen after competent women filled the interim or permanent lead administrator position.

The literature review confirmed these findings. Karneili (2014) completed a study of three women principals in three different private Israeli schools: Catholic Franciscan, Orthodox Muslim and Orthodox Jew. The results indicated women performed to their religious sects'

standards and guidelines, leading within the boundaries. Another confirmation of transformational research, Gitlin (1994) suggested that feminist theory has more to offer than an examination of societal events. According to Lather, "Poised at the end of the twentieth century, the human sciences are in search of a discourse to help chart the journey from the present to the future" (Gitlin, 1994, p. 36). Lori and Jill voiced their frustrations about the social change. They state the obvious and painful truth: in 2016, women are still fighting the same battles.

Feminist theory will remain alive and well because women are still building the case for change in some areas of society, and in this case, the more conservative Mennonite churches and schools. The women participants' use of power alleviated domination and oppressive behaviors. hooks (1984) described how women exercise power differently than men. Mennonite women never spoke of power, but they used subtle influence to bring change.

Finally, another study of women in higher education closely mirrored my own findings. Ropers-Huilman's (2003) feminist theory research focused on gender and change in higher education. Ropers-Huilman (2003) focused on higher education women faculty negotiating their identities and making change in their institutions. The study investigated the experiences of 15 faculty women in Research I universities in southern states. Two findings from the study applied to my research findings: how women develop identities working in higher education, and their perceptions about change (Ropers-Huilman, 2003).

The findings relate closely to the Mennonite women interviewed during my study. Higher education women negotiated their identity as faculty members. Competing roles of becoming and being a family caretaker, feminist activist, and unbiased academic professional led to challenges in all three roles. Sometimes these roles conflicted and caused them to feel stress. Women faculty sometimes separated their identities at various times to protect themselves or

their positions. One participant in the Ropers-Huilman (2003) study described the conflict

evident in performing the roles:

> Personally, I can't separate it from who I am and I couldn't live without it. It validates
> everything that I do for me. It's useful in the classroom because it's necessary in a
> number of ways I think for young women; even if they're going to resist the label of
> feminist, they are seeking a female role model, they are seeking words of empowerment.
> (p. 139)

Untangling the roles proved challenging for Ropers-Huilman's (2003) participants. Their

struggle is part of changing the social fabric of the community. Women faculty ensured the

challenge these societal or cultural barriers presented limited their success in their personal and

professional lives. The women faculty's experiences regarding negotiating identities as well as

the social constraints as a women leaders closely aligned to my study of Mennonite women's

experiences.

While feminist theory framed the male-dominated, hierarchical church and school

structural challenges women participants faced, the next section on organizational theory will

frame the challenges based on social and managerial patterns within the institution.

Organizational Theory Analysis of Political and Social Structure

The second theory utilized to analyze the themes of my study is Bolman and Deal's

(2013) organizational theory. Bolman and Deal (2013) studied the positive and challenging

trends of organizational structure. Schools, hospitals, government and businesses are created

because of the good they can accomplish; however, management and other aspects of the

institutional framework contribute to success and failure of the institutions.

Historically, the Mennonite Church and school institutional structure are deeply rooted in

biblical mandates and dominated by men who believe that women should not lead, but be

submissive and supportive. Slowly the structure is changing as a result of women's involvement

in church and school activities demonstrating gifts of leadership and communication skills when resolving challenges within the political and social structure of their respective institutions. Finally, women participants found their voices as leaders in their schools, many who had long tenures and their colleagues' respect.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory provided four frameworks: "structural, human resources, political and the symbolic frame" (p. 5). The four screens presented in their theory enable us to look at the experiences of the women participants through different organizational lenses. First, the structural frame applies to this study because the Mennonite church and school institutional structures are rooted in a historical biblical text and androcentric culture. Second, the human resources lens allows us to explore the relationships between women in leadership and their boards or other colleagues in opposition to their leadership. Third, the political lens frames the challenges between men and women when the power shifts. Finally, the symbolic frame establishes the leading women's voice and leadership skills within the Mennonite school. Once women establish their role, they sustain their leadership.

Each lens is important, but Bolman and Deal (2013) cautioned against departmentalizing individual frames. Finding solutions in today's organizational climate require leaders to use organizational theory in ways most effective for their organization. Therefore, Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory provides a resource that can easily shift with an organization instead of a concrete, formal solution. There are too many organizational internal and external variables that leaders must recognize and hold loosely in order for the organization to make healthy, quick decisions for sustainability.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) structural frame is best described as an organization that most efficiently and productively achieves the common goals of the organization: "The structural

frame involves organizational charts, goals, specialized roles and responsibilities. Policies and hierarchical systems provide the structure that aids production because the process is systematized. Goals are measured and if production is lagging, a restructuring begins" (pp. 15-16). The structural frame focuses on taking the responsibilities and goals and aligning them with organizational structure to be most effective in achieving common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 44).

Typically, one thinks of the old hierarchical top down structure, but in today's world there are alternative styles of management. For the purposes of this study, Mennonite churches and schools are historically top down, religious structures. Mennonites do not have as much formal church structure as the Catholic Church and might consider themselves a flat organization, but in reality they are not always flat. There is an overarching umbrella, MCUSA and Mennonite Church Canada, with their sub-educational structures. MEA oversees MSC in the US and CAMS falls under the Christian Formation Council in the Canadian Mennonite Church structure. Both church and schools fall into old institutional structures which have been dominated primarily by men on both sides of the border. A shift to include women in leadership has begun in some areas of the church and in geographic regions.

The literature review confirmed the traditional, hierarchical power structure. As Morgan (2006) stated in the literature review, "Traditional forms of organization are often dominated and shaped by male value systems" (p. 131). Wallin (2003) also stated that the educational setting mirrors societal roles for men and women who received the power and control based on societal norms. As one example, participants shared that men dominated the CAMS organization, nice men, who found subtle ways to maintain control. Comments by the men around the table were made consciously or unconsciously to put and keep women in their place. The privilege and

structure of organization allowed the men this right. It simply was a social norm until Lori

challenged their communication patterns.

The second frame describes the human resources lens (Bolman & Deal, 2013) as "the

psychology of individual employees; and how an institution can achieve an individual's highest

productivity and still feel good about themselves and their institution" (p. 16). An employee

who lacks institutional trust will organize and strike whereas employees in a trusted relationship

where employees are valued and compensated adequately will perform responsibilities well.

Bolman and Deal (2013) described two extremes:

One side sees individuals as objects or tools, important not so much in themselves as in what they can do for the organization. The opposing camp holds that the needs of the individuals and the organizations can be aligned, engaging people's talent and energy while the enterprise profits. (p. 116)

The organization must consider if they are going to meet only their employees' basic needs or

also their psychological needs. Basic needs are important required tools of employees; adequate

supplies and facilities assist them with completing their work effectively. On the other hand, the

organization can go a step beyond fulfilling basic needs and address employees' cares and

concerns, such as environmental aesthetics that make employees' productivity increase.

The women participants in my study used more collaborative leadership skills. Amy

used collaborative methods to resolve the staff grievance issue and ultimately land her the lead

position. Val found her style more collaborative than that of her predecessor and felt she worked

more effectively with her team and faculty. Collaboration was important to the participants as

leaders and they tended to the psychological needs of their staff. Lori also used collaborative

methods with faculty and students when implementing faith practices in the classroom. Lori

shared that the beginning of her day was spent in the hallways greeting teachers and children,

asking how they were and relating to them on a personal level with genuine care and concern.

Throughout the various conflicts, women participants strived to work in relationship, empowering others, instead of an authoritarian top-down leadership style.

Leadership styles analyzed by Bolman and Deal's (2013) human resource lens suggest that treating employees treated with an authoritarian leadership style and giving them instruction as children will cause employees to adapt and respond like children. Women participants focused on employee, parent, student and board relations. They aligned closely with the human resource lens. Relationships exhibited nurture and care.

The literature review validates the human resource lens as well; Woo (1985) found that women's least likely reason to enter administration was for power purposes. Katz (2006) surveyed women superintendents in four Midwestern states and then interviewed nine about the use of power. The research found women used power as an influence to effect change and empower staff to meet goals the superintendent outlined, but if women lead with an inclusive style, the employees react as members of a functional community (Morgan, 2006, p. 132).

The third frame, the political lens (Bolman & Deal, 2013) of organizations are made up of groups and individuals who have differences of opinion about effective means of allocating scarce resources within the institution. Groups or individuals vying for position create tension and conflict while vying for power and resources, which can be healthy or caustic. An organization competing for power or resources provides an environment that challenges itself and each other.

The political lens applies to this study because in many cases the two groups vying for decision-making power was a male-dominated board versus a new woman leader as head of school. A more common political situation Mennonite women leaders experienced was male colleagues feeling threatened by a woman suddenly filling the role of leader. Male assistant

administrators or lead male faculty felt threatened when there was a power shift. Suddenly the typical male dominated hierarchical power structure or "good ol' boys club" was no longer the standard. The club became obsolete. Men either refused to work with the women administrators, as in Leanne's case, stonewalled progress or worked around the women. Resistant male colleagues used passive aggressive patterns and went to other men, trying to preserve the power structure. Lori directly confronted several male power structures: her board, CAMS and male faculty. After addressing the conflicting power structure, she resolved the conflict. In Lori's case, she used a conversational map to expose the men's pattern of exclusion when women were at the table.

Women participants found creative ways to address or resolve the political conflict. Sharon, Heidi, Val, and Amy all used strategic communication and direct conversation to resolve the political and structural power frames in their schools. Resolving conflict by direct conversation meant bringing to the men's awareness that the power structure had changed and the political conflict was undesirable and unhealthy. Colleagues could be more effective in educating students and working together if they recognized the value of their women colleagues or leaders. Once they accomplished that hard work, the participants usually won the respect of their male and female colleagues, making them the representative leader of the school. The Mennonite women leaders, as mentioned in feminist theory, used a more subtle approach to power and influence, but effectively resolved conflict or previous power structures.

In the literature review, Montz and Wanat (2008) also noted the political lens, the existence of good ol' boys clubs and how withholding information from women colleagues blocked women's success. Men in leadership sometimes used a hostile or intentional exclusion of information during communication preventing women leaders from succeeding (Montz &

Wanat, 2008). Fennel (2008) did a case study on Kathryn, a woman leader who experienced unwelcome atmospheres but persevered and refocused the group toward effective work. This is an example of the symbolic frames lens, which I discuss next.

Finally, Bolman and Deal's (2013) symbolic frame holds "organizations as cultures with heroes, and stories. Employees are motivated by the spiritual use of symbols, myth and magic" (p. 16). The final frame is somewhat in contrast to the first structural frame, more chaotic and less predictable.

The symbolic frame is described as follows: "symbols carry powerful intellectual and emotional messages; they speak to the mind and the heart. . . . The symbolic frame focuses on how humans make sense of the chaotic, ambiguous world in which they live. Meaning, belief and faith are central concerns" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 243). Once organizational leaders are recognized by others in the organization or community, they establish themselves as the symbolic representation. For the women in this study, it was an exercise in establishing themselves and their relationships.

