SERVANT LEADERSHIP AS DEFINED BY K-12 ACSI CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS IN ARIZONA, USA

A Dissertation
Submitted to
The Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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May 2016

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ABSTRACT

This study is designed to understand how ACSI certified Christian School leaders in Arizona lead their schools. There are a variety of leadership models available. Servant leadership, being a fairly recent phenomenon has been studied and implemented by numerous organizations and leaders with great organizational success and buy in. One area of servant leadership research which still needs development is whether or not ACSI certified Christian School leaders are employing servant leadership principles.

By using qualitative metrics and using narrative-based interviews of Christian School leaders coupled with already established research parameters of servant leadership as outlined by Page and Wong (2003), this study analyzed whether or not servant leadership is guiding and directing the acting administrators in Arizona ACSI certified schools.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed to look for key words and concepts understood in servant leadership models. This study focused on current administrators serving in K-12 schools across the state of Arizona. With analyzing interview transcripts and discovering patterns that emerge a better understanding should emerged as to how ACSI Christian School leaders lead their respective school environments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For providing me with opportunities and believing in me, I thank you Mom and Dad. For always encouraging me through thick and thin, thank you Honey. To Jack, Lydia, Holly, and Bethany, my inquisitive troop, I am so proud of each of you. For blessing me with every spiritual blessing, I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The role of the educational leader has changed over the last thirty years (Bottoms &

O'Neill, 2001; Cushman, 1992; Levine 2005; Pascopella, 2011; Usdan, McCloud & Podmostko

2000). Local autonomy has waned in favor of national standards with strings attached.

Education has become more political than ever before with the creation of the Department of

Education and a one sized curriculum taking center stage (EdWeek, 2011). Couple these recent

actions with our understanding of motivation in that employees have affective needs that induce

them to action and the educational system is at a crossroads (Ali & Ahmed, 2009 Glass, 2011;

Howard, 2014; Lindner, 1998; Pink, 2010; Sundheim, 2014).

The demands and pressures from legislation to meet adequate yearly progress goals is

enough to strike fear in the minds and hearts of educational leaders. Many states require students

to pass end of course exams or high stakes testing before students may advance to the next grade

or even graduate (American Psychology Association, 2014; Supovitz, 2014). As early as third

grade students are measured for success or failure. Students and leaders struggle to find balance

to meet the increased standards while steering the ship in the right direction.

The 1980s saw the birth of a national educational report that indicated American schools

may be failing (A Nation at Risk, 1983). Since this time schools have been pressured to increase

student outcomes. Rather than focusing on local options and initiating projects that best meet the

needs of the community, national standards and federal accountability arose. Furthermore, many

districts began employing business leaders to run the district as CEO.

There are major differences between school children and the business arena. Children are

not widgets which elicit predictable outcomes. There are many factors that contribute to the

overall success or failure in schools but sudden, rapid changes do not emerge

overnight. Planning, buy-in, ownership, training, data, accountability, and growth of all within

the organization contribute to overall success. Many schools have demonstrated true change and

a culture of learning, but with commitment to excellence by the entire community (School

Improvement Network, 2014; Nielson 2014; Pearlman, 2009).

One researched leadership principle that schools are beginning to adopt emanates from

Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s. That model of school leadership is servant based. Greenleaf

stated that

> The servant-leader *is* servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to
> serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is
> sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an
> unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions…The leader-first and the servant-
> first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of
> the infinite variety of human nature. (Greenleaf Center for Leadership, 2014)

Although Greenleaf brought Servant leadership to the forefront as a business approach to

leading organizations, it is not a new concept. In fact its roots are very Eastern (Argryis, 1957)

and have been practiced for centuries. Jesus of Nazareth set the example when he stated, "even

the son of man did not come to be served but to serve others and lay his life down a ransom for

many" (NASB). Therefore, servant leadership must break long standing business customs and

practices in the western world to be considered credible.

