

**WOMEN AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS:  
CONTEMPORARY  
PIONEERS**

By

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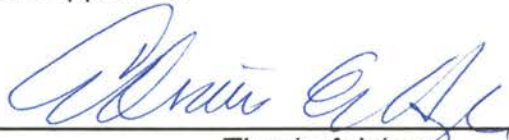
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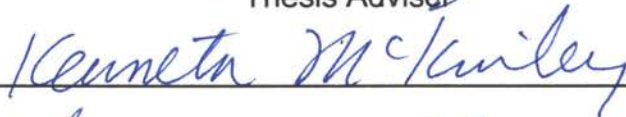
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## CHAPTER I

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The lineage of this nation's education has its origin and roots deeply embedded in the traditions and beliefs of a generation of pioneering Christian radicals. These men and women left behind the conventions, accepted norms, and religious tyranny of their homeland for the hope of a time and place that would provide an environment of religious freedom (Marshall & Manuel, 1977). Within this setting of a new breed of believers, evolved the beginnings of American education.

Nearly 175 years ago, in 1826, James Carter (1826) wrote that the initial seekers of religious freedoms, the Pilgrims at Plymouth, established the first free schools of the then modern American civilized world. The Bible was used as a text book. American education was conceived in an attempt to teach the children to overcome the Deluder Satan and remained generally church related through much of the 19th century (Stoker & Splawn, 1980). This embryo, education, grew and matured, developing into what was described by Seybolt (1925) as "town schools," eventually becoming the public schools of today.

As often happens with youth, the offspring of this group of radical believers, education, left the precepts of its forefathers. This separation of the young thing we call education from its Christian foundations evolved into a system of public education without the familiar plum line of faith. Today, the closest form of this original concept of education was found only in a group of educational entities called Christian schools (House, 1988; Pazmino, 1988).

Christian schools of today, laden with religious beliefs, values, and purposes beyond academics alone, provided a unique educational setting for the exploration of equity and gender. We know that in public education, equity was a topic of great importance, and that equity in women's educational and administrative careers was impacted by gender (Greyvenstein & Westhuizen, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Pavan & Robinson, 1991). In addition, we knew that inequities did exist (Ball, 1991; Hyle, 1991; Jacobs, 1992; Jacobson, 1989; Reskin & Ross, 1992; Seybolt, 1925; Schmidt, 1992).

The Bible, the foundation of the Christian faith, indicated that Eve, in the beginning, was equal with Adam (Hagin, 1983). Sometime after the creation, sin entered the relationship and "a curse was laid upon the wife," Eve (Hagin, 1983). However, this curse and the inequity that ensued was removed and the path to restoration was established with the redemption act of Christ's sacrifice. So there was foundational support for the concept of equity in the beginning. There was a difference between Adam and Eve, male and female, but there was provision for equitable treatment within the Biblical foundations of Christian faith. Total equity and personal fellowship with the creator were restored with redemption (Hagin, 1983). Was equity, a foundational part of Christian faith, readily available to women administrators in Christian schools today? We did not know.

The literature suggested that there were differences between men and women public school administrators. Women were more task oriented and tended to be more democratic in leadership style, working with a more interactive, sharing, and equitable flair (Rosener, 1991; Schmidt, 1992), as opposed to men who generally had a more

autocratic style (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Rosener, 1991). Women also tended to play the subordinate role in the subordination/domination equation (Miller, 1986). In addition, men resisted women as equal partners because that acceptance undermined traditional male dominance (Rusch, Gossetti, & Mohoric, 1991).

However, in 1984-85, 21% of the principalships nationally were occupied by women (Whitaker & Lane, 1990); substantially fewer women held superintendencies, about 5% (Jacobson, 1989). Today, one half to two-thirds of the teaching force was female (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1994; Whitaker & Lane, 1990), yet, only about one-third of all principalships were held by women, with the majority at the elementary level (NCES, 1994). Ultimately, women were over-represented in education at large; however, women were under-represented in educational administration (Schmidt, 1992). The white male culture dominated educational administration (Marshall, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1987). Evidence of inequity abounded at every level.

This under-representation in administration was attributed to a variety of reasons. Women were not in line positions (Glass, 1992; Russell & Wright, 1990), those positions historically associated with upward movement toward higher administrative positions such as assistant superintendent or superintendent. Women were less likely to follow the traditional teacher, principal, superintendent line (Glass, 1992) and were often "ghettoized" in lower level positions (Reskin & Ross, 1992) such as special projects director or personnel. Additionally, under-representation of women in administrative

positions in education may have been caused by career path obstacles, including family responsibilities (Derrington; 1991; Pavan & Robinson, 1991), lack of mentors (Pavan & Robinson, 1991), lack of women's network (Johnson, 1991; Rist, 1991; Whitaker & Lane, 1990), role stereotyping (Derrington; 1991), and gender bias (Greyvenstein & Westhuizen, 1991; Pavan & Robinson, 1991).

In education, women generally had higher academic degrees (Glass, 1992; Radich, 1992). They had more experience in the classroom, and were perceived to be more capable by both females and males. However, in spite of those facts, men were still recommended more often than women for administrative positions (Schmidt, 1992). It appears that "women are equal, but men are more equal" (Hyle, 1991, p. 14).

The story was no different outside education. Less than 3% of top executives in Fortune 500 companies were women, most were found in jobs that did not lead to higher level management (Ball, 1991); those positions were more likely to be held by men (Jacobs, 1992).

#### Statement of the Problem

Much was known about women's experiences in public education and administration. We knew that they were generally over-represented in public education classrooms, and despite Title IX, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, and ensuing affirmative action legislation, women remained under-represented in educational administration (Jacobson, 1989; NCES, 1994; Schmidt, 1992; Whitaker & Lane, 1990). But, were the experiences of women administrators in denominational education reflective of the same reality as those of public education? Very little was known about private school administrators (Bridges,

1982). Even less was known about women Christian school administrators and whether or not their experiences were similar to those of women administrators in public schools.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, was the examination of the experiences and perceptions of women who were administrators within private Christian schools. The lens through which this examination occurred was the evaluative framework of Feminist Phase Theory (Tetreault, 1985). Specifically, in this study, three tasks were undertaken:

- 1) The presentation of individual and collective career profiles of the women studied;
- 2) The evaluation and categorization of the profiles within the five phases of Feminist Phase Theory; and
- 3) The assessment of the usefulness of Feminist Phase Theory for understanding the collective profiles of the women studied.

#### Theoretical Framework

Feminist Phase Theory (FPT) (Tetreault, 1985) was a lens that provided a tool of critique and analysis. This frame was comprised of five levels of awareness regarding perceptions of women and their societal positioning. This model was designed to evaluate the reconceptualization and the "...incorporation of women's traditions, history, and experiences into selected disciplines" (Tetreault, 1985, pg. 364). Although used in other studies to evaluate literature (Twombly, 1993) it was used in this inquiry to evaluate and categorize the career experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators.

Phase one, *male dominance*, recognized humanity and all of its experiences as singularly faceted and explicitly "male". There was little or no awareness that women existed as a separate entity (Tetreault, 1985).

Phase two, *female compensatory*, reflected the awareness that women did exist and that they were missing; yet, humanity was still defined as distinctly "male." From this phase, ideas, theories, and perspectives were believed to be created and all structures viewed through the masculine lens. In the search for the missing woman, only the "great ones" who achieved the masculine norm were recognized and noted (Tetreault, 1985).

Phase three, *bifocal*, acknowledged the dualistic nature of humanity. Both male and female were conceptualized as individual groups, different, complementary, but equal. In this phase, oppression of the female group was recognized with attention given to the efforts of both noteworthy and ordinary women to overcome oppression (Tetreault, 1985).

Phase four, *female dominant*, revealed the former devalued and unacknowledged daily activities of women becoming the focus and the new measure of significance. Other variables of race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation were considered (Tetreault, 1985).

Phase five, *multifocal or relational dominant*, emphasized how women and men complement each other and relate to one another. Rather than dividing humanity into a dichotomy, male and female, as in bifocal phase three, humanity was perceived as a continuum of humanness, both feminine and masculine. The previous center of

humanity, the male experience, was shifted to acknowledge women and their experiences as part of the holistic view of humanity (Tetreault, 1995).

Most personal experiences, and personal perceptions have advanced and regress through all five stages at differing times because people change in their perceptions depending upon available information. Their experiences may fluctuate depending upon differing variables and circumstances (Tetreault, 1985).

FPT was used as a lens to examine experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators regarding their careers. The participants' career experiences and perceptions were cast against the five phases of developmental feminine awareness. Experiences and perceptions categorized into phases three and five reflected equity, because women were recognized as an integral part of the whole of humanity. Those categorized into phases one, two and four reflected dominance by one gender and were, therefore, inequitable. Both equitable and inequitable experiences and perceptions were revealed through this evaluation of women Christian school administrators' careers (Tetreault, 1985).

#### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was discovered in the domains of research, practice and theory.

#### Research

This study was important because of the knowledge void that existed in this area of inquiry. No research illuminated the finite area of the perspectives and experiences of women Christian school administrators and their experiences with gender issues. This study

provided insight into this, heretofore, undiscovered arena, gender career experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators.

### Practice

The practical significance of this study was found in its ability to provide a glimpse of the stories of women Christian school administrators and the gender issues they faced. This view of administration through the knowledge and experiences of women Christian school administrators may help to provide guidance and advice for those seeking similar career positions.

### Theory

The theoretical significance of this study was found in its unique application of FPT (Tetreault, 1985), an evaluative classification schema. This frame was engaged to evaluate and categorize career experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators in the arena of gender issues. This unusual application of the theory demonstrated its usefulness as an evaluative tool of experiences and perceptions in addition to the already accepted use of literature evaluation.

### Procedures

The researcher, a veteran public school teacher, with limited Christian school experience as an administrative-intern and parent of a Christian school student, recognized the importance of the experiences of women Christian school administrators and the accurate reporting of their "reality." With that in mind, this study included a series of steps designed to maintain anonymity of participants and to reveal their career perceptions and experiences in



Christian educational administration. The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board application and approval for this research were included in Appendix A.

### Population and Sample

A group of women Christian school administrators in a major metropolitan area of the southwest region of the United States was purposefully selected from the population of women school administrators at-large. Each was an active member of an international association of Christian school administrators, from which all participants were selected. A variety of backgrounds, educational degrees, and experiences were sought.

### Data Collection

Two strategies were employed to accomplish data collection: the long interview (McCracken, 1988) and document gathering (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Long Interview. After a consent form guaranteeing anonymity was signed by all participants and the researcher, informants were interviewed individually in one to two hour in-depth, open-ended, audio taped interviews using the McCracken (1988) long interview method. Perceptions and experiences as women Christian school administrators were discovered through the use of three general questions.

1. How did you become a Christian school administrator?
2. Who and what helped you to become a Christian school administrator?
3. Who and what hindered your becoming a Christian school administrator?

These questions were developed to provide a subtle guided journey into the experiential memory and the developed perceptions of the interviewees.

Documents. In addition, each participant was asked to provide an up-to-date vitae and general information about their school. Mission statements, administrative goals, and other documents were collected and examined for pertinent information (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

### Analysis

Data gathered from documents and long interviews were analyzed inductively using the McCracken (1988) method and were cast against the developmental awareness evaluative tool of FPT (Tetreault, 1985), with a focus on gender issues. The data was color coded by individual respondent, grouped into emerging categorical themes, cast against phases of feminist awareness, and used to construct the "reality" of gender issues faced by women Christian school administrators. Categories of experiences and perceptions were evaluated using the theoretical framework and then identified by the phases into which they were grouped. This process was facilitated by grouping strategies using Microsoft Works Wordprocessing. During this gleaning process, it was expected that a wide range of additional potentially unrelated themes and data would emerge. There was anticipation that much more than the initial inquiry focus of gender issues would be discovered, including the impact of family choices and opportunities.

## Summary

The foundations of American education were firmly structured upon the importance of Christian faith and the need to teach and train future generations in those principles. Those values, although no longer rudiments of public education, were yet the mainstays of Christian schools. Within these educational entities were found women administrators. The importance of equity within their journey, both in perceptions and experiences, was one that warranted the attention of mainstream qualitative research, which was the endeavor of this work.

## Reporting

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter One provided an introduction to the study, its problem and purpose, as well as procedures. Chapter Two presented a review of related literature. Chapter Three defined specific procedures used in collecting the data. In addition, it provided a detailed description of the population interviewed, documents reviewed, and data. Chapter Four presented the analysis of data and the findings of the study. Chapter Five presented the conclusion, implications, discussion, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The place of women in this country's recorded history has been left to those who could dig deep enough to find the hidden treasures of their influence. However, there have been those exceptional women who measured up to the masculine norm and gained notoriety. Harriet Beecher Stowe perceived the inequity of slavery, and based upon her strong Christian beliefs, posited a reverberating challenge against its unethical foundations (Marshall & Manuel, 1987). Her pen and paper war on slavery gained for her a place in history, but what of her own feminine slavery, which remained. Susan B. Anthony perceived and experienced the plight of women and moved a generation to change it, inspiring a nation of women to pursue the right to vote (Peterson, 1971).

Women in education have not been spared. Literature was examined for insight into the following three areas: 1) Women in Education, 2) Christian Education, and 3) Feminist Phase Theory.

#### **Women in Education**

Women in this country have been major contributors to education (NCES, 1994; Twombly, 1991). In this country, the Issue Brief of the National Center for Education Statistics, January 1994 provided recent statistics for women in education and educational administration, both private and public. In 1987-88, 71% of public school teachers were women (NCES, 1994). Private schools employed more women teachers that year, 78%. Continued increase in the public domain for the 1990-91 school year revealed 72% of the teachers were women while the private sector incurred a slight

decrease to 77% female. Of the teachers in public schools in 1990-91, 83% were women in elementary schools, while 53% were women in secondary schools. In private schools, for the same year, women held 89% of the elementary teaching positions and 53% of secondary teaching positions. These recent U.S. Department of Education statistics reflected a disproportionately large number of women in education at-large, particularly at the elementary level.

Demographics of women in educational administration, painted an entirely different portrait of education. During the 1990-91 school year, women in public schools held 31% of the principalships, up from 21% in 1987-88. Of those public school principalships held by women in 1990-91, 37% were elementary and 11% were secondary, reflecting an increase from 1987-88 when 30% of elementary public school principalships and 9% of secondary principalships were held by women. Women in private schools held a higher percentage of all private school principalships with 33% in 1990-91, up from 28% in 1987-88. Women had the strongest showing in private school elementary principalships with 65% in 1990-91, a half of a percentage point gain over 1987-88. Secondary private schools saw 29% of principalships held by women in 1991, a decrease from 32% in 1987-88 (NCES, 1994).

Though overrepresented in education at-large, women continued to be underrepresented in educational administration (Schuster, 1990). From the days of the schoolmarm in a one room schoolhouse, to the present, women in education administration generally have remained at a lower average income than men (Johnson, 1991; Pavan & D'Angelo, 1990). The experiences and

perceptions of women in education were stereotypical cultural perceptions and experiences that limited their vision and the availability to achieve their vision and have often fallen into one of two categories: career barriers and the often related gender issues (Derrington, 1991; Greyvenstein & Westhuizen, 1991). Career barriers often emerged under the guise of important value laden social responsibility, the family and its requirements (Derrington, 1991; Marshall & Kasten, 1994; Miller, 1986; Pavan & Robinson, 1991). Barriers with other less congenial names also hampered the careers of women in education, lack of respect for their legitimate authority, inadequate salary, lack of mentors and lack of women's network (Johnson, 1991; Pavan & D'Angelo, 1990; Pavan & Robinson, 1991; Rist, 1991; Sutton & Watson, 1995).

Although each of the noted barriers had a root link to gender, other more glaring barriers reflected an even stronger more distinct gender orientation. The research of Grant and Martin (1990) and others revealed dramatic gender bias that expressed itself in the form of discrimination and role stereotyping (Derrington, 1991; Glass, 1992; Greyvenstein & Westhuziezin, 1991; Hite, 1994; Hudson, 1994; Pavan & Robinson, 1991). Gender bias restricted women to socially acceptable positions, most often those without power or authority, in non-line positions despite their having advanced educational preparation, higher degrees (Glass, 1992; Kanter, 1977; Radich, 1992) and more classroom experience (Schmidt, 1992).

Title IX, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other ensuing legislation were enacted to facilitate the development of women's careers (Jacobson, 1989; Mertz, 1994; NCES, 1994; Pavan &

others, 1995). However, administrative representation of women remained low (Wendell, 1994). The number of women in the ranks of school administration have continued through recent decades to climb to a new height (NCES, 1994; Mertz, 1994; Regan & Brooks, 1992). The bright spot in the picture revealed, when women broke the barrier, future incumbents were likely to be women (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991). In an administrative development program of the Chattanooga schools, women achieved most of the promotions (Gettys, 1994). The down side of women in education taking a step upward revealed many of the high calibre women with advanced degrees often left education, as an apparent response to the glass ceiling phenomena that had substantially remained in education and had somewhat been broken in other fields (Greyvenstein & Westhuizen, 1991). Despite all that has been done through acts of law and all that was known about barriers, expectations and perceptions, women continued to be viewed and treated differently with inequities existing at all levels of education (Hyle, 1991).

Overrepresentation in education at-large and underrepresentation in educational administration, in addition to the issues of disequity, characterized the state of women in education. A look at Christian education revealed other realities.

### **Christian Education**

Throughout the history of this country, religious schools have held a prominent and important position and were the only source of a formal education until the 1840's (Randall, 1994). With the advent of state supported education, private Christian schools had to carve a niche for themselves, find a need and fill it to continue as a viable

institution. They accomplished their goal by continuing to provide a broad academic regime within the specific culture of Christianity. Today Christian schools continued to provide an important educational alternative (House, 1988).

A prominent purpose of Christian schools has been academic, however the primary goal has remained the perpetuity of specific religious views (Turner, 1981) through the eyes of God and His Word (House, 1988). House (1988) expounded the concept of Christian schools as an active agent in making a significant impact upon the moral fiber of the people of this nation. The foundation of Holy Scripture was the primary characteristic that separated Christian schools from others (Pazmino, 1988; Stoker, 1980). Spiritual maturity, the primary goal of Christian education (Dudley, 1994), was accomplished with Scripture and scriptural principles as taught and lived by Christians and specifically Christian educators.

The method of delivery used to accomplish the purpose of Christian education was the educators themselves. Christian educators were spokespersons for God, teaching His statutes (Hennessy & Obrien, 1983). Christian school principals called to the ministry of education administration were considered the mouthpiece of God and used scripture in their decision making (Merrick, 1985).

### **Feminist Phase Theory (FPT)**

Rooted in the work of Gerda Lerner (1984) in her effort to describe the impact of women in the history and development of a feminist epistemology, Feminist Phase Theory (Lerner, 1984; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1988; Tetreault, 1985) has been used as an evaluation schema in diverse applications usually curricular, in focus



(Tetreault, 1985; Townsend, 1993; Twombly, 1993). The phase structures, though somewhat renamed and redefined by others (Lerner, 1984; McIntosh, 1983; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1989; Tetreault, 1985) retained a similar fundamental structure. The commonalities reflected a consistent framework of a minimum of five phases of feminist awareness.

Feminist Phase Theory has been used in the disciplines to achieve many goals. It has been applied to the disciplines and its curriculum, to research and seminars to evaluate the level of feminine awareness. With emphasis on the addition of feminist awareness to both academic disciplines and their curriculum, FPT has influenced progress toward the goal "to raise the level of knowledge to a point at which reconstructed disciplines and/or curriculum and ultimately a reconstructed academy is possible" (Twombly, 1991, p. 10). A heightened level of feminist awareness through the use of this evaluative schema has assisted the movement toward another goal: "the eradication of all oppressive gender (and related race, class, age, affectional orientation, ability) categories of analysis and the creation of a world in which difference does not breed domination of subordination" (Warren, 1989, p.49).

The application of FPT as an evaluative schema has been diverse. This evaluation model was used to "document some of the subtle conceptual changes and behavioral details that resulted from participation" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 376) in a faculty seminar on women's studies. FPT was also noted as "having application beyond the disciplines and curriculum: It is useful both for learning how past research in higher education has conceptualized women and for

suggesting new directions for research on women" (Twombly, 1991, p. 10). Scholarship of three core higher education journals were evaluated using FPT revealing "the limited and somewhat negative picture of women faculty, students, and administration that appeared in these journals" (Townsend, 1993, p. 36). In addition, Andersen (1988) suggested FPT "provides a concentrated outline of transformation in our thinking about women" (p. 48). Tetreault (1985) saw FPT as a "classification schema of evolution in thought...about the incorporation of women's traditions, history, and experiences into selected disciplines" (p. 364). Twombly (1990) surmised, "Feminist Phase Theory suggests that if women's and men's lives are to change, what we study and how we study it must also change," (p. 15).

### Phases

Five phases of feminine awareness were expressed in FPT. A description of each phase was imperative to its application as an evaluative tool and potential change agent. "Furthermore, by describing characteristics of each phase, phase theories provide insight into the questions and issues that need to be raised in order to advance our conceptualization of women - a necessary precursor to action" (Twombly, 1991, p. 11). Each phase revealed a particular level of feminine awareness ranging from phase 1, no awareness of women, to phase 5, women and men both equally a part of a harmonious complementary nature of the continuum of humanity (Tetreault, 1985).

McIntosh (1981) expressed feminine awareness in the form of five interactive phases diagramed as a pyramid of power. Linear

progression through the stages was not mandated as the normal path of progression. In reality progression was more of a popcorn effect than linear with evaluation and categorization in diverse phases simultaneously thus reflecting a variety of positions (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985; Tetreault, 1985). "Most of these authors recognized that the boundaries among the stages are fluid and that one piece of scholarship might well represent thinking of more than one stage...As with most complex processes, stages of knowledge development may not occur in a neat linear fashion" (Twombly, 199, p. 11).

The five phases of FPT, male dominance, female compensatory, bifocal, female dominant, and multifocal exposed the characteristics of conceptualized thought concerning women and their place in humanity. Phase 1 thought was strictly male. Phase 2 revealed an acknowledgment of women and a search for those "exceptional women" who measured up to the male norm. Phase 3 expressed the dichotomy of a dualistic and equal humanity, both female and male. Phase 4 found women at the dominant center of humanity along with their traditions and culture. Phase 5 promoted a more gender balanced fusion of the two diverse worlds into a new entity of humanness (Lerner, 1984; McIntosh, 1981; Tetreault, 1985; Twombly, 1993; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985).

Phase 1 of FPT, male dominance, revealed a female void. Women did not exist. There was no feminine awareness: women and their impact were not found. No evidence existed that humanity was different than the accepted norm of "masculine humanity." Phase 1 expressed male knowledge as the only knowledge of value and male history as history (Tetreault, 1985).

Womanless history is characteristic of thinking which reflects the society's pyramidal winning-vs-losing mentality...Womanless history, in other words, is about 'winning' and has been written by the 'winners.' Feminist analysts of that version of reality have come to realize that a pyramidal class of men in western culture have defined what is power and what is knowledge. (McIntosh, 1981, p.7)

Women, the losers, were at the base of the pyramid devoid of power. They have carried the burden of the unvalued tasks of life particularly those directly related to the care and keeping of the body (Miller, 1986). Phase 1, masculine dominance, revealed life as strictly male with no acknowledgment of women and their contribution to that life.

Phase 2, female compensatory, acknowledged the existence of women deviants and searched for those outstanding women who measured up to the "male norm." Women were attached to the social structure as an exception not as a part of the framework of that structure (Tetreault, 1985). When applied to the evaluation of literature, "On the whole, compensatory scholarship accepted male standards as universal. When women differ from men, the differences are translated as deficiencies" (Twombly, 1993, p. 198). Phase 2 was described as "...worse because it only shows a few famous women...women don't exist unless they make something of ourselves" (McIntosh, 1981, p. 8). Shakeshaft's (1989b) phase 2 revealed a search for women and their differences (social deficiencies), and the attempt to add noteworthy ones to the social structure.

Phase 3, bifocal, illuminated a reality of equality and dualistic complementary entities, male and female. Inclusion of women was evidenced in the acknowledgment of female oppression and an attempt to solidify their place in the structure. However, the structure remained one "more appropriate to the male experience" (Tetreault, 1985, p. 369). Phase 3 acknowledged "women's ways are not better or worse than men's--just different" (Twombly, 1993, p.199). "Phase 3 challenges the literary cannon" (McIntosh, 1981b, p. 11) and "Phase 3 curricular work involves getting angry at the fact that we [women] have been seen only as an absence, an anomaly, or a problem...rather than as part of the world, part of whatever the people have chosen to value" (McIntosh, 1981, p. 10).

Phase 4, female dominant, expressed reality as female oriented, focusing on their traditions, cultures, and perspectives emerging into a pluralistic conception of women as diverse (Tetreault, 1985). Women and their experiences were studied and expressed in their own terms, providing the complete picture of the human experience (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985). In phase 4, McIntosh saw "women as history...whether in daily life or curricular revision, you call into question whether all that work behind the scenes is the work of losers. You ask if it isn't the work of the civilization...the work of the 'haves' rather than the 'have nots'" (McIntosh, 1981b, p. 16). Phase 4 also asked questions about ethnicity, sexual orientation, race and class that provided "for a new framework that accommodates women's history and traditions" (Twombly, 1993, p. 202). "In Phase 4, one looks at the mix of life..." (McIntosh, 1981b, p. 18).

Phase 5, multifocal or relational, reflected a holistic view of humanity, gender-balanced, with an emphasis on the fusion of both women's and men's experiences as the expression of humanness. The continuum of humanity included both. A shift from humanity as male centered to that of a holistic view including women as experts of their knowledge, provided the means of a reconceptualization of knowledge of the human experience (Tetreault, 1985). "Defining characteristics of this stage include a focus on how men and women relate to each other..." (Twombly, 1993, p. 202). The final phase was inclusive instead of exclusive. "Phase 5 curriculum revision is the hardest to conceive...it was the phase in which History (or Knowledge) gets redefined, reconstructed to include us all" (McIntosh, 1981b, p. 20).

The focus of research in educational administration has been administration as defined by white males. "If all the players in schools were white males, androcentric research and theory would not be problematic. Nor would it be misleading for understanding the behaviors of people who are not white males" (Shakeshaft, 1989b, p. 325). FPT's application has assisted in the reconstruction and redefinition of humanity.