The symbolic lens applies to the findings of my study because each of the women found her own way of representing women in leadership in her community. The women saw themselves as role models for young girls in their schools. Amy and Val both commented on their positions as mentors and role models. Parents at Jill's school saw Jill as a role model for the boys as well as the girls. It was a chance for the children to see that women could lead in the community. In addition to role models and mentors, Kelly and Lori used their position to bring leadership to their boards. Lori also

Jill weighed how best to use her personality and position in her conservative church community. She had this to say about stepping into her role as a symbolic leader:

> It's this fine line to walk where, on the one hand do you upset a congregation, or do you push them beyond what they're ready for, or do you decide, you know what, it's time. It's time, and if I'm the person who gets to nudge you a little further along, then I will be that person to help nudge you along a little. I've got no end of courage for that kind of thing.

Jill will take some calculated risks to challenge her community about women in leadership.

The literature review confirms these findings. Women participants of my study confirmed the symbolic frame: Washington, Aliller and Fiene's (2007) results indicated that women were capable managers and advocated for both children and reforms successfully. Finally, Katz (2006) surveyed women superintendents in four Midwestern states and then interviewed nine about the use of power. The research found women used power as an influence to effect change and empower staff to meet goals outlined by the superintendent.

In conclusion, Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory applies to the findings of the women in this study because all the women participants experienced a historical, structural frame that they had to navigate in order to lead into a symbolic frame. The challenges the women educational leaders experienced played out in the human resources framework and their understanding of the value of their employees. The political framework of Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational theory applied to the undercurrent of who would lead when the power shifted within the institution. Each woman participant prevailed in her own unique way. They navigated the structure, challenges and politics and became the symbolic representation of their school. Their leadership found new "meaning, belief and faith" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 243) central to their core as individuals.

While Bolman and Deal (2013) began to capitalize on the individual's meaningful purpose as an employee, Palmer (1983/2010) captured the educational organizational challenges to function as an economic power structure versus the individual's heart. This leads to the exploration of themes using vocational theory.

Vocational Theory: Analysis of Personal Meaning and Purpose

Palmer (1983/2010) described being in the world in a more holistic way. "Whole sight, a vision of the world in which mind and heart unite" (Palmer, 1983/2010). I chose vocational theory because it best frames the experience of the women I interviewed and ties together feminist and organizational theories. The benefit of vocational theory is that it incorporates all aspects of life experience and spiritual leading. Feminist and organizational theory explain the themes from a "mind" and or "knowledge" application of vocation. However, Bolman and Deal (2013) acknowledged the importance of a more holistic approach to organizational theory: "Meaning, belief and faith are central concerns" (p. 243). Feminist theory also referenced the holistic view of women making choices because they could no longer separate who they are from the action they needed to take to create change at their university (Ropers-Huilman, 2003).

Palmer's vocational theory brings to the story the whole of the Mennonite women leader's experience and their strong sense of purpose for what they do every day. Palmer's (1983/2010, 1990 & 1998) vocational theory defended the themes recognized in the women's stories of church and school environments and being "called" to leadership.

Palmer's (1983/2010) description of vocation is "the spiritual life, the quest for God, which relies on the eye of the heart. My avocation is education, the quest of knowledge, which relies on the eye of the mind" (pp. xxi-xxii). Whole sight derives meaning from both concrete, scientific purpose and intuitive, spiritual, heartfelt purpose. The heart and mind together form an intimate truth and sense of knowing that the person is fulfilling a calling and passion.

Peter O'Malley's story as an environmentalist in Michigan described his own work as "stemming from love . . . It's an emotional calling" (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003, p. 100). The feeling O'Malley described is the vocation Palmer (1983/2010) explained as the "eye of the heart."

The mind motivated by compassion reaches out to know as the heart reaches out to love (p. 8).

Palmer (1983/2010) went deeper with the meaning than just an emotional love. It is a love that

is all encompassing, connectedness of self and others and the shared experiences of the

interconnectedness of those involved.

Those who immerse themselves into their work, such as Loren Eisley, natural scientist,

or John Howard Griffin, author of *Black Like Me*, have described their transformation by being

immersed in their work, not only for their own benefit but for others (Palmer, 2003, p. 116).

The concepts of whole sight, love, and immersion are only a few characteristics of vocational

theory, but it pulls together the themes of my research in a way that captures the "whole"

experience of the women participants. The women leaders immersed themselves in their work

because they loved their work of transforming student lives and mentoring faculty and staff in a

spiritual environment, essentially filling God's calling or mission and purpose in a meaningful

way in their own life. The participants were living out their own God-ordained purpose.

Beyond self and "calling" is institutional change and social movements in community.

Palmer (1998) explained the importance of institutional leaders and their ability to discern

actions and word choice to influence their faculty and ultimately bring change to community.

First, I explore the internal motivations of vocation and then the broader impact on community

because of their actions.

Love, Immersion and Whole Sight

Seven of the twelve Mennonite women leaders spoke openly about their position as a

"call from God" or this place of "knowing" they were to lead at the school. Their "knowing"

resulted in action. Palmer (1990) described it like this: "to be any way that we can co-create

reality with other beings and with the Spirit" (p. 17). Val described her love for her work and

sense of knowing that God called her to be a principal and then head of school: "I do love it . . . I really do like the role that I'm in, and I feel like, okay, this is where God has called me, so I'm not looking to go somewhere else." Val's "calling" to leadership was clear to her when her husband and others affirmed her move to apply for a principal position. The sphere of influence or web Val created in her school fulfills her purpose and positively impacts the colleagues and students she works with.

Amy also experienced a sense of knowing after a conversation with a mentor: "I think calling is important and if I hadn't felt a personal call to do this, I don't think I would have endured it or sustained it or done well because it's not always easy and that has to come from others and I think it's also a spiritual knowing that you . . . in your really rough times you fall back on." Even though Amy as an early woman leader in her Mennonite community experienced numerous challenges, she led confidently because her sense of knowing when Spirit and action united sustained her. Amy's decision to step forward and accept the lead position at her school when she was chosen was not taken lightly: "It was a holy moment, and it was an affirmation [speaking with the mentor] for me to go forward because I knew the community, I knew their perspective of women in leadership. I knew, I knew, I knew. I stepped in anyway." The "calling" and "knowing" that the participants referred to was not always the warm, fuzzy, positive emotional feelings equated with being "called."

In the particularly challenging times of leadership or even before taking the position, such as Amy mentioned, knowing the community conflict will be frustrating, why accept or continue to stay in the challenge? Kelly, after a very difficult phase with her board, did not feel she was ready to move on: "My husband said, 'So why are you staying here at the school?' and I said, 'Because God hasn't released me.' I wanted to turn and run; that's all I wanted to do. I

also had a very strong sense that God did not release me to do that." Palmer (1990) referred to this stage as "integration" (p. 16). Kelly gave up control to God. To hear Kelly's story, it made no sense to stay in the frustrating board behavior and unhealthy environment, yet Kelly opened herself to God's work in her life and theirs. The strength of their faith was a compelling enough reason for Amy to accept the leadership position despite the turmoil of women in leadership ahead and for Kelly to continue despite the challenges of men's bad behavior in the board room.

Lori described her vocation as "meaningful work that impacted both my life and other lives, and an ability to not cut out a piece that was important in terms of spiritual connection." For women participants like Lori, the combination of meaningful work with an impact had dual purpose for herself and others. Lori's "whole sight" was her reason for entering leadership. Palmer (1990) explained that "authentic spirituality of action will celebrate our desire and capacity to co-create the world with the gifts we have been given" (p. 65).

The strength of the internal "calling" is real for the women participants. Clearly it inspired action and movement when there would have otherwise been none. Palmer (1998) explained how these leadership choices grow into institutional change and ultimately a movement that changes community. Next, I explain how Palmer's vocational theory slowly applies to institutional change across Mennonite schools.

Institutional and Community Change

Palmer (1983/2010) described a community: "I listen as that love addresses me, calling me out of isolation and self-centeredness into community and compassion" (pp. 10-11). Palmer (1998) explained that the call to be intimate and authentic within community changes the whole, both for the individual and the other. The individual actions of a person who can no longer live a divided life begins to influence others, such as Rosa Parks (p. 167). Mennonite women

leaders, in their own isolated times and spaces, reached the point of internal incongruence of

calling and action and for personal well-being took the risk. Amy recognized the resistance to

women in leadership but took action anyway. Leanne, another early Mennonite leader, also

took the challenge in times when it was unheard of for women to lead. The immediate

resistance to the announcement of her as acting interim principal was dramatic, but her internal

perseverance persisted.

> Jill shared her internal thoughts as a school leader who had the opportunity to speak to a

congregation.

> It's this fine line to walk where, on the one hand do you upset a congregation, or do you
> push them beyond what they're ready for, or do you decide, you know what, it's time.
> It's time, and if I'm the person who gets to nudge you a little further along, then I will be
> that person to help nudge you along a little. I've got no end of courage for that kind of
> thing.

Jill walks a fine line in community measuring her actions, timing and impact from one church to

another. Her "courage" speaks to the internal passion she has for leadership in her church

community and the type of expressive action women felt compelled to work through in their

schools and communities. The whole sight, love of the work and complete immersion or

integration of the "calling" provide depth and meaning to the avocation of Mennonite women

leaders, but the larger movement becomes apparent in community.

> Many of the participants found courage to address men in their schools who challenged

their leadership. The men on occasion became their allies as they worked together. These

relationships infiltrated the community as another part of the social movement allowing women

to lead in school and speak in churches. Palmer (1990) answered the question of why the

participants would take such significant personal risk: "There are many reasons, but one of the

most creative is that by risking we may learn more about ourselves and our world, and the

bigger the risk, the greater the learning" (p. 23).

Palmer (1998) explained that the movement's next phase is women finding each other and their individual actions building a more aligned movement. MEA or CAMS meetings acted as one forum for women to support each other, but this was initially an informal mechanism. As time goes on, MSC makes concerted efforts for parity on committees and leadership within the educational branch of the church structure.

The Mennonite women leaders discovered themselves through their lived actions and the social movement of Mennonite women in educational leadership is underway. Palmer (1998) explained the messy work of taking steps forward, then backward, and sometimes not in order. Mennonite schools experienced institutional resistance to change in the awkward dance Palmer described. Palmer (1990) described faithful action this way: "They are crafting themselves. And the sort of selves they are becoming is their finest contribution to the increase of peace and justice and beauty in this world" (p. 77).

The literature review affirmed vocational theory, especially when women of color found themselves challenged by access to leadership positions. Much like the Mennonite women leaders, Harris and Ballenger (2004) explained how women of color perceived spirituality as a source of empowerment when discouraged.

> These women coped with their deferred dreams of not being able to pursue their desired aspirations by later embracing the vocation of teaching as a divine calling from God. Their response is consistent with prior literature on the salience of religion and spirituality in the lives of African-American women (Mattis, 1997; Turner & Bagley, 2000), particularly recent work citing spirituality as a critical lens through which women school leaders create meaning out of their work and are empowered to confront the daily struggles and challenges associated with leadership.