In the wake of educational administration failures to achieve desired results and schools

that still struggle to meet AYP, perhaps the model of servant leadership is one that will

encourage collaboration, participation, trust, development of classroom teachers to become

school leaders and provide the impetus for educational reform and change. According to Stone

and Patterson (2005) the servant leader's motive is not to direct the activities of followers.

Instead, the servant leader's behavior motivates, influences, inspires, and empowers followers to focus on ways to serve others better. If the organization is committed to improvement and the leader believes in empowering others, a culture of servant leadership may emerge. With a culture of serving established the organization is ready to tackle tough decisions to ensure the success of all.

People respond to incentives and value intrinsic worth and dignity over external rewards. Being a part of an organization that values the employee leads to educational gains and satisfaction for all stakeholders. Covey (1988) believes "trust is the highest form of human motivation because it brings out the very best in people" (p. 178).

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

Servant leadership has been researched to be a viable leadership methodology. With increased study and scholarship, both of the qualitative and quantitative nature, servant leadership has a place in leading organizations and educational institutions. With so many standards coming from the top down, educational leaders will have to convince staff and students that they are valued members of the organization and still be able to make effectual change in their local setting.

Since Christian schools are rarely examined at the intensity of public schools, and since about five percent of the student population in the USA attends a non-Catholic Christian school, further study is needed to see what strategies and steps Christian school leaders are taking, if any, to promote servant leadership and other authentic leadership practices to gather data as to their understanding of the methodology.

The Christian school movement needs to determine whether servant leadership is effective in their respective organizations. With so much emphasis of study on public education,

Christian schools often lack evidence as to the effectiveness and clarity of their leadership practices. Furthermore, if there are other leadership practices they should be employing to stay true to their mission and vision, research will help uncover and promote such transformation within the Christian school movement.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative research study is necessary for a variety of reasons. Few research studies evidence how servant leadership is being employed in Christian schools and what this model looks like. Although it may be assumed that educational leaders in Christian schools are employing servant leadership principles, to give evidence of such would give great impetus for reflection and practice for the Christian school community. This study could be published in Christian educational leadership journals to encourage and foster growth. In addition to the Christian education community, this study could have implications for leaders in other non-profit organizations.

The study, being qualitative using semi-structured questioning, will look for certain responses from educational leaders indicating servant leadership is guiding their decision making including Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community (Spears 2002). Patterson (2003) adds that certain virtues guide the servant leader including agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. What emerges from these researched characteristics and values may help answer what servant leadership means in a Christian school context.

Semi-structured qualitative research generates a fluid and flexible structure (Mason, 2004). Questions asked are generally focused around key concepts but allow participants to

diverge and explain in greater length why they believe as they do. Whereas structured interviews follow prescribed questions and elicit very specific responses to questions, semi-structured questions allow for more divergence and new information to emerge. Another key aspect of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the interviewee to provide their own understanding to the researcher's interests and explore unintended trails based on the interviewees understanding of the content (Mason, 2004).

Another important aspect of the study is to give educational leaders a snapshot into fellow educational leaders' schools. Often educational leaders and schools act as islands unto themselves whether by choice or by time constraints. A careful researcher who is able to capture the dynamics of another school through the educational leader will provide networking opportunities and leave questions for further inquiry. The field notes left behind not only will give a picture of the leader but also help the reader understand how the servant leadership approach, or lack thereof, impacts the school community including teachers, staff, and students.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The central research question guiding this study is:

- What role does servant leadership play in how Christian school leaders in Arizona operate his/her school?

The study will also seek to answer the following sub questions:

- What specific leadership actions do selected Christian school leaders employ to promote success in their schools?

- Do the responses of selected educational leaders in Christian K-12 schools align with research-based servant leadership characteristics?