### **Summary**

A review of literature revealed valuable information in three distinct areas: Women in Education, Christian Education, and Feminist Phase Theory. Statistics exposed the reality women in education face. They were overrepresented in education, underrepresented in educational administration, and faced a variety of career barriers including family and its requirements, lack of

respect for their authority, inadequate salaries, lack of mentors and women's networks, and more alarmingly, gender bias expressed in the form of stereotyping and discrimination. Despite legislation, women continued to be overrepresented in education and underrepresented in educational administration, revealing the inequity.

A review of Christian education in this country revealed a legacy of impact. Christian schools were the first schools providing instruction in the academics and scriptural principles. Their prominent position gave way to the advent of public education in the middle of the last century. However, they continued as a viable alternative, providing an education within the cultural setting of Christianity.

Feminist Phase Theory (Tetreault, 1985) provided a method of evaluating the level of feminist awareness. Phase 1, male dominance, revealed a level of no female awareness. Women did not exist. Phase 2, female compensatory, recognized their existence, the exceptional females who achieved the "masculine norm" and attempted to add them to the social framework. Phase 3, bifocal, saw humanity as both male and female, separately equal. Phase 4, female dominant, expressed humanity as female, both culturally and traditionally. Phase 5, multifocal, revealed humanity as a continuum, a fusion of both female and male.

### CHAPTER III

#### DATA PRESENTATION

Women, both pioneers of other centuries and today, have often been referred to as the stalwart pillars of faith, teaching the things of God to the next generation in an effort to perpetuate that faith. They taught their children and often others to read the Bible in front of open hearths while dinner was cooking, and later in groups at designated locations called schools. That desire for the perpetuity of faith and knowledge of God through education was still a driving force found today among women pioneers in Christian school administration. These women have left behind the comfort zones of the open hearth teaching of their predecessors and have ventured out into the previously all male arena of education administration. Their stories, both individually and as a group, were of great determination, sacrifice, and vision.

They were more than Christian school administrators. They were: Christian woman, wife, mother, teacher, and school administrator. Their journeys, as shared through individual in-depth audio-taped interviews, vitae, school mission statements, and personal goal strategies, provided insight into this "road less taken," the life path of a woman Christian school administrator.

In an effort to provide anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in addition to changing the names of all the cities, schools and organizations. In line with the strong pioneering character of each, undaunted by the winds of adversity, stabilized by



the deep roots of their faith, it seemed fitting to assign to them the names of trees. This is particularly significant considering the fact that trees were used as landmarks, as sources of protection and provision, and examples of stalwart strength by pioneers of previous centuries. Ms. Maple, Ms. Elm, Ms. Birch, Ms. Oak, and Ms. Hickory each shared their journey, revealing growth, difficulty, and triumph. Each participant was cited in the following manner with both their pseudonym and the referenced page number (Maple, pg. 1).

Their journeys, presented herewith, commence with in-depth individual profiles of each participant followed by a group profile. This approach was taken in an effort to reveal both each individual and the group as a whole.

### **Individual Profiles**

Individually, these women Christian school administrators personify the traditionally held image of femininity, yet with the added characteristic of unusual inner-strength and personal presence. Their individual life paths were reflective of considerable similarity, however, their diversity provided each with a flavor all her own. Here, the areas of individual 1) educational settings, 2) backgrounds, 3) career paths, 4) career facilitators, 5) career inhibitors, and 6) role of faith were independently examined in depth to discover that unique flavor that made them who they are today as individual women Christian school administrative pioneers.

#### **Ms. Maple**

Well educated, seasoned professional, multi-faceted, wife and mother, each aptly described Ms. Maple, a Caucasian woman Christian school administrator. She appeared physically fit and

healthy at about five feet and seven inches tall with dark hair. At the age of 40, though young in years, her life path revealed experiences that brought early professional maturity and acumen.

### **Educational Setting**

The campus setting, the workspace of the school administrator was an important part of Ms. Maple's daily life. It was a strong factor in the creation of the living thing called Brighton Academy.

Ms. Maple, the superintendent of Brighton Academy, a Pre-K3-12 Christian school, drove to work each morning to a very old established, once fashionable, somewhat decaying section of her densely populated city. There she parked across the street from a three story brick spired historic church building with ornate fixtures, antique stained glass windows, and aged trees. Likely built in an outlying rural area surrounding town, a century later the massive city has far outgrown the view from it's spires, yet, it retained some of its rural illusion with huge trees, shrubbery and delicate flowers. To stroll on the campus and walk through the three inch massive doors was to step into history that could be felt as well as seen. With little difficulty, one could hear the voices of children of another century skipping rope and the echoes of quick feet running up the ancient stairs.

Within this rich atmosphere of history, so thick it could be felt pressing against the skin, was found a contemporary pioneer at work, perpetuating her faith and her moral commitment to the education of the next generation. The hall ceilings were high, the walls thick, wooden railings revealed the initials of former students. Layers of paint, peeling in some places, expressed the attempt to keep an updated caring smile on the facade. Aged, used, yet preserved and

admired well described the physical setting of this campus. Modern adaptations included the ever present acoustical tile lowered ceiling and the dominant face of computer monitors, without which one could easily imagine horse carriages outside, or at least Model T's in the drive.

Yet, the present century was brought quickly back to focus when the observer realized that the man in charge of this school, was a woman. The campus setting was a major contributor to the creation of the school entity. Brighton Academy, state accredited for 20 years, provided education for a student body of 440 in the K-3 early childhood to 12th grade levels. In addition to the normal curriculum of any state accredited school, much attention was given to student life. Here emphasis was placed upon community service groups, chapel services, Bible study, and athletics.

### **Background**

Ms. Maple's background, defined as both her personal history and her education, greatly influenced the development of the person she was today. Her story was revealed in her own words.

**Personal history.** Ms. Maple was the second of two children. She was reared in a two parent family in a rural community of the middle region of the United States. Her home was, "...Typically traditional family. Dad worked, mom stayed home" (Maple, p. 1). She was divorced, becoming a single parent of one child, early in her career after arriving at Brighton, however, she was remarried with an additional child.

**Education.** Education was important even though there were no educator role models in her family. "School was always very

important to us. I was the number two child and had to keep up with the number one who was basically an 'A' student...We made regular trips all the way into several towns away where there was a library to check out library books" (Maple, p.1). After high school Ms. Maple chose to attend a private Christian college majoring in Psychology, "I also got my teacher certification, and that was in secondary education, social studies" (Maple, p. 1). Upon completing an additional two years of theology, she began her career. "I came to work here at Brighton. Started out teaching" (Maple, p. 10).

Married with a young child upon her arrival at Brighton, Ms. Maple was later divorced, taking on the full responsibilities of not only a career but single parenthood. She returned to school to complete a Master's program and courses required for state administrative certification.

Now in her early forties, she was superintendent of the same school, and remarried with two children. Her husband and family were supportive of her career. "They are all very supportive...He feels fine about it. It's not threatening to him at all" (Maple, p. 3). Her career was a very important facet of her life. "I love what I'm doing and I think what I'm doing makes a difference in peoples lives...I know that our school makes a difference in kids lives" (Maple, p. 23-24).

### **Career Path**

One of the characteristics of a true pioneer was that of going ahead of or preparing the way for others to follow (World Book Dictionary, 1987). Ms. Maple was a pioneer in her own field and particularly her school, as the first woman to hold the superintendency at Brighton Academy, "And, I even struggled a little

bit with the fact, 'Oh gosh, there's never been a woman do that before. Why should I be the first?' (Maple, p. 22). Her early goals, developing vision and then filling the need by moving into administration, have each played a part in the development of her career path.

**Early goals.** Early in her career, Ms. Maple's goals were very limited. "When I was in college I never would have dreamed that I would even go to graduate school" (Maple, p. 22). When asked what her goals were back then, she replied, "Oh, to teach school and teach school. (laugh) Be a mom. And I had no aspirations to do anything else" (Maple, p. 22). When asked if she ever saw herself as an administrator, her response and plans were not unexpected, "No, never...be a teacher, be a mom. Never had an inkling that I'd do anything beyond that. When I started my Master's degree I thought, 'I can't believe I'm doing that.' I never planned to do this...So I started, finished, and amazed myself" (Maple, p. 2).

**Vision.** Her early goals were limited to teaching, which she quickly achieved. After college Ms. Maple began her teaching career. During this time her vision was expanded beyond her own classroom. She noticed things that needed attention and a new door of opportunity opened, elementary administration. An administrative career began for Ms. Maple when she looked beyond herself.

...In those first four years of teaching, noticed some things that I didn't think were being handled correctly or as smoothly as they could be, and talked to the headmaster at the time about it. And, he asked me if I'd like to supervise some of it. So that's

kind of how I got into supervision by recognizing there was a need and being asked to fill a need. After four years of teaching, I started in as the elementary principal..."(Maple, p. 2)

She continued as elementary principal for eight years, four of which she concurrently served as assistant headmaster.

**Filling the need.** Then, without pursuing the position she was offered the superintendency. "They sought me out. I mean I was already here, but they approached me and I said, 'No.' Then they approached me a second time and I said, 'No.' Then they approached me a third time..." (Maple, p. 22). After prayer, she accepted the position five years ago and remained Brighton's first and only woman superintendent, "In fact I am the first female head administrator of this school" (Maple, p. 5), a true pioneer.

Her career spanned 17 years, as a teacher (4 years), elementary principal (8 years), assistant headmaster or assistant superintendent (concurrently with principalship 4 years), and now superintendent (5 years). Though her early goals did not include graduate school, she now held a Master's degree and extra courses required for state administrative certification.

Ms. Maple's career, though short in years, reached an early maturity and accomplishment experienced by few women in education. Years ago, even the concept of becoming an anomaly, a woman school administrator, was foreign to Ms. Maple. Though neither administration nor graduate school were in her plans initially, after college graduation, limited teaching experience, and a principalship, her life path, her career path led to the

superintendency. "God changes things and leads us in paths where we didn't think we would go and of course if He told us everything when we were 18 years old, we'd probably say, 'Forget it. I can't do that,' (laugh)" (Maples, p. 22). On that path, she experienced a variety of influences upon her career.

### **Career Facilitators**

Ms. Maple experienced two varieties of influences upon her career. The first, facilitators, promoted career opportunity and development.

Many positive influences helped Ms. Maple in her administrative career. She emphasized aspects of 1) family and financial demands, 2) support from others, 3) professional associations, and 4) facets of herself, as helpful influences to her career.

**Family and Financial Demands.** Ms. Maple's availability to and for her children during work was an important influence upon her career. "...My family is probably one of the reasons I'm in education or still in education, because having a career in education and having children works real well together, real well together...I highly value being in education, and working here and my children are both right here all day long" (Maple, p.10). Early in her career, divorce created a need for more family income, which helped to propel her into administration.

Probably, one of the things that led to it [administration] was I went through a divorce and had a little girl, a small daughter, she was not quite two when I was offered the position of going into the administrative position here...I guess I kind of thought

that might be helpful. (laugh)...Well, because you would earn more money in an administrative position," (Maple, p. 3).

The positive way that her career worked with her family needs, simultaneously fulfilling parental responsibilities and needs while fulfilling career needs, was a helpful influence upon Ms. Maple's career.

**Support.** Another facilitator was encouragement from others when she considered advancing her career.

Probably at the time, the headmaster who asked me to take the elementary position was...very, very kind. And he liked to pull out the best in people...He encouraged everyone...And possibly that was a major contributing factor...He said, "I know you can do it. I'd like for you to do it. Can you give this a try?" He was very, very encouraging. (Maple, p. 4)

A good role model also influenced her career. Though, in the truest sense of the word, Ms. Maple was not closely mentored, she credited one individual as influential in her growth and development toward administration.

We had an assistant headmaster for just a short period of time. She was a woman in her late fifties, early sixties. And, she I think if anything, she probably would have been more of a mentor than anyone. Not so much in practical; "let me help you do this," but she was a neat person and probably a good role model. Maybe more of a good role model than a mentor...I guess just in the way she handled herself, the way she did things, the way she stuck with a project. (Maple, p. 5)



Though extremely limited, mentoring was mentioned as helpful to Ms. Maple's career. When asked if more would have benefitted her she responded, "Oh, yes" (Maple, p. 13). Ms. Maple's perceived and experienced mentoring through role models were a helpful influence upon her career. She was now mentoring two proteges.

School board support also facilitated her career. The school board played an important role in the smooth operation of the administrative position and in Ms. Maple's school.

You know the only time a parent has a problem is when they've got a problem. (laugh) And if we are having to suspend a student or had to expel a student from school they might be upset...Now, occasionally, if a parent is unhappy with a decision I've made, I invite them to go to the school board, because I know what the school board is going to do. They are going to back me up, and if they didn't, we would all just need to part company anyhow. (laugh)...Let's see, I guess twice in the past five years a parent has gone all the way to calling the school board. (Maple, p. 16)

**Professional Associations.** Seminars, a Christian professional association, and peer relationships also were integral in the development of her administrative career. "The headmaster that talked to me about going into administration full time and leaving the classroom, sent me to a conference...for administrators. So that was helpful. It was encouraging" (Maple, p. 4). Ms. Maple also mentioned the importance of contacts she had with peer administrators.

One thing that has helped me a lot is the Christian School Association...We go to their teacher's convention every

fall...And they have an elementary track, a secondary track, and administrator track. And the administrator's sessions are always very good. You know you just hear such and such is a good book...or whatever. So that has been helpful. (Maple, p. 5).

**Herself.** Ms. Maple attributed some positive impact upon her career to certain caring facets of herself: 1) attention to details and planning ahead, and 2) sensitivity to people and the ability to empathize with them, and 3) an intrinsic need to help others. Each impacted her career.

I think women handle details far better than men. And I've had some female teachers tell me that after I was in charge, "Oh we're so glad you're here..." And I'm not sure if its all men and all women, but from what I see even in our faculty the women teachers tend to do a better job on getting lesson plans turned in on time, paper work, bulletin boards. And men just kind of, "Oh, do you think I should change my bulletin boards." (laugh) ...But I think women tend to details better than men. (Maple, p. 16-17)

She further added how being a woman helped her,

One thing I think, um, and it may not be female thing, it may just be a personal thing. Trying to be perceptive or to think ahead as to what this decision or change or policy will do. What's it going to effect. What's it going to mess up? Is doing this going to mess up something that we fixed over here? But that's details. (Maple, p. 17)

Her own organizational and leadership skills were important to Ms. Maple's career development. When asked what she thought made her a strong administrator she indicated organizational and leadership skills. "You can't teach people to be organized...I think I've always kind of been an organized person" (Maple, p. 12). She also shared how being a strong leader was a help.

...Being a leader. Being able to lead people to do the right thing. I think it is important to be an encourager, to encourage people, and you know to notice when an elementary teacher has put out a display that is just beautiful, out in the hallway, and you know it took a whole lot of time to do it...Just compliment the people. But that is more of a way of leadership..." (Maple, p. 12)

Ms. Maple believed her natural inclination toward organization and leadership were helpful to her career. Her ability to attend to details and plan ahead how things impact the future, which she attributed to her gender, helped her career.

Additionally, Ms. Maple's acknowledged her sensitivity to others and her ability to empathize with them, which she credited to her gender, as other facilitators of her career.

Maybe, being more sensitive to people's feelings. I know there was a time with the prior administrator who was just going to just up and fire a teacher over something. And, he said it to me right before he was going to fire the person. And, I basically interceded on behalf of the person. I said, "This just happened one time. Don't you think we should maybe do a written reprimand and put it in his file and give him another

chance?" And he said, "Oh, well I guess you are right." And I guess if I hadn't happened to hear him say he was going to do that, that person would have been fired. But, you now I think of the legal issues, and due process, and it's like wait. Whoa. What, what's going to happen down the line? And, people have to have room to make a mistake and they be earnestly sorry for it, and be willing to do better...I think maybe a sensitivity to people's feelings. I think another thing that has helped me, and I don't know again if it's woman, or personality, being sensitive to people's feelings whether it's a student you are dealing with or a teacher or a parent. And, just kind of using better terminology to talk to them about something. Not being brash, or cold, or frank and just, but you know, kind of making it a little more soothing. Making whatever the bad news is you are about to break a little easier to take...A little more positive. Maybe a little more sensitivity to people's feelings. (Maple, p. 17-18)

When asked to give an example of when being female really made a difference, she shared this story.

Yeah, I remember specifically a mom coming to see me. Her son was in 4th grade. Her husband was diagnosed with terminal cancer, didn't have long to live. And she came in and talked to me. And I just kind of cried with her. I suppose if I were a man I would not have done that...I kind of went a step further and said, "What can we do to help John [student]? What can we do to help him? What can we do?" She said, "Well when he comes in the afternoon to see his dad after

school, his dad is always tired from the day." I said, "Well, can we have him come in at lunch time at recess and call him on the phone and chat for a few minutes? Would that help your husband? Would that help your son? Does that make any difference?" And she was just thrilled with the idea. And so they did that until he passed away. But see, that takes being a feeling, caring empathizing person..Instead of just "Oh, well thanks for telling us." (Maple, p. 18-19)

She shared another example of how her gender, specifically the sensitivity and empathy facet, has helped her.

...I guess I try to empathize with people and be available. If they come in to talk about something or have a problem, I kind of like to give them a chance to reflect about it rather than just, "Oh, so you won't be here next Thursday. Need a sub, ok." You know, we might share about it a little bit more than just business like procedure that needs to take place. (Maple, p. 19)

Sensitivity to others and empathy have helped her career.

The inner need to do something that counts, intrinsic need, was also a positive influence. When asked what contributing factors motivated her entering administration, Ms. Maple replied, "Maybe somewhat of an intrinsic thing of being able to see things that aren't run right and being bothered by that and wanting to make it work right. And, you can't really do that when you are a teacher in the classroom" (Maple, p. 3). Additionally she responded,

I guess I enjoy seeing things run smoothly, when they do, seeing things go well. You know, watching kids walk across

the stage, getting their diploma, and remembering when they were here. I guess there is a sense of accomplishment in knowing that you've done a good job. You've made a difference in kids' lives. Even if the kid doesn't stay here all 12 years from first through twelfth. We made a difference. (Maple, p. 20)

"So I love what I do and I think it makes a difference" (Maple, p. 23).

The intrinsic value of meeting other's needs, through education and administration, a facet of herself, was a positive influence upon her career.

Ms. Maple attributed many helpful characteristics to facets of herself. Both her attention to details and planning ahead, and her sensitivity to others' feelings and empathy, in addition to an intrinsic need to help others were mentioned as facets of herself that were facilitators of her career.

Throughout Ms. Maple's 17 year career, there were contributing influences, facilitators, that helped her career. Found among those beneficial influences mentioned by her were aspects of 1) family and financial demands, 2) support from others, 3) professional associations, and 4) herself as a caring person.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Many good things were helpful influences in Ms. Maple's career. However, there were also negative influences or hindrances to her career. Overcoming career inhibitors was an ever-present challenge for Ms. Maple. Those hindrances appeared in the form of: 1) job stress, 2) lack of mentoring, 3) family demands, and 4) being female.

**Stress.** Stress, the first hindrance, although a general hindrance umbrella under which all hindrances could be listed because their ultimate effect was life stress, was mentioned in a more direct way as dealing with the responsibilities of the professional position. "Stress, (laugh) would be one thing. Just the burden of responsibility. Knowing that 440 students education...the buck stops here pretty much" (Maple, p. 11A). Of all the responsibilities of administration one reigned most stressful.

Probably the most stressful thing in my job is personnel. Hiring and firing is probably the most stressful. Doing it. I love to interview people. I enjoy doing that. A lot of times we don't have enough applicants for a position. And so you scramble and you make phone calls and you hope and pray that by the time in-service starts in August you've got every position filled. (Maple, p. 11)

Stress, a very real career hindrance, often the by-product of other career hindrances, was a direct result of the responsibility of Ms. Maple's administrative position, particularly in the area of staffing and personnel.

**Lack of Mentoring.** In line with what literature revealed was so often the case, Ms. Maple was not mentored.

When I started in administration, I was pretty much on my own. I didn't have just a whole lot of mentoring, "Now do this, now do this. Come tell me when you have a problem." I kind of was given basically this is what you need to do. Do it. And other than going to San Diego for that one seminar, I wouldn't say I was mentored. (Maple, p. 13).

**Family Demands.** Another inhibitor to Ms. Maple's career was the necessity of balancing conflicting time requirements of family and career. Family responsibilities were a drain and required advanced planning.

I scramble a lot, plan ahead. (laugh) Lay kids' clothes out the night before. You just have to be super organized and carry a daytimer with you everywhere you go. I try real hard for them not to be at the bottom of the barrel, so to speak. And there are plain and simple times when I could do something career wise, some evening activity that I say no to because I think I need to be home. (Maple, p.9)

Family, too, was affected by the requirements of administration that went beyond the normal work day. Ms. Maple worked "Probably about 55 hours a week, maybe 50. In the summer it is a little bit less. We cut our hours back in the summer just a little" (Maple, p. 10). One aspect of this hindrance upon her career was,

...An absolute unwillingness to work 60-80 hours a week. I mean men can kind of do that. You know they can come to work at seven o'clock in the morning because they are not dressing children and brushing teeth of children. They are just doing their own and dashing off to work. And I think women in general, women who work have far more responsibility than men who work. We have family responsibilities, household responsibilities, and then incorporating them into your work responsibilities. (Maple, p. 9)



Conflicts in time requirements arose and difficult family and career choices had to be made. Female administrators' families often "Have to be willing to let go of wife/mom every now and then for an evening board meeting once a month. Those kinds of things and I think everything balances out pretty well. When I'm not home because of a board meeting my husband is there to make sure the kids get fed on time" (Maple, p. 10). Administration not only took a larger bite out of her day but also out of the annual calendar.

...When you are teaching and not working in the summer it's really wonderful because there aren't too many days you do work that kids don't go to school...in my case it's just a little bit different because I work in the summer. I have four weeks off. But, the rest of the summer I'm working. And if I were teaching in the classroom instead of administrating, I'd be home most of the summer, or nearly all of the summer. So... that's one thing is that I haven't...been able to spend as much time with them in the summer as I would if I were not in administration.

(Maple, p.10)

The third career inhibitor, time requirements of meeting both family responsibilities and career responsibilities had a substantial impact upon the career of Ms. Maple. It was closely related to the fourth career hindrance facets of herself.

**Herself.** The fact that Ms. Maple was a women in a traditionally male role created some difficulty. Her gender had a negative influence upon her career and had been a hindrance at times. "...Ten years ago in the Christian school movement, most of the head administrators were men. There just weren't a lot of women...but

there are tons and tons of female teachers. Most of the teachers are females" (Maple, p. 5). When asked how that was a hindrance she responded, "Perhaps just in either a perceived not being taken seriously, or maybe not being as reputable as some of the others, or in reality. I'm not sure which. If it was, if it was a real thing or just a perception" (Maple, p. 6). This caused feelings of, "I guess...I have to prove myself to these guys" (Maple, p. 6). The lack of acceptance of authority, because of gender, was a hindrance to her as well.

I didn't have any question that I could do it. I knew that I could do it. I guess maybe a part of me always wondered if there would be full acceptance and loyalty and those kinds of things. That wouldn't be there if I were a man...Occasionally someone would come along, it didn't necessarily have to be a man, but just in leadership someone comes along who doesn't readily or easily submit to authority over them whether it's written policy or whatever. So you have to deal with those kind of people.

(Maple, p. 7)

She felt there were incidents, "probably a couple times" (Maple, p. 7), that acceptance of her authority would have been different had she been male.

When it comes to things like athletics...maybe a feeling that, maybe it was just me feeling I don't know everything about athletics...but I suppose that in some ways that's no different than my leadership style with other people. You know if it's a teacher coming in and talking about a problem in geometry or chemistry...you get that person to talk and fill you in on all the details before you give them a decision. But I

think probably in the area of athletics I have felt a little bit, maybe not understanding the full picture, or not understanding because I am a woman and not a man and I never played football and those kinds of things. (Maple, p. 8)

"I think sometimes coaches, male coaches in general, probably, they might react a little differently if the person in authority over them was male instead of female" (Maple, p. 19-20). They could be "thinking perhaps the right decision was not made because of the fact that I was a woman and not a man" (Maple, p. 9).

Ms. Maple's career was impacted by negative influences that inhibited her career: stress, lack of mentoring, incongruent family demands, and herself as a female. In the face of these, her faith in God made a lasting difference.

### **Role of Faith**

Ms. Maples faith and the role it played was evident in three areas. They included her career preparation and choices, administrative style, and divine intervention.

**Career preparation and choices.** Her faith played an important role in Ms. Maple's professional life. After graduating from college with teacher certification, she went back to school, "I...attended Christ for the World School of Evangelism, where I took two years of Theology, just personally feeling that was something I needed to do" (Maple, p. 1). She then accepted a teaching position at Brighton and was soon promoted to the principalship. Her faith again impacted the course of her career when she was offered the superintendency. When asked what part her faith played, she responded, "A big part because I never would have taken this

position having not felt like the Lord was leading me to do that" (Ms. Maple, p.21). And how did you know that?

Prayer. In fact when the school board first offered this position to me five years ago, I said "No..." Then they approached me a second time and I said, "Well." They asked me if I would pray about it. I said, "Well, I'll pray about it." (laugh) And I thought that's as far as it would go. But, I really felt like the Lord was telling me this was what I needed to do... So I felt like that was what I was supposed to do. (Maple, p. 21)

**Administrative style.** Her faith not only influenced the acceptance of the position, but also influenced her daily operation as the superintendent.

I believe God gives me wisdom to make the right decisions and to do my job well. And, I believe that as a Christian, the Holy Spirit kind of gives you an inner urging or impulse to do something to someone, to say something to someone, to seek them out and check on them. "How's your day going? How's everything with Johnny?" ...I believe a lot of that comes from the Lord to help us to be kind and caring toward people. I think people work a lot better in kind caring environments... (Maple, p. 23)

**Divine intervention.** Her faith also influenced the staffing of positions.

Last fall we had a high school social studies teacher with an English minor who was teaching all social studies classes, history classes and one English class resign on a Friday. And two days prior to that a lady walked in here with that History

major, English minor, she was a little better though, she had her Master's degree in history. She walked in and wanted to start subbing. So when he resigned I called her as a sub and by the end of the first day I had a contract ready to offer her. It was just unbelievable, but see God is an unbelievable God. He knew before that man ever resigned that we needed a teacher.

(Maple, p. 11)

Her faith also impacted interactions with parents and students, as revealed in her reported meeting with a Brighton student's parent who was facing a family crisis. "I cried with her. Kind of held her hand and prayed with her. And, I think I was able to really minister to her" (Maple, p. 18). The role her faith played in her professional life was apparent in her decision making and in interactions with faculty, parents and students.