Loder's (2005a) recognition of women's challenges aligns with Palmer's (1998) way of moving into and through negativity or challenges. Instead of giving up, Palmer described how "action

and convictions join together in an undivided life (p. 168). Rosa Parks refused to leave her seat because she reached a point where she could no longer separate action from her convictions (Palmer, 1998, pp. 168-169). Sometimes the reason for action is an overwhelming conviction for social justice. The civil rights movement of the sixties or the feminist social movement that has lasted decades began because of individual convictions and actions that aligned in time and place to create change.

Summary

Each theory uniquely frames the research themes found in this study. Feminist theory (Evans, 2009) in its historical and basic sense frames areas of the Mennonite church today, in 2016. Women still face the male-dominated and hierarchical structures created within the Bible and maintained in churches. Mennonite women educational leaders operated within the respected guidelines because they did not want to harm their institutions and, on many occasions, their personal views took a back seat to their preference for social change.

Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational frames outline the root of the women's challenges. Women participants experienced an antiquated structure that has long been supported by biblical mandates yet resolved to navigate the challenges faced within the structure. Most challenging for the women participants were the political shifts, causing power to be uncertain until they established their voice and stabilized their leadership.

Finally, the Mennonite women leaders' vocation is articulated in Palmer's (1983/2010, 1990, 1998) vocational theory. Women participants thrived in their work because transforming students and working with colleagues was a "calling" and a passion. Heart, soul and mind united to serve their school their school community. The women experienced meaningful work and socially moved their communities forward.

In chapter seven I summarize my study of Mennonite women leaders, consider the implications of the findings and make recommendations about further research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter I summarize the key findings from my study of Mennonite women school leaders, and describe the implications for practice. This includes a discussion of how women advanced to leadership roles as well as the difficulties they experienced while serving as women leaders in Mennonite communities. After the summary, I discuss the implications of these findings and recommend changes within Mennonite schools and communities. Finally, I discuss limitations in my research and make recommendations for further study.

I interviewed 12 Mennonite women educational leaders. These pioneer women currently serve or served in Mennonite schools across Canada and the United States. The schools were in urban and rural settings and in conservative and liberal churches. Many of the schools served all members of their communities, including students outside of the Mennonite faith community. In fact, Mennonite student populations often fell below 50 percent, which made the work of leading a school with the Mennonite Church tradition even more challenging. My study concerned the women's call to leadership and the challenges women faced within their school and community. I organized my findings into four themes: (1) called to serve, (2) board decisions and church community relations, (3) family responsibilities and support systems and mental health, and (4) shaping new communities through positive actions. I briefly summarize key findings and then provide a model for individual, school, and church growth in the implications section of this chapter.

Called to Serve

Seven women leaders felt God move in their lives, calling them to leadership. Participants described the experience of being asked or chosen to lead at their school and where they felt God moved in that call. There were two types of experiences. Some of the women

leaders strived to be in leadership roles at their school, while others never intended to become school leaders. Often women became "default" leaders because of their leadership strengths and qualities. Five of the women participants served as interim leaders, two of them twice. Six of the 12 women served in assistant or front office administration before being chosen as head administrator. Four of the 12 served as teacher leaders and became head administrators. Almost all of these women were well known in their school communities and chosen to lead because of their character and existing leadership skills. The women experienced God's call and possessed recognized leadership skills, and found themselves as the first woman to serve as head administrator in their Mennonite schools.

Women leaders successfully and competently led their schools. Some members of the school community reacted negatively to the women's leadership, especially in more conservative communities. The women persevered through challenges and became strong communicators and relational leaders. The women served through difficult situations because they felt God sustained them, their supporters encouraged them, and they believed in the mission of their schools. They wanted to transform the lives of their students.

In addition to the call to serve as leaders, women described the board's role in hiring the women administrators and their work together in subsequent years. This often presented them with an initial honeymoon phase, but followed with more significant challenges.

Board Decisions and Church Community Relations

The board's role in my study proved instrumental to the women's appointment to a leadership role. They worked together with women leaders through challenges and future school plans. Board members made the decision to hire women leaders who were typically known and skilled in their community. This reduced the board's risk adverse actions from community

members, particularly those living in more conservative communities. Boards initially supported their candidates, and some participants enjoyed positive relationship with board members throughout their tenure as leaders.

However, some board members lacked adequate training to lead effectively, creating tensions between the board and women in leadership. Women leaders found ways to educate and train their boards, but not without trials and pain. The boards subscribed to deep-seated cultural and structural hierarchical social patterns. This presented women leaders with very challenging experiences. The relationship between board members and women leaders was strained at times over blatant or subtle superiority of male board members. Men serving as board leaders experienced women in the leadership arena for the first time, causing a shift in the power structure. These circumstances caused men to react positively and negatively, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The women participants typically worked in communities with a range of liberal to conservative churches and families. The boards functioned as a microcosm of the greater community, so the same male-dominated structure and social patterns found in the community were found in board behaviors. Churches, CAMS and MSC, and supporting organizational members, also challenged women, even though opportunities existed to provide mentorship and colleague support to women leaders. These organizations ascribed to the same male-dominated structure and social patterns. Church leaders, in particular, drew clear lines about women in leadership.

As contributing members of their communities, women participants faced negative experiences and oppressive behaviors due to embedded cultural patterns. The churches' hierarchical, male dominated system was even more deeply rooted in community culture. The

women often put personal agendas aside to walk their leadership journey in ways that avoided

conflict or damage to their schools or church communities. The participants preferred to

preserve the whole versus flying their own flags. This view did not prevent them from pushing

out the boundaries or redrawing some of the lines. Some women had healthy and more positive

experiences and faced very little male negativity.

Family Responsibilities, Support Systems, and Mental Health

Study participants found ways to cope with the challenges of leadership. The women

spoke of their families and mentioned briefly the time constraints of their position. Balance of

life was critical to their success as they juggled the responsibilities of young children, spouses,

aging parents, and ill family members. Women leaders described these challenges only in

passing when talking about other decisions regarding school. Family responsibilities seemed to

be less of a focus for Mennonite women than I found in the literature review.

Women participants found life-giving, support systems in various forms. These support

systems included family, friends, church women, a local, retired superintendent retained for

counsel, and trusted colleagues or board members. Organizations like CAMS and MSC offered

a structural form of support and resources as well opportunities to interact with other Mennonite

administrators. The list of support varied and shifted. A recurrent theme used to cope with

difficult circumstances was the call to serve. Women leaders believed God sustained them

through their tenure in leadership roles. Some women leaders felt reassured and confirmed in

their leadership role by the actions of random and familiar people who crossed their paths.

Maintaining mental health proved critical for the participant's success. Various actions

helped them achieve positive mental health. Family typically served as the stabilizing force, and

spending time together with family brought solace and restoration of the soul. Most of the

women also found time away from school as vitally important for perspective. Vacations or quiet retreats helped them renew their energy and ability to serve.

Shaping New Community through Positive Actions

Finally, my study found women building new communities as leaders in their schools and communities. They viewed leadership as a vocation. The women leaders poured their heart and soul into building a community of caring faculty and staff dedicated to positively changing student lives. Developing a culture of trust was their first undertaking. The time needed to establish trust depended on whether people know the women or needed time to develop a trusted relationship. Known candidates went to work collaborating on projects and goals for the school, but the unknown candidates spent time working at building trust. New women leaders used collaboration to build trust. This investment of time helped women leaders achieve their goals in the long term.

One of the most enjoyed aspects of the women's leadership involved mentoring others. They encouraged school faculty leaders to become assistant administrators, supported faculty in building programs, and aided community members in finding new careers. Mentoring, empowering others and witnessing growth was motivational and inspiring for the women participants. Much like watching students grow, administrators had the opportunity to bring change to improve the school systems by supporting others in their life work. The women recognized empowering others was healthier than using an autocratic system of telling people what to do. It was not a power trip for the women to be in leadership but a collegial and collaborative effort. They set up conditions to empower others to be successful, and then ultimately the school found success.

As a result of trusted relationships, skillful leadership and supported colleagues a new community took shape. The women participants shared the positive outcomes, including new facilities on their campuses, new academic programs, moving from private to a public alternative schools, professional development, and board training. The women's visibility meant young students saw women leading. Women in leadership roles challenged churches and communities to stretch because they faced a new paradigm.

These findings closely mirrored findings from my literature review. For example, participants were usually well prepared educationally and came with qualifications and leadership skills (Brunner & Kim, 2010). They used a new style of leading which was more relational and collaborative (Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004). Mennonite women leaders, like other women leaders, focused their energy on empowering others (Fennel, 1999; Coronel, Moreno & Carrasco, 2010).

A literature review finding that differed involved the church relations challenges. Since my study focused on women in Mennonite or faith-based schools, I found limited studies about women leading faith-based schools except a few internationally in the Middle East. Participants experienced challenges from men in church and community which might be similar to women in earlier public educational studies; however, the new factor in this study involved men who used biblical mandates as a defense of power and position. This justification for oppression of women leaders requires a change in attitudes and actions. I describe my implications of my findings next.

Implications

Knowing women leaders served in the past in Mennonite education serves as reference point for women moving into leadership today. Women leaders shared their stories to benefit

future women leaders. They offered advice on how to find work-life balance and meet the challenges of leading as women leaders in schools and communities.

The ordinary challenges of leading are taxing enough, but combined with androcentric bias makes the load more challenging. Taking care of oneself by finding support, taking time away, and/or just spending family time away from work allows for respite from the weight of the position and provides balance in life between work and home. Each participant described their time away from work, and the tone in their voice indicated that time away offered respite, but more importantly perspective. Leaders may become fixated on the challenges and lose the whole picture or greater perspective. Down time provides opportunity to recharge and bring creativity to problem solving. Challenges may not appear as difficult as once imagined. The challenge was often not worth the energy. Space and time allow for wisdom, relevance and perspective to balance realities. While individuals may find ways to cope with a difficult leadership role, most of my recommendations involve system change.

Mennonite Women Leadership

Women leaders shared experiences about their journeys in leadership because they agreed it was time for society and more specifically Mennonite schools to recognize women's skills and abilities and value their contribution to the church community. Improvements in school communities have begun, but clearly there is room for improvement in conservative areas of church and society. Given the current political landscape, there seems to be a segment of society that appears to be moving backward instead of forward. Women's leadership brings awareness to subtle and unconscious biases and behaviors still woven into the fabric of our communities. More women in leadership build the case for a cultural shift, a tipping point, where society no longer knows or cares if a man or a woman is leading.

Mennonite women leaders' positive experiences outweighed the challenges. There was a certain satisfaction when participants reflected that they made it through some incredibly challenging issues and led well. The challenges develop stronger leaders within the community. The participants want other women to take the challenge in their own communities and recognize the benefits of changing culture and community.