Importance of the Study

Christian schools, like their public school counterparts, desire to see holistic growth in each student. Since Christian schools operate from a biblical framework, they should be modeling the teachings found in their scriptures. Although more and more literature exists for servant leadership in public schools, more research needs to be done to determine the effectiveness of servant leadership on K-12 Christian schools. The Bible being the framework from which Christian schools operate, should lead to a culture and climate that values the employee, trains the child and prepares each student to be successful in life and learning.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was time constraint. As this project was being conducted as part of doctoral degree requirements for Doctor of Education, the time frame limited the study's scope to a certain number of interviews. Having more time would have allowed a larger population sample for greater depth. It would be in the best interest of K-12 Christian education to continue the research after publication to help refine and develop leadership perspectives.

A second limitation is researcher bias. As this has been a topic of study and interest for me for many years, there will be natural bias and a tendency to extrapolate results that are not present in the data. Although this is a limitation it is also a strength of the study to work alongside and collect data from those leading schools. This study may provide the impetus for further inquiry into servant leadership in K-12 Christian schools.

Researcher bias was addressed in many ways. All questions presented before each interviewee were chosen in consultation with the university advisor and selected for study relevance. This helped the novice researcher look beyond short sighted outcomes.

Another way researcher bias was addressed was by recording, transcribing, and analyzing the data, giving the researcher opportunity to interact with the data. Bogden and Biklin (1982) posit that data collected will provide a much more detailed rendering of events than the most creatively prejudiced mind might have imagined prior to the study. What this implies is that even though there will be subject bias, when the data are recorded and available there will be greater clarity on the matter than without any data.

Researcher bias was also addressed through member checks. Member checks has been defined as a quality control process in which the researcher attempts to increase the validity, accuracy, and credibility during the research (Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001, Doyle, 2007). Each interview, after recorded and transcribed was discussed with the interviewee to ensure accuracy and verification. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that once the research was concluded the interviewee subjects could determine whether a "true" representation was made in the research. Creswell (2007) found that often each participant should have opportunity to critically analyze the findings and offer comment before publication.

A further limitation of the study is the semi-structured interview approach to gather data. Rather than solely use open ended questions and allow comments and patterns to emerge there will be guided questions. These questions may steer the conversation in a direction that leaves out critical data for analysis. However, the goal of qualitative research is to provide more knowledge on the subject, not pass judgment (Rajendran, 2001). Being able to add theory and understanding to the field of servant leadership is possible with qualitative research.

One of the strengths of qualitative studies is that they can help "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991, p. 58). Since understanding and new theory is such an important part to qualitative studies, reliability is birthed through this

methodology. Strauss and Corbin (1990) add that trustworthiness in the experimental design and the way research is collected helps enhance reliability and validity. If the instrument used is research-based, peer reviewed, the data have been properly recorded and available for critique, "good science" has been employed and reliability and validity exist.

<center>Delimitations</center>

There are many leadership styles that have been researched over the years. This study has intentionally neglected other research strategies. This is largely due to time constraints but also the belief that servant leadership, although a recent phenomenon, is a style that will continue to emerge. Being able to contribute to the success of this leadership style gives great hope and interest to me.

Another delimitation of the study is the geographical region proposed. Arizona does not represent the entire United States of America. Due to travel expenses and my geographic location this region was selected. This delimitation may also affect overall generalizability of the research; however, there should be aspects of the research that carry over to every region in Christian education because of the purpose and framework in which Christian education originates.

The small research pool selected is a delimitation. It would be impossible to interview all Christian school leaders. The information gleaned from the interviews and field notes will allow the reader to draw some conclusions about Christian schools in Arizona.

Finally, focusing on ACSI certified Protestant Christian schools and the omission of Catholic schools is a delimitation. Although both schools use the Christian Bible there are enough differences in the structure and format of each that only Protestant schools were considered. Furthermore, each has their own accrediting institutions and standards they

follow.   One such study, the Cardus report, found that Protestant and Catholic schools had different student outcomes in terms of education and religious experiences impacting their lives after graduation (2011). As a result it would not be proper to enjoin the two schools together for the sake of this study.