### **Summary**

As a woman in Christian school administration, Ms. Maple's background, career path, career influences, school setting and faith impacted her daily life. Those experiences paved the path she followed and created the administrative pioneer she became. Faced with the adversity of divorce, peer skeptics, and administrative difficulties, Ms. Maple rose to the challenge and answered the question that faced all pioneers, "Will you succeed in your effort?" Her own words described her victory, "But, I think maybe there's more respect for me because five years later I am still in the same job at the same school. And if there were any skeptics, perceived or otherwise, I would suppose they are no longer skeptics" (Maple, p. 24).

## **Ms. Elm**

Sensitive to the needs of others, committed to her faith, and adventurous, characterize this pioneering woman. A Caucasian woman Christian school administrator, petite, in her late 50's, articulate, and focused, aptly described this adventurer, Ms. Elm. The spunk and vitality of her youth appeared to have remained intact. Her life and career reflected a model of zest for living, which in her case included the desire to help humanity.

### **Educational Setting**

A heavily trafficked upper-middle class suburban office complex was the geographical setting of Stillman Christian School, Ms. Elm's "home away from home". Located in a modern and efficient office complex, Stillman provided a comfortable physical environment for its students. Surrounded by a parking lot and a few trees at the street, convenient, accessible, and efficient best described the physical aspects of Stillman's educational setting.

Within the unpretentious physical structure of the school campus was found a warm and inviting cubical housing the driving force of Stillman, the founder and administrator of this unique school, Ms. Elm. Whatever may be found lacking in personality or personal appeal of the sterile architectural structure was compensated by the gracious warmth of the atmosphere established in the administrator's office. There it was evident the purpose of this school was to meet the needs of the students. "So my goal always had been the child, and my mission statement is that. And, as long as I kept my mission statement before me, I was able to be changing, adapting to the needs I needed to face" (Ms. Elm, p. 16).

Stillman Christian School was established 15 years ago to help fill a local educational void for students who experienced learning difficulties, yet desired a private Christian school setting. A group of concerned parents and Ms. Elm founded the school to meet that singular need. Through the years its name became a source of community pride with emphasis given to individual learning difficulties.

...The community very much respects what has happened to children that come here. I hear a lot of positive things from others. In fact just Friday I had an interview with a family who...had their child tested and they were talking about they wanted a Christian school. And they [diagnostician] said, "The only one we know is Ms. Elm with Stillman Christian School...I really think it is the best school there is because she works individually with children. (Elm, p. 13)

Serving approximately 50 students in the K-8 school, Stillman provided a teacher/pupil ratio of about 1 to 7. That ratio facilitated Stillman's goal of individualized learner-centered curriculum to help meet various student learning needs.

This campus, though small and restricted to an office complex setting, provided a warm professional and personal academic atmosphere that was highly regarded by its constituents.

### **Background**

Ms. Elm's personal history, including family relationships and spiritual experiences, and her educational path directed her footsteps toward administration.

**Personal history.** She was the third of five children, in a close knit bi-lingual family of the northeastern part of the United States.

My parents coming from an old country, the past never saw a young lady having worth but to be a mother and to raise her children and to be a wife...their mental attitude was, "You're a girl, a woman, you don't need education, you don't need to be anywhere." But, I said, "No Dad, I want to be something, and I want to pursue something which I know I have gifts for."...So I stressed the fact that I was going to go [to college], and I don't think my father could have stopped me, because he saw my determination. (Ms. Elm, p. 5)

Resisting the norm of her family culture, she became a pioneer early in life, determined to become more than was expected of women in her culture, she would indeed attend college. Yet, she was still restricted by some archaic family and cultural traditions, "...I wanted to be a nurse...but, my father said, 'No, being a teacher is more honorable from the old world. Nurses do not have as honorable position.' So he allowed me to go to a college...I studied Home Economics" (Ms. Elm, p. 2).

During college she broke away from a strong heritage of family traditions and religious beliefs to venture out into the unknown world of a new Christian faith.

I didn't know anything. I didn't even know the Bible, because we were never allowed to read it. Being born and raised in a Orthodox home, the priest only had the power to read. So we were never given any scriptural truth. So I started searching. (Ms. Elm, p. 2)



Experiencing spiritual conversion and accepting Jesus Christ as her saviour during college near her home, this new walk of faith led her to become a missionary to her family's old homeland, teaching under-educated children in a foreign field. Her culturally rich bi-lingual home life well prepared her for the cultural differences of a foreign mission assignment.

While abroad she met and married her husband, an archaeologist, then returned to America with him. Ms. Elm taught ten additional years. "Then my children were born, and I stayed home for five years and was their mother" (Ms. Elm, p. 3). Now a grandmother, she was proud of her adult children, "...My daughter now has her Master's...And our son is married, and has three children and doing a wonderful job of raising their children" (Ms. Elm, p. 4).

She remained married with yet another vision for the future, that of helping more children abroad.

...My next vision is to be able to take my educational training to the fields over seas, because I know that there are mission schools that need teachers. But, teachers are there who don't know how to work with children. So I can see myself going in and maybe in a year I will be doing that, so that I can train teachers in workshops...that's my final dream to be able to accomplish. (Ms. Elm, p. 19)

Ms. Elm was a pioneer not only in the domain of her personal faith walk, breaking away from strong family religious beliefs, but also in the area of education, overcoming generations of traditional teaching that a woman needed no formal education. She left that bondage far behind when she elected to initiate her adventure into

higher education, going where no woman in her family had gone before, a true pioneer.

**Education.** Education was always important to Ms. Elm. "...Growing up in the N. E. some years ago, I was very much interested in learning" (Ms. Elm, p. 1). Her bi-lingual world, English at school and another language at home, created some educational difficulties in earlier years. "I went on to high school and I wasn't considered one of the top students in English because I had a bi-lingual background. And I felt inadequate because I didn't speak proper grammar" (Ms. Elm, p. 1).

She attended college studying about the learning disabled child and Home Economics, receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in secondary education from the State Teacher's College. After a missionary tour, Ms. Elm returned to the states and to college, attending Bible college. There she received a Bachelor of Art's degree with emphasis in elementary education. She continued her education with advanced courses. "...I did a lot of graduate work to the extent of a Master's, but did not have a direct Master's, I have the graduate credits" (Ms. Elm, p. 5).

Ms. Elm's background, both personal history and education revealed her pioneering spirit and determination. Both influenced the development of her career path.

### **Career Path**

The career path of Ms. Elm had many zigs and zags, moving from one level to another, from one school to another, from one continent to another. Yet, each zig and zag brought her closer to administration. Her early goals, developing vision, and the desire to

fill the need at hand, each played a part in the trail she blazed, the career path of Ms. Elm.

**Early goals.** Though initially desiring to become a nurse, that possibility vetoed by her father, Ms. Elm found an avenue to express her desire to help others, teaching. She taught poverty stricken orphaned children as a missionary in Europe. Teaching in her family's old homeland provided opportunity for her bi-lingual and cultural experiences to be used in a new way, which added value and appreciation for those aspects of her heritage. "Now my other language had value. (laugh) I could think in two worlds, which was exciting because I was able to meet their world" (Ms. Elm, p. 3).

Returning to the U.S., her career took a new turn toward teaching special education. "I stayed with Special Education for a while, and then moved again...and I taught at a Christian school, elementary education" (Ms. Elm, p. 3). Change continued, moving from elementary to high school Home Economics within the same school. "...Then I was in Home Economics in the high school which needed a department, so I developed a department for them. And, I taught young girls how to be mothers and how to be trained in the raising of children, and various other aspects of the training which I had had in Home Economics" (Ms. Elm, p. 3).

After leaving her career for five years while at home with her children, Ms. Elm returned to her education career, teaching elementary school. She later moved back to the high school level at a local Christian school, teaching in the resource program, a program designed to assist students with learning difficulties. When that program was terminated three years later, a new vision developed,

still aimed at helping others, but with a more specific way of achieving that goal.

**Filling the need.** When one door was closed another opened for Ms. Elm. The termination of her resource program left a void in local Christian education. With no job search or particular aspirations for administration, a new idea and opportunity developed, providing a special educational setting to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties.

So we started the center and it was mostly tutoring and then after tutoring some suggested, "Why don't you start a school. There is a real need for a Christian school in the area for the child that is different and learns in diverse ways." ...So I started that and we got into the school program, and then it grew, and now we are going into the 15th year. (Ms. Elm, p. 4)

Ms. Elm found herself at the helm of a developing and pioneering concept, a school for children with learning difficulties.

The board makes and sets up policy. I work with the board and I'm the administrator...I carry out and I administrate the operations of the daily activities of the school...I pretty much run the school...I'm given the responsibility as any headmaster would be given in any school, even though I formed it and created it. (Ms. Elm, p. 14)

Fifteen years later the original vision prevails, "...To me our goal is the children...I expect the adult also to have the vision that here we're working together toward a cause...your job is to meet the needs of the children" (Ms. Elm, p. 9). She remained the first administrator

Stillman Christian School, serving about 50 students with learning difficulties.

In the face of adversity, Ms. Elm experienced a need to stretch her horizons by attending college. She recognized a void in her life and satisfied her need for God through a personal study of the Bible and the development of her faith. In an effort to share her faith and talents, the educational needs of orphans on another continent were met. When the need for a unique school designed specifically to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties was made known, Ms. Elm filled in the gap. She historically filled the need when it was presented, and her final career goal was to again meet the needs of others. Teaching teachers in educationally disadvantaged areas was her ultimate career path dream. Though it is yet to be satisfied, the plan was in her heart.

Ms. Elm's early goals and desire to fill the need, were each part of her career path. That path was influenced by both positive and negative factors.

### **Career Facilitators**

Ms. Elm's career was influenced by facilitators, those factors that positively influenced her career. Her pioneering journey revealed her effort to take advantage of those influences.

Several positive influences facilitated her career. They included intrinsic need, support of others, and facets of herself.

**Intrinsic need.** Ms. Elm had a need to learn and to help others. Her first choice was medicine which was denied by her father, however she found her outlet in education. Though hindered by cultural and religious bondage and a negative traditional family view

of women and their purpose, Ms. Elm was determined to stretch beyond those historical restraints. This involved not only leaving behind her family religious views but also certain attitudes toward gender. In addition there was evidence early in life of an intrinsic need to help others. This need found expression in missionary work and teaching.

Well, when I was in the mission field, I saw children...who didn't have opprotunities. And I realized the lack to humanity. And I was determined to be rich [experientially] and to read and to constantly be able to impart knowledge to others. So that probably was another way that I realized that learning was very important, but it's how you impart it and how you care for others that's going to be very valuable and effective. (Ms. Elm, p. 12)

The intrinsic need to become more and to help others greatly facilitated her career toward Christian school administration.

**Support.** Ms. Elm noted three specific incidents in her life when the support of others accelerated her development toward her career and ultimately administration. Two involved other educators while the third was the direct involvement and support of school patrons.

As a senior in high school, a young woman from a family laden with traditional beliefs regarding the limited value, purpose, and place of women, Ms. Elm faced real issues of self-esteem and personal worth. This dilemma was compounded by a need for orthodontics. "I had crooked teeth and I thought we were very poor and we couldn't correct them" (Ms. Elm, p. 11). However, the support of a teacher at a critical juncture in her life, the year she determined to pioneer

beyond the traditional familial role of women in her culture, left a permanent imprint.

...And then I had a teacher my senior year in high school who was very good in building my morale...And he said, "Why don't you smile?" And I said, "Because I have terrible teeth." And he said, "O, but you have a beautiful smile...and you reflect all of who you are. You need to smile more." So that helped me become more free from the feelings of inferiority because of that particular handicap. So I was able to be empathetic to people with handicaps...So I think the key people were those probably in my very younger years who helped me tremendously to go into what I wanted to do. (Ms. Elm, p. 11)

Ms. Elm recalled another incident in her life, another educator who had a profound impact upon her career.

I worked with a principal in a public school...who was a fine Christian man and I learned a lot of his skills in the way he treated people, that I have respected greatly. And I think I attribute a lot of my behaviors as an administrator to him, because I watched his life and the consistency of his attitude toward his people. And I think that helped me a lot. He allowed us as teachers to be very creative and to be free to create and become the fullest persons we needed to be. There were never the restrictions as an administrator...There were restrictions as to our performance, but within our personality we were free to develop to the highest. And he always encouraged that motivation from within, or the creativity. (Ms. Elm, p. 10)

He was a major influence upon and facilitator of her career. "I remember the principal I worked under. I admired him so...And I feel that, he of all people had been most influential in my thinking realm toward education" (Ms. Elm, p. 17).

These two educators impacted Ms. Elms life and career in a dramatic way. However, the next phase of her life and career, administration, was directly influenced by the support of school patrons.

The third example of support of others that facilitated Ms. Elm's career toward administration was that of parents and community friends. Their support stimulated the creation and development of Stillman Christian School in the effort to satisfy a need for a Christian school focused on the student with learning difficulties. "...Some of the parents and some of the good friends of the community said, 'Well, we'll help to start your own thing" (Ms. Elm, p. 4). This support, under Ms. Elm's leadership, helped to establish the corporation and oversee the development of Stillman Christian School.

**Herself.** Several personal characteristics were mentioned as influences upon Ms. Elm's career. Those included humility and submission to others, respect for others, self analysis, independence, and traits she associated with her gender.

The characteristic of humility and submission was reported as a strength and subsequently a facilitator of her career.

...Great strength comes when you don't have to be on top of everything and be tough. That I could be willing to know that my strengths were within, that it didn't matter that the world pass me by, and I think that is humility and that is strength. And the



power to be insignificant at times is very important. And I could do it without affecting my self image and without having a lowered sense of value, because I was still in control of...who I was. And I think that comes with a strong self image, which I had acquired through the years past...So when I needed to submit, it was no hurt, no problem. And I think the submitting time came in respect to those in authority over me. (Ms. Elm, p. 6)

She continued,

And it's interesting, because as I look back at my siblings, I think I'm the only one that has accomplished the things that I have with my life, with the freeness of life because I was able to be assertive, and yet willing to submit to those in authority. I think that was a key...So I wasn't a docile Mickey Mouse soft milk toast to everybody. And, I think that has enabled me today to be a better administrator, because I know I can look into the hearts of people in a way giving them some benefits of some potential that is hidden, hoping to be able to surface it.

Because, I can be patient with people in a loving way and yet allowing them to make some mistakes but helping them through the mistakes to grow into a better person. And that's what I see as my challenge as an administrator here, is to enable the people that come to work under me to grow and become a better person. (Ms. Elm, p. 7)

The ability to respect others thus causing respect to flow back to her was also noted. "So I learned those skills I think through the

course of years of having to find myself in positions and to respect the people under me, because I wanted to be respected" (Ms. Elm, p.7).

In addition, self analysis for correction and change was indicated as an important facilitator to her career.

When incidents happen and struggles happen, analyze self and say what could you have done differently. Not blamed the other person but they go, "What could I have done?" And so constantly being open to find out more about who I am and how I function, so that I can adapt myself to meet the needs in a harmonious way to relate to people and to be effective. And I think that was the key to my reaching to a point where I could be effective with adults. I had to grow a lot...I was sensitive enough to allow myself to see my weaknesses, I was working on it so that I could become more gentle and firm yet kind, and respect the other person more so I saw their value and their worth because they are going to effect the children. So if I wasn't affecting them properly, how would they in turn reach the needs of the children in the classroom. (Ms. Elm, p. 15)

Independence, a characteristic found early in her personal life was another positive influence. "I think in this world one has to be independent and able enough to know what they want" (Ms. Elm, p. 6). This independence also expressed itself in her determination, in the face of adversity, to attend college. Leaving her family's faith and becoming a missionary, were additional examples of her pioneering independence.

Characteristics she associated with her gender, sensitivity and adaptability, were also mentioned as important.

I really don't think of myself as female or male. Maybe a female in the sense that I'm more sensitive, because we are built this way as a woman under God. And, I think because we're mothers, to be mothers, or in that world, we're more adaptable and sensitive. And the qualities are there if they are developed and they surface, they are to your advantage. So, that's why I think I am who I am...I don't see that my success is because I'm female except that I have characteristics that blend into a sensitive environment that I can create rather than the harsh male authoritative tone that I could have established because I needed to have my ego stroked. (Ms. Elm, p. 17)

Her gender, a facet of herself was a facilitator of her career.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Three career inhibitors, negative influences, were mentioned by Ms. Elm. They included, stress, lack of an advanced degree, and herself as a female.

**Stress.** Every new day presented its own challenges. One of the most stressful for her as a school administrator was staffing. Ms. Elm shared some of her difficulties in that area, a career inhibitor.

...Several years ago we had one teacher that stayed three weeks and I had to fire her, because she was absolutely incompetent with all the degrees. Thought she was going to sit back and make this a picnic. The second person who came in I knew wasn't competent but I thought if he had a willing heart I'll give it a chance...So then I had [another] also trained and willing, but not willing to sacrifice and work under my leadership. They hadn't learned authority. They hadn't learned how to

submit to authority. So three people in one year left and my parents were complaining, "Well, Ms. Elm, how are you hiring these people?" So it was all on me. (Ms. Elm, p. 20)

She related another example of staffing stress.

I need a teacher for next year and I'm going away tomorrow for my vacation, and I don't have all my ducks in a row, as they say. I don't have everything in place. And this has happened before. And other times I'd panic. And, I'd make a decision on someone I wasn't fully convinced was the best. (Ms. Elm, p. 19)

Stress was a facet of school administration that became a major career inhibitor.

**Advanced degree.** Another career inhibitor identified by Ms. Elm was her lack of an advanced degree. "If I had it to do over again and if I was talking to someone who wants to start out, I think what I would have done, is I would have pursued a higher degree...In education. And I would have pursued it because it would have opened more doors for me," (Ms. Elm, p. 16). The lack of an advanced degree was a career inhibitor.

**Herself.** Ms. Elm noted a particular facet of herself as a career inhibitor; she, on occasion, experienced a lack of respect based upon her gender.

The attitude was first observed in her own family as a youth. "...In the Old World home, or culture, background like that, a woman has very little value but to serve and to care for others" (Ms. Elm, p. 5). She also recalled,

...There was a time I remember with my brother, he said, he asked me to do something, my oldest brother. Now in an Old World home you are to reverence that, because they are the male dominant, and they are more important in the Old World home. So when he said something, I needed to submit. (Ms. Elm, p. 6)

After leaving home to go to the mission field she again faced the challenge of being female. Ms. Elm taught in a Gypsy village until,

The people came down from the North, from the city church and put a stop to it because I was a woman. And they told me that I couldn't teach anymore because I was a woman. And yet when you stop to look at the mission fields, who are there but women, because they are willing to make a sacrifice. So God doesn't look at the vessel, it's the spirit [that is] of value, not the vessel. So I had that as comfort to my heart, and I thought it doesn't matter Lord. You just use me where you want to use me. And I see the male world dominating, because, I have a feeling, as I analyze to justify what I see, the male world never really was trained to submission and under authority...And, you would think wouldn't you, that in a Christian world there would be a respect, mutual one to another, because we are all under Christ, and we are all sinners. But there is neither male or female with God... (Ms. Elm, p.22)

Later during her career, she again experienced negative responses toward her gender.

So my attitude toward the male world was not one of hostility or arrogant attitude, or of "I'll show you, I can do better than you." So I don't have that attitude. And I have more of a warm loving relationship with the male world. So that when men come to work with me I've treated them the same as the women. I didn't always get the same respect from them though, which I think created a little bit of a problem...Well I sort of felt that the male thought that because I was a female I wasn't worth anything, and they could play the game with me and could manipulate me to get what they wanted because they were male. And, I was able to take a stand that this is my position, not male or female, but as an administrator. So I really stood back on the policy that we had established in the school to operate it as, "This is policy. It has nothing to do with me, and I'm not vindictive toward you as a male." (Ms. Elm, p. 7)

She further expressed, "So I felt that some of the male feels that maybe there's more female favor, and he didn't get what he was due. But, it wasn't that at all. It was having to do with the job relationship" (Ms. Elm, p. 8).

These career influences left their imprint upon Ms. Elm and her career. Through it all her faith played an important and influential role.

### **Role of Faith**

The daily activities of living in addition to the rigors of Christian school administration provided opportunity for her to use faith. Ms. Elm's faith impacted her personal and professional life in the areas of career preparation, administrative style, and divine intervention.

**Career Preparation.** While preparing for a career in education, Ms. Elm embarked upon a journey that ultimately led to the position of Christian school administrator. With a pioneering spirit burning within, she began her search.

Through college, my senior year, I was searching for truth. And I was searching to find who I really was, and what was going to happen to me at the end of my life, and where I would go when I died. Those were very serious questions for me to find answers to...I was searching for truth...So um, I started searching, and I read all these different books. And I didn't know what faith was. Here I was in college in America, a Christian country and I didn't know anything about faith, or the life of faith, or what God expected of me...So I started reading the Bible and started opening the whole plan of God and I saw where I fit in God's plan. And, I gave my heart and my life to Him. From then on I had a new perspective to life. (Ms. Elm, p. 2)

Her faith and belief in what she read in the Bible caused her to accept this new way of life, an early step in preparation for Christian school administration.

There was a price to pay for this decision, her new faith, and what was in reality preparation for her future career.

...It wasn't easy, and I paid a price, because when I left home they kept all my clothes and money and everything I had. They just disowned me. So it wasn't an easy thing to get out to do what I really wanted to do. So it took a lot of courage, but it took determination, because I believed. (Ms. Elm, p. 13)

When asked why she was disowned, she continued. "Because I had left the faith, their church which again was very strong orthodox. They are very narrow in their perspective to mine. So they look at me, they admire what I've done, but there's a price always to pay for what you believe" (Ms. Elm, p. 13). Character was built early in her life.

In the face of adversity Ms. Elm continued her pioneer's effort, allowing her faith to direct her. She packed her education and her newly found faith and headed toward a new frontier, the mission fields of Europe, for the purpose of teaching orphans and teaching the Word of God.

Then I went to Europe and worked on the mission field. And I worked over men and I taught them because they were from Gypsy villages, absolutely in darkness. And, when I spoke to them and they were changing and they were being given life, because the Word of God is life, and the village began to grow and be effective. (Ms. Elm, p. 22)

However, because she was a woman, the local religious leaders stopped her from teaching and sharing her faith. Undaunted, she returned to the U.S. and continued to blaze a trail toward what she would eventually become, a Christian school administrator.

After teaching many more years, she was presented with the opportunity to head her own school. Her faith continued to play a role in her career preparation. "And I thought, 'Lord, I don't know what to do.' But, suddenly, you do know what to do" (Ms. Elm, p. 4).

Though she was disowned by her family in those early years of commitment, her faith caused those experiences and attributes to become positive input into her life.



I am very thankful that I had the richness of my home structure. They were very structured, very demanding of us. We needed to learn obedience, and we needed to learn submission. Which I think was a very rich quality that they gave us. Finding the Lord, I think that was sanctified into a better perspective of what it is to be a woman, to be determined, to have aggressiveness, and assertiveness, and yet know when to submit. (Ms. Elm, p. 5)

**Administrative Style.** Ms. Elm's faith played an important role in her career, particularly her administrative style, the way she conducted her daily business. Her personal identity was linked with her faith which was the foundation from which she saw her work as an administrator. "And my identity to God enabled me to know who I was...with strength rather than weakness" (Ms. Elm, p. 6). She dealt with staff from a creative God perspective. "And I began to think that God is a Creator and I'm to be creative too. So I was free and I thought that...probably goes back to this person that I've been able to be in philosophy...allowing people to be creative to the fullest of their ability" (Ms. Elm, p. 11). This framework of faith helped her to see good things in every situation.

And so I have to sit back to see all the positives I can see in a person, and know the negatives and know how I'm going to construct a positive communication so that the negatives disappear. And that takes a lot of inner-thinking and skill and wisdom which I don't think I learned from the books, but I learned through life, and maybe reading the scriptures a lot to get wisdom. (Ms. Elm, p. 16)

Trusting God, she endeavored to staff the school effectively, evidence of her faith in action.

And I was willing to settle for less, and I said, "No, I'm not going to do that anymore. I'm going to trust you Lord." I've had several teachers come in for interviews. And I wasn't fully pleased. Not with their credentials, but with their persons. And the person is the key thing for me in education. So, I'm going away perfectly at peace because I know God is going to bring them in time. (Ms. Elm, p. 19)

She mentored her staff enlisting the Godly wisdom of her faith as the model of mentorship.

I think the people that work under me are being mentored...In their sensitivity to working with the children...I had a teacher last year who was very scared of the fact that she didn't think she could handle what was expected of her. She had worked for me for four years. And I saw rich qualities in her, but I wanted to move her into a classroom like a first grade. And she didn't know if she could do it because she felt insecure. She had never done it before. And I said, "But you can because you do have these abilities. I've seen them." And I have enough faith in her to guide her and to tell her, and I formed in her attitude a confidence that she needed. And I praised her often. And I gave her a lot of affirmation...And that gave her encouragement. (Ms. Elm, p. 17)

Ms. Elm sought daily counsel and leadership from God so that her leadership was patterned after Him.

Well, everyday I come in and ask the Lord, "What is today, Lord? What is going to happen today?" And I sort of really feel in my heart that God is the Boss. And that I need to go to Him for counsel. I can't give it to someone else if I haven't got it. I remember reading somewhere that you can never be a leader unless you learn to be under authority. And that was the thing that helped me from my childhood...I had to learn to be obedient and learn to respect authority. And those rich qualities enable me today to transfer them to God when I was saved. So then I can in turn relate them to my position now. I'm still under His authority. So He guides... (Ms. Elm, p. 19)

Faith was an everyday element of Ms. Elm's administrative style, including staffing, mentoring, leadership and administrative responsibilities. Her faith was also evident in divine intervention.

**Divine intervention.** Divine intervention was evident in Ms. Elm's life and career. In her early search for truth and purpose for her life, God sent a man with a message that radically changed her life. "And this gentleman who saw the book I was reading...[he] said to me, 'That is not what you should be reading. What you need is the Bible'" (Ms. Elm, p. 2). This divinely appointed encounter opened the door for revelation of God's purpose for her life, to help others. After her conversion, she embarked on a new journey of faith that eventually led her to Stillman Christian School.

Ms. Elm's faith provided opportunity for supernatural divine intervention in her career. When things looked the worst, the Christian school she was with closed her resource program and terminated her contract, God was about to intervene. "...I started

teaching at a Christian high school...in the resource program for the learning needs child. And, after three years they decided to close down the program so they dismissed me because they didn't need me. And I was devastated" (Ms. Elm, p. 4). However, God had a better plan for her gifts and talents. With the support of school patrons a new concept was created in the heart of Ms. Elm, a private Christian school for the student with learning difficulties. "So they started me and they paid for my rent of an office and they gave me furniture" (Ms. Elm, p. 4). Divine intervention set Ms. Elm into Christian school administration.