Mennonite or other faith-based schools offer opportunities to appoint women to school leadership roles. This action helps women serve as models for leadership in their church and community. Membership in school communities and the church are closely tied. A change in either institutions (school or church) through interactions between people in the community changes boundaries and allows culture to shift. Families subscribe to churches and schools, and the more interaction and visibility of women in leadership roles, the more they contribute to a cultural shift.

Mennonite women school leaders model a more collaborative, relational leadership style to empower faculty and staff to be successful in different areas of leadership. Young girls witness new leadership and see a different style of leading and managing. They recognize they too can become leaders. Challenging young women to consider leadership in their future builds the confidence now and develops a leader for the future. An improved education model within schools and churches supports young women to believe they may equally lead with competency and skill.

Promoting Gender Equity through Education

Since androcentric culture still exists in Mennonite church and school communities, I recommend adopting an education model to promote awareness of biases by holding classes. Community members might become more informed about bias through an evaluation of current

church and school structures as well as taking tests for biases. Tools such as Harvard's Project Implicit (Greenwald, Banaji, & Nosek, 2011) test gender perception biases, and the results may inform adults of their bias. Adult church and school leaders might test themselves for bias before offering testing to faculty, teachers, and parishioners. Once testing is complete, continuing education might be offered to address ways to work against bias and support inclusion of women in leadership roles. Given current social issues in the Mennonite church, this type of education might also involve a more open look at scripture.

Wahlstrom (2004) stated, projects to promote gender equity among adults in Sweden have often yielded limited results, which is one of the reasons for shifting focus increasingly towards children to see if gender stereotypes can somehow be countered in schools and preschools. Swedes promoted gender equity through education. This is another growth area for Mennonite churches and schools. Bayne (2009) described a compensatory pedagogy used in Sweden teaching boys closeness and girls autonomy because their typical experience is reverse. This kind of education may offer children a new perspective as they navigate their worlds.

I organized a model to visualize change in Mennonite community. Figure 7 shows how churches and schools might begin to bring awareness and start to offer leadership opportunities regardless of gender in both institutions. This model involves a two-prong approach, pairing Mennonite churches and school efforts to unravel the current androcentric culture. Both churches and schools might create a comprehensive educational model addressing the biases of all ages.
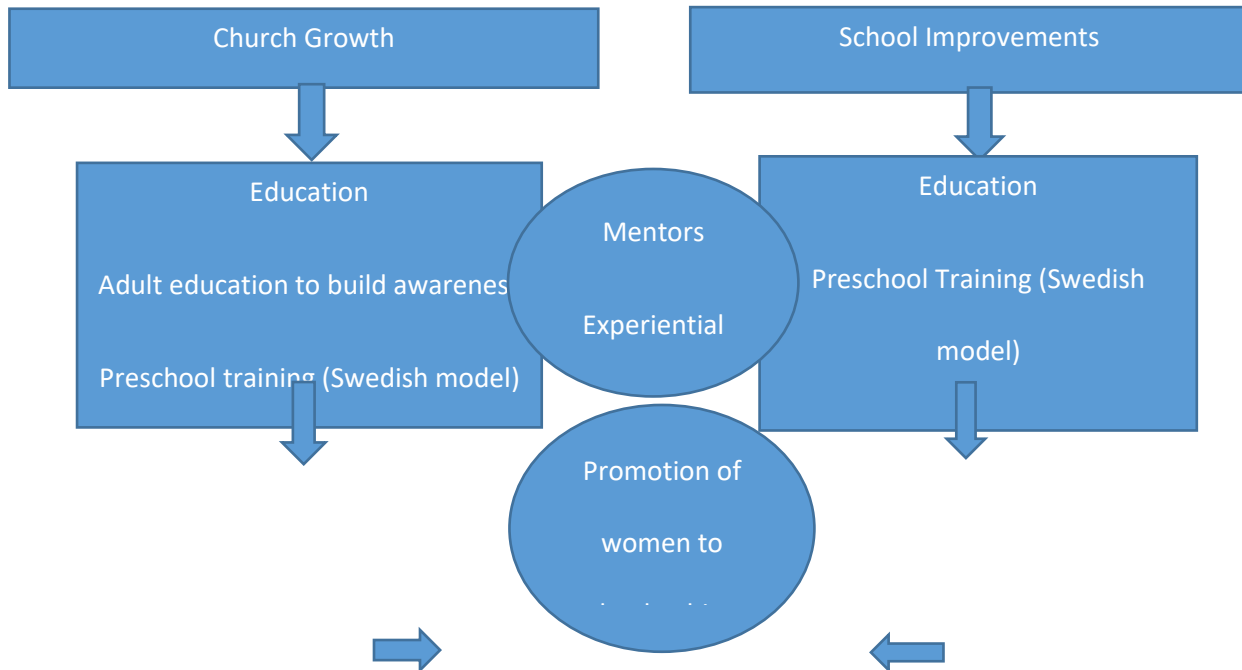
Figure 7. A Model of Church and School Leadership Growth

Church Growth

For example, church leaders might begin with adult education and the Project Implicit (Greenwald, Banaji, & Nosek, 2011) bias testing. This provides a service for church and school leadership as well as school faculty. Basic education determined by bias results would establish a foundation for leadership by recognizing bias areas and understanding how this affects faculty and students. Self-awareness is the first step to beginning a cultural shift.

Preschool training begins at both the church and the school as dual efforts to begin altering androcentric community culture. The Swedish model (Bayne, 2009) begins to create a cultural shift because it teaches girls autonomy and boys closeness. If churches offer a daycare program, Sunday School or midweek classes, there would be an opportunity to practice the Swedish model (Bayne, 2009).

Finally, Mennonite Church USA offers women's self-care classes through Sister Care Seminars which provide women an opportunity to recognize the benefits of self-care. The study includes claiming core identity, healing, listening and care for others. Self-care classes empower women to find their internal strength to be who they are. Women often lack the confidence to fill these roles and need to be encouraged that their contribution is valuable. Women need to be involved and commit to governing and leading.

School Improvements

The school improvement side of Figure 7A works in tandem with church growth. While bias testing can take place in either church or school, the importance of the training is that it happens and brings about awareness. The Swedish model (Bayne, 2009) training could happen more formally in a school setting. Mennonite church school education seems to thrive at caring for young children. Adapting to the Swedish model (Bayne, 2009) provides the greatest opportunity for changing culture. Educational efforts might continue throughout the education continuum from early ages through higher education. Mennonite higher education embraces women in seminary and leadership, but universities are well ahead of more conservative church communities where kindergarten through high schools exist. Mennonite colleges and universities might also offer leadership training, providing additional support for women seeking leadership positions.

Mentors

Women entering into leadership in Mennonite schools still experience male-dominated culture in some communities. When learning to navigate the culture of school and churches, particularly in more conservative communities, women may benefit from the support provided by an experienced mentor. The MSC executive committee currently pairs up new administrators

with more seasoned leaders. Unfortunately, time and distance interfere with genuine relationship building, and these simply do not provide the needed support. Meetings with mentors as well as informal mentorship provided by women in leadership roles offer another form of support.

In my early years as an administrator, a small group of pioneering women who started our administrative careers relatively close together formed a pretty close bond. We served in various schools across Canada and the United States and met about three times a year. One colleague and I started to call each other once a month. Our schools were different sizes, but the challenges remained the same. The relationship we formed continues today, even though I moved to another Mennonite school. Each of us now serves as a mentor to other women administrators.

Both church leaders and school members should set up mentor programs, pairing aspiring and appointed individuals in future or new leadership roles with experienced leaders. Experienced Mennonite leaders exist and may serve as role models to young women considering the field. Additionally, leaders in churches and schools should tap potential leaders by helping students recognize their talents. Church and school leaders have a responsibility to identify and grow leaders. Learning to identify and promote others is an opportunity for growth for Mennonite churches and schools. Occasionally Mennonites tap young people on the shoulder but too frequently miss the opportunity to promote young leaders.

Experiential Learning

Creating a leadership program or offering leadership opportunities in church and school for young adults provides more opportunities for experiential learning. Experiential learning trains leaders to become empathetic communicators. Exposing oneself to new and uncomfortable situations is one way to prepare for difficult experiences that administrators

encounter. The experiences are unique every day, which can be exhilarating or difficult, and often the position itself shapes the leader. Exposing oneself to a new experience offers growth, and one of the Mennonite Church's strengths is service in other parts of the world. Doing a term of service outside one's own culture provides opportunity to gain understanding and leadership skills.

Over time, the Figure 7A model would lead to a pipeline of women leaders who would be prepared to lead in Mennonite churches and schools. Leadership courses or groups would identify those most prepared students for the challenges of leadership. This network and support system would be a natural stepping stone for women to become leaders. The model would also produce a more open and accepting community that would welcome women in leadership.

The structures and opportunities for supporting Mennonite women through churches and schools exists, but using the system to intentionally adjust culture does not mean communities will embrace the idea of shifting to a less androcentric culture. This is one study that tells the story of Mennonite women educational leaders, but more research around women in leadership could make a compelling case recognizing the need for change. Potential for ideas for continuing research follows.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for more research based on this study should include interviewing board chairs and/or board members to better understand their perspective of women in leadership as compared to men in the same role. Asking board chairs about their experience of working with women in leadership may offer a new perspective. I also recommend interviewing board chairs with experience working with both men and women leaders for ideas on how to support women leaders.

Similarly, I recommend interviewing faculty or staff in Mennonite schools because they may offer another perspective of women in leadership. It would be even more interesting to divide the responses of boards and faculty and staff based on their genders to better determine any biases toward men or women in Mennonite school leadership.

My recommendations for continued research about Mennonite women in leadership will add to the literature on women serving in faith-based schools and advance research of women leaders. Research would provide more support to women leaders by exposing them to the challenges of leadership in Mennonite or other faith-based schools.

Closing Comments

Mennonites need more women in leadership roles, but until communities alter the androcentric standards used to measure leadership, they will face the same challenges of thinking women are not competent because they do not lead like men. The limited number of Mennonite women leaders across school system in both Canada and the United states surprised me. I feel grateful and humbled nearly all those recruited for my study agreed to share their experiences despite the small number of women leaders.

While women supposedly long ago broke gender barriers, the barriers within faith-based schools in church communities still stand because of the biblical premise that women should not lead or be submissive to men. My interviews with women leaders revealed the strengths and positive leadership skills of women leaders. Because these women are products of their communities, a change in view of their ability to serve produced growth in their community. Culture shifted.

It has been an honor to share the stories of pioneering women leaders. I pray the research accurately portrayed their story and their life's vocation. These women blazed a trail in their

school and community churches, and they often walked a fine line to protect their schools in

times of controversy. It is a humbling and moving experience to be a witness for others and tell

their stories. I feel grateful to the participants because this journey changed me.

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Appendix A

St. Thomas University International Review Board Forms

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IRB Tracking #: 561498-1

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Institutional Review Board

Grants and Research Office

Application for Initial Review

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The University has assured federal regulatory agencies that the institution will review all research studies that meet the federal definition for human subjects research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures the safety and wellbeing of research study participants and determines whether a research study is ethical. All studies that meet the federal definition for human subjects research must obtain IRB approval ***prior to any contact with participants***. Contact with any human subjects may not begin until you receive notification of approval from the IRB. Please read through directions carefully and provide specific, detailed answers.