Definitions

Christian school-Protestant based K-12 academic institution.

Servant leadership-style of leadership dating back to Eastern culture in the 500s BC, expounded upon by Jesus of Nazareth and popularized in recent organizational practice by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s. Many of Greanleaf's contemporaries have expanded upon his definition and sought to qualify and quantify his work (Laub, 1999, Page & Wong, 2001: Spears, 1996). What separates servant leadership from many other leadership styles is the attention to the needs of the individual within the organization. Rather than focus on the overall good of the organization, servant leadership focuses on meeting the individual needs. Servant leadership is not driven by the need for power but rather ensuring others' highest priority needs are being fulfilled.

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)-World's largest Christian school accrediting organization that provides accreditation/membership for Christian schools throughout the world.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)-Educational gains public schools must achieve as set forth by the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2002. Schools that fail to make AYP on a consistent basis risk losing federal dollars in addition to restructuring.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine leadership characteristics of ACSI accredited K-12 schools in Arizona. The review of the literature began with examining books and articles written on the topic of servant leadership. The literature drew from both a religious and a non-religious foundational platform to validate and authenticate the approach in each circle. The review then focused on recent studies both qualitative and quantitative, many of which were peer reviewed on the topic of servant leadership and education.

The review of literature is divided into the following categories:

1. History of Leadership Models

2. Contemporary Leadership Models

3. Rise of Servant Leadership

4. Private Christian Education and Servant Leadership

5. Studies of Servant Leadership in K-12 Public Education

6. Servant Leadership as an Emerging Practice

History of Leadership Models

Leadership is influence. Leaders are great and influential because of their ability to empower others not because of their position. Some would argue the reason being is because they view themselves as servants first (Blanchard & Hodges 2005; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Maxwell 1995; Sendjaya & Sarros 2002; Stott 2006). True leaders inspire others to attain new heights and build leadership teams making others look good (Blanchard & Hodges 2005; Jennings & Stahl-wart 2004; Mackay 2012; Page & Wong 2003). In the last two

decades studies of leadership have moved away from management as a key ingredient of leadership to a seemingly paradoxical model of servant leadership. This shift, however, is not a new approach but one with great historical significance that continues to prove successful both in the world of business and education. Although many names are given to this form of leadership it is a valuable piece of the leadership equation.

Perhaps part of the reason for leaders to take such a defensive and protective approach stems from previously held notions of what it meant to be a leader. The spillover effect of controlled management has lingered because of tradition and because only recently have more collaborative models been studied with any credence. Furthermore, with the exposure of illegal practices from CEOs and case studies of effective organizations that lead with integrity and value the employee, it is likely that value, service and opportunity will be appreciated and valued for most organizations moving forward. It is important to understand the context of previous leadership models in uncovering current practices.

Although the concept of servant leadership is not a new concept, leadership practices for business and organizations have evolved in the last two hundred years to where they are today. One of the first modern models of leadership was the theory of scientific management. The architect of this leadership theory was Frederick Taylor. He proposed in the late 1800s that leadership must be viewed from a clinically based management position. Employees were seen as beneficial only as long as they were efficient. He championed studies focusing on per worker output to determine how productive workers were to their company.

This theory of management had four key components. One component was to ensure that scientific measures were studied for each task of each employee. Science would solve problems

and replace the "this is how we have always done it" mentality. When laborers and managers were clocked doing tasks, it would lead to scientific rationale for decision making.

Another aspect included scientifically selecting the best task for each worker and training solely for that specific task. This meant assigned tasks would always be done by the same type of worker. Job advancement was not an integral part of this theory. Nor were ideas for organizational growth accepted from the common laborer.

The final two components dealt with the role between worker and manager. Employees should complete tasks that the scientific data revealed best fit their strengths and managers must constantly analyze the data of the employees. Little to no attention was paid to affective measures or career advancement. Roles, it was believed by Taylor, would remain constant with little to no room for advancement for the common worker.