### **Summary**

The life journey of Ms. Elm revealed a trail blazed through a new frontier of faith, family, and career, all facets of the person she was to become. Ms. Elm, Christian school administrator, demonstrated her leadership skills in an educational setting designed to meet the learning differences of individual students. Her background including personal history and education provided a strong platform from which she launched her career. That career path including her early goals, personal vision, and her effort to fill the need at hand led her to another continent, home again to teach high school and elementary, and finally to the key administrative position at Stillman Christian School. "So in a way this has been my outlet. This has been my mission field. This is where God placed me" (Ms. Elm, p. 23).

This arduous journey, her career, was influenced by both career facilitators and inhibitors. Some factors helped her career while others hindered it, but through it all her faith played an integral role in

becoming what she was to be. "I just knew I had to be what God wanted me to be" (Ms. Elm, p. 20).

### **Ms. Birch**

At the age of 66, most women would be applauding the virtues of retirement, not this pioneer. She continued to press on into new career territory. Lively, conversive and zealous for her cause, each of these characteristic strokes of the brush revealed, upon the canvas of her life, the image of a pioneer woman with decades of stories to tell and experiences to share. This Caucasian school leader appeared in her denim dress covered with pencil and crayon symbols sharing the warmth of a loving grandmother with cookies in the oven. This was the aura of Ms. Birch. There was no doubt of her education, yet, it was overshadowed by her effort to create a down to earth, personal, non-threatening atmosphere. Though a distinct professional, because of her pioneering heart, one could have easily imagined her as part of the Oklahoma Land Rush, there to establish the first school.

### **Educational Setting**

Once a bedroom community, now engulfed by the metro-plex, the location of His Servant Christian Academy was one of lower socio-economic prestige than was experienced in the area 20 years previous. However, an atmosphere of growth and financial stability permeated the campus as the shadow of a new, under-construction facility continued to rise above the present home of the school. The present setting was a building that appeared to have aged beyond its years, probably because of the continual daily, high traffic use not only from the school but also church activities. Very close, cramped

quarters provided the work element within which Ms. Birch thrived as His Servant Christian Academy's elementary principal.

His Servant, a pre-school - 12th grade academy, provided the educational backdrop for the training of about 990 students, 550 of which were enrolled in the elementary program under Ms. Birch's supervision. It had grown considerably since the day of conception in 1980 with 27 students. She supervised about 30 elementary teachers, an all female staff. The major source of income for the school was tuition.

The school was under the ministry of the church, however, it is governed by its own school board with 12 members.

I think all but four of them are church members, and the other four are parents. They don't have to be members of the church. So now our structure is that we have a headmaster, principal, and teachers, and directors...It comes under the auspices of the church, but it's a committee of the church, but it is our boss level you know. And I think all but four of them have to be members of the church. This is a ministry of the church...He [pastor] has no direct control. (Ms. Birch, p. 27)

His Servant Christian Academy, housed in the cramped, yet adequate structure, provided the educational setting for Ms. Birch, her faculty, and students.

### **Background**

The background of this pioneer administrator well prepared her for the encounters of her career. Both her personal history and education were influential factors.

**Personal history.** Ms. Birch was reared in the strong pioneering atmosphere of an oil field town of the 30's and 40's. Her father was employed in the oil fields. She was part of a close knit family. "...My mother was Italian and she was always hugging us. We just grew up in a hugging family, in a very communicative open family" (Ms. Birch, p. 7). She attended the same church and school all of her young life before graduating as valedictorian and receiving a scholarship to a private university.

After graduating from college, she moved to a major metropolitan area to teach in the public school system. "...I actually started teaching when I was...about seven, I taught my five year old sister how to read" (Ms. Birch, p. 2). With three aunts and her mother as educator models and her father a safety instructor, teaching was in her blood.

She married a minister, becoming a pastor's wife, and began her family. With six years of public school experience, she chose to leave her career for 20 years so that she might be able to stay home with her family. Returning to her career, she substitute taught for three years before re-entering full time. She then taught 18 years in Christian schools. During this period, after 30 years of marriage, Ms. Birch was divorced. She has two adult children and grandchildren.

**Education.** As a child, Ms. Birch experienced, through her family, much exposure to the field of education. "...My mother had been a teacher, and three of my aunts have been teachers. And my mother had also been a principal," (Ms. Birch, p. 1). Education was very important part of her life. After high school graduation, on scholarship, she attended a private university. "So I majored in

Education, English, and minored in Spanish and Bible, and I was a voice minor. I sang in all the glee clubs and choirs and loved Music and Art" (Ms. Birch, p. 1).

Later in her career, she began a Master's program in education at the State University. Upon completion of the program her Master's thesis received an award from the university. "[My] Master's of Education and certification was in Reading Specialist" (Ms. Birch, p. 3). Ms. Birch was state certified as a Reading Specialist, however, she had no state administrative certification. She was working toward administrative certification with the Christian Schools Association [CSA]. "Really, I've intended to get my doctorate, but I don't know if I will or not. But I love research and I love reading, and I'm just an avid student. I guess I'll be a career student from now until the end of my days" (Ms. Birch, p. 2).

Educator models, a close communicative family, along with many other facets of her personal history, and a desire to learn and pursue an advanced degree, each helped to propel Ms. Birch toward a lifelong career in and pursuit of education. That career path ultimately led to administration.

### **Career Path**

The career path of this pioneer held a 20 year detour, nevertheless, after the detour and many years of service, her career path crossed an intersection that led to school administration, and she continued on that trail. "...I totally taught 25 years in all...Then I was asked to take this position [principal]..." (Ms. Birch, p. 1). Her early goals, developing vision, and desire to fill the need were each facets of the "road less taken," toward school administration.



**Early goals.** With several family role models, Ms. Birch was destined to follow their footsteps into education. "...I started teaching Sunday school when I was 13 and I had about eight little girls, and I taught them" (Ms. Birch, p. 2). Teaching was so much a part of her family life, that her career choice was not a surprise. "So then I had a scholarship to the university and I wanted to be a teacher" (Ms. Birch, p. 1).

During that 20 year career furlough she continued what she knew best but in a different element, teaching in her church organization. She was state missions director for three years over a 5 1/2 state region. In addition, "I was the state GA [girls auxiliary] director...I had to teach the teachers how to develop leadership. That was really neat and I loved doing that" (Ms. Birch, p. 9). Teaching was part of who she was whether in school or her church organization.

She gently returned to classroom teaching by substituting for three years before teaching full time again, thus satisfying her goal and desire to teach. "Then I taught 18 years in Christian schools as a 3rd grade teacher" (Ms. Birch, p. 9). That period of her career saw a new vision begin to develop within, one that would eventually lead to administration.

**Vision.** During those 18 years, change occurred in her thought patterns. Instead of the limited thinking of "me and my class", Ms. Birch's thoughts traveled beyond her classroom walls. A new expanded vision was developing, one that encompassed the entire school as an entity.

And I just began to look through our school to see how we were doing...and my sister was a principal...at the time. And she'd come up to help me every year to put up my bulletin boards and everything. I'd be talking about, "You know I wished the school would do this, or I wonder why they are doing this?" She said, "Well, one of these days you'll be an administrator...you're thinking global thoughts now, like the whole school." (Ms. Birch, p. 4)

This developing administrative vision became a lens through which she could see the school in a new dimension. As a teacher destined to become an administrator, she began to see the school entity as a ministry tool through which to teach the Word of God.

The school was a ministry not just a center for academics, the new foundational key of her vision. "...I think they also have to see this as a ministry, actually, it's a teaching ministry, but it's an outreach to reach children for the Lord, and help them to come to know Jesus as their personal savior and to give themselves training..." (Ms. Birch, p. 10). It was an essential element for the church leadership to share that part of the vision. "But, it's important for the pastor to realize that this is one of his biggest ministries, probably the biggest ministry" (Ms. Birch, p. 27).

The most important facet of the school entity was that of being a ministry to the students. Part of the vision that developed in those 18 years of teaching in Christian schools, was the need to teach the Word of God. During that developmental era of her career, immersion in Christian education as a teacher with administrative

tendencies, her perceived paramount assignment was "Teach the Word of God".

I believe the main thing that helped me was just having grown up in the Word and knowing that's why I wanted to teach children, because they would learn to read and love the Word, and want to find out God's will for their lives; and they would in turn go out and serve Him in whatever and helped them to be trained academically so they could reach the highest goal that God had for them. (Ms. Birch, p. 12)

It was imperative that the administrator have the vision, "Teach the Word of God." "...I think first of all they [administrators] have to be centered in the Word and know that's why a Christian school is a Christian school because we teach the Word" (Ms. Birch, p. 10). This aspect of her developing vision of administration with the purpose of making sure that God's Word was taught to the next generation, was accomplished through the teachers.

If we are really a Christian school, then our people that train and teach our kids should be, they should be in the Word themselves. They should have a quiet time with the Lord everyday and pray and be involved with their church. And they should try to live before those children to show them who Jesus is and how He loves them and get them in. Help them be born again in Jesus and read the Word, learn the word and find God's perfect will for their lives...I know that was one of my goals. (Ms. Birch, p. 11)

Teaching the word of God to students in her classroom and teachers in Christian School Association seminars progressed during this

phase of her career. However, she desired a wider impact. The change was occurring, transition was in the air, all part of her developing vision for administration. A vision that would soon have an expanded outlet of expression.

**Filling the need.** At the close of those 18 years of preparation and development in Christian schools, her career path shifted to a new level, administration. Similar to her peers, with no job search, she received a phone call that ultimately resulted in being approached to fill a need as an administrator at His Servant Christian Academy. Ms. Birch was contacted by the school board and faculty to accept the offer of her first school administrative position. "...So I came up here and visited with them...So finally I prayed a lot about it, and they called me and said, 'Quit praying and tell us, because the board meets tonight.' I said, 'Okay,' and I was unanimously accepted" (Ms. Birch, p. 5). There she experienced a broader influence with the opportunity to implement her vision. As a servant of God, she saw her administrative position as that of stewardship, not ownership of the position or authority that came with it.

People used to say, "Can I sit here and use your phone?"

"Sure it's not my desk, it's not my phone, it's God's. I'm permitted to use it, so you can use it too." So it's like I don't own things. There's a difference in ministry and ownership, stewardship. It's like that's my life philosophy, if God calls us to a position, it is a stewardship position. He's called me here to minister and to be the steward over it for five years... (Ms. Birch, p. 20)

An attitude of service continued to permeate her career as she looked forward to her next level assignment, that of Chaplain and Admissions Director. "And I really think God really heard my cry because, now as a Chaplain I'll get to work with the students in that area specifically, how to pray with them," (Ms. Birch, p. 2).

Ms. Birch's career path, from those first years in public school to her new assignment for the coming year as Chaplain and Admissions Director, saw her early goals to teach fulfilled; her developing vision, for the school to be a ministry of teaching the Word of God, satisfied; and the need for her to become principal of His Servant's Christian Academy accomplished. Her pioneering career path continued in administration, more specifically, it was to be on the new road of service as a Chaplain and Admissions Director. She continued to traverse uncharted domains.

### **Career Facilitators**

The direction taken by a career, the twists and turns it experienced, were determined by career influences along the way. Similar to her peers, Ms. Birch experienced positive influences, facilitators.

Ms. Birch credited her family and teaching experience as the greatest influences upon her development. "I think that the greatest asset I did and have...was to have had parents who taught and who had been in administration and having taught kindergarten, first, second, third, all the way up to eighth at some point..." (Ms. Birch, p. 38). However, many other positive influences facilitated the growth and development of her career including; 1) support of others, 2) professional associations, and 3) facets of herself.

**Support.** The support of others was instrumental during strategic phases of her life and career. Personal support was provided by three general sources, family, friends, and role models. Within that support system, Ms. Birch gained the confidence necessary for her career to develop and progress toward administration.

Her family was the initial source of career development and support. "So mama says I always was a teacher" (Ms. Birch, p. 2). Ms. Birch entered the field of education with a strong influence and heritage of family educational professionals. Her parents, aunts, and a sister were educators. "My mother, as I said, was a teacher and principal. My dad was a teacher. He was, even though he worked in an oil field, he had a lot of training in safety, safety engineering. And he had taught the employees how to be, observe safety rules and all. He was a good teacher to me" (Ms. Birch, p. 11). When faced with a career shift to administration, her family was again a source of support.

My sister was a principal. My sister came up here and she said, "You can do it. I'll help you." For two weeks she came and packed up all my stuff and helped me move. Helped me find an apartment...We got all my stuff moved. She helped me set up my office..."I know you can do it. You can do it." Nothing but encouragement. (Ms. Birch, p. 22)

Support of friends and peers also contributed to the progress of Ms. Birch's career. One of those contacts was the divine link to her first administrative position.

...One of my friends who taught here, who taught science, called me and said, "They are looking for a principal...we've turned in your name...You'll love this school and we've told all of them." And there was another man that taught here who had been in the school there. So two teachers, former teachers who knew my work, and also the headmaster and the principal who knew my work, and the pastor's wife who was just a dear dear friend of mine, they all wanted me to come. (Ms. Birch, p. 5)

A catalyst toward administration was found in the intervention and support of friends at just the right time when her thoughts were pointed in that direction. The influence and support of friends facilitated her career change.

Another source of support was found in educator role models. "...I had good people over me. That helped me too" (Ms. Birch, p. 8). When asked what specifically helped her to become an administrator, she responded, "Well first of all, having served under a good administrator...of course during those 18 years there were about six different ones...And everyone of them were strong in different ways" (Ms. Birch, p. 12). Positive relationships with her role models provided a solid source of on the job training and preparation before assuming her first administrative position. "And I think I was under some real strong examples where I taught 18 years. Not in the public school particularly, but I think that I was very fortunate in the six headmasters I've had in those 18 years..." (Ms. Birch, p. 13). Several supervising role models provided input into her career and facilitated

the development of her administrative career once she was in the position.

...They [pastor and wife] were very strong administrators in this school. He was superintendent and she had been our assistant headmaster there. And so I had a high regard for both of them. And I had many conferences with them. You know, "I just don't know what to do here please help me." And they always gave me Biblical advice. The man who had been headmaster there was headmaster here, and he was good. He helped me a lot. And the girl that started the school, the director here helped, all four of those people, we were just a team. (Ms. Birch, p. 8)

"...I felt I had a good covering from my headmasters and my superintendent...and that was supportive most of the time. If it wasn't we talked about it and tried to agree" (Ms. Birch, p. 37).

Peer role models also helped to mold her into the administrator she became. "And then just being with other principals, other women principals, pick their brains. That's what I've done through the five years. Yeah that's going to help. I just keep a little notebook and go to lunch with them, you know spend the whole hour talking about how you spot this and how did you do that?" (Ms. Birch, p. 37). A variety of educator role models helped to facilitate Ms. Birch's administrative career.

**Professional Associations.** Another facilitator of Ms. Birch's career was her involvement with CSA, a professional association. "CSA has been wonderful, the Christian School Association. And I've gone to all those [meetings] since 1971...It's really great, I learned a lot from them. I learned more from CSA seminars than I ever learned



in college. That's true. I think about any administrator would tell you that" (Ms. Birch, p. 14).

The CSAT [Christian School Association Teachers] meeting is once a month, and all the administrators go...there's about 25 of us and you are in little groups there too, that helps. And you just ask a lot of questions, "How do you do this? How do you do that?...What test do you use here and what do you use there?" So you gain a lot of knowledge from that. That was very helpful. (Ms. Birch, p. 15).

Continued education and peer association through a professional group was very beneficial to her career.

**Herself.** Certain personal characteristics and her gender, all facets of herself as an individual, were also facilitators of her career. She was a people person, she was her own person, and she operated in humility.

She was a people person. "...You have to be able to really love to work with people. And I have loved to work with these people," (Ms. Birch, p. 17).

She was also obedient to authority but retained the right to be her own person.

I've always tried to be amicable. I really believe that scripture that says, "Obey those in authority so that you have a good report and not have a great dispute." I haven't always agreed with them but I've always gone to them in a private encounter and tried to work it out...If I agree with a person, we pray this and I feel like it's true, I will do it. But, if not I will meet with them and say, "I don't agree with you on that, and I'm sorry that I have

to take this opinion." Because I think that's a strong mark of an administrator...have to be your own person," (Ms. Birch, p. 24).

A humble heart also positively influenced her career.

He cannot, she cannot, we [cannot], become prideful and look at me what I've done. I mean He [God] said that comes before your downfall. Just, pride is just a mistake to get into that...But every now and then you know it creeps in, but I really think God honors that humble spirit... (Ms. Birch, p. 19).

An additional facet of herself, her gender, also had positive impact upon her career.

Well, for one thing, having been a mother, and a wife, and a pastor's wife...I understand the child and the parent. Also I was divorced...now the only good thing that has come out of that, is like this year I had a little mom, in fact one of our staff now is separated from her husband...they've all come to me because they know I've been there...And I think if I hadn't been a woman, a mom, a grandmother, and divorced, and a pastor's wife, all those things, nothing's wasted. God's going to use it all. And there are people that you can minister to and no one else can minister to. (Ms. Birch, p. 33)

Being female was helpful in some ways. "If I hadn't had to walk through disciplining my own girls, and my own grandchildren and my own kids I taught, I would never have been able to help her...So see there are very strong reasons why a woman can hold a position as principal," (Ms. Birch, p. 34). She continued, "I had a strong mother and a strong father. But, my parents taught me I could do just about anything I wanted to. And it didn't matter if you were a boy or a girl,

just in God's way train yourself and get in there and do it" (Ms. Birch, p. 34).

Ms. Birch experienced several career facilitators. The support of others, including family, friends, and role models; professional associations; and facets of herself, including personal characteristics and her gender, positively influenced her career development. However, Ms. Birch also experienced negative influences upon her career.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Careers were influenced on a daily basis, sometimes positively, sometimes in a negative way. Those hindrances, inhibitors, had a profound impact. "...There are hindering things that happen" (Ms. Birch, p. 23). Ms. Birch expressed concern regarding several inhibitors she had experienced: 1) stress, 2) hindering words of others, 3) fear, 4) herself as a female.

**Stress.** Stress was a factor in every career, however, similar to her peers, stress appeared to play a prominent role in the life of a woman Christian school administrator. Several types of stress were noted: 1) general level of difficulty of the job and time demands, 2) extreme overload of responsibility, 3) staffing challenges, and 4) financial stress.

Ms. Birch regarded school administration as a generally difficult task, the first form of stress, a career inhibitor. "It's a hard job...and it's a job you don't turn off at night. It's like teaching more. And summers you still work" (Ms. Birch, p. 40). "The only thing I would say is that it is very difficult. You better be ready to work pretty hard, and it's not an eight hour job. But that's the way education is anyway"

(Ms. Birch, p. 38). School administration was not an easy career choice.

The second source of stress was an expressed concern for the sheer volume of responsibility and extreme overload that lead to a stressful experience in her career.

It happened four years ago that we had a darling little girl here, Sue, who was an elementary counselor, and she did a super job...her husband was a minister and they got a job, a church in Cleveland. So when Sue left they didn't rehire, and I, they gave me the counselor [job], Christian School Association [work], and all the achievement testing for the whole school on top of principal. And that last year was a killer, because I had, by that time I'd gone from 300 to 550 children. I'd come from 15 to 30 teachers. And I was assuming two jobs, (Ms. Birch, p. 6).

The challenge of staffing school positions caused stress. When asked why she never saw herself becoming an administrator, stressful confrontations was the reason.

Because I thought I had to confront people. And you do have to, and it's very difficult when you have to. I really love to work with people, but you do have to confront people..I can share because I remember my first year, the teacher is no longer here. She was really a good teacher as far as academics, but she just for some reason or another she couldn't really show a lot of love to the children...But I'd have to call her in and say you need to find ways to show these children that you love them...But a lot of people are not like that. So you do have to

learn to be loving and always did it in private, very quietly in my office. I never did it in front of anybody, and I always made an appointment and asked her to come in. We prayed, and I would help them and I'd make a list of things I wanted to work on together...Occasionally there is someone we have to let go and it really hurts. And I just didn't figure I was tough enough. But you get that way. (Ms. Birch, p. 7)

"When somebody is dismissed it's usually you and the headmaster or you and the board. But its hard" (Ms. Birch, p. 8). Staffing, a source of stress, inhibited her career.

In addition, the stress of the position was compounded by financial stress caused by the lack of adequate salaries. That impacted staffing needs as well as her own personal finances.

Our pay scales are just not anything like public schools. They are just not funded. The tuition is our main [source of funding], we don't like to raise that, because that drops kids out. So there's not much, unless a man has a wife that makes a big salary, he really can't afford to, to teach here...We need a better financial base than what we have. And we are never going to be able to attract the higher income people...without a broader base for the high income. (Ms. Birch, p. 28)

Financial stress caused by an inadequate salary also negatively impacted Ms. Birch directly.

Well, it's been difficult for me not to have very much money. And I'm a single woman, and I have two daughters that I help. I don't know how a man could do this unless he had a doctorate and could command a higher salary and had a wife

that was working...This year I found out I made \$10,000 less than a first year teacher in the local public schools. That hurt...And my friends that are principals make twice what I make in public education. (Ms. Birch, p. 39)

The financial sacrifice, caused by lack of an adequate salary, brought stress into her life and career.

So either you just have to learn how to manage it [money]. I have a house that I rent. So that kind of helps...But, when I was a teacher...I had several other jobs just to keep afloat, you know. Yeah, but that is a drawback...It helps to have, if it's a two person income family, it's probably easier than one...It's just that when I'm single it's pretty hard. But God's come through for me. (Ms. Birch, p. 40)

**Words of others.** The second inhibitor noted was the hindering words and influence of others. Those influences strummed emotional chords that were a challenge to overcome.

There were people that say, "You're not, at this age of life, you're changing positions." I had a friend that went to graduate school with me. She said, "I never dreamed when we went to graduate school you would end up a principal. You're giving up your summer?" I mean (laugh), you know, people come up with all kinds of stuff. Those are hindering spirits. They do hinder you...They are just like little arrows pointing at you...The people that try to hinder you are only doing it for your good they think...But you know, yeah, there were hindering things. My mom wasn't sure. She was living with me and she was 82.

"Are you sure honey? This is going to be hard." She had been a principal before. (Ms. Birch, p. 22)

She provided another example of words from a close friend that were a hindrance to her career.

Well, my former headmaster, my former principal, Ms. Lee, when she found out they had offered me this, and they had just offered her the headmaster, she did not want me to leave that school. She begged me not to go, but I said, "Oh Ellen." She said, "You're the best teacher I've got here". Well, but when somebody really treasures your leadership and they beg you and they don't want you to leave, it's almost like they are closing the door for you...And we were real strong in the Lord, like sisters. So for her to tell me that, boy that was hard. (Ms. Birch, p. 20)

**Fear.** Fear of the unknown and new responsibility became an inhibitor that had to be faced.

I think I was fearful at one point that I couldn't do it physically. I was thinking, "Here I am 61 years old." And I've always been in good health but I'm thinking, "Man alive, how am I going to handle those steps and check...300 kids and 20 teachers. The devil throws those doubts in there, those fears...[You] really have to put down that fear, because the devil will try to make you think you can't handle it. If he doesn't attack you physically, he'll say, "Well you're not smart enough to know. Your credentials aren't strong enough or you know, you're this, this and this." (Ms. Birch, p. 23)

**Herself.** Being female in a traditionally male position proved to be an inhibitor to her career as well.

I think people are more and more used to seeing women principals now than they used to be, because back when I was a kid there was never a woman. It was always a man, but just in the last 20 years or so, more women have accomplished this. But there are still a lot of men principals, there's an awful lot of them. (Ms. Birch, p.37)

Some difficulties arose when dealing with parents who did not acknowledge her position simply because she was female.

A lot of times, the men particularly, would be, they didn't want to talk to me, they wanted to talk to a man...One said one day, "Well I'm sorry but I want to see a man"...I said, "That's your privilege." I never fought it because I figured...you're fighting a losing battle. I really think so. Partly because I was not going to fight it. I think one time I did because the man, he wasn't here, and I said, "Well you'll have to wait a week. Can I help you in the mean time?" And I think that humble spirit is what stole his heart off. And I really think that, see I think that a lot of times we humble ourselves, and I'm not a man and I'll never be one, and I'm not going to act like one. If you want to talk with me as a lady, I'll be glad...But there is a place where, yes they want to see a man. (Ms. Birch, p. 32)

She considered why that was the case. "I think it's the background they come out of. You know, the macho men are in control thing. And it just never bothered me because you are going to meet people like that" (Ms. Birch, p. 33).



Now a lot of women like to serve under a man...Well I think they maybe some of them think a man has a greater authority and he's got more control, or more powers with powers that be...I mean I'm not a feminist at all, but I do think God calls women to seek administration just as well as men. And, you have to win your respect from those people who don't. And you have to prove to them that you are going to be able to do it. (Ms. Birch, p. 34)

Lack of respect for her position as administrator was a negative influence. She shared an example of her position not being acknowledged respectfully by both a parent and her supervisor.

There was another problem here where people would go to the headmaster and go around me. And I think that's bad. In fact our handbook says that if you have a problem...the first thing they need to do and I always say, "Have you talked to the teacher?"...And that Matthew 18 works. But, if they go around you and go up here then you've got this problem back here...and you're caught right smack in the middle. And that happened...I went here and I said, "Why didn't you guys come to me. Why didn't you do Matthew 18? Why didn't you tell them, 'Have you talked to the teacher or have they talked to Ms. Birch?'...And I confronted him [headmaster] one time the first year. I said, "Mr. Brown, you let the people come around to you and that's not right." He said, "I know it and I'm sorry and I apologize." You see that's where it is. The Bible teaching works...And when you follow the chain of command you go to your immediate supervisor and not talk to everybody

else...When I came her there was a lot of this. (Ms. Birch, p. 30)

Lack of respect of her position was a challenge to her career.

In addition to her own office and domain, she also experienced gender bias in the board room.

Well a lot of times when I was at the board meetings, I felt like that the people who were males got more attention and they got better support and their ideas were accepted quicker. But the whole school board was nearly male except for...the Pastor's wife. That's all...I usually went to her first. She was a dear dear friend. And she and I agreed on everything. So usually, she had a higher position of authority, so I could, maybe it wasn't the right way, but that's how it is. (Ms. Birch, p. 36)

Ms. Birch experienced career inhibitors in the form of job stress, hindering words, fear, and herself as a female in a traditionally male domain. These negative career influences, inhibitors, left their imprint upon her career.