You are encouraged to contact the IRB office at (651) 962-6035 or Sarah Muenster-Blakley, director of the Institutional Review Board, at muen0526@stthomas.edu with questions at any time.

A. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Level of Review

For more information on levels of review, please contact the IRB office.

       Exempt   **Expedited**   **Full**

2. Are you submitting an exempt or expedited application for review as a classroom protocol?

Instructors may submit one application for review that covers most human subjects research assigned to undergraduate or graduate students in the same course. There are exclusions; contact the IRB for more detail. Do not check if you are an investigator planning to conduct research in a classroom.

Yes No

3. Estimated Project Completion Date

December 2018

4. Project Title

A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators'

Experiences in Mennonite High Schools

5. Principal Investigator Research Category

If you selected *other*, please specify:

6. Principal Investigator

Name: Pam Tieszen

Status Type:

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School: Education

Phone (please include area code): 605-212-3572

Email Address: ties3477@stthomas.edu

7. Co-Investigator(s)

Include a separate sheet with additional co-investigators if necessary and include it in your IRBNet project package. All co-investigator and advisor contact information must be included in the Application for Initial Review.

Name:

Status Type:

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

Name:

Status Type:

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

8. Research Advisor(s) *Undergraduate and Graduate Students Only*

Include a separate sheet with additional research advisors if necessary and include it in your IRBNet project package. All co-investigator and advisor contact information must be included in the Application for Initial Review.

Name: Dr. Sarah Noonan

Status Type:

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School: Education

Phone (please include area code): 651-962-4897

Email Address: sjnoonan@stthomas.edu

Name:

Status Type:

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

9. Research Project Funding

If you selected *other*, please specify:

B. RESEARCH SUMMARY AND METHODOLOGY

1. Abstract/Research Summary

Describe your research study in clear language so a person who is unfamiliar with your field of study will
understand your proposal. Please avoid jargon and provide definitions for study-specific terms.

a. In one or two paragraphs (500 words or less), describe the purpose of your research. Indicate
how it fits in with previous research in the same field and why it is important.

This phenomenological study gives voice to Mennonite women who are or were leading Mennonite high
schools across the US and Canada for the first time. Many of these schools came into existence in the

1950s or earlier and have been under male leadership and direction of local Mennonite congregations. The Mennonite church has been slow to embrace women in leadership in church or school. A traditional religious belief states that men should lead and women fill a quiet, support role. Mennonite women leaders are challenged with finding ways to lead within the scope of their local religious culture.

Recently, the number of Mennonite women leaders in schools began to shift. In some geographical areas of Canada or the United States this happened ealier than others. This shift is worthy of recognizing, and recording the women's stories provides an opportunity to give voice to their experiences. Their stories offer us an opportunity to learn about their challenges and successes in a modern day faith based educational setting. These women are pioneers in their communities and churches even in the year 2016.

This study is important because no literature exists on women leading Mennonite high schools. I found literature on Mennonite women leaders in church, however, I found no literature on Mennonite women leaders of high schools. Mennonite women's stories in church and higher education leadership exist on a very limited basis. The most current literature included women of color both within the US and abroad leading remote or urban schools facing economic challenges.

b. Provide a one or two paragraph (500 words or less) literature review to show existing information in your field of study that supports your research project.

Summary of Literature Review

I reviewed scholarly literature and found that women high school education leaders made progress throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. The passage of Title VII, Title IX and the Women's Rights Movement, 1964-1975, brought inequality between men in leadership roles and women teachers into focus. Women still struggle to be viable candidates in the largest school districts in the county (Mertz, 2006). They often lead school districts in small, rural, economically disadvantaged school districts (Lumby & Azaola, 2011; Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004).

Androcentric culture and a patriarchal structure set the guidelines and standards for women competing with men for leadership positions and the barriers they experienced. While women made progress throughout the 20th century in obtaining educational leadership roles, their experience developed within an androcentric culture (Limerick & Anderson, 1999). Self-imposed barriers meant women prevented themselves from taking a position due to lack of confidence. Woo (1985) studied 450 women at the Center for Women in Educational Leadership in North Carolina. Woo (1985) summarized the findings, saying: "Women's biggest enemies are probably themselves. The earlier literature indicated women lacked financial and facility management skills (Kamler, 2009); they were perceived as more likely to succeed at nurturing students and leading student achievement (Washington, Aliller & Fiene, 2007). Dual responsibilities of family and work prevented many women from accessing or choosing leadership positions. Limerick and Anderson's (1999) participants described the difficulty of raising a young family and aspiring to be an administrator, two often conflicting roles. Finally, networking and lack of mentors prohibited access to lead positions. Montz and Wanat (2008) and Washington, Aillier, and Fione (2007) found women believed networking enabled them to find a position, but the absence of networks for women was problematic.

Women needed family support to obtain and maintain their positions. Women who did have children enjoyed spousal or extended family support. After the Civil-Rights era, women pursued administrative careers more frequently (Loder, 2005), however, social structures still expected the administrator's fulltime focus to be on school with little time left for personal and family life affecting women leaders significantly (Loder, 2005). a marked difference exists regarding the cultural background of women administrators and its effects on women leaders. According to Loder (2005), Black women administrators chose to put family choices before career choices, unlike White women who chose career over family.

Womens' leadership styles and perceptions of power affect their ability to lead in their own democratic, communicative, and caring way. Women's strengths were found in communication and community relations (Kamler, 2009). Women participants perceived successful use of power meant giving their power

away to enable others. Women emphasized listening to others and supporting students and staff to create a more unified team.

Racial and ethnic differences affect the way women adapt to educational standards and androcentric culture based on their individual circumstances. Women, especially women of color, found ways within their existing cultures to manage their lives but it was seldom a framework understood by society (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

c. Provide your research question(s).

I adopted the following research question: How do women heads of school experience and make meaning of their role as leaders in Mennonite-affiliated high schools?

I added sub-questions to support the investigation of my central question:

1.How do women heads of school experience the initial transition into a leadership role typically dominated by men?

2.How do cultural and religious beliefs about women affect women's opportunities to serve as well as their experience as leaders of Mennonite-affiliated schools?

3. How do "pioneering" women survive and thrive in an isolated leadership role? How did you experience the leadership role as the first woman hired in your educational institution? Describe your personal journey into your role as lead administrator.

d. Provide your research hypotheses, if applicable.

Not applicable

e. Describe the method(s) you will use to address your research question(s).

Methodology

Interpretive Phenomenological Qualitative Research

I chose the interpretive phenomenological qualitative research method to conduct my research because of the inquiry process and meaning derived from the inquiry. The recent phenomenon of Mennonite women in school leadership is worthy of exploration. Qualitative research allows for a better understanding of an issue or problem (Creswell, 2007). The nature of this study applies to qualitative research because of the human complexities of the women's stories. Quantitative research collects the data via survey, but would not help in interpreting the voice of the participants. Therefore, I chose qualitative research to better capture the women's leadership experiences, voices, and meaning.

Qualitative research methods will allow me to seek out the unknown variables of Mennonite women leader's experiences. According to Creswell (2014), key characteristics of qualitative research methods include: "natural setting, researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive and deductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, reflexivity, and holistic account" (pp. 185-186). The data characteristics collected from a variety of sources develop common threads and differences among the participants. I plan to seek out the unique characteristics of women administrators in Mennonite schools and learn the similarities and differences of their experiences.

Creswell (2007) defined qualitative research as "assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p.37). Once the stories are collected, qualitative research intends to make meaning of the stories. Meaning is an effort to make sense of the participant's story (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

I then chose phenomenological qualitative research for its open-ended inquiry to better understand the "story" of women leading Mennonite schools. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that phenomenology as a method develops meaning from common events or experiences of individuals. "Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience" (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 11). Creswell (2007) defined phenomenological study as "the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 57). Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological research approach means the researcher reflects on the shared experience of participants and finds structure and meaning in the

phenomenon: "The method of reflection that occurs throughout the phenomenological approach provides a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and syntheses needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience" (p. 47).

Phenomenological qualitative research allows participants to share their voices and allows them to be heard so society can learn from an underrepresented or oppressed group (Creswell, 2007). Bradbury identified the hope for social change: "The objective of the learning process is to liberate the participants from their external and internal oppression; to make them capable of changing their reality, their lives, and the society they live in" (as cited in Nash & Viray, 2013, p. 33). "A powerful story, when shared with others, serves as both a catalyst and a vehicle to accomplish the purpose or life lesson embedded within the story" (Noonan & Fish, 2007, p.6). Qualitative research opens the door for Mennonite women's voices to be heard. I want to learn about the candidates through an unstructured and open-ended interview process.

Phenomenological research is more about the participants and their thoughts and experiences and less about the researcher's interpretation and reflection of the shared communication (Cresswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) reflected on the methodology: "This connectedness between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within me in reflective thought and awareness, is in truth a wondrous gift of being human" (p. 65). Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) described capturing lived experiences through interaction such as an interview to allow the researcher to hear the voice of the participant. This relationship offers a rich exchange; a vulnerability of sharing, being heard, and interpreted by the researcher.

I plan to use interpretive phenomenological qualitative methods approach to research, learn from, and reflect on the experiences of Mennonite women leaders. I will uncover themes from the interviews and make meaning of the themes in this research project. Wolcott (2009) describes human behavior as complex, and the researcher should strive in her interpretation to reflect the complexity of the research participants' stories.

2. Is this study a continuation of a preliminary study?

Yes No

If yes, are there any preliminary results that will be used in this study?

Yes No

If yes, please explain.

3. Will you analyze existing data, such as education records, medical records, specimens, or other data?

Yes No

If yes, please explain the source and type of the data and how and where you will access it.

Who has custody of the data (who is the person who must provide permission for you to access the data)?

C. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

1. Target Participant Population and Participant Eligibility

a. Describe the population you plan to deliberately target for your research. *For example, University of St. Thomas undergraduate students taking psychology courses.*

Selection and Recruitment of Participants

I intend to interview 10-15 participants about their experiences as Mennonite women heads of secondary schools as the first women hired in formerly male-structured administration. Women participants will have formerly served as the first woman leader in their respective schools or currently be in service with at least one year of experience. I chose the snowball or chain selection process for inquiry. The snowball or chain selection process "identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (Miles & Huberman as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 127). I know several women - former and current heads of school within Mennonite Schools Council (MSC), Mennonite Education Agency

(MEA) and Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS) - who are likely participants and have experiences valuable to the research. These women leaders know other first-time women heads of school fitting the criteria and can begin the snowball selection process.

Volunteers will receive an email or letter explaining the research project and an informed consent form once they agree to volunteer. I will give each volunteer a pseudonym and her identity will be kept private. Great care will be taken to maintain privacy and anonymity given the small Mennonite world.

b. State why you selected this population for your research study.