Taylor was criticized for not advancing workers' causes or providing fair wages to employees. Managers began resisting the scientific management style of leadership because of the constant data collection and lack of local decision making beyond just collecting data. Although accountability was high, morale was low.

While Taylor focused on scientific rationale for decision making, Henri Fayol focused on improving organizations. Both men argued their claims for leadership in the same generational time span although Taylor was in the USA and Fayol was in Europe. Rather than leadership being a list of rules and data collection, he believed the entire organization should constantly be improving and that all voices should be heard. He developed a 14 point principles of management plan. Many of these points included opportunity for the worker to provide feedback and solutions to problems within the organization. While Taylor contributed to the study of leadership by introducing scientific data as a way to demonstrate success, Fayol was

able to add organizational improvement by bringing credence to all voices within the organization. He advocated that, at least in the business community, all members of an organization are important and valued.

By the 1920s scientific management principles were losing effectiveness on production. Laws were passed to protect workers from poor jobsite conditions and studies were financed to understand the role of the employee in organizations. One important study revealing the affective importance of employees became known as the Hawthorne Study.

A team of researchers conducted experiments at the Western Electric Plant in Chicago in 1924 examining work habits of employees over a period of five years. They altered many aspects of the working environment-adjusting the lighting, modifying time for breaks throughout the day, and adjusting the minutes of the work day- for a controlled group of employees. It was discovered that the experimental group of workers did contribute to the organization with much more impact over that length of the study, but it was not because of the change in working conditions imposed on them throughout the study. What contributed to their effectiveness was the attention they received. When they believed they were a part of something of great significance, they were satisfied and productive in their work. This study was paramount to understanding the emotional components employees need fulfilled in order to maintain their effectiveness (Cafferky, 2011).

The thought of valuing each employee is common among modern organizational theorists such as Morgan (1999) who asserted that, "employees work best when motivated by the tasks they have to perform and that the process of motivation hinges on allowing people to achieve rewards that satisfy personal needs" (p. 35). The outcome of this study and others that focused on employee satisfaction reveals how important the employee is to the success of the

organization and paved the way for businesses to provide training, professional development, and leadership advancement at all levels in the organization.

If humans are the catalyst for change in organizations and desire to be connected to the organization for maximum success, then more attention should be directed to every employee in the organization. Wheatley (2002) went on to add that, "meaning is what motivates people". The human relations movement and organizational psychology studies have paved the way for the engaging leadership models of today.

As is very evident in the theoretical frameworks of leadership, servant leadership and empowering the employee are not native concepts. As early as the 1950s researcher Argryis noted this issue and saw organizations appeasing employees in their employment dissatisfaction by external means such as compensation. Rather than engage the worker at their most basic need, they chose outside compensation. Rather than seek out the abilities of each employee they used methods to keep employees happy enough to not rebel. With leaders such as Jesus of Nazareth, Lao-Tzu and Ghandi considered worldwide as servant leaders, it is clear that servant leadership is an Eastern leadership framework that has only recently been considered in western practice.

<div align="center">Contemporary Leadership Models</div>

Many leadership models have emerged since the scientific management and human relations models of the 1920s, most notably servant leadership. Servant leadership was the phrase made popular by Greenleaf (1970) to describe characteristics of leaders that pour into the members of the organization to obtain results rather than using their position for a sense of entitlement. Many books have been published praising servant leadership as a way to lead organizations and promote humility throughout organizations. The desire to lead by serving

others is an incredibly dynamic principle in gathering and leading followers. Heider and Laozi (1988) state that greatness comes from knowing how to be lowly and receptive and of service (p. 38). Leaders that aspire to be great and lead their organization with prominence must empty themselves of all pride and be willing to serve others.

By the late 1990s researchers began to consider moral leadership, charismatic leadership, stewardship, and the principle-centered leader. All of these leadership models have helped solidify the understanding that the leader does matter, but to what extent and of what importance? What matters is that the leader creates environments for