Career influences left road markers along her frontier trail to administration. However, her faith and the role it played in her life and career had its own profound impact.

### **Role of Faith**

Faith in God and His Word was an influential factor in the course of Ms. Birch's life and career. She chose to marry a minister, then gave 20 years of her life to her marriage and church organization. That experience helped to prepare her for a future administrative position in education. Faith was evident in three areas:

1) career preparation and choices, 2) her administrative style, and 3) divine intervention.

**Career preparation.** Ms. Birch made a choice early in life that proved to direct the course of her entire life, including her career.

I remember when I was 13, I made a commitment that I would serve God in a full way, whatever He wanted me to do. And at that point I didn't know what it was, but later on it was, it was marrying a minister and teaching my own children, teaching Sunday school, and teaching GA's in other schools and Christian schools. (Ms. Birch, p. 11)

Her decision to place God in control of her life profoundly impacted other life and career decisions that were made later.

At the close of her teaching career, she was inwardly readying for the next step, administration. Her faith in God again had an impact.

What they don't realize is even though it's hard to step out of a secure and comfortable position, I was very restless my last year there [teaching]. In fact I remember in May I'd taken these bulletin boards down and I'd put [them] away, and I'd think, "You're not going to need this again." And I'd think, "That is the craziest thought I've ever had." But see, the Holy Spirit was already telling me, "I'm releasing you from bulletin boards." ...And it was just little bitty things like that...He would tell me, "You're not going to need this again." (Ms. Birch, p. 22)

God was preparing her mind, helping her to be ready to make the right decision when His plan of administration was revealed.

She searched to educate herself on the subject of God's will for her life and how to determine that. Ms. Birch wanted to be confirmed in what she believed was His plan for her life and the position He had prepared for her. "...You just have to search. I must have read every book there is on knowing the will of God" (Ms. Birch, p. 23).

Once the decision was clearly made her faith again stepped in. "And I went into it [administration], 'Lord show me.' And I think when you humble yourself and just lay your life down, He shows you what to do. And He leads you. He goes before you" (Ms. Birch, p. 23). Her initial preparation and choices were complete. Ms. Birch's faith had led her on a pioneering adventure to the new frontier of Christian school administration.

**Administrative style.** The administrative style of Ms. Birch was greatly influenced by her faith. She felt the first and most important part of a strong administration was godliness. "Well to me, I think the basic is, number one, they have to be a godly Christian person who loves the Lord and knows the Word" (Ms. Birch, p. 10). This belief and the role her faith played in her administrative style were evident in two emerging facets, the importance of 1) prayer and 2) Biblical authority.

Prayer, one facet of the role faith played in her administrative style, was used in decision making and as a ministry in behalf of students and staff. She sought God's direction through prayer when decisions were to be made. "A lot of times I'd just get on my face and say, 'Lord, show me what to do'" (Ms. Birch, p. 31).

In administration, you have to make a decision. And you need to think about it, pray about it, get counsel from others who are

trained and well qualified, but then, bottom line is you have to decide. And you probably won't always be right, but you have to make a choice and walk with Him. (Ms. Birch, p. 13)

"Lot of times you really don't know what to do. You're just totally depending upon the Lord crying, 'Help'" (Ms. Birch, pg. 18).

Prayer was also used as a tool of ministry to and for the student body and staff. As a matter of course, she prayed for them. "I prayed for the student body, but I prayed for my teachers, because that was like my class. And you need to be a strong prayer warrior" (Ms. Birch, p. 18).

Prayer was also used as a direct ministry tool in times of crisis or special need. "I can hold them and cry with them and pray with them and stand on scripture with them" (Ms. Birch, p. 33). Prayer was a facet of the role of her faith actively influencing her administrative style.

The precept of Biblical authority, the second facet of her faith's role in Ms. Birch's administrative style, was evident in behavior expectations for students, staff, and herself. The application of Biblical authority was presented at each level. With the students, Ms. Birch emphasized the importance of authority and obedience to it. She established the umbrella metaphor of authority and its purpose throughout the school.

You are in a position of authority. This is what God taught me. And I used to teach my kids this with a big umbrella the first day of school. And I'd say, "This big umbrella represents God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and Jesus. And we are all under His authority. And here's two little umbrellas, that's your daddy

and mom, and then here's the principal, the headmaster and the teacher. And as long as you can stay under that authority and be obedient, the Bible says you will have a long and happy life. But when you step out of that and begin to go your own way, and disobey, boy you are going to get those fiery darts.

And so we're teaching you Biblical principal." (Ms. Birch, p. 7)

"But I think kids need to know that discipline came right straight from the heart of God. You'll be happy when you learn to obey those in authority like the umbrella thing" (Ms. Birch, p. 35).

The application of Biblical authority, the second way her faith played a daily role in Ms. Birch's administrative style, was also evident in the way she dealt with staff. "We just have a whole lot in there [handbook] about following the chain of command because it's Biblical. And some people won't even do it, you know. We've let a couple go who couldn't...But you know when people cannot submit they need to leave" (Ms. Birch, p. 35).

She used the umbrella metaphor to describe her position with the staff.

So that's how I had to do the teacher, not in that same regard, but you know, your authority here is to do this. And unless you do we can't keep you. And I finally learned that it's God's job...He's your umbrella, but you're the teacher's umbrella.

That's your class, and you will be held accountable for how you train them. And if you train them and they can't follow, you can't keep them. (Ms. Birch, p. 8)

Authority as a Biblical principal, was a daily expression of Ms. Birch's faith influencing her administrative style.

Ms. Birch also applied the concept of Biblical authority to herself and her position as administrator under the authority of a headmaster and board of education. The personal application of the precept revealed another example of the role of faith and its impact upon her administrative style.

Now it didn't mean we always agreed, because there were times when we disagreed. But we could always come back in love and work it out. But yes, you do have people over you who are strong leaders and do flow as a team. You have your school board, you know they help. Our headmaster is very strong, godly, Biblically oriented man, and I think he's a God send. (Ms. Birch, p. 9)

...Somebody said to me my first year, "Well we thought you'd just be a little rubber stamp, because you had served under him." And I said, "I'm nobody's rubber stamp, except Jesus"...The Bible says to be obedient to those over you...if you have a difference of opinion, let's solve it in a Christian way...Well you have to meet with them and you have to discuss it and work through it. And I did that. And I think once that the decision is made, then you have to walk on. (Ms. Birch, p. 24)

Ms. Birch's administrative style was directed by two factors, prayer and application of Biblical authority. Both influencing factors were facets of her faith taking an active role in the way she operated her school, her administrative style. Her faith was also evident in the expectation of divine intervention.

**Divine intervention.** Faith played a role in her career through the expectation of divine intervention. God's intervention was both anticipated and acknowledged in her daily walk.

She expressed an awareness that God opened doors of opportunity and change. "God always brings His Word forth and helps you know if you are qualified to do it. Now if, if I hadn't been, I think He would have closed the doors. So when the doors opened I just walked through it in faith" (Ms. Birch, p. 24). "I said, 'Yeah, but we know that God opens new doors'" (Ms. Birch, p. 21).

Ms. Birch shared an example that confirmed to her that the change to administration was indeed God's plan, but also a point of divine intervention into her life as a result of the prayers of others.

...The first day that I met with the teachers in in-service, I was teaching on spiritual warfare...and I was going through these charts and hands on things and I was showing them how I was going to do that... And this lady raised her hand and she said, "Did you teach this at Christian School Association?" I said, "Yeah, the last five years I taught it. I taught on how to teach the Word in every subject." And these three little girls [teachers] looked at me and said, "We sat in your seminar and we prayed for someone like you to come here." The tears just flooded. That was total confirmation to me...It was just the Lord's sweet confirmation. (Ms. Birch, pg. 21)

As expressed by Ms. Birch, God's intervention was also available to help with handling career responsibilities. "...I've learned that God brings you to that place [to handle confrontation] and He works through you" (Ms. Birch, p. 7).



She also credited divine intervention for her success in hiring quality staff.

"Boy, you've had a great track record on hiring teachers. How did you do this?"... And I just said, "Help, Lord." Because it's His part. He knows who needs to be here. I don't even know who needs to be here. I have a stack of applications six inches tall. "Where do I start Lord? Who do I call?" And without fail, I mean I could write a book on how these teachers came, in fact one today. It's just really neat how God brings people into His field, when we surrender back to Him. (Ms. Birch, p. 20)

Her faith had an active role in Ms. Birch's daily life and career. Faith impacted her career preparation and choices and her administrative style. Her faith was also evident in the expectation and receiving of divine intervention. Faith played a major role in her life.

### **Summary**

Decades of giving herself for others and in the face of difficulty, blazing a trail of faith toward her God ordained assignment, Ms. Birch pioneered a path of service in administration. As an administrator of His Servant Christian Academy, Ms. Birch endeavored to provide a warm, Godly, academically conducive educational setting for students and staff. Her adventurous journey to that place started decades before. A choice to continue her education in college and eventually acquiring a Master's degree helped to prepare her for that career. Her career path including her early goals, developing vision, and the opportunity to fill the need of an administrator at His Servant Christian Academy, was impacted along the way by career influences. Support of others, professional associations, and particular facets of herself

facilitated her career. However, she also experienced the inhibiting influences of stress, hindering words of others, fear, lack of respect, and herself as a female. Yet, throughout this frontier adventure, her faith helped her to press on. Ms. Birch traversed treacherous terrain in a pioneering effort to arrive at her present position, a woman Christian school administrator.

### **Ms. Oak**

Modern pioneers come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. This Caucasian pioneer, tall, stately, with the apparent inner strength of an oak tree, faced the daily challenges of Christian school administration with zest and the determination that where she was, was exactly where she should be. Dressed like any other female corporate executive in her late forties, this blonde heroine of school administration went to work "On the Hill," each day fulfilling her present God given assignment. However, there was no doubt that this position placed a distant second to that of her family. "I am a mother first" (Ms. Oak, pg. 1). Her first priority was her family, which not so strangely, was the very impetus that eventually led her to Christian school administration.

### **Educational Setting**

On a hill in the midst of an undeveloped area of the outer limits of the city, with a lovely view of the distant skyline, was found a new, efficient, and nicely appointed church and Maranatha School. Fresh, lively, and new, were the overwhelming characteristics of its educational setting. At the helm of this vessel was a woman pioneer who attended college to please her father. "Primarily, I went to college because of my daddy, because he did not get to go to

college. I did it for him. He wanted to make sure we all went to college" (Ms. Oak, p. 1). That educational experience set her upon a course toward leadership in school administration.

Maranatha School was operated under the auspices of the church, yet was directed by a school board. "Generally, we have one or two females of a total board of ten" (Ms. Oak, p. 21). "...On our school board we try to have a public school administrator...And the reason why we do that is because we think that is another safety net. By tapping into somebody who is out there in the real world, they give us ideas and insight with a check and balance" (Ms. Oak, p. 10). Though the school was under the indirect leadership of the church, there was substantial autonomy. "...My senior pastor is a very hands off type of person, allows the school to function alone, which is a very invigorating operation" (Ms. Oak, p. 11).

Maranatha followed guidelines of accreditation established by the Christian School Association and was recently accredited with that organization. The teachers held state certificates, though not necessarily from the resident state.

Ms. Oak supervised the education of 300 students in the K-8 school. She was not state certified in school administration, however, held administrative certification through Christian School Association. Maranatha enjoyed a stable financial platform under the leadership of Ms. Oak. "I'm in education and I hired a business man [accountant]. Us working together, we have not had financial problems...I've forced us into being good stewards of our money...I think that really helped bring stability" (Ms. Oak, p. 8).

She believed Maranatha School was different. "There is a real difference between a Christian in the education field and Christian education" (Ms. Oak, pg. 32). "I think that a school has to know who they are, what they are trying to accomplish, organizing foundations, goals and objectives" (Ms. Oak, pg. 7). "...[We] really desire for people to get to understand the heart of Maranatha and what we are trying to accomplish here" (Ms. Oak, p. 32).

### **Background**

Personal history and educational path, both facets of her background, revealed the direction and purpose Ms. Oak's life was to take. Those factors paved the path toward Christian school administration.

**Personal history.** Raised in a small rural town of the south central region of the nation, Ms. Oak was one of three children of a hardware store manager and teacher. With the educator influence and her father's desire for her to attend college, education was a very influential part of her youth. After her junior year of college, Ms. Oak was married, requiring her to transfer to another university. Upon completing her Master's program, she became an educational diagnostician for a national benevolent and research organization. Then she and her husband became the parents of two boys, which also became the focus and highest priority of both. "I had stayed at home when they were young" (Ms. Oak, pg.13).

When her children enrolled in school at Maranatha, she desired to ease back into a working situation. Using her education and experience, she started the gifted program there.

**Education.** Her college education began in one area, but because of a change of circumstances her degree was in a different area. "I started out...with an Elementary Education major, with specialization in Art and Special Education. When I transferred...they did not have elementary education...I changed my major my senior year...to Art Education, saying if I ever got to go to graduate school I would get my Special Education degree" (Ms. Oak, p. 2). She then immediately proceeded to advanced course work. "...I went directly into graduate school...and did my graduate work there, and my degree in Special Education with Education Diagnostician background" (Ms. Oak, p. 2). With that course work, she received administrative certification through the Christian School Association. "Because of my...educational classes for my Masters degree, I submitted that transcript to CSA and they have given me a CSA administrator's certificate. I have not pursued a state administrator's certificate," (Ms. Oak, p. 9).

Ms. Oak's background, both her personal history and education, launched her toward the ultimate position of Christian school administrator. The path her career was to take was not evident in the beginning.

### **Career Path**

"Well, I'm not a career oriented person. Which is interesting. I've told many people that. I'm just a mother," (Ms. Oak, p. 5). A career was not Ms. Oak's greatest goal. She prepared for it through her education, but delayed it because of her priority on family life. However, her career choice was a good fit for her family priorities and allowed her to re-enter her career.

**Early goals.** Ms. Oak wanted a Master's but it was very important that that goal be accomplished before children arrived in order to prevent conflict between the needs and demands of each.

All I could see at that point was, to pursue the educational diagnostician. And I knew that we would have our family, so that all kind of helped. And, then this other [administration] evolved. So things were kind of put on the shelf for a while.

Which, that was our total intent (Ms. Oak, p. 27)

With her first goal, a Master's, completed she was able to move toward the next one, a family.

After completing her graduate degree and working for a while as head of the educational assessment department of a nationally known benevolent foundation, Ms. Oak began to focus on the second goal, raising children. This, of course, entailed a departure from her career. "Shortly thereafter our family started...I chose to stay home with them" (Ms. Oak, p. 2).

The goal of school administration was totally absent, however there was an inner knowing that staying in the classroom would not be probable.

Looking back I've always ended up in leadership. My little school, little bitty school, I was drum-major four years. I was cheerleader, I was student life officer. I was this. Didn't pursue it, but always ended up there. At my college I chose not to do sororities...I wanted to be my own person without somebody's label...But, I ended up being in some leadership...in the dorm room situation. Ended up being director in the dorms. So I've always ended up surfacing as a leader, but not pursuing it.

That may be why...it [administration] just evolved, maybe. (Ms. Oak, p. 27)

When asked how she was directed toward administration, she repeatedly emphasized that she did not pursue administration. "It's not something that I necessarily sought, it was something that, as I was here, the opportunity was made available to me...It's not something I ever pursued." (Ms. Oak, p. 4).

**Vision.** "I've never sought a job. I wanted to make a difference," (Ms. Oak, p. 33). Even though she may not have overtly sought an administrative position, the vision began to develop, and the skills were identified by others. She did not want to be confined to the daily routine of teaching.

When I first came to Maranatha, the principal wanted me to teach and I was not interested in doing that. But, I started here at Maranatha developing the gifted program...and also working with kids with special needs...I'm a developer. But doing the same thing day after day after day is not where I am most comfortable. (Ms. Oak, p.3)

She began to see that she could broaden her impact through administration, the vision was growing. "As an administrator of the school, I could help position programs and ideas that I knew would not only be a benefit to my own kids but to other kids, because I had a mom's heart. I knew what the moms were looking for in education" (Ms. Oak, p. 5).

While still teaching in the gifted program she designed, her talents and skills were being noted. "I started a few things. So, they saw this developing visionary person I think. And, they were allowing

me a vehicle to put some of that in motion" (Ms. Oak, p. 9). Her vision had expanded, although she did not originally have the goal of school administration, she knew she did not want to remain in the classroom.

Then she was offered the administrative position. "I understood the heart of the school and what we were trying to accomplish. For them that was more important" (Ms. Oak, p. 31) than experience as an administrator. Her vision for administration had expanded. She was ready to fill the need.

**Filling the need.** Though she was a little hesitant to assume the principalship, once she did, she believed it was the right thing to do.

When the principal left and they asked me to become principal, I said, "No!" And then, then we started interviewing other people. Bringing them in from all over, who, they were quite competent and qualified. And I could see they didn't understand the heart beat of our particular school which is a unique school. And they asked me again if I would consider it. And through several encouraging words and confirmation from other people, I was willing to accept it. And I've not regretted it. It's been a real challenge, a real stretch, a real growing experience. But, I really feel like it's been what I'm supposed to do. (Ms. Oak, p. 4)

Consistent with the pattern of her peers, she made no job search for either administrative position.

Ms. Oak's career path included a delay to fulfill her family goals, yet even that goal helped to propel her back into education because



of the fit between family needs and career needs. Her career experienced several additional influences.

### **Career Facilitators**

The pioneering journey of Ms. Oak, her career, was influenced by forces, circumstances, and situations. Those influences were sometimes helpful, positive facilitators.

Ms. Oak experienced several positive influences upon her career: 1) family needs; 2) support; 3) professional associations; 4) mentoring; and 5) facets of herself.

**Family needs.** The desire for a family and the needs of a family in some ways facilitated her career. The self-imposed deadline of finishing her graduate degree before starting her family later positioned her for promotion. "My goal was to get the graduate degree before we had kids, so that I wouldn't have to take away from them to pursue a career or some goal that I had. So it just worked, it worked out great for us" (Ms. Oak, p. 27). The field of education and administration was a good match to achieve both a career and a family. "This fit very well into our family goals" (Ms. Oak, pg. 5). The ability to schedule in family activities was a very important facet and facilitated her staying in her career.

It was great because being an administrator I had some control over my schedule. Where if I was in the classroom, I wouldn't have had any control over that. I would have had to totally go with whatever was established already. So that was another plus for me as to fulfilling the responsibilities of a mom. (Ms. Oak, p. 24)

The administrative position allowed the school and the students to become an extension of her own family.

Now I have 300 kids at Maranatha. So it was an extension of our family in that when my kids were going to school...I was very comfortable having connection to my kids education. I could really be on top of what was going on in their lives and really help plan teacher activities for them...I think it was really a wonderful experience that I had the opportunity to walk through.

(Ms. Oak, p. 14)

The way the needs of family and career meshed greatly facilitated her career. Outside support also had a positive influence.

**Support.** Ms. Oak experienced the support of others, the second career facilitator, which not only helped to propel her toward administration but also encouraged her staying there. Three sources of integral support were noted: 1) family, 2) administrative supervisors, and 3) the school board.

Family priorities appeared to impact almost every facet of Ms. Oak's career. Support from her husband specifically helped to facilitate her move toward administration.

Wanting to try to keep my priorities in order I didn't think he would allow me to...But he was one of the ones who encouraged me. He said, "You can do it"...So my husband was probably my number one supporter and encouraged me to come into it [administration] and has remained that. (Ms. Oak, p. 13)

She also received support and encouragement from her administrative superiors to accept the position.

One of the pastors was one who confirmed and affirmed that I should accept this position...I have a very small circle of people who influence my life. And, the former principal, my husband, a couple of direct people like the pastor that I shared, was one that came and encouraged me to pursue. Not pursue, but to accept the position. (Ms. Oak, p. 11)

She provided an additional example of that support.

If I've got a problem with someone, like we just heard that my business office has to be boxed up and moved out by Tuesday...So I immediately called the pastor who is over me. They called a meeting and we all sat down and solved the problem...I've always felt support whenever there is a parent that is down on me or is a staff person who is down on me. They have been there 100%. They've given me suggestions. They are open to give that, and I am open to receive that. They have always stood right beside me, had a front of unity. (Ms. Oak, p. 23)

In addition, the support of the school board also facilitated her administrative career.

...The school board is here, the church board is here and I'm underneath all that. They have a real hands off approach which has really been great. I've had the opportunity to be very creative in problem solving. Naturally they have to approve everything that I do, but they have not been oppressive and controlling. They have allowed us to function as educators trying to develop appropriate programs for this school. (Ms. Oak, p. 16)

"When there are conflicts with parents and things like that, my board has been totally supportive, and my board is mainly male" (Ms. Oak, p. 21).

**Professional Associations.** Her involvement in a professional association, The Christian School Association, and the accreditation process within that organization were influential facilitators of her career. It provided learning experiences and the necessary tools needed for her successful administration.

We had just gone through the accreditation process with the Christian School Association. The reason why that was helpful is it caused us to evaluate every single thing we were doing. And it caused us to think of the things we've never thought of before. It caused us to re-examine and it really sharpened us as an organization. And then the principal left and I was principal...Having that self study probably was the one greatest tools that was, I would say a benefit for me. (Ms. Oak, p. 7).

Her affiliation with the organization continued to benefit her.

Again I go back to the Christian School Association organization. They don't send someone over to help, but I found a wealth of knowledge by buying video tapes from them. They have some legal video tapes. Things like that, so that keeps me abreast of legal issues. (Ms. Oak, p. 10)

**Mentoring.** There was evidence of limited mentoring though not in the form of a formal program. Ms. Oak acknowledged the importance of her working beside another administrator in the learning process as she described it.

Not an official mentoring other than just train and equip and perhaps that's what that principal was doing with me when I really didn't realize it. She was giving me opportunities to grow, and observe, and to see, and then when the opportunity came, it wasn't like I was starting all over and brand new with the job. I had already been working at the job. (Ms. Oak, p. 24)

She also emphasized the importance of her experience with the previous administrator.

I would say--walking beside the administrator is the best way to learn. Like I had the privilege of going to school board meetings. I had the privilege of problem solving with the administrator. I had the privilege of going through the test scores because of my diagnostician background. But just walking beside probably was the greatest learning curve and a willingness to serve. I think that really opens doors. And it wasn't an attempt to brown nose. It was an attempt to be a real servant. A servant with the school administration. She gave me the opportunity to speak. Sometimes it had to be in the contrary manner. But, I would never do that in front of another staff member or the school board. I'd always do that privately so that I would not put her in a position that she would feel intimidated or threatened by somebody challenging what she was doing. (Ms. Oak, p. 32)

**Herself.** Personal characteristics, both servanthood and leadership tendencies, along with her gender were noted as facets of herself that facilitated her career.

Personal characteristics have been important to every career. Her attitude of servanthood, a recurring theme among the participants, was an important expression of her feelings toward her career. "I really think the reason that I was given the vice-principal opportunity is because, and again through the spiritual perspective, I really believe that I was willing to support the administration and I was a servant" (Ms. Oak, p. 8). "If I expect you to do it then I'm going to be the first to do it too. I think that has helped bridge a relationship with some of the staff members" (Ms. Oak, p. 29).

The second personal characteristic noted as a facilitator was a natural tendency toward leadership. "As I said earlier, if there is a strong leader there I will back up, but when I see weakness, then move over lets get this thing going and let's do it right. And that's not unnatural and perhaps why I ended up getting that position that I had not pursued" (Ms. Oak, p. 27).

She also mentioned the benefit of her gender, a facet of herself, as a positive influence. "Now there's some things that I think females do a lot better...When you're dealing with mothers a lot of time, from a woman to woman stand point, sometimes the heart is kind of touched and the male wouldn't have anything to do with that," (Ms. Oak, p. 19). "I've had people that are really glad that a female is an administrator because we have a mother's heart, or a female heart over the kids. Because, there have been people who have said that that's comforting" (Ms. Oak, p. 22).

There were also other influences upon her career. Those less desirable influences, inhibitors, had a negative impact.

## **Career Inhibitors**

Inhibitors, negative influences upon Ms. Oak's career, fell into two general areas, stress and facets of herself. Their impact was revealed in her comments.

**Stress.** The first noted career inhibitor, stress, found three avenues of manifestation. The demands and needs of family, job demands, and financial limitations were contributing sources of potential stress.

Family was the first priority for Ms. Oak, when a choice had to be made, her family came first.

The biggest difficulty was after my kids graduated. I had one over at another Christian school and one here. So we had two children's schedules...Like last Friday night, I was supposed to be at three different places, and one was son related. One was church board related and one was school. So all of them are priorities. And I try to, if there's a church board meeting, I try to go to that if I need to be there. If there's a school function, I try to go there. So on that particular night, I ended up only making two and not one. The one I did not make was my son. He was playing one song at his school showcase before they had gone to a national competition. And so, what we did in that situation, my husband video taped it so I could at least experience that. And that way I could at least break the other two down and go to one part time and then go to the other one part time. But now, had he had a full blown basketball game, I would never not be at that. I would have been at his activities.

But since it was one song and my husband video taped it...

(Ms. Oak, p. 24)

The demands of the job also had an inhibiting impact by creating stress.

Sometimes I sense myself, say when I'm doing a lot of paper work at home, and I have to be careful I don't stay up too late too much. My mom was a workaholic. She would always be the last one to go to bed. And all she was, was a classroom teacher, but she was a very good educator. And, I've tried to bring balance to my life, because she died at a very young age. And, if anything they would be concerned that I would follow her pattern there...There are many times I'd have to stay up late or get up early and work on something. And, that bothers them [family]. It doesn't bother me, as much but it bothers them. "Mom, get lots of rest." (Ms. Oak, p. 25)

The stress of the demands of the job was an inhibitor.

The stress of a low salary was also noted as an inhibitor.

Although Ms. Oak's salary was not the main source of income for the family, it was recognized as very low, thus an inhibitor that could contribute to stress.

The pay is not terrific. But, in fact I make today probably what many school teachers make who have as much experience as I have in the field of education. I didn't come to Maranatha with the desire for money...It's really a part of my ministry. I would say for some people coming on staff, a hindrance would be the salary. My husband is our financial support. What I do has helped to provide Christian education for our two boys. We



eventually got to move to a bigger house because of that. We didn't build our family around my finances. But, I do know that that would be a hindrance...It's not been a hindrance for me because that was not my focus. (Ms. Oak, p. 15)

Stress was a career inhibitor. Its sources were found in family needs, job demands, and financial limitations. Another inhibitor of her career was discovered in facets of herself.