This is a limited group of women in a small number of Mennonite high schools, many of which have never allowed women to lead.

c. Describe eligibility requirements for participants. That is, what criteria must participants meet to be included in the study?

I plan to interview women who have or had at least 1 year of experience in leading a Mennonite high school.

2. How many participants do you plan to recruit?

10-15

3. Vulnerable Populations *Requires full review*

Please check the appropriate box(es) for any vulnerable populations that you plan to <u>deliberately target for recruitment</u> as participants in your research. The following populations are determined 'vulnerable' by federal regulation:

Children (minors)

Pregnant women

Prisoners (any individual involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution)

Adults lacking capacity to consent and/or adults with diminished capacity to consent including, but not limited to, those with acute medical conditions, psychiatric disorders, neurologic disorders, developmental disorders, and behavioral disorders

Economically disadvantaged persons (any individual determined as low-income by the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines)

Educationally disadvantaged persons (any individual who requires special services or assistance to enable them to succeed in educational activities or an individual who has lacked access to normal education rights and services)

4. Other Populations

Please check the appropriate box(es) for any special (non-vulnerable) populations that you plan to <u>deliberately target for recruitment</u> as participants in your research.

Elderly/aged persons (individuals age 65 or older)   Hospital or clinic patients (in- or out-patient)

Non-English speaking persons   Students (age 18 or older)

UST employees   Other (Please describe): Women heads of Mennonite high schools in US and Canada

5. Will all participants be at least 18 years of age?

Yes No (*Requires full review)*

6. If recruiting children (persons under the age of 18) to participate in your study, please indicate the specific age range of the anticipated participants:

years old to   years old

7. Demographic Population

a. If you are purposefully excluding women or minorities in your study, explain why. If you are not purposefully excluding women or minorities, provide a statement that indicates this.

b. Will gender, race, and ethnicity of your participants be proportionate to the general population?

 Yes No

If not, state what demographic you anticipate your participant population to be representative of. *For example, if you are recruiting only UST students, indicate that the participant demographics will be representative of the population at UST.*

I will be interviewing only women representative of their school and church communities .

8. **Existing Relationships**

Do you, the investigator, have any existing relationships with potential participants or organization

 Yes No

If yes, please explain:

I served as one of these first women administrators and became friends with some of them.

9. **Conflicts of Interest**

a. Identify any conflicts of interest in this study. A conflict of interest is any circumstance that could result in undue influence or coercion. For example, the potential for coercion exists if research participants are also students, employees, colleagues, or subordinates of the investigator.

None.

b. If a conflict of interest exists, provide a management plan to eliminate or minimize undue influence or coercion.

10. Expectations of Participants

Provide detailed information to describe expectations of participants.

a. What will each participant be asked to do?

Each participant will be asked to respond to the interview questions and share stories and experiences using a semi-structured interview.

b. What is the total time commitment of each participant?

Approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

c. Where will the study take place?

All interviews will be by phone.

d. Indicate whether you will follow up with participants at any point and how you will determine whether or not follow up is necessary.

I plan to provide a copy of the transcript for participant review, and also request an opportunity to clarify questions as they arise in reviewing the data. I will ask paticipants if they are willing to participate in a brief conversation to clarify their comments.

D. RISKS AND BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Risks to Participants

a. Consider any potential risks to participants in your study. Read through each listed risk carefully, consider the risk in terms of your study, and check each risk involved in the study, even if it seems like minimal risk:

  Possible violation of privacy of subjects

Privacy is having control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually). For example, some potential participants may view certain recruitment methods as a violation of their privacy. Check if there is any possibility invasion of privacy above what would be reasonably expected by participants.

Possibility of confidentiality of data breach

Confidentiality is the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the informed consent) without permission. For example, data collected from participants should be secured in a manner that maintains confidentiality. Check if a data breach may cause additional risks or harms to the subjects.

Possible emotional distress

Recalling traumatic or distressing events

Social or economic risk

Check if employability or reputation of any participant are at risk.

Physical harm

Including minor pain, physical discomfort, or possibility of injury.

Use of deception as part of experimental method

If your research design uses deception, complete the debriefing statement in the Use of Deception section (D.3) of this form.

Any probing for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews

Participation in measurement scales that may lead a participant to self-diagnose any symptom or disorder

A sense of mental fatigue or embarrassment

Manipulation of psychological or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, or psychological stresses

Risks associated with allergies, phobias, or environmental sensitivities

For example, would this study harm someone who is allergic to peanuts or who is frightened by heights?

Other (please be specific):

None of the above

b. Describe each risk that you checked as it relates to your study. Include all potential risks, not just those listed above.

Possible violation of privacy of subjects:

Data will be recorded and stored on my personal computer, in the event that my computer is stolen or hacked a breach of privacy could happen. All precautions will be taken to secure the computer by password and maintain confidentiality and prevent theft

I plan to provide each participant and school with pseudonyms and only share key comments not revealing the identity of the participant in the research. Their stories are personal and will need to remain private.

Emotional Distress: Should participants experience emotional trauma as a result of the interview quesitons. They will be provided the number and email adress for the Univsersity of St. Thomas counseling services:

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

Counseling and Psychological Services

2115 Summit Avenue St. Paul, Minnesota 55105, USA

1 (651) 962 6780

counseling@stthomas.edu

c. Describe the precautions and safeguards you will use to minimize each risk. Please be specific.

Both written transcriptions and recordings of interviews will be kept securely until June 2018. These records are private and confidential and will be protected by password on my computer and used only by me.

Identities of the participants and schools will remain anonymous and protected with the use of pseudonyms or code numbers.

Records will be destroyed June 2018.

As a researcher I hope to be sensitive to the emotions of a participant. I will offer the participant an opportunity to go on to less sensitive topics should tention or sensitivity arise.

2. Potential Coercion

Participation in research must be voluntary. Coercion can occur if a participant feels they must participate or cannot withdraw for any reason. Identify any source of coercion and indicate how you will eliminate or minimize undue influence or coercion on participants.

I will reassure participants that they can chose to participate and discontinue at any time during the process by stating such in a recorded interview or by email. I will also destroy all data as requested by participants who decide to end the interview. If participants express any discomfort, I discuss the voluntary nature of the study and their opportunity to withdraw at any time.

3. Use of Deception *Only complete this section if your research design utilizes deception.*

If this study is designed to use deception as part of the experimental method, include a debriefing statement and explain the debriefing procedure that will be followed once the study is complete or if

a participant withdraws from the study. This statement must explain your study in truth and detail, discussing what elements of the study were changed or left out on purpose and why. All participants must be given another opportunity to withdraw from the study upon debriefing.

4. Benefits to Participants

a. List any direct benefits to research participants. If there are no direct benefits, please state "None." *Please note that benefits to society, such as adding to existing knowledge, are <u>not</u> a benefit to participants. Direct payments or other forms of remuneration offered to potential subjects as an incentive or reward for participation should <u>not</u> be considered a benefit to be gained from research. Direct benefits are most often medical benefits for participants receiving specialized treatment as part of a research study.*

None

b. Will the participants receive direct payments or other forms of remuneration as an incentive or reward for participation?

 Yes No

If yes, describe these payments, incentives, or rewards. Describe the procedure for giving these to participants. At what point in the study will payment be given? *Please note that payments and rewards cannot be held until the study is completed or only provided when a participant completes the study. Plan to provide any payments or remuneration if a participant withdraws at any point in the study.*

NA

E. RECRUITMENT

1. Recruitment of Participants

*Please note that if subjects are recruited through an agency or institution other than the University of St. Thomas, you must submit written documentation of permission from each agency or institution you wish to recruit through. Written permission must be in the form of a **signed letter on agency letterhead** with enough information to demonstrate that the agency or institution understands your research project and grants permission for you to work with and recruit through their organization.*

a. Identify <u>where</u> participants will be recruited. Use organization or location names and include city, state, and country. *For example, if you are recruiting at UST, include University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, United States.*

I plan to recruit women that I already know from my past relationships when serving on Mennonite Schools Council. They live across the US and Canada, although some are no longer working in Mennonite schools. Currently, I do not plan to recruit through any agenicies or schools. I may need to contact some of the schools to find some of the women I do not know or rely on communications of former administrators to find them.

b. Identify <u>how</u> you will recruit participants and indicate whether you will recruit using flyers, advertisements, social media, phone calls, email, or other forms of contact. *All recruitment materials, such as flyers and advertisements, must be uploaded to IRBNet and approved by the IRB prior to use.*

I plan to use email, phone calls or social media to contact women via the snowball method (administrator to administrator).

2. Will you use existing records in order to recruit?

 Yes No

If yes, where are the records located?

If yes, describe the type of records you will access.

If yes, provide the name of the person giving permission for you to access existing records. You must submit written documentation of permission from each agency or institution through which you will obtain records.

3. Recruitment Script

a. Provide a recruitment script you will use as you contact potential participants. What will you say to potential participants to describe the study and ask whether they would like to participate? Include any information that you think is necessary for an individual to make an informed decision about whether or not to continue with the recruitment process. *Please note that the recruitment communication is not informed consent.*

Provide an email or telephone script that includes the following:

1) Information about your study;

2) Why the individual you are contacting is eligible as a potential participant;

3) What the risks and benefits (if any) of participation are; and

4) The expectations of subjects if they decide to participate.

Greetings _____,

I am Pam Tieszen, a graduate student at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, MN, and a former Mennonite administrator at Freeman Academy, Freeman, SD. I am working on a dissertation titled A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators Experiences in Mennonite High Schools. I wish to interview you as a current or a former woman administrator leader in a Mennonite High School. Your story is important to my research telling the story of women working in or formerly as Mennonite leaders in Mennonite high schools.

I plan to analyze the stories of 10-15 women administrators and determine themes telling the challenges and successes of women education leaders in Mennonite high schools across the United States and Canada.

The interview would be by phone at my expense for 60-90 minutes at a time convenient for you. I wish to hear the story of your experience and will ask only a few questions allowing you to share the most important aspects of your leadership story. I do not anticipate any further interviews, but in the event I need to clarify your comments when analyzing the data, I might request a second phone call for clarification. You will be given an opportunity to review the transcript of our recording and provide feedback or changes as needed.

Risks and benefits: Names will be confidential and stored securely on my home computer. All recordings and records will be destroyed one year following the approval of my dissertation. Names and schools will be given pseudonyms in order to protect your privacy. I believe that this research will benefit other Mennonite or faith based women educational leaders.

Would you be willing to be a participant in my dissertation research on Mennonite women administrators? Your consent will be required. Should you chose to participate, I will send you the appropriate form. You will be allowed to step away from the research at any time if you wish to discontinue or are uncomfortable.

I thank you in advance for your interest and taking the time to review this email. I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Pam Tieszen

b. Provide a script you will use to follow-up with participants, if applicable.

Follow up script:

Dear ………………,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important research, A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators Experiences in Mennonite High Schools. Outlined below are the details of your participation. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions regarding this research process.

1.Attached you will find the necessary request form required by the Internal Review Board of the University of St. Thomas. Please sign and return to me via email at tieszenp@gmail.com.

2.Could you suggest a time convenient for you when you will not be disturbed for approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded.

3.I will only ask several general questions about your experience allowing you to share the important details of your leadership.

4.The interview will be transcribed and returned to you via email, so that you might review for accuracy and any necessary changes.

5.I do not anticipate a second interview, but in the event I need to clarify your comments, I might ask for a second call for clarification.

6.If you are uncomfortable or wish to discontinue the interview or research process at any time, you are welcome to do so.

7.You will be given a copy of the dissertation if you would like to follow the research.

Risks and benefits: Names will be confidential and stored securely on my home computer that is password protected. All recordings and records will be destroyed one year following the approval of my dissertation. Names and schools will be given pseudonyms in order to protect your privacy. There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. Should you experience emotional distress during the interview, you may contact the Univsersity of St. Thomas counseling services:

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

Counseling and Psychological Services

2115 Summit Avenue St. Paul, Minnesota 55105, USA

1 (651) 962 6780

counseling@stthomas.edu

Every precaution will be taken to follow the ethics of the Institutional Review Board of the University of

St. Thomas and care of your information so as not to cause undue harm to you, the participant.

Thank you again, for agreeing to participate in my research.

My contact information:

Pam Tieszen

1009 Trinity Dr.

Newton, Ks. 67114

tieszenp@gmail.com

cell # 605-212-3572

4. Costs to Participate

Will there be any costs participants must cover if they choose to participate in the study?

 Yes No

If yes, describe what those costs are.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

1. Identifying Information

a. Will personal identifiers be collected? *Personal identifiers include names, initials, postal or home address, email address, phone numbers, birth date, social security numbers, demographic information, photographs or videos of participants, etc.*

Yes No

If yes, describe what identifying information will be collected.

Name, email addresses, phone numbers, home address, and name of school where employed.

b. Why is it necessary for these identifiers to be collected and maintained?

I will need to be able to communicate with them by phone to conduct the interviews. Email addresses will allow me to exchange necessary documents and review of transcripts. The name of the institution will be part of the confidential data.

c. Will identifiers be coded by the investigator? *Coding means that the original identifying information of the participant is replaced with a code, often a letter or number system, the researcher uses.*

Yes No

If yes, explain how identifiers will be coded.

Individuals and schools will given pseudonyms to protect the participants.

If coded, how will identifiers be kept separate from data that could link the code to the identifier?

A pseudonym will be assigned at the time of the interview and attached to their recording. A separate key document will be kept on my computer that will be the only link between pseudonym of school and participant information.

If no, explain why identifiers will <u>not</u> be coded.

2. Data Formats

In what formats will data be created? Check all that apply.

  Consent forms Audio recordings *(requires consent form statement)*

  Surveys, digital format   Surveys, paper format

  Notes, paper format Notes saved on a computer

  Transcripts

  Photographs, digital format *(requires special permission from participant via the Photography and Video Recording Permission Form)*

  Photographs, paper format *(requires special permission from participant via the Photography and Video Recording Permission Form)*

  Video recordings *(requires special permission from participant via the Photography and Video Recording Permission Form)*

  Other:

3. Data Access

Indicate who will have access to the specific types of data you checked above.

My research advisor, a transcription specialist and I have access to the data.

4. Data Transcription

Will information from audio-recorded interviews or other data be transcribed?

 Yes No

If yes, explain who will transcribe data and whether the audio recordings will be deleted upon transcription. If the transcriber is not a project investigator, complete the **Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement** and include it with this application.

attached

5. Data Storage

Give the specific location where you will store all forms of data that you checked above. If data formats will be kept in different places, indicate this (i.e. digital files kept on a computer and paper files kept in a filing cabinet). Specify if passwords, codes, or locks will be used and provide the location for storage. If you will be traveling while conducting research, say how you will maintain confidentiality while traveling <u>and</u> at your home or office.

All data will be kept on my personal computer protected by password and used only by me.

6. Data Retention

Federal regulations require that consent forms and any significant new findings shared with research participants be retained for a minimum of three years <u>after completion</u> of the research study. Any records that are kept indefinitely must be de-identified. **Photography and Video-Recording Permission forms** should be retained for as long as you will keep the photographs and videos collected. *If you plan to de-identify your research data, please specify how you will do so and maintain data anonymity in the Identifying Information section.*

Provide an estimated date when you will destroy each type of data marked in the Data Formats section.

All data will be deleted following one year after approval of the dissertation, no later than Junw 2018.

G. INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT PROCESS *Exempt review applicants who are not required to obtain consent may skip this section*Additional Forms

Please read carefully:

Informed consent is an ongoing discussion between the investigator and participant(s). Simply giving a participant the consent form is <u>not</u> informed consent. Prior to asking the participant(s) to sign the consent form, the investigator is responsible for having a conversation with each participant individually (or in groups in approved settings) to discuss the required elements of informed consent. Required elements can be found on the IRB website. Participants must have the option to skip interview questions, surveys, or tests and to withdraw from the study at any time. *In the case of electronic surveys, the consent form is often a cover sheet or the first page of the survey which clearly informs the participant that continuing with the survey means they consent to participating in the study.*

CONSENT WITH ADULT PARTICIPANTS AND LEGALLY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES

1. Consent Discussion

State at what point you and participants will have a conversation about informed consent.

Before beginning our interview, I will review the rights of the pariticipant and right to discontinue at any point during the study.

2. Informed Consent Script

Include the script you will use to have an informed consent discussion with participants. The script should summarize information provided in the consent form, including but not limited to:

1. **What the study is about;**
2. **Why the participant is eligible for participation;**
3. **How many participants will take part in the study;**
4. **Risks and benefits of participation;**
5. **How risks will be managed;**
6. **How you will preserve confidentiality of data; and**
7. **Steps a participant should take if they choose to withdraw from the study.**

If your participants are under the age of 18, please write this script for parent or guardian consent. Please be aware of language used in your script; it is important to use appropriate language for your target population (for example, avoid jargon specific to your discipline). A full list of informed consent requirements is available on the IRB website.

Informed Consent Script:

My study called: A Phenomenological Study of Women Administrators Experiences in Mennonite High Schools. This phenomenological study is about listening to the women's stories who have led Mennonite high schools for the first time in the school's history. I hope to learn about the women's challenges and successes during their time of leadership.

You've been asked to participate in this study because you were the first woman leader in your respective Mennonite high school. I plan to interview between 10 and 15 women across the United States and Canada.

As a participant in this study of women administrators I plan to gather information about your leadership by audio recording. Did you receive the attached consent form? I would like to review this document with you and explain in detail. If you have any question, do not hesitate to ask.

I will be collecting personal information on my personal computer that is password word protected and used only by me. All personal information, recordings, notes and transcript information will be deleted June, 2018. These protections are put in place by the Institutional Review Board of the University of St. Thomas to protect participants from harm.

There are no benefits as a result of participating in this study.

You have the right to skip any questions you are uncomfortable with.

Your confidentiality will be maintained by using pseudonyms for you and your institution and its location will not be used. All efforts will be made to use data discretely in the research findings. Do you have any confidentiality concerns?

If you are uncomfortable about this process, do you know whom to contact for further assistance? My chair is Dr. Sarah Noonan and her email is sjnoonan@stthomas.edu . Should you experience emotional distress as a result of the interview, you may contact the University of St. Thomas counseling services:

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

Counseling and Psychological Services

2115 Summit Avenue St. Paul, Minnesota 55105, USA

1 (651) 962 6780

counseling@stthomas.edu

You have the right to discontinue at any time during this interview by asking to do so during the recorded interview or by email. Should you decide to discontinue, I will ask you if you will allow me to use the information you have already shared. Can you tell me the process for withdrawal?

You will receive a transcript of the recording and will have an opportunity to adjust and clarify the dialogue for accuracy.

All details can be found on your copy of the consent form.

Do you have any questions for me? Do you have my contact information?

3. Informed Consent Questions for Participants

Investigators should ask participants open-ended questions upon ending the informed consent discussion. The participants' answers to these questions will help the investigator assess whether the participant truly understands the research project, risks, the voluntary nature of the study, and what they will be expected to do.

Please provide 3-4 questions to ask participants (e.g. What should you do if you wish to withdraw from this study? What are the risks if you choose to participate? How will these risks be managed?) These questions should not be yes-no questions; rather, they should require participants to answer in full sentences so that you can more adequately gauge their understanding of the study.

Do you have any confidentiality concerns? If you are uncomfortable about this process, do you know whom to contact for further assistance? Can you tell me the process for withdrawal? Do you have any questions for me? Do you have my contact information?

ASSENT WITH CHILDREN *Complete only if targeted participant population includes persons under the age of 18.*

Please read carefully:

Under state law, participants under 18 years of age cannot consent to participate. Once you have received parent or guardian consent for child participation, the investigator must also have a discussion about the study with each minor participant. In this discussion, the investigator is asking minor participants whether they agree to participate in the study, after their parents or guardians have given their permission for their child to participate. The agreement of the minor participant is called assent.

4. Informed Assent Script

Include the script you will use to have an informed assent discussion with child participants. The script must summarize information provided in the assent form. *Please be aware of language used in your script; it is important to use appropriate language for the population.*

5. Informed Assent Questions for Children

Investigators must ask child participants open-ended questions upon ending the informed assent discussion. The participants' answers to these questions will help the investigator assess whether the child truly understands the research project, risks, the voluntary nature of the study, and what they will be expected to do.

Please provide 3-4 questions to ask child participants in an appropriate language level (e.g. What should you do if you do not want to answer my questions?) These questions cannot be yes-no questions; rather, they must require participants to answer in full sentences so that you can more adequately gauge their understanding of the study. *Please be aware of the language used in your questions; it is important to use appropriate language for your population.*

H. ADDITIONAL FORMS

If required, include the following forms in your IRBNet project package. <u>Applications missing forms will not be reviewed until all necessary forms have been uploaded to IRBNet.</u> If you need assistance to determine which consent form is right for your project, please contact the IRB office. Check which forms will be included in your project package:

1. Consent Forms*Required*

General consent form, *required for most studies that do not involve children or adults who cannot consent*

Parent or guardian consent form, *if children are participants*

Child assent form (ages 7-12), *if children ages 7-12 are participants*

Child assent form (ages 13-17), *if children ages 13-17 are participants*

2. Surveys/Questions/Instruments*Required*

Upload a copy of all surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, or other research instruments that will be used in the study.

Surveys, if applicable

Interview Questions, if applicable

Other research instruments used (e.g. psychological measurements, questionnaires, etc.), if applicable

3. Confidentiality Agreements

Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement, if applicable

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement, if applicable

4. Other Permissions

Photography and Video Recording Permission form, if applicable

Organization, agency, or institution letters of permission to obtain existing data or recruit through the

institution, if applicable

I. SIGNATURES

Thank you for completing the Application for Initial Review. Once you have completed this application, upload all necessary application forms to your IRBNet project package. It is important to review all application materials for clarity, consistency, and grammar prior to signing and submitting the package. Project review will not be initiated until all electronic signatures are received on IRBNet.