**Herself.** Ms. Oak's career was negatively impacted by two aspects of herself. A personal characteristic, lack of confidence, and her gender inhibited her career.

A confessed lack of confidence in her ability caused some consternation. "The principal before me was Miss Articulate. And, so everything that I thought that you needed, I saw as my weakness" (Ms. Oak, p. 4).

I don't know if anything really hindered the opportunity, other than my lack of confidence in myself. I wouldn't say there's been a hindrance. There's been opportunity for growth. I would see a benefit of getting some additional course work, just to stay current on what's out there right now in education, (Ms. Oak, p. 14).

Another facet of herself, her gender, was also noted as an inhibitor in some ways. "I think some parents would look at it differently with a male principal...I think the males bring authority to the organization...Just because of who they are," (Ms. Oak, p. 19).

Why?

I think it is probably up-bringing. Perhaps in their home the mom's been walked over and this is kind of a crude example,

but red-necked in their own home. That kind, they don't have a whole lot of respect no matter who that female is and what that female has accomplished. There are certain men, and I've had very, very few that have really--and I try to be very gracious and try to be very firm and I try to really probably be my firmest with them because I want them to know that this is the way it is. This is the way it is whether I have a dress on or not...The people we are dealing with that bring in their concept of men, some of it could be Biblical. They may be basing it on Biblical standards...That Christ is the head of the home...and the male is the head. It's not that the female is there to be walked over, that they really are--when Eve was created she came from Adam's side. So they were really to walk together but some people have perverted that gospel to say that "Whatever I say, I'm the authority," in that deal. And so, therefore they transfer that to females whether it be a car dealership or some people just want to talk to the man. I don't see a whole lot of that today. (Ms. Oak, p. 22)

Two general areas were noted as inhibitors of Ms. Oak's career. The first, stress, expressed itself in family needs, job demands, and low salary. The second area of negative influence, aspects of herself, inhibited her career through a lack of confidence and consequences of her gender. Mingled throughout her career, in the face of both positive and negative influences, was found her faith in God.

## **Role of Faith**

Faith played an important role in Ms. Oak's career. It impacted three areas, career preparation and choices, administrative style, and divine intervention.

**Career Preparation.** Although she had not considered Christian school education early in her career, when her children were ready to begin school, that was her choice. However, God was preparing her long before she entered Christian school administration.

He [husband] showed me how the Lord had prepared me in advance for some of the things I'd be doing...Sounds rather strange, but one of the things that I did when my kids were small that is, I sold Mary Kay Cosmetics. Reason why I did that is because I wanted to be at home with them, but we needed a little extra money and I could work it in. But, that forced me into becoming more vocal. (Ms. Oak, p. 13)

Even with the graduate degree and personal development through other sources, Ms. Oak credited God with enabling her to be prepared for an administrative position. "You have to realize that my walk with the Lord is very alive and there was a real spiritual opening for me to be able to do this. First of all, I recognized that where I'm weak, He is strong" (Ms. Oak, p. 4). That preparation included God instructing her. "...There's a scripture that says, 'I will instruct and teach you the way you should go.' And that has really been the premise of what I've done" (Ms. Oak, p. 11). Her faith was evident in her preparation and choices before she entered administration. It continued as an influence impacting her administrative style.

**Administrative Style.** Ms. Oak's faith was revealed in her administrative style in two ways, her general dependence upon God to help make administrative decisions and in her relationship with staff. Faith was a strong influence in her daily administration.

Ms. Oak depended upon God in a very intimate personal way. That dependence, part of her administrative style, was expressed in the following:

...Again, my dependency is a lot on the Lord. Asking for His direction...A lot of people would not understand that because you think you should learn it from this book or this class. But, the way that we approach Maranatha, things at Maranatha, is that we really want as much as possible to have a school that brings honor to the Lord and sometimes that just means asking Him, seeking His face. "God, what do we do here?" And it takes a real desire to be in tune to what He would have us to do. (Ms. Oak, p. 10)

Her administrative style included waiting to be lead by God in what she was to do in her position. "...There's a lot of security, a real sense of direction that comes from just waiting and listening to His plan. So I would say my number one counselor in what I do is the Lord, just trying to get direction from Him" (Ms. Oak, p. 12). Her ability and equipment for the position were credited as a gift of God. "I see myself as being equipped to be an administrator. But it was not necessarily equipment that I got through my University experience. It's been the Lord," (Ms. Oak, p. 5).

The second facet of her administrative style impacted by her faith was the way she interacted with staff.

My main objective is to surround myself with people who are good at what they do. And the Lord gives me insight into this person's gift and that came from my Special Education background, to be able to see this gift that maybe nobody else can see, but there was something underneath that needed to be pulled out. I've always had a desire to take a person on staff and pull them up professionally. Help them grow professionally. So by doing that, that makes my job easier. (Ms. Oak, p. 5)

Another example of her administrative style and the impact of her faith was shared.

...If I hear a good word on somebody, I let them know and I pass it on, because teachers get very little recognition and very little praise. And especially in Christian schools you are really here to serve the Lord. But, it really helps to hear somebody say, "I really appreciate the teacher." So I try to be an encourager and an appreciator of their gifting. (Ms. Oak, p. 29)

Her faith was an everyday part of who she was and her administrative style. Faith was also evident in the acknowledgment and expectation of divine intervention.

**Divine Intervention.** The faith of Ms. Oak was also evident in the area of divine intervention into her daily life and career. She shared an example of divine intervention before she began the gifted program at Maranatha.

There was no other Christian school that had a gifted program happening. And the Lord said, "No. I want to instruct you and teach you. I want to show you instructions." So I really had to

seek Him. And He gave me the opportunity to develop a program that was quite unique. (Ms. Oak, p. 11)

When asked how she was directed toward administration she responded, "It was God's providence. And that's all I can say," (Ms. Oak, p. 3). "I think the Lord opened the door and I desire to walk wherever I feel it is His will for my life" (Ms. Oak, pg. 5). "God's hand has really been upon us and I can't take any of the credit because I didn't have the skills to do it. He just equipped me to do it on a day by day basis" (Ms. Oak, p. 4). Her acknowledgment and expectation of divine intervention revealed part of the role her faith played in her career.

Ms. Oak's faith played a major role in her career. It impacted her career preparation and choices, choosing to have her family after receiving a graduate degree, in an effort to avoid conflicting needs of family and education. Her faith impacted her choice of a Christian school for both her children and herself. In addition, her faith influenced her administrative style in two ways. She depended upon God to help make decisions and conduct daily business and her faith was influential in her relationships with the staff. Ms. Oak's faith was also evident in an acknowledgment and expectation of divine intervention into her daily walk.

### **Summary**

Maranatha Christian School, a young school in a new building, provided the educational setting for Ms. Oak as school administrator. Her background revealed the importance of education to her and her family, which propelled her toward a career in education. That career path included her early goal of a graduate degree but also a time

away from her career for a family. Upon a return to her career path, her vision was expanded to encompass school administration, which led to her filling the need of a vice-principal, her first administrative position, and then principal. Her career was influenced by both facilitators and inhibitors. However, her faith played an important role. As a pioneer in a new territory of school administration, she helped to blaze a clear trail for others to follow.

### **Ms. Hickory**

Amid the dreams of pioneer women of the past was probably found the desire to establish a Godly, safe, stable environment for the education of the next generation. In that respect, Ms. Hickory could easily be identified with those women of another century. Her valiant effort to save a faltering bastion of Christian education was the "stuff" of novels. Yet, this experienced administrator gave her God the credit. At about 60 years of age, with decades of experience including two separate administrative assignments, this Caucasian woman Christian school administrator revealed a legacy of administrative experience, breaking the ground for other women pioneers to follow.

### **Educational Setting.**

Located in an older middle class once considered suburban community that was engulfed by the metroplex, Timberlake Christian Academy, a Pre-K/4 through sixth grade school, was the educational domain of about 200 students. Recently completely renovated internally, Timberlake was not always the beautiful, thriving entity of today. "This school was ready to close when I came. They were heavily in debt. The morale was terrible. The relationship with the

church could not have been worse" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). After her arrival, a major effort was undertaken to stabilize the school and to reduce the \$100,000 indebtedness. Ms. Hickory's leadership helped to facilitate both goals. Although the school was housed in a church building, it was a totally separate entity, only leasing the use of the facility. Timberlake was under the direct supervision of Ms. Hickory who reported to the school board. A lovely well manicured church campus, whose external architectural design was reminiscent of the 1950's, provided a quiet stable educational setting for Timberlake Christian Academy.

### **Background**

Personal history and education revealed the background of this pioneer. Ms. Hickory's background provided the foundation upon which her career was built.

**Personal history.** Reared in the northeastern part of the U. S., one of five children whom she helped to raise, Ms. Hickory indicated when she became interested in education. "Since I was born I think. (laugh) No, I've always been interested in teaching. Our home life was such that I really raised two brothers and sisters...Having a gift of administration and to serve, [it] was natural to continue on with children and teaching" (Ms. Hickory, p. 2). Her early interest in the field of education was enhanced with her college experience. After college she entered her career and also married a chemist. She and her husband had three children while she continued her career. After ten years in the public school, Ms. Hickory and her husband moved to the southeastern part of the U. S. to make a change to Christian schools. He accepted an administrative position with a Christian



school there, while she taught at another Christian school, her first. She later became their first woman administrator, the beginning of her administrative career.

**Education.** The influence of her calling to teach, directed her to college. "I went to college...started out as Christian Ed....and changed over to elementary education" (Ms. Hickory, p. 1). She received a Bachelor of Science degree. Ms. Hickory had no administrative courses before she accepted her first administrative assignment.

Years later, after moving to this metroplex, she began work in a Master's program at a local seminary. However, she discontinued that program upon the acceptance of the present administrative position. She initiated further study from an out of state college through seminars and a self-study program. "Right now I'm taking graduate courses...a seminar here...and doing the rest self study. So I really don't have a degree beyond the B. S., although I have 36 years in education and a number of courses" (Ms. Hickory, p. 2).

Ms. Hickory held a teaching certificate through her state and with Christian School Association. However, she held no administrative certification with either.

### **Career Path**

Helping to rear her brothers and sisters provided a natural setting for Ms. Hickory's teaching and administrative gifts to develop. That experience and desire to develop her gifting further positioned her upon the career path of education. That path included her early goals, developing vision, and filling the need.

**Early goals.** Ms. Hickory, "always felt called to teach" (Ms. Hickory, p. 1). She and her husband believed they were to be involved in some kind of missionary effort. Both leadings were satisfied. "...The Lord working with us...realized that our mission field was right here in the United States" (Ms. Hickory, p. 1). After ten years in public schools, her career took on a new meaning, ministry, which lead to the career shift to Christian education.

Actually I taught ten years in public school...Then when my husband went to the southeast, it was in a Christian school and that's when we had the change. That was in 1970. And prior to that with prayer in the schools and Bible reading aloud, there really was no, it didn't seem very different to go into a Christian school. Of course now, it's quite different...I had ten years in public school and since then all the rest has been in Christian schools. (Ms. Hickory, p. 3)

Early in her career, her goals were limited to teaching. "I really did enjoy teaching and never thought of myself as an administrator of a school" (Ms. Hickory, p. 4). However, after ten years of teaching in a Christian school and the daily influence of her Christian school administrator husband, Ms. Hickory's vision began to broaden, breaking away from her early limited goal of teaching.

**Vision.** Ms. Hickory began to look at the school as a whole, developing a broader view, noting areas in need of attention. "Saw a lot of lack in the style of the administrator before me that I would love to change, because he was a very relaxed person. It was a flexible relaxed situation. And I thought, just need more pulling it together here" (Ms. Hickory, p. 5). With a wider scope and vision, similar to

her peers, she still did not pursue administration and made no job search for either of her administrative positions. "I had not gone out to seek any of these opportunities. It's [been] presented to me" (Ms. Hickory, p. 4). That fact was confirmed in her lack of any preparatory administrative courses before stepping through the door of opportunity. "I hadn't taken any courses in Christian school administration or school administration, not one," (Ms. Hickory, p. 6).

With her vision expanded and an open door of opportunity and need at hand, Ms. Hickory crossed the threshold to administration. She moved ahead to fill a need.

**Filling the need.** Ms. Hickory, in her first administrative position, became the first woman administrator of that school.

That was the year that the administrator there was taking his sabbatical...I had been teaching under him for about ten years, and he approached me about filling in that position while he was on sabbatical. And at first I was very hesitant...And as I say, once I got into the office and had the total big picture, rather than the parts, I found it very fulfilling and really enjoyed it. And knew that that was where I should be. (Ms. Hickory, p. 3)

She accepted the position there and continued as it's administrator for six years.

That need was met, yet it was not the only administrative need she was to fill. When her husband accepted a university position in another state, she followed him, continuing her pioneer's adventure. In that city, a part of the central southwestern region of the nation, another assignment was waiting. Because of the cultural and

educational differences, Ms. Hickory returned to the Christian school classroom for four years. Her reputation, gifts, and talents did not remain unnoticed. Without a job search, another administrative need presented itself to her. "...In fact they called me one year and I said, 'I've already signed my [teaching] contract so I'm not even going to look at this'...And they kept after me that next year, during that year to at least consider it. And that was the year they were in deep trouble" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). Timberlake had experienced a string of three unsatisfactory principals. One was a woman referenced as dictatorial and forceful, followed by a man who only remained six months. Then another woman came who didn't stay. The school was in desperate need of leadership. "They called from Timberlake, and through prayerful consideration and the advice of friends, we came on at Timberlake" (Ms. Hickory, p. 5). "...My husband and I were committed to the fact that even if the doors closed after being there a year, even if I didn't get paid for the year, we felt God was calling us to this for what ever reason. And we were committed to it whatever happened" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). With a strong determination to fill the need and fulfill God's plan, she was still in the position five years later.

### **Career Facilitators**

A variety of variables impacted Ms. Hickory's career. There were those that positively influenced her career, facilitators.

Four categories of positive influences were noted. They included: 1) support of others, 2) professional associations, 3) mentors, and 4) herself.

**Support.** The support of others was an integral facilitator of Ms. Hickory's career.

I think you need a support group within your own peers. And you need people who will be up front with you, maybe within that same support group. Or, as I've had, a group that's not in that particular group but they are a very good support group because we've known each other for 20 years and they can tell me, "Ok, you blew it that time." Come help me through it. (Ms. Hickory, p. 16)

It was important to her to have a support group outside the school. "But if you're going to be the only one at that level, have a support group because you can be torn to pieces just by things that happen, finally you've just got to talk to someone" (Ms. Hickory, pg. 17). That outside support was received from three general areas, family and friends, a previous administrator, and the school board.

The most intimate support was provided by her family and friends.

Well, my husband has really been the biggest help that anyone could ask for. He was an administrator in a Christian school for 16 years...He does a lot of work with Christian schools and it's just wonderful to have his input so close at hand. Actually I would also say that my circle of friends, too have encouraged me to use the gifts that God has given me in this area, when the opportunity comes up. (Ms. Hickory, p. 4)

The second source of support, a facilitator of her career, was the principal of her first Christian school. "He [principal] encouraged me, pointing out the different gifts that I had. And he saw that they were, they fit into the job" (Ms. Hickory, p. 4). "He felt that I had the ability to see the big picture and know what needed to be done and

knew how to do it...He saw that in me" (Ms. Hickory, p. 5). His professional and personal support and request for her to fill his position, was a great facilitator of her career.

The third source of support was the school board. The board encouraged her to accept her position and supported her after she did.

Now the board president, I have been very fortunate in the board president, I've had two since I've been here, a wonderful man to talk to. In fact they have set up a time when the executive committee and I meet apart from the board meeting. And they allow me to talk about anything off the record, and they have been very true to me that way. And that has been very very helpful. (Ms. Hickory, p. 17)

That support helped to build a bridge of relationship between her and the board, facilitating agreement on future decisions. "They [school board] have respect for me," (Ms. Hickory, p. 9). Their agreement was evident when, "I went ahead and made the bold step and the board backed me, adding a grade even when we only had three students for that grade," (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). The school board's support facilitated her career development.

**Professional Associations.** The second facilitator noted, professional associations, also was a benefit to her career during her present administrative assignment.

Oh, CSA does have a group that meet monthly, administrators. And I can't make every meeting, but I do go to as many as I can. And I have developed a friendship with a number of Christian school administrators, at different levels you know.

There are two in particular I get to talk to quite a bit, and others more or less at the meetings...The two that I keep in touch with are female, the others I guess, more informally are male...There are a number of female administrators in this group. In fact the group has elected a female...So she will be the president next year. (Ms. Hickory, p. 14)

**Mentors.** The third noted facilitator of her career was the influence of mentors.

I would say that my mentors have been, the elementary principal that I replaced that one year for sabbatical, was a very good friend of ours, we still keep in touch. And my husband has been the best mentor anyone could ever have. But, I'm an observer kind of person, and the different principals that I've worked under in public school and in Christian school, just that one gentleman, and here...the other one. I love to observe how people handle conflict situations particularly. I have great admiration for one particular principal, female [public school] principal, that I taught for...I was just amazed at her, and I think a lot of what I do I learned from watching her. (Ms. Hickory, p. 13)

**Herself.** The fourth contributing facilitator of her career was herself. Her gender was beneficial in some relationships and her personal determination to be who she really was, herself.

When asked how her gender helped she replied, " I think with the female faculty, I understand them because I'm the same" (Ms. Hickory, p.16). "Well because most parents, the mother is the one that is mostly involved in the school, I guess it would have helped, it

does help in that area" (Ms. Hickory, p. 17). She also benefitted from the freedom to be herself.

I think you need to be yourself, not what other people expect you to be. Don't misunderstand me, I think that some people try to be somebody else or try to respond because they think that is the way they want them to. I think you've got to be true to yourself. And you are going to lose some people as a result of that. (Ms. Hickory, p. 15)

Four positive influences upon her career, facilitators, were discovered. The support of others, professional associations, mentors, and facets of herself each assisted her career development. There were, however, influences that did not help.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Two general areas were noted as career inhibitors, stress and one facet of herself. Stress from the job because of its daily demands and the stress of school board relations along with herself as a female, each contributed some negative influence upon her career.

**Stress.** Ms. Hickory shared that the demands of the job would prohibit having children concurrently, because of the requirements. "Number one, make sure this is what you want to do, because it is all consuming. I could not have a family still growing up and do what I have too, the hours and demands on your time" (Ms. Hickory, p. 12). Additionally the job demands of a working relationship with the school board caused stress.

I think that the problem that you're going to find in most Christian schools where the problems lie is generally with the board, because they don't truly understand, sometimes, their



role as policy makers and that the school administrator is the one that carries out the policy and that they don't get involved in the day to day happenings. I would say though, that is the most difficult part of my position even now, is keeping the board informed and on track as to what their focus should be and what their position is. (Ms. Hickory, p. 8)

**Herself.** The second inhibitor revealed was herself as a female. Her gender on occasion had a negative impact. "There are times when I wish I were a man so I understood how they think. Their banter is quite different than a woman's way of looking at things. But, I think that's just me," (Ms. Hickory, p. 9). "In fact I hired male teachers. And of course I had to ask the question, 'Now are you going to have a problem working with a female administrator?' And one said, 'Yes,' and the others, 'No,' So we didn't hire that one. (laugh) It's got to work smoothly, you know," (Ms. Hickory, p. 6). Her gender had some drawbacks.

Ms. Hickory's career was influenced by negative factors. Those career inhibitors were job stress and herself as a female. Inhibitors impacted the course of her career. Throughout, there was evidence that her faith also played an important role in her career.

### **Role of Faith**

Faith in God and prayer was an ever present thread woven throughout the tapestry of her career, from the early desire to do missionary work to her effort to save Timberlake Christian Academy from a financial demise. "Your walk with the Lord is vital, because there are times that it's just you and the Lord. You know if your walk is not with Him, you are opening yourself up to heartbreak and

discouragement" (Ms. Hickory, p. 13). Her faith was evident in three areas, career preparation and choices, administrative style, and divine intervention.

**Career preparation.** After leaving her first administrative position and moving to another region, Ms. Hickory's preparation for future administration included the necessity of knowing what God's plan for her entailed. "First of all, do I know that this is where God has for me to be" (Ms. Hickory, p. 13). Knowing the will of God was imperative for Ms. Hickory. "We've got to be sure this is what God has for you to do. I don't think it's an easy job. Once you have that assurance...once you know that that's where God has placed you, you have the assurance that He cares for the way things are" (Ms. Hickory, p. 15).

Now when we made the switch to here, there were so many changes in my life at that time, I decided to go back to teaching so that I understood what education here was like. I did that for four years. Very happy with that...And I feel that that was part of His [God's] will that I really get established in the classroom here before I was to move into administration, back into administration. (Ms. Hickory, p. 4)

Her faith played an important part in her career preparation and choices. It also impacted her administrative style.

**Administrative style.** Ms. Hickory's administrative style was influenced daily by her faith. That faith was revealed through her dependence upon prayer. She used prayer to assist her administration in certain situations. "I talk with my circle of friends and we pray about it and I pour heavily on that. Looking at the

situation seeing what works" (Ms. Hickory, p. 4). Prayer was evident at every level.

The faculty prayed every morning. We got a prayer chain going. We prayed for all the students everyday with our prayer warriors. We covered all the teachers and faculty in prayer and we'd bring up every activity before the Lord prior to, during it's planning stage actually. And God honored that tremendously. We had had ups and downs, I'm not saying it was heaven on earth, but God continually blessed us just above and beyond. (Ms. Hickory, p. 10)

"If I want to talk about it [administration] now, I go to one of my prayer partners" (Ms. Hickory, p. 17). Prayer, personally and with faculty and patrons was an important facet of her administrative style. Her faith was also evident in her expectation and acknowledgment of divine intervention.

**Divine intervention.** Another reflection of her faith, divine intervention, revealed the impact of that faith upon her daily administration. She believed her assignment was divinely appointed. "I think God called me to this position" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). In an effort to save the school, she gave credit to God for His intervention. The school was in peril of closing because of a heavy indebtedness. "Within that year, God moved us from 68 students to 85 by the time the year was finished, 118 the next year, 140, 160 to 200 and that is our maximum now. And the school was \$100,000 in debt that first year. We got out of debt within a year. I mean God just, everything was bathed in prayer" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). God's intervention was also evident in the building renovation at Timberlake.

Again we prayed really hard about that [the church's offer to help the school] and felt it was the way to go. We accepted their terms and in three months raised \$122,000 and wrote a check for them. And then they had a bond party, and in one hour and fourteen minutes sold all the bonds. Again an evidence that God was in it. (Ms. Hickory, p. 12)

Ms. Hickory expected to hear from God and expected Him to regularly intervene in her life and career.

I know God has called me to this and I know He has called me for next year. I don't know beyond that. I feel like I have, the Lord has allowed me to do things here that have turned this school around and have made it what it is today. But I am very willing should the Lord have a different place for me for service next year to do that. And if He closes the door here I feel very good about it, even though we've had some rough times. (Ms. Hickory, p. 18)

God's intervention into her administration was a facet of her faith at work.

Ms. Hickory's faith played an important role in her career. It was evidenced in her career preparation and choices, administrative style and divine intervention.

### **Summary**

A modern pioneer, blazing the trail for other women to follow, Ms. Hickory traversed the frontier of Christian school administration as the first woman administrator of her previous school. Her career, encompassing two administrative assignments and 36 years in education, revealed both career facilitators and inhibitors. Her faith

provided the security and determination to succeed in the face of difficulty. As a trailblazer, she left a clear path for other women to follow.

### **Collective Profiles**

To know them as a group, as one, it was necessary to view their individualities collectively. What made them who they were individually also created who they were collectively. Therefore, important areas of their corporate being were examined, including their: 1) educational settings, 2) backgrounds, 3) career paths, 4) career facilitators, 5) career inhibitors, and 6) role of faith.

#### **Educational Setting**

The school campus was an important facet of the participants' educational settings. Generally, the setting of these Christian schools was one of a church building, with the exception of Ms. Elm's high income sub-urban school which was located in a modern and efficient, though less personal, office strip center. The structure of the various church buildings, age, and condition were diverse, and ran the full gamut. Ms. Maple's inner-urban school was housed in an historic, ornate, well-used although preserved church building whose general condition was fair to good even though it housed many generations of the faithful. At the other extreme was found the new church structure that was home for Ms. Oak's suburban school. It was a very modern aesthetically appointed, efficient building in excellent condition. Between the two extremes were found Ms. Hickory's urban school, located in a stable well manicured area of the city. The church building, located on a spacious open lot, was about 50 years old, but has been recently renovated to better accommodate

the school. The school setting was a late 50's architecture mixed with a modern efficient interior. Once probably considered suburban, Ms. Birch's urban school was located in a less aesthetically pleasing surrounding. The building, about 40 years old, was cramped, in need of renovation and not a particularly conducive academic atmosphere. However, construction was underway and a new educational wing of the church was soon to be completed, housing the school more effectively in the future.

Generally housed in an attractive academic surrounding inside a church building, the educational setting of the woman Christian school administrator was one of efficiency and aesthetic charm. Her home away from home was generally comfortable and professional.

Table 1

**Educational Setting Summary**

| <b>Respondent</b>  | <b>Facility</b> | <b>Condition</b> | <b>Location</b> | <b># students</b> | <b>Grades</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Ms. Maple</b>   | church          | fair to good     | inner-urban     | 440               | K-3/12        |
| <b>Ms. Elm</b>     | office center   | very good        | sub-urban       | 50                | K-8           |
| <b>Ms. Birch</b>   | church          | fair to good     | urban           | 900/550 elem.     | K-3/12        |
| <b>Ms. Oak</b>     | church          | excellent        | sub-urban       | 300               | K-8           |
| <b>Ms. Hickory</b> | church          | excellent        | urban           | 200               | K-4/6         |

**Background**

Generally, the personal history of these five Caucasian women revealed that they were reared in rural areas of mid-America with two coming from a metropolitan are of the northeastern part of the nation. Each were raised in traditional two parent families. They married early in their careers, each having two children, except one, Ms.

Hickory, who had three. Two of the women were divorced, one early in her career, Ms. Maple, the other quite late, after 30 years of marriage, Ms. Birch. The former was remarried. The other three remained married. Only two of the husbands were educators, Mr. Elm and Mr. Hickory, both were at the university level, although Mr. Hickory was a former Christian school administrator. Their ages were clustered in the late fifties to early sixties, except for Ms. Maple and Ms. Oak, who were in their forties.

As children, education was important to their families, which was specifically mentioned by three participants, Ms. Maple, Ms Elm, and Ms. Hickory. That importance was also revealed by the other two participants, Ms. Birch and Ms. Oak, through the influence of educators within their families, both teachers and administrators. Two participants, Ms. Elm and Ms. Hickory, married educators, leaving only one who did not have another educator within the family or extended family, Ms. Maple.

Education was a dominant force in their childhood families and was equally important to their immediate family. Their highest achieved degrees ranged from a Bachelor's to a Master's degree plus state certification required courses. Three had Master's degrees, Ms. Birch, Ms. Oak, and Ms. Maple, the latter who had completed extra required course work for her state administrative certification. Ms. Elm, had received both a Bachelor's of Science and a Bachelor's of Art, plus required course work for a Master's degree, but did not receive the degree. The remaining participant, Ms. Hickory, received a Bachelor's of Science only, with some additional graduate courses, but no advanced degree.

The collective woman Christian school administrator having come from a traditional home setting, was married with two children, about 58-59 years old, held a Master's degree, or equivalent course work, and shared a familial commitment to education.

Table 2

**Personal Background Summary**

|                    | <b>Personal</b> |                         |                        |                 |            |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
|                    | <b>Reared</b>   | <b>Family Educators</b> | <b>Marrital Status</b> | <b>Children</b> | <b>Age</b> |
| <b>Ms. Maple</b>   | rural           | none                    | divorced/remarried     | 2               | early 40's |
| <b>Ms. Elm</b>     | urban           | husband                 | married                | 2               | late 50's  |
| <b>Ms. Birch</b>   | rural           | mother, aunts, sister   | divorced               | 2               | mid 60's   |
| <b>Ms. Oak</b>     | rural           | mother                  | married                | 2               | late 40's  |
| <b>Ms. Hickory</b> | urban           | husband                 | married                | 3               | early 60's |

|                    | <b>Education</b> |                            |                              |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
|                    | <b>Master's</b>  | <b>State Certification</b> | <b>C.S.A. Certification</b>  |
| <b>Ms. Maple</b>   | yes              | teacher/administrator      |                              |
| <b>Ms. Elm</b>     | no               |                            |                              |
| <b>Ms. Birch</b>   | yes              | teacher/reading specialist | pursing administrative cert. |
| <b>Ms. Oak</b>     | yes              | teacher                    | administrative               |
| <b>Ms. Hickory</b> | no               | teacher                    | teacher                      |

**Career Path**

These women never planned to become administrators; the situation presented itself, the door was open and they walked through it.

Their administrative career paths included teaching, assisstant principalship, principalship, and in one case superintendency. Each



participant taught before becoming an administrator. Ms. Maple became elementary principal after about four years and had been superintendent for five years of her 17 year career. Ms Elm taught more than ten years, plus a missionary assignment, before pioneering her present school and becoming it's first principal, her first administrative assignment, a position she has held for 13 years. Ms. Birch taught 25 years before assuming her present and also her first elementary principalship which she has held for five years. One participant, Ms. Oak, taught about three years before becoming an assisstant elementary principal for two years and then moved up to the principalship where she has remained for seven years. Ms. Hickory taught about 20 years before accepting her first administrative position, becoming a Christian school principal for six years. She then, after moving to another state, returned to teaching for four years before accepting her present principalship which she has held for five years. Three of the five women were in their present administrative position for only five years, two as principals and one as superintendent.

Ms. Oak, Ms. Elm, and Ms. Birch were in their first full principalship position. Ms. Maple, now superintendent, held a higher administrative position in the same school where her first administrative position was acquired. The remaining participant, Ms. Hickory, was a Christian school principal for six years at one other school previous to her present administrative position. Three of the five pioneered the concept of women Christian school administration by having been, Ms. Hickory (in her first administrative assignment 10 years previous), or were at that time, Ms. Maple and Ms. Elm, the first

woman in their school to fill their administrative position. The remaining two, Ms. Oak and Ms. Birch held administrative positions previously occupied by women.

As related in their interviews, not one woman made a job search for an administrative position. Each described how they were happy teaching in the classroom and "doing my thing" when they were approached and asked repeatedly before they accepted their present position as school administrator. As they expressed, these women, though pioneers in their own right, did not seek to pioneer a cause for women in Christian school administration. They simply stepped through an open door of opportunity. One that offered them something that they desired, such as increased income, greater influence on curriculum, and something they felt called by God to do.

The collective woman Christian school administrator, after teaching many years, was generally in her first full charge administrative position, having been asked to take the position without a job search. She was likely the only woman to have held the position and had about seven years of total administrative experience.

Table 3

**Career Path Summary**

| Respondent  | Years    |                | Present Position      | Left Career |
|-------------|----------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|             | Teaching | Administration |                       |             |
| Ms. Maple   | 4        | 13             | 5 superintendent      | 0           |
| Ms. Elm     | 10+      | 14             | 14 principal/director | 5           |
| Ms. Birch   | 25       | 5              | 5 elem. principal     | 20          |
| Ms. Oak     |          | 9              | 7 elem. principal     | 5           |
| Ms. Hickory | 28       | 8              | 6 elem. principal     | 0           |

### **Career Facilitators**

Each participant noted outside influences upon their careers. They each mentioned an organization, Christian Schools Association, and their member administrators, noting it as a very beneficial factor in their administrative development and peer interaction. Organized monthly meetings, seminars, and video tapes along with the availability of experienced peers as sources of guidance, was repeatedly emphasized as a help in career development. In addition, mentoring was mentioned as something that did help or would have helped had they received it. They noted varying degrees of mentorship, although the essence of the comments revealed the reality was that they observed and picked up ideas on their own, rather than experiencing a true one on one mentoring situation.

Other facilitators included the need for additional money, which made the promotion to administration more appealing. Support of others was a major facilitator mentioned by the participants. Individual characteristics of themselves ranging from the ability to continually submit to self-analysis and natural leadership abilities to being true to self, facilitated their careers. Also a facet of themselves, their gender as females, had some positive influence upon their careers. Another noted facilitator was family needs and how well they meshed with a career in education.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Some career influences were noted as inhibitors, family responsibilities, poor salary, lack of acceptance of their authority, hindering input from others, fear, stress from both the demands of the job and family, and certain facets of themselves including lack of

confidence and negative reactions to their gender. Family responsibilities was referenced as a potential hindrance, with the necessity to prioritize, and always have a game plan for the week to be able to meet both familial and professional needs. There was a particular emphasis on the importance of family activities in addition to the needs of the professional time requirements. The lack of satisfactory income was mentioned as a definite hindrance both to them and their faculty, which of course impacted their ability to staff their schools as was needed. However, two participants did not see the lack of money as a hindrance for them personally because their financial security was not based upon their own income, albeit, the impact on staff was noted. Lack of acceptance or appropriate acknowledgment of their authority and position because of their gender was also mentioned as a potential hindrance to their career paths and their effectiveness as administrators. Stress of every form and source was an inhibitor.

The collective woman Christian school administrator was an active member of a Christian school and administrator's organization and saw herself as having been mentored to some degree, both helpful influences to her career. She was hindered by the time requirements involved in meeting both familial and professional goals, by financial restraints if for no other reason than staffing, and by the experienced occasional lack of acceptance of her authority as the "man in charge".

### **Role of Faith**

From this collection of heroic pioneer women, emerged the face of a woman full of faith in her God. Faith was the key ingredient, the

scarlet thread, that woven throughout, bound them together. Faith the connector, struck a chord of unity, creating one, a pioneer woman Christian school administrator. Her faith was evident in her preparation for and choices in her career, guiding her down the path through the field of education. It was evident in the way she conducted the daily business of administration, her style. Additionally, her faith was present when she expected and acknowledged divine intervention into her life and career. As in days of old, heroines of another era, faith in God brought her through all that life and career had to offer.

### **Summary**

Collectively, these women created the face of the woman Christian school administrator. Their similarities and differences merged to create a unique blend of not only the mystique of historically traditional Americana, but also the mystery of womanhood converging upon and emerging from a previously male dominant professional and social setting. When viewing the totality of the collective, the face of the pioneer that emerged was one of a woman Christian school administrator who was reared in a traditional two parent generally rural home. She was married with two children, was about 58-59 years old and shared a familial commitment to education as was personally expressed in the attainment of her own advanced education and degree, a Master's. Generally, she was in her first full charge school administrative position, holding that position for about seven years, and was likely the first woman to fill it. She acquired her position without a job search. Her school was located in a church building on a spacious campus. The support of others and her

membership in a Christian school and administrators organization along with limited mentoring greatly facilitated her career development, while family responsibilities, financial constraints and lack of acknowledged authority because of her gender, hindered her career. Her faith in God and prayer played an important daily role in her career. She was a woman who wore many hats in the course of her daily personal and professional life. The man in the principal's office was a woman, a contemporary pioneer.

### **Chapter Summary**

Historically, women have found themselves out in the frontier. This nation owed much to the women who pressed on, even in the face of nature's perils and man's vices, to go forward and bring not only contemporary civilization but also to bring God to the scene. It was no different today, women continued to press on in the face of adversity in an effort to bring God to the scene. Such was the task of each of these heroic pioneer women both individually and collectively. Diligent to prepare and to follow their faith into domains often previously unoccupied by women, they accepted their assignment and gave to it the most productive years of their lives. The frontier they traversed, Christian school administration, became a better land because of them.

## CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data gathered from interviews (McCracken, 1988) and documents (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) for each of the five participants was presented in Chapter III. That data fell into four emerging categorical themes: career paths, career facilitators, career inhibitors, and the role or impact of faith upon careers. In this chapter, the four categories of perceptions and experiences were cast against the five phases of Feminist Phase Theory (Tetreault, 1985).

FPT was operationalized for this study to reveal the feminist awareness level of the participants' experiences and perceptions. Those perceptions and experiences that reflected a reality of male dominion with no awareness that women existed, revealed an FPT Phase 1 level of feminine awareness. FPT Phase 2, female compensatory, expressed itself in perceptions and experiences that recognized that women existed; however, only those that became sociological men, the great ones who achieved the masculine norm, were acknowledged. Bifocal, FPT Phase 3, was discovered emerging from those perceptions and experiences that noted the dualistic nature of humanity both male and female equally, with attention given to women overcoming oppression. Female dominant, FPT Phase 4, revealed perceptions and experiences that reflected the new valuation of "women's activities" as the focus of significance, including other variables of ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation. Perceptions and experiences that expressed the awareness that human nature was a continuum, both male and female equal and complementary, were categorized as FPT Phase 5.

Those categories of experiences and perceptions grouped into phases 1, 2, and 4 revealed the inequity of gender domination while those in phase 3 and 5 reflected gender equity. The data were examined first independently and then collectively.

### **Ms. Maple**

The career experiences and perceptions of Ms. Maple were first evaluated by data clusters and then collectively.

### **Career Path**

The opportunity to become Brighton's first female superintendent revealed the organization's dominant former administrative FPT level as Phase 1, a male domain. Her own lack of aspiration for graduate school expressed an awareness of a limited ceiling on future goals, restricted to socially acceptable female work, teaching, a classic Phase 1 perception.

### **Career Facilitators**

Divorce and later remarriage revealed the influence of family and financial demands expressing a limited Phase 4 level of awareness, with her gender related responsibilities becoming highly valued and a new measure of significance as a woman, although again limited to the socially accepted role of women. This perceived valuation of her time financially and socially as a working woman and mother encouraged her career direction.

Her perception of the beneficial impact of her gender was expressed in her feminine perceptiveness, detail orientation, and sensitivity toward others as a gender related attribute. This position made plain a perception in her own mind of female dominance in those arenas, FPT Phase 4.



### **Career Inhibitors**

The heavy load that a career woman carried compared to that of a man, because of family demands and the fact that she was a woman in a previously male dominated field, a Phase 1 experience, became career inhibitors in Ms. Maple's life. Through personal experience she perceived that her gender had negative impact. She "...perceived not being taken seriously, or maybe not being as reputable as some of the others...I guess...I have to prove myself to these guys" (Ms. Maple, p. 6). Those experiences and perceptions revealed an experiential awareness level of Phase 2, female compensatory. In other words, be and do all that is required as a woman and be and do it as a man. The best woman, the most all-together woman was one that became a man sociologically, an example of FPT Phase 2 experience and perception.

### **Role of Faith**

Some enlightenment was evident in the role her faith played in her career. With a general experiential background of male dominion, because she believed God wanted her to move into administration she ventured into a position previously, historically, male. Her school had never had a female superintendent. The divine influence as expressed in her perception of the situation revealed a FPT Phase 5 position.

### **Summary**

Ms. Maple shared personal experiences and perceptions that, when examined using FPT, revealed every level of feminine awareness except Phase 3. Six of those shared experiences or perceptions reflected dominion of one gender. Four of seven shared

experiences and general perceptions were evaluated at Phase 1 or Phase 2, reflecting a strong male dominance. Her experiences and perceptions that were evaluated at Phase 4 were from predominantly traditional female roles, though giving rise to the value of those activities, the overall picture remained one of traditional male dominion, a Phase 1 position. Table 4 summarized these analyses.

Table 4

**Ms. Maple: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

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|                          | <b>FPT Phase</b> |                     |          |                 |            |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
|                          | Male Dominion    | Female Compensatory | Bifocal  | Female Dominant | Multifocal |
| <b>Emerging Category</b> | <b>1</b>         | <b>2</b>            | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>   |
| Career Path              | 2                |                     |          |                 |            |
| Career Facilitators      |                  |                     |          | 2               |            |
| Career Inhibitors        | 1                | 1                   |          |                 |            |
| Role of Faith            |                  |                     |          |                 | 1          |

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**Ms. Elm**

The experiences and perceptions of Ms. Elm were first evaluated by data clusters and then collectively.

**Career Path**

Ms. Elm's career path was greatly impacted by her father who did not see a need for her to attend college and only allowed her to do so if she was to become a teacher. This part of her personal life strategically placed her on the road to administration and was an example of an extreme Phase 1 experience that strategically impacted her course.

My parents coming from an old country, the past never saw a young lady having worth but to be a mother and to raise her children and to be a wife..their mental attitude was, "You're a girl a woman, you don't need an education, you don't need to be anywhere." (Elm, p. 5)

Though this familial position could have terminated her career before it was started, Ms. Elm's determination and persistence overcame the archaic denial of an educational opportunity, which expressed her Phase 3 perception of the dualistic nature of humanity and her particular and equal gifting. She was also aware of the oppression of women, a Phase 3 position.

### **Career Facilitators**

Several examples of career facilitators were shared by Ms. Elm. However, only two shared experiences provided enough evidence to evaluate using FPT. The first, as a young student trying to find her way through the familial obstacles of generations of female unworthiness, was encouragement by a teacher. A small thing that 40 years later came up in her memory as a career facilitator. His encouragement and her perception of it was one of elevating her self concept to a higher level, an FPT Phase 3 experience and perception. "Oh, but you have a beautiful smile...and you reflect all of who you are. You need to smile more.' So that helped me become more free from the feelings of inferiority..." (Ms. Elm, p. 11).

The second evaluated facilitator, as perceived and experienced by Ms. Elm, was her personal characteristics of humility and submission. They were learned early in childhood and expressed themselves late in life with some perceived benefit as career

facilitators. These two noted characteristics and the information provided regarding their acquisition and application in life revealed an FPT Phase 1 experience and perception because of the extreme familial fixation on the worth of men and the worthlessness of women, requiring the automatic submission to the authority of all men, hence, the unacknowledged existence of or value of women. However, in another section she expressed, through experiential FPT development, a Phase 5 perception of self. "I really don't think of myself as female or male," (Ms. Elm, pg. 17). Yet, as also happened in other interviews, this position was undermined or negated by further comments. "Maybe a female in the sense that I'm more sensitive, because we are built this way as a woman under God," (Ms. Elm, p.17), which expresses a female dominant Phase 4 position in this finite realm of sensitivity toward others.

### **Career Inhibitors**

The most outstanding career inhibitor was expressed by Ms. Elm as a lack of respect from others, parents and subordinates because of her gender, a Phase 1 experience. Though first experienced in her family, "...In the old world home, or culture, background like that, a woman has very little value but to serve and to care for others," (Ms. Elm, p. 5), it was later evidenced in both her missionary experiences and her career. These additional experiences and perceptions were examined, revealing a FPT feminine awareness level of Phase 1, male dominance, with no attributable value assigned to women, their role, or existence. "...Well I sort of felt that the male thought that because I was a female I wasn't worth anything, and they could play the game with me and could

manipulate me to get what they wanted because they were male"  
(Ms. Elm, p. 7).

### **Role of Faith**

Faith played a pivotal role in her career, pointing her in the direction of her ultimate accomplishment, Christian school administration. That perception of faith in her life and her experiences of faith were examined using the FPT evaluative lens. Ms. Elm's early perception of faith apparently remolded the previously discriminatory gender experiences of her youth into a more palatable form of acceptable behavior, a Phase 3, bifocal reflection.

I am very thankful that I had the richness of my home structure. They were very structured, very demanding of us. We needed to learn obedience, and we needed to learn submission...Finding the Lord, I think that was sanctified into a better perspective of what it is to be a woman, to be determined, to have aggressiveness, and assertiveness, and yet to know when to submit. (Ms. Elm, p. 5)

### **Summary**

Ms. Elm's comments revealed a concentration in Phases 1 and 3. Though no shared experiences or perceptions revealed a Phase 2 level of awareness, the presence of strong Phase 1 exposure with Phase 3, 4 and 5 experiences and perceptions, reflect a developmental pattern (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985) toward the liberated end of the feminist awareness spectrum. Her overall phase positioning was assessed at Phase 3, bifocal. Table 5 summarized these analyses.

Table 5

**Ms. Elm: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

|                          | FPT Phase     |                     |          |                 |            |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
|                          | Male Dominion | Female Compensatory | Bifocal  | Female Dominant | Multifocal |
| <b>Emerging Category</b> | <b>1</b>      | <b>2</b>            | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>   |
| Career Path              | 1             |                     | 2        |                 |            |
| Career Facilitators      | 1             |                     | 1        | 1               | 1          |
| Career Inhibitors        | 2             |                     |          |                 |            |
| Role of Faith            |               |                     | 1        |                 |            |

**Ms. Birch**

Experiences and perceptions of Ms. Birch, gathered from interviews and documents, were evaluated first in data clusters and then collectively.

**Career Path**

With several teacher role models in her family, teaching for Ms. Birch was a given. Her career path included a time apart from her career, 20 years, spent doing what would be generally considered traditional women's work, raising her family, being a full-time pastor's wife, and state director of her church organization's girl's mission group. The career furlough, along with its replacement activities were classic examples of Phase 1 perceptions and experiences. She became the female counterpart of her husband, restricted to traditional women's work.

Ms. Birch never mentioned any desire or aspiration for administration until late in her career at about the age of 60, a Phase

1 perception. With the encouragement of peers and models, her vision of self expanded to include a perception of herself as a Christian school administrator in an arena that previously was associated with the male domain. This perception, as a woman called by God and the experience of moving into school administration expressed a Phase 3 level of awareness. There was a sense that she could be successful in a previously male arena.

### **Career Facilitators**

Friends and family of Ms. Birch were of great importance in facilitating her career toward education and eventually administration. With women administrator role models in the family, the normal mental barrier faced by women on the path to administration was somewhat overcome because of their previous success and influence, though it remained unmanifested until late in her life. The experience of having familial administrators as role models was probably reflective of a Phase 3, bifocal mental positioning.

Other noted career facilitators were facets of herself including personal characteristics and gender. Her perception of herself as humble and obedient to authority initially brought the thought of a clearly Phase 1 perception and experience. However, her continued comment reflected a more dualistic approach. People are different, with different positions of authority and opinions, yet they are equal in their right as humans, a Phase 3 acknowledgment.

I've always tried to be amicable. I really believe that scripture that says, "Obey those in authority so that you have a good report and not have a great dispute." I haven't always agreed with them but I've always gone to them in a private encounter

and tried to work it out...If I agree with a person, we pray this and I feel like it's true, I will do it. But, if not I will meet with them and say, "I don't agree with you on that, and I'm sorry that I have to take this opinion." Because I think that's a strong mark of an administrator...have to be your own person. (Ms. Birch, p. 24)

Her gender was also mentioned as a facilitator of her career.

The highly valued experiences of motherhood and being a wife were noted as providing insight that could be used in relating to students and parents. "...So see there are very strong reasons why a woman can hold a position as principal" (Ms. Birch, p. 34), a solid Phase 4, female dominate position. She continued by sharing a lesson that her parents taught earlier in her life, which was reflective of a Phase 5 perception. "I had a strong mother and a strong father. But, my parents taught me I could do just about anything I wanted to. And it didn't matter if you were a boy or a girl, just in God's way train yourself and get in there and do it" (Ms. Birch, p. 34).

### **Career Inhibitors**

Several inhibitors were noted by Ms. Birch. The stress of confrontation was one that caused her not to see herself in the role of administration. "Because I thought I had to confront people... Occasionally there is someone we have to let go and it really hurts. And I just didn't figure I was tough enough. But you get that way" (Ms. Birch, p. 7). The perception that an administrator must be personified as "tough," a masculine term, reflected a Phase 1, male dominance perception of school administration, a hindrance to her career.

In addition, the stress of an inadequate salary revealed an understanding that men need to be paid more and that it would be



difficult for them to accept the position at her salary because of family responsibilities, although the truth of the situation revealed that she had an elderly mother living with her and she financially assisted two adult daughters. This position reflected a financial devaluation of women in her position, a Phase 1, male dominance perception of money and women in the marketplace. "I don't know how a man could do this unless he had a doctorate and could command a higher salary and had a wife that was working" (Ms. Birch, p. 39).

Her fear of not being up to the task physically also inhibited her decision. That perception seemed connected to the "be tough and strong" masculine domain of administration, a FPT Phase 1 position.

Ms. Birch also noted that herself as a female in a traditionally male position was an inhibitor. "...Back when I was a kid there was never a woman. It was always a man, but just in the last 20 years or so, more women have accomplished this. But there are still a lot of men principals, there's an awful lot of them" (Ms. Birch, pg. 37). "A lot of times, the men particularly, would be, they didn't want to talk to me, they wanted to talk to a man. One said one day, 'Well, I'm sorry but I want to see a man.'...But there is a place where they want to see a man" (Ms. Birch, p. 32). This experience, in regard to her gender, reflected a clear Phase 1 awareness level. In her continued conversation within the same context she said, "And you have to prove to them that you are going to be able to do it" (Ms. Birch, pg. 34). The life perception expressed a need to prove that you can do it (administration), which probably really meant you have to prove that you can do it as well as a man, a Phase 2 experience, noting the "great ones" who achieve the male norm. Ms. Birch also perceived a

gender bias in the board room, with males getting more attention, better support and the ready acceptance of their ideas, not a surprising fact when it was revealed that the board was predominately male. That experience was another example of Phase 1, a male world experience.

### **Role of Faith**

Ms. Birch's faith augmented her career as well as her daily activities as a Christian school administrator. Her faith was evident in her acknowledgment of God preparing her for administration when she heard a voice in her spirit that she would not need the bulletin boards again. That leading of God facilitated her decision for administration and reflected a Phase 3 position. In addition, her style of administration and the paramount importance that a Christian school administrator must love God, with no implication of gender, just the high calling of love for God and humanity, revealed a Phase 5 position. Also her confession that she was specifically called by God to school administration, with no gender qualifications, implicated a Phase 5 position as to the role of her faith. Phase 1, 2, and 4, inequitable phases were not represented in perceptions and experiences with regard to her faith. Her faith, when applied to FPT, reflected a very equitable standing.

### **Summary**

The varying experiences and perceptions of Ms. Birch were evaluated using FPT. Early in her career, Ms. Birch experienced and perceived life under the influence of Phase 1, male dominance, however, she appeared to progress developmentally through the phases. Having faced very demonstrative Phase 1 inhibitors, she

overcame them to progress to the opposite end of the continuum. Each phase of FPT was found represented in her shared experiences and perceptions. Almost half of those (7 of 16) reflected Phase 1 positioning, plus one additional Phase 2 comment, which revealed strong male dominion. However, FPT development was evident because she countered that influence with eight shared experiences and perceptions that reflected either equality or female dominance. Due to the developmental nature of FPT awareness and her apparent progress through those stages, her overall FPT position was evaluated at Phase 3, bifocal. Table 6 summarized these analyses.

Table 6

**Ms. Birch: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

|                          | FPT Phase     |                     |          |                 |            |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
|                          | Male Dominion | Female Compensatory | Bifocal  | Female Dominant | Multifocal |
| <b>Emerging Category</b> | <b>1</b>      | <b>2</b>            | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>   |
| Career Path              | 2             |                     | 1        |                 |            |
| Career Facilitators      |               |                     | 2        | 1               | 1          |
| Career Inhibitors        | 5             | 1                   |          |                 |            |
| Role of Faith            |               |                     | 1        |                 | 2          |

**Ms. Oak**

Ms. Oak related experiences and perceptions that were first evaluated by data clusters and then collectively.

**Career Path**

Ms. Oak's career, as expressed through her comments, was never the focus of her life's ambition; it held a definite back seat to

parenthood. She took time off to stay home with her children, which initially appeared reflective of a perception of life at the female dominant level, the great importance of women's issues. "Shortly thereafter our family started...I chose to stay home with them" (Ms. Oak, pg. 2). Though seemingly reflective of the perceived importance of women's activities, since the perception and experience was restricted to the traditionally accepted role of women, "mother and wife," this perception and experience actually exposed a Phase 1 position. Repeatedly Ms. Oak remarked that she did not pursue administration. This lack of aspiration expressed a Phase 1 perception, male dominance in the marketplace. In contrast, one comment reflected an inner desire for more than accepted women's work, a Phase 5 perception. "When I first came to Maranatha, the principal wanted me to teach and I was not interested in doing that...I'm a developer. But doing the same thing day after day after day is not where I am most comfortable" (Ms. Oak, p. 3). However, a lack of self-confidence caused her to internally reject the possibility of administration, not seeing herself as an administrator, probably reflective of a Phase 1 perception

### **Career Facilitators**

Support of her husband and others was a great facilitator of Ms. Oak's career. That support reflected a Phase 3 experience. Her gender was also mentioned as having some benefits for her career. "Now there's some things that I think females do a lot better" (Ms. Oak, p. 22). This perception revealed a Phase 4, female dominate stance.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Inhibitors were also evident in Ms. Oak's career. She noted one inhibitor specifically, her gender. "...They don't have a whole lot of respect no matter who that female is and what that female has accomplished" (Ms. Oak, p. 22). That experience reflected a Phase 1, male dominance position and was a hindrance to her career. The other examples could not be evaluated using FPT.