Electronic signatures can be added to your IRBNet project package by clicking "Sign this Package."

By electronically signing the IRBNet project package, you confirm that:

- The information provided in this application is true and accurate.
- All contact with human subjects will not be initiated until final approval has been granted by the IRB.
- All investigators and research advisors agree to contact the IRB within 24 hours of becoming aware of any adverse events or problems associated with this research project.
- All consent forms and records required by the IRB will be retained for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study.
- The investigator agrees to contact the IRB and seek approval prior to any amendments to this research proposal, including changes in procedures.
The following electronic signatures are required for new project submissions:

Principal Investigator

All co-

All research advisors

Appendix B

Rev.com Terms of Use

Terms of Service

Date of Last Revision: July 5, 2017

Welcome to Rev.com!

Rev.com, Inc. ("Rev," "we," "us," "our") provides its services (described below) to you through its websites (collectively, the "Site") and through its related services (collectively, such services, including any new features and applications, and the Site, the "Service(s)"), subject to the following Terms of Service (as amended from time to time, the "Terms of Service"). We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to change or modify portions of these Terms of Service at any time. If we do this, we will post the changes on this page and will indicate at the top of this page the date these terms were last revised. We will also notify you, either through the Services user interface, in an email notification or through other reasonable means. Any such changes will become effective no earlier than fourteen (14) days after they are posted, except that changes addressing new functions of the Services or changes made for legal reasons will be effective immediately. Your continued use of the Service after the date any such changes become effective constitutes your acceptance of the new Terms of Service. If you do not agree to abide by these or any future Terms of Service, do not use or access (or continue to use or access) the Service.

In addition, when using certain services, you will be subject to any additional terms applicable to such services that may be posted on the Service from time to time, including, without limitation, the Privacy Policy located at /about/privacy. All such terms are hereby incorporated by reference into these Terms of Service.

Access and Use of the Service

Services Description: The Service is designed to provide simple and efficient transcription, video caption, translation and other related document services.

Your Registration Obligations: You may be required to register with Rev in order to access and use certain features of the Service. If you choose to register for the Service, you agree to provide and maintain true, accurate, current and complete information about yourself as prompted by the Service's registration form. Registration data and certain other information about you are governed by our Privacy Policy. If you are under 13 years of age, you are not authorized to use the Service, with or without registering. In addition, if you are under 18 years old, you may use the Service, with or without registering, only with the approval of your parent or guardian.

Member Account, Password and Security: You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of your password and account, if any, and are fully responsible for any and all activities that occur under your password or account. You agree to (a) immediately notify Rev of any unauthorized use of your password or account or any other breach of security, and (b) ensure that you exit from your account at the end of each session when accessing the Service. Rev will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from your failure to comply with this Section.

Modifications to Service: Rev reserves the right to modify or discontinue, temporarily or permanently, the Service (or any part thereof) with or without notice. You agree that Rev will not be liable to you or to any third party for any modification, suspension or discontinuance of the Service.

General Practices Regarding Use and Storage: You acknowledge that Rev may establish general practices and limits concerning use of the Service, including without limitation the maximum period of time that documents, data or other content will be retained by the Service and the maximum storage space that will be allotted on Rev's servers on your behalf. You agree that Rev has no responsibility or liability for the deletion or failure to store any documents, data or other content maintained or uploaded by the Service. You acknowledge that Rev reserves the right to terminate accounts that are inactive for an extended period of time. You further acknowledge that Rev reserves the right to change these general practices and limits at any time, in its sole discretion, with or without notice.

Conditions of Use

User Conduct: You are solely responsible for all documents, information, data, text, images, software, music, videos, sound, photographs, graphics, messages or other materials ("content") that you upload, post, publish or display (hereinafter, "upload") or email or otherwise use via the Service. The following are examples of the kind of content and/or use that is illegal or prohibited by Rev. Rev reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate legal action against anyone who, in Rev's sole discretion, violates this provision, including without limitation, removing the offending content from the Service, suspending or terminating the account of such violators and reporting you to the law enforcement authorities. You agree to not use the Service to:

- email or otherwise upload any content that (i) infringes any intellectual property or other proprietary rights of any party; (ii) you do not have a right to upload under any law or under contractual or fiduciary relationships; (iii) contains software viruses or any other computer code, files or programs designed to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment; (iv) poses or creates a privacy or security risk to any person; (v) constitutes unsolicited or unauthorized advertising, promotional materials, commercial activities and/or sales, "junk mail", "spam", "chain letters", "pyramid schemes", "contests", "sweepstakes" or any other form of solicitation; (vi) is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, tortious, excessively violent, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, pornographic, libelous, invasive of another's privacy, hateful racially, ethnically or otherwise objectionable; or (vii) in the sole judgment of Rev, is objectionable or which restricts or inhibits any other person from using or enjoying the Service, or which may expose Rev or its users to any harm or liability of any type;

- interfere with or disrupt the Service or servers or networks connected to the Service, or disobey any requirements, procedures, policies or regulations of networks connected to the Service;
- violate any applicable local, state, national or international law, or any regulations having the force of law;
- impersonate any person or entity, or falsely state or otherwise misrepresent your affiliation with a person or entity;
- solicit personal information from anyone under the age of 18;
- harvest or collect email addresses or other contact information of other users from the Service by electronic or other means for the purposes of sending unsolicited emails or other unsolicited communications;
- advertise or offer to sell or buy any goods or services for any business purpose that is not specifically authorized;
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Rev.com
251 Kearny St, 8th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94108
415-449-3679

To be effective, the notification must be in writing and contain the following information:

- an electronic or physical signature of the person authorized to act on behalf of the owner of the copyright or other intellectual property interest;
- a description of the copyrighted work or other intellectual property that you claim has been infringed;
- a description of where the material that you claim is infringing is located on the Service, with enough detail that we may find it on the Service;
- your address, telephone number, and email address;
- a statement by you that you have a good faith belief that the disputed use is not authorized by the copyright or intellectual property owner, its agent, or the law;
- a statement by you, made under penalty of perjury, that the above information in your notice is accurate and that you are the copyright or intellectual property owner or authorized to act on the copyright or intellectual property owner's behalf.

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- your physical or electronic signature;
- identification of the content that has been removed or to which access has been disabled and the location at which the content appeared before it was removed or disabled;
- a statement that you have a good faith belief that the content was removed or disabled as a result of mistake or a misidentification of the content; and
- your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, a statement that you consent to the jurisdiction of the federal court located within Northern District of California and a statement that you will accept service of process from the person who provided notification of the alleged infringement.

If a counter-notice is received by the Copyright Agent, Rev will send a copy of the counter-notice to the original complaining party informing that person that it may replace the removed content or cease disabling it in 10 business days. Unless the copyright owner files an action seeking a court order against the content provider, member or user, the removed content may be replaced, or access to it restored, in 10 to 14 business days or more after receipt of the counter-notice, at our sole discretion.

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You agree that Rev, in its sole discretion, may suspend or terminate your account (or any part thereof) or use of the Service and remove and discard any content within the Service, for any reason, including, without limitation, for lack of use or if Rev believes that you have violated or acted inconsistently with the letter or spirit of these Terms of Service. Any suspected fraudulent, abusive or illegal activity that may be grounds for termination of your use of Service, may be referred to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Rev may also in its sole discretion and at any time discontinue providing the Service, or any part thereof, with or without notice. You agree that any termination of your access to the Service under any provision of this Terms of Service may be effected without prior notice, and acknowledge and agree that Rev may immediately deactivate or

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User Disputes

You agree that you are solely responsible for your interactions with any other user in connection with the Service and Rev will have no liability or responsibility with respect thereto. Rev reserves the right, but has no obligation, to become involved in any way with disputes between you and any other user of the Service.

General

These Terms of Service constitute the entire agreement between you and Rev and govern your use of the Service, superseding any prior agreements between you and Rev with respect to the Service. You also may be subject to additional terms and conditions that may apply when you use affiliate or third-party services, third-party content or third-party software. These Terms of Service will be governed by the laws of the State of California without regard to its conflict of law provisions. With respect to any disputes or claims not subject to arbitration, as set forth above, you and Rev agree to submit to the personal and exclusive jurisdiction of the state and federal courts located within San Francisco County, California. The failure of Rev to exercise or enforce any right or provision of these Terms of Service will not constitute a waiver of such right or provision. If any provision of these Terms of Service is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the parties nevertheless agree that the court should endeavor to give effect to the parties' intentions as reflected in the provision, and the other provisions of these Terms of Service remain in full force and effect. You agree that regardless of any statute or law to the contrary, any claim or cause of action arising out of or related to use of the Service or these Terms of Service must be filed within one (1) year after such claim or cause of action arose or be forever barred. A printed version of this agreement and of any notice given in electronic form will be admissible in judicial or administrative proceedings based upon or relating to this agreement to the same extent and subject to the same conditions as other business documents and records originally generated and maintained in printed form. You may not assign this Terms of Service without the prior written consent of Rev, but Rev may assign or transfer this Terms of Service, in whole or in part, without restriction. The section titles in these Terms of Service are for convenience only and have no legal or contractual effect. Notices to you may be made via either email or regular mail. The Service may also provide notices to you of changes to these Terms of Service or other matters by displaying notices or links to notices generally on the Service.

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Services of the California Department of Consumer Affairs may be contacted in writing at 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N 112, Sacramento, CA 95834, or by telephone at (916) 445-1254 or (800) 952-5210. You may contact us at Rev.com 251 Kearny St, 8th Floor San Francisco, CA 94108 or 415-449-3679.

Questions? Concerns? Suggestions?

Please contact us at support@rev.com to report any violations of these Terms of Service or to pose any questions regarding this Terms of Service or the Service.

Service Provider Terms of Service »

Appendix C

Interview Questions for the study:

I adopted the following research question: How do women heads of school experience and make meaning of their role as leaders in Mennonite-affiliated schools? I added sub-questions to support the investigation of my central question.

Lead Question

1. How did you experience the leadership role as the first woman hired in your educational institution? Describe your personal journey into your role as lead administrator.

Sub questions

I added sub-questions to support the investigation of my central question:

1. How do women heads of school experience the initial transition into a leadership role typically dominated by men?

2. How do cultural and religious beliefs about women affect women's opportunities to serve as well as their experience as leaders of Mennonite affiliated schools?

3. How do "pioneering" women survive and thrive in an isolated leadership role?

Other Potential Questions

4. What were your original life aspirations? Did you always want to be a principal?

5. What prepared you for the leadership position (examples: education, experience, mentor)?

6. What kind of personal choices would be different? Waiting to have a family?

7. Are there advantages to being female in the position?

8. Were there barriers in attaining the lead administrative position?

9. When you took the position, did you think about your opportunity to model leadership for young women?

10. What advice would you give a woman starting an academic career today?

11. What should we be teaching young women about leadership in institutions?

12. Is there anything else you want to tell me that I did not ask?