### **Role of Faith**

Ms. Oak acknowledged an equipping for administration through her relationship with God. "I see myself as being equipped to be an administrator. But it was not necessarily equipment that I got through my university experience. It's been the Lord" (Ms. Oak, p. 5). Being able to perceive herself as an administrator and accomplish the task successfully through divine intervention, revealed a Phase 3, bifocal position.

### **Summary**

When cast against FPT, evidence was found for every group except Phase 2. With four male dominant and four equitable or female dominant experiences and perceptions shared, Ms. Oak appeared to have progressed through the phases to experience and perceive her career through the lens of the more liberated end of the feminist phase spectrum, establishing her overall phase position of Bifocal Phase 3. Table 7 summarized these analyses.

Table 7

**Ms. Oak: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

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|                          | <b>FPT Phase</b> |                     |          |                 |            |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
|                          | Male Dominion    | Female Compensatory | Bifocal  | Female Dominant | Multifocal |
| <b>Emerging Category</b> | <b>1</b>         | <b>2</b>            | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>   |
| Career Path              | 3                |                     |          |                 | 1          |
| Career Facilitators      |                  |                     | 1        | 1               |            |
| Career Inhibitors        | 1                |                     |          |                 |            |
| Role of Faith            |                  |                     | 1        |                 |            |

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**Ms. Hickory**

The expressed perceptions and experiences of Ms. Hickory were first evaluated in data clusters and then collectively.

**Career Path**

Ms. Hickory moved into education as a natural consequence of teaching and training siblings during her youth. However, early in her career she limited her self-vision to teaching, with no aspiration for administration, an apparent Phase 1 perception of administration. "I really did enjoy teaching and never thought of myself as an administrator of a school" (Ms. Hickory, p. 4). Similar to her peers, she never sought an administrative position, though holding two different principalships. They came to her. Once the opportunity was presented to her with the request that she take it, her perception of administration and her part in it began to shift to another level. "And at first I was very hesitant...And as I say, once I got into the office and had the total big picture, rather than the parts, I found it very fulfilling

and really enjoyed it. And I knew that that was where I should be" (Ms. Hickory, p. 3). This shift reflected a Phase 3, bifocal position because there was evidence she felt she could do as well if not better than the previous male administrator.

### **Career Facilitators**

Many influences were noted as facilitators of Ms. Hickory's career. One important facilitator was the support and encouragement from her previous supervisor, which emphasized her talents and skills. "He [principal] encouraged me, pointing out the different gifts that I had. And he saw that they were, they fit into the job" (Ms. Hickory, p. 5). This support had the marking of a Phase 3 bifocal experience.

Ms. Hickory also noted characteristics of herself as a facilitator of her career. Her gender offered career benefits. "I think with the female faculty, I understand them because I'm the same" (Ms. Hickory, p. 16). "The mother is the one that is mostly involved in the school...it does help in that area" (Ms. Hickory, p. 17). This perception revealed a Phase 4, female dominate position.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Other career influences inhibited her career. Among those was her gender, which in some ways was an apparent benefit and in other ways an inhibitor. "There are times when I wish I were a man so I understood how they think. Their banter is quite different than a woman's way of looking at things" (Ms. Hickory, p.9). This was an example of a Phase 1 experience. When hiring men, her gender occasionally presented a problem to the applicant. Those men were not hired, again a Phase 1, male dominate experience.

## **Role of Faith**

Faith in God was evident in Ms. Hickory's administration. She felt a divine appointment or selection as an administrator. "I think God called me to this position" (Ms. Hickory, p. 10). This perception seemed to reflect a Phase 5 multifocal level of thinking.

## **Summary**

When cast against FPT, the shared experiences and perceptions of Ms. Hickory were categorized in all but one level of feminine awareness. Phase 2 was not represented. The remaining experiences and perceptions provided inadequate evidence for evaluation. With experiences and perceptions categorized at the Phase 1 level and the opposite extreme of the pendulum, indicating FPT progressive development, there was evidence to support an overall evaluation of Phase 3, bifocal. Ms. Hickory appeared to work and see the world at that level. Table 8 summarized these analyses.

Table 8

### **Ms. Hickory: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

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|                            | <b>FPT Phase</b>     |                            |                |                        |                   |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | <b>Male Dominion</b> | <b>Female Compensatory</b> | <b>Bifocal</b> | <b>Female Dominant</b> | <b>Multifocal</b> |
| <b>Emerging Category</b>   | <b>1</b>             | <b>2</b>                   | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>               | <b>5</b>          |
| <b>Career Path</b>         | 1                    |                            | 1              |                        |                   |
| <b>Career Facilitators</b> |                      |                            | 1              | 1                      |                   |
| <b>Career Inhibitors</b>   | 2                    |                            |                |                        |                   |
| <b>Role of Faith</b>       |                      |                            |                |                        | 1                 |

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### **Collectively**

Five participants, female Christian school administrators, one superintendent and four elementary principals, shared their individual stories. Within those conversations, both experiences and perceptions were revealed. The data clusters were cast against FPT to reveal the feminist awareness level of each. Table 9 provided a collective summary of these analyses.

### **Career Paths**

Their career paths were dominated by Phase 1 experiences and perceptions (9 of 14). Five of 14 career path experiences and perceptions reflected the equity of Phase 3 and 5. Though male domination strongly influenced their career paths, glimmers of hope, equity, were also shared.

### **Career Facilitators**

Career facilitators, evaluated perceptions and experiences, reflected female dominion (6 of 14), Phase 4, usually female related characteristics, and an almost equally present (5 of 14) bifocal, Phase 3, with limited (2 of 14) Phase 5 representation. Data revealed the prevailing influences of equity (7 of 14) and female dominance (6 of 14), Phases 3, 4 and 5 perceptions and experiences. Those positive influences that facilitated their careers inevitably were Phase 3, 4 and 5 perceptions and experiences. Only one other facilitator was noted, a Phase 1 experience of learned submission to authority, which gained a Phase 1 evaluation because of the unusual familial fixation on men as the only legitimate authority. All other facilitators revealed equity or dominion of women. Overall the facilitators of their careers were female or equity focused.

### **Career Inhibitors**

Those elements noted as career inhibitors, when evaluated, revealed a Phase 1 position (11 of 13) and Phase 2, female compensatory position (2 of 13). Every career inhibitor was related to male domination, the opposite of career facilitators. Influences that stymied their careers were male related. No inhibitors were equity or female focused. Career inhibitors sprung from inequity.

### **Role of Faith**

The role of faith in the participants' careers reflected a more equitable FPT position. Of the seven evaluated perceptions and experiences regarding the role of faith, three were Phase 3, bifocal, and four were Phase 5, multifocal. Perceptions and experiences in regard to faith and its role in their careers always reflected an equitable, gender neutral position. Faith, God, held no gender restraints or proponents, it was equitable.

### **Phase Clusters**

The data were then examined in phase clusters. This examination provided a view of the data from the phase position providing a focused glimpse of the categories that certain phases consistently impacted.

**Phase 1: Male Dominion.** Male dominance was reported in every data category except the role of faith (21 of 48 total). Phase 1 experiences and perceptions dominated the career path (9 of 21) phase examples and revealed Phase 1 experiences and perceptions as career inhibitors (11 of 21).

**Phase 2: Female Compensatory.** Only two evaluated experiences and perceptions were categorized as Phase 2. With the

heavy influence of male domination (21 of 48 total) and two examples in Phase 2, there was little or no acknowledgment of women in their careers. The two examples evaluated as compensatory were also noted by the participants as career inhibitors. Phase 2 revealed no positive career perceptions or experiences only hindrances.

**Phase 3: Bifocal.** Bifocal experiences and perceptions (12 of 48 total, 25%) were revealed in their career paths (4 of 12), as career facilitators (5 of 12), and in the role their faith played in their career (3 of 12). Those perceptions that helped their careers were equitably based. No inhibitors were evaluated at the Phase 3 level, indicating that no equitable experiences and perceptions inhibited their careers, only inequitable, male dominance was a hindrance.

**Phase 4: Female Dominance.** Female dominion, Phase 4, was evident in 6 of 48 evaluated examples expressing female superiority, predominantly gender characteristics were credited as facilitators. All female dominant examples were shared as career facilitators. This indicated dominant female characteristics as positive career influences. No evidence of female dominion was discovered in the career path, as career inhibitors, or in the examples of the role of faith. Female dominion was denoted as a career facilitator only.

**Phase 5: Multifocal.** Phase 5 expressed a more diverse spread. Evaluated Phase 5 experiences and perceptions (7 of 48 total) were discovered in the participants' career paths (1 of 7), career facilitators (2 of 7) and role of faith (4 of 7). No career inhibitors were evaluated as multifocal, gender neutral. The role of faith revealed a

heavy concentration in the Phase 5 level of equity of genders and the complementary nature of each on the human continuum.

### **Summary**

When grouped together collectively, their experiences and perceptions revealed in their life and career a very strong presence of male dominion, Phase 1. Although their careers reflected a preponderance of male dominion, there was acknowledgment of gender equality with 19 shared comments reflecting the equality of Phase 3 and Phase 5.

They recognized male dominant perceptions and experiences, 21 of 48 reported, yet rebutted it with 19 perceptions and experiences in the equitable Phase 3 bifocal or Phase 5 multifocal level. In addition six perceptions and experiences were evaluated at the female dominant, Phase 4 level, shifting the pendulum away from a strong male dominance, with 25 shared perceptions and experiences evaluated at the equitable or female dominant end of the continuum. Collectively they were aware of male dominion in their careers, however, were resistant to it with counter perceptions and experiences.

The career paths of this group were greatly influenced by male dominance. On the other end, their facilitators were predominantly reflective of equality or female dominion. Career facilitators reflected female dominion usually in the form of female related characteristics, and an almost equally present bifocal position of perceptions and experiences. Overall, the facilitators of their careers were female or equity focused. Career inhibitors were male dominant. Faith reflected a more equitable position with three comments at the bifocal

level and four at the multifocal level, both expressing equality of genders. Faith in the lives and careers of the participants revealed equality, a position of no ruling gender. Not surprisingly, the positive contributions were found in Phases 3, 4, and 5, while negatives, such as career inhibitors, were entirely Phase 1 and 2.

Though they experienced male domination, there was evidence of progressive phase development with rebuttals to male dominion in the form of Phase 3, 4, and 5 perceptions and experiences. They recognized the way things were externally, yet moved internally to rebut. For that reason and the weight of 25 Phase 3, 4, and 5 evaluated experiences and perceptions, these women reflected a general Phase 3 FPT position as revealed in the collective summary of these analyses in Table 9.

Table 9

**Collective: Perception and Experience Phase Analysis**

|                          | FPT Phase     |                     |           |                 |            | Total     |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
|                          | Male Dominion | Female Compensatory | Bifocal   | Female Dominant | Multifocal |           |
| <b>Emerging Category</b> | <b>1</b>      | <b>2</b>            | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>        | <b>5</b>   |           |
| Career Path              | 9             |                     | 4         |                 | 1          | 14        |
| Career Facilitators      | 1             |                     | 5         | 6               | 2          | 14        |
| Career Inhibitors        | 11            | 2                   |           |                 |            | 13        |
| Role of Faith            |               |                     | 3         |                 | 4          | 7         |
| <b>Total 48</b>          | <b>21</b>     | <b>2</b>            | <b>12</b> | <b>6</b>        | <b>7</b>   | <b>48</b> |

## **Summary**

Using Feminist Phase Theory (Tetreault, 1985) five phases of gender awareness, the career experiences and perceptions of five women Christian school administrators were evaluated and categorized individually and collectively. This categorization revealed a Phase 3 gender balanced analyses. This position characterized a view of career experiences and perspectives as a dichotomy. Women and men both have valuable and equal attributes that are different. This category revealed a set of perspectives that recognized the appropriate need for both.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND COMMENTARY**

This chapter includes a summary of the study, findings, conclusions, recommendations, implications and commentary.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators through the lens of FPT. This purpose was accomplished through the gathering and presentation of data from documents and long interviews. Three tasks were undertaken:

- 1) The presentation of individual and collective profiles of the women studied;
- 2) The evaluation and categorization of the profiles within the five phases of Feminist Phase Theory; and
- 3) The assessment of the usefulness of Feminist Phase Theory for understanding the collective profiles of the women studied.

The data was presented in six categories for each individual and then as a group. Four categories of data were evaluated using FPT phase analysis and then categorized into the applicable feminist phase level of awareness.

#### **Data Needs and Sources**

Data from Christian school administrators was needed to achieve the purpose of this qualitative study. Willing women Christian school administrator participants were found. Four of the five participants were elementary administrators. One additional

participant was a Christian school superintendent, having moved up through the elementary principalship at her school to assume the superintendency.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected through the use of the McCracken (1988) long interview and Guba and Lincoln's (1989) document gathering techniques. The individual interviews were conducted on the school premises using open-ended semi-structured interview questions in a one to one and a half hour interview. The questions focused on those things that had impacted the careers of these administrators, including facilitators and inhibitors.

### **Data Presentation**

The data gathered from documents and interviews was first grouped individually and then collectively into six categories. Two of the emerging categories, educational setting and backgrounds, were provided as a backdrop to help understand the platform from which the participants perceptions and experiences were shared. Data gathered in this study fell out into six clusters: educational settings, participant backgrounds, career paths, career facilitators, career inhibitors, and the role of faith.

**Educational Settings.** This information provided the backdrop or atmosphere within which the participants conducted the essence of their work. Four of five participants worked on a church campus, which ran the gamut from very new and modern with many amenities, to very old and only somewhat updated. The remaining participant's school was in an office complex.



**Backgrounds.** Data regarding their backgrounds provided a view of the platform from which they launched their careers. Generally, these Caucasian women were reared in two parent traditional families with a heavy concentration of rural roots. They each married and raised children; two of the five divorced, with one remarrying. Their ages ranged from early 40's to middle 60's. Education was an often mentioned as an important facet of their childhood and adult life. This was evidenced in the degrees acquired: one with a Bachelor of Science; one with both a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts, plus required courses for a Master's, but no degree; and three Master's, one of which had completed additional courses required for state administrative certification. Education was a personal and familial commitment.

They emphasized the importance of their family with careers often taking a backseat to the priority of family needs. Their backgrounds were indicative of traditional family settings both as a child and then as a parent with women filling the traditional role as mother and wife and then educator. Even the un-traditional administrative position came second to the priority of family.

**Career Paths.** The individual directions from college to school administration were discovered and presented. The data provided insight into factors that directed their paths. Early in their careers, none of the participants saw themselves as administrators, yet eventually they experienced a divine calling to that position. However, none of the participants sought an administrative position, the opportunity was presented and they accepted.

**Career Facilitators.** Data also revealed factors that enhanced their careers' development and propelled them toward Christian school administration. Those factors included administrative models, family needs and influences, a professional association, support of others, and certain facets of their gender.

**Career Inhibitors.** Factors that negatively impacted their careers were presented. The data revealed experiences and perceptions these women had to overcome in order to obtain success. Among those were family responsibilities, lack of acceptance of their authority, gender bias, fear, and stress, each inhibiting their careers.

**Role of Faith.** Each individuals' faith and the role it played in their careers was revealed and presented. Faith impacted the choice of career and was reported as an avenue of continued divine intervention and influence in both their personal lives and career.

### **Analysis**

Four categories of data, 1) career paths, 2) career facilitators, 3) career inhibitors, and the 4) role of faith were each cast against the five levels of feminist awareness of FPT. When examined through that lens, the perceptions and experiences within each category, both individually and collectively, revealed its FPT level. Career paths were dominated by Phase 1, male dominion. Career facilitators were Phase 3, 4, or 5 perceptions and experiences. Those things that facilitated their careers were equitable or female dominant. Career inhibitors always fell into Phase 1 or 2, Male dominion. Male dominant perceptions and experiences were a hindrance to their careers. Perceptions and experiences regarding the role of faith

always fell into Phase 3 or 5, expressing a gender neutral positioning. In addition, phase clusters were presented indicating an overall FPT Phase 3 position.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Considering the data, four findings emerged: 1) the participants appeared to progress developmentally through the phases, having experienced and perceived their career through each level; 2) those things that facilitated their careers were equitable experiences and perceptions, the non-traditional; 3) those things that inhibited their careers were inequitable experiences and perceptions, the traditional; and 4) their faith brought some equitable balance to their inequitable career experiences and perceptions.

The perceptions and experiences of these women appeared to progress through the phases of FPT from male dominion to equity. Though encountering strong male dominion in family and career, both creating and exposing experiences and perceptions of inequity, these women developed their own perceptions of equity which then in turn created experiences of equity. They experienced both extremes of FPT, dominion and gender neutral liberation. Though Phase 2 was limited, it was represented. Negative inequitable experiences and perceptions, were countered with those of equity and feminine dominion. Often their faith influenced the equitable positioning.

Equitable experiences and perceptions, the non-traditional, emerged as facilitators of their careers. The facilitators, perceptions and experiences that generally fell into Phases 3, 4, or 5, revealed equity or feminine dominion. Those facilitators included family needs, administrative models, professional support, a professional

association, and certain gender characteristics. Female dominant experiences and perceptions helped to facilitate their careers.

Inequitable experiences and perceptions, the traditional, inhibited their careers. Inhibiting perceptions and experiences always emerged as Phase 1 or 2 data. They included family responsibilities, low salary, stress, and negative response to their gender.

Faith appeared to create an influence of equitable balance in the face of inequitable experiences and perceptions. Often God was credited with providing the "calling" to administration. Faith related experiences and perceptions always reflected an equitable, a gender neutral, FPT position.

### **Conclusions**

The singular purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of women Christian school administrators. Though faced with traditional gender barriers, these women countered or rebutted their inhibiting career experiences and perceptions with equitable ones. Though the revelation of it may have been dim early in their careers, as they progressed toward that mark of administration a guiding light, their faith, seemed to set an internal standard of acceptance of their gender as a positive factor and established a level of career excellence that was necessary to achieve, no matter the misguided perceptions of others. These women saw themselves as the counter to men with similar and sometimes surpassing qualifications for the position to which they were called. However, they also recognized and acknowledged the importance of male input into school administration.

## **Categorizations**

Categorization of perceptions and experiences into the five different levels of FPT was achieved through the evaluation of recorded incidents and views. If women's perspectives were not considered or acknowledged, Phase 1, male dominion was obvious. When evidence was found to support the awareness of special women, or tokens, Phase 2, Female Compensatory level was assessed. Perceptions and experiences that recognized the dualistic, equitable nature of males and females, complimentary yet separate and diverse were categorized as Phase 3, Bifocal. Those experiences and perceptions that expressed emphasis on women's perspectives were assigned a Phase 4, Female Dominant level. Phase 5, Multi-focal categorization was given to perceptions and experiences that expressed gender neutral posit, male and female as one on a continuum of humanity.

## **Profile of Similarities and Differences**

The individual profiles of the participants revealed similarities in the phase spread of their perceptions and experiences. For the women in this study, more perceptions and experiences were male dominant, Phase 1, than any other phase. They each had experienced strong male dominion. The next most predominant phase was Bifocal, Phase 3. They each shared perceptions and experiences, which when examined through FPT revealed a fairly horizontal picture of a seesaw, as many on the side of male dominion as on the side of equity or female dominion.

## **Usefulness**

Feminist Phase theory proved useful in the analysis of career perceptions and experiences of women Christian school administrators. FPT was useful as an evaluative tool, to evaluate and categorize shared perceptions and experiences at the phase level of each. However, some perceptions and experiences, due to a lack of in-depth explanation or contextual background, were unable to be evaluated and categorized. Though useful to evaluate and categorize positioning of some statements, revealing the level of feminist awareness, FPT offered no remedy or solution to experiences and perceptions that fell into inequitable categories. FPT was a diagnostic tool, not a remedial one.

## **Recommendations and Implications**

The research findings impacted theory, research and practice. Each were herewith examined.

## **Theory**

This qualitative study revealed the usefulness of Feminist Phase Theory (Tetreault, 1985) as an evaluative tool in the phase assessment of administrative perceptions and experiences. In addition, though Tetreault (1985) did not promote this view, this study revealed evidentiary support for the concept of developmental progress through the five phases of FPT (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1985), however, not necessarily in a strictly linear fashion. These women Christian school administrators reported experiences supporting the full gamut of FPT, from Phase 1, male dominant to Phase 5, multi-focal equitable. Developmental growth was revealed in both perceptions and experiences.

Other theoretical uses may be applicable in a variety of discipline based research efforts. A study of the experiences and perceptions of women secretaries, women doctors, or women engineers could reveal the levels of FPT awareness in their careers. A study of those disciplines once or currently predominantly male might reveal the levels of feminist awareness as experienced and perceived by women who had entered those domains. A comparison between the findings of the women and men Christian school administrators might reveal a very interesting and diverse portrait of the career of Christian school administrators.

### **Research**

This qualitative study provided findings that contributed to the knowledge base of both gender related research and the finite area of women Christian school administrators. When examined, no research was found in this restricted arena, indicating a gaping knowledge void which engulfed thousands of women Christian school administrators. Further research might focus on the differences between male and female Christian school administrators' perceptions and experiences. Are those differences equitably based?

Since the subjects in this study were each members of a particular Christian professional organization diverse in its religious affiliation, future research might focus on other groups or a specific denomination and the experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators within that specific domain.

## **Practice**

Several success contributing factors were illuminated in this study. The comradery, support, and influence of a professional association was often referenced and credited as a source of encouragement and important information. In line with the position of Patterson (1994), women may be socialized not to aspire for positions of leadership, none of the participants had planned a career in school administration, nor did they seek one. However, later in their careers they saw themselves called or assigned by God to the position of Christian school administrator. Their faith was evident as a great influence upon their personal life and career.

Considering the data revealed in this study, the experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators were gendered. Three of the five participants held administrative positions never previously held by women. However, the evidence of progressive development was indicative of a equalized pendulum swing. Even as Townsend (1993) discovered, "These women had experienced or perceived their careers from every phase, one end to the other (p.35), yet balance was struck at an equitable position, Phase 3, which revealed a very free, liberated if you will, internal view of themselves in their career. This acknowledgment of progress and its availability to other women Christian school administrators who had not yet progressed developmentally through the five phases, was an added benefit to those in practice.

## **Commentary**

It is my position that there is not only a place for private Christian schools in the hierarchical domain of education at large, but



there is a need for it. Christian schools perform an important community service in not only providing an alternate learning culture for the education of the next generation, but they focus on the transferral of important traditionally held values and mores of this country's Judaeo-Christian roots. Without the historic plum line of faith in God as Creator, Father, and Judge, modern educational cultures are devoid of an unchanging theoretical or practical framework through which right and wrong, good and evil are ascertained and comprehended, hence the reckless abandon of prayer and acknowledgment of a Power greater than ourselves. Private Christian schools serve a valuable function. In doing that, they need administrators, Acknowledging both facts and my own gender, it was of special interest to me to learn of the perceptions and experiences of women who hold those influential positions in Christian schools.

This topic was selected because of the strong influence of faith in my own life. For the women interviewed, faith appeared to change the inequitable perspective of male dominion to one of equity, fostering a perspective recognizing the different and complementary nature of male and female, as designed by God. The question arose within, regarding the lives of women already in Christian school administration, did they experience a similar transformation and if so what impact did it have? This study helped to remove the mystique of women in Christian school administration. It was learned that they faced similar trials, experienced similar triumphs, and at times momentary defeats. I was disappointed to learn that gender had negative impact even within the created domain of an equitable God,

Christian schools. However, it is understood that humanity is yet to be perfected, and only receives as much divine revelation as she/he is willing to seek, which indicated to me that many Christians are not seeking divine revelation in the area of equity.

Nonetheless, a prevailing theme, pioneer woman, seemed to ooze from every comment, shared experience and perception. Guided by faith in God on a path dimly lighted moving toward an often obscure goal, these women embodied a true pioneer spirit, undaunted by the obstacles that appeared as they traveled their road of life.

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APPENDIX  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

**CONSENT FORM FOR A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

**General Information**

You have been asked by a graduate student (investigator) of Oklahoma State University working on a research report (dissertation) to be interviewed about your experiences and perceptions as a woman Christian school administrator.

The interview serves two purposes:

- (1) Information collected in the long interview will be used by the investigator to prepare a scholarly paper (dissertation) about the experiences and perceptions of women Christian school administrators.
- (2) Information collected by the investigator may be used in scholarly publications of the student and/or the project director (dissertation adviser).

The interview should last from one to one and one-half hours and will be audio-tape recorded. The questions asked will be developed by the investigator. All subjects will be asked the same general questions and each of their interviews will be audio-tape recorded. The investigator will type transcripts of all interviews for analysis. The project director (dissertation adviser) may review these transcripts. All tapes and transcripts are treated as confidential materials and will be kept under lock and key storage. Upon the conclusion of this study, the tapes and transcripts will be kept in lock and key storage for at least two years.

The investigator will assign pseudonyms for each person interviewed. These pseudonyms will be used in all discussions and in all written materials dealing with the interviews.

No interview will be conducted or accepted by the investigator before this consent form has been signed by the subject and the investigator, with a copy provided for the subject. This form will be filed and retained for at least two years by the project director (dissertation adviser).

**Subject Understanding**

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director/dissertation adviser.

I understand that the interview will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that information taken from the interview will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

I understand the interview will *not* cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

I understand that I may contact the project director (dissertation adviser), class instructor, Professor Adrienne Hyle, Ph.D., Department of EAHED, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Phone (405) 744-7244 should I wish further information about the research. I also may contact Jennifer Moore, University Research Services, 001 Life sciences East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Phone (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy, for my records, has been provided.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of subject)

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it. In addition, I have provided a copy for the subject's personal files.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of investigator/graduate student)

I agree to abide by the language and the intent of this consent form.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of project director)

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 04-07-95

IRB#: ED-95-068

Proposal Title: EQUITY, WOMEN, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Principal Investigator(s): Adrienne Hyle, Rebekah Ward

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.

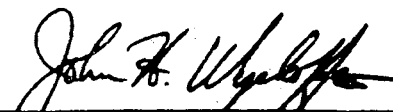
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: April 12, 1995

2

VITA

Rebekah Karber Ward  
Candidate for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Thesis: WOMEN AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOLS: CONTEMPORARY PIONEERS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

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Education: Received Bachelor of Science in Education in  
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University of Science and Art, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
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from Oral Roberts University in 1988; completed the  
requirements for Doctor of Education degree from  
Oklahoma State University in July 1997.

Professional Experience:

Taught for Mid-Del Public Schools from 1973-1981,  
Midwest City, Oklahoma. Taught for Tulsa Public Schools  
from 1990-1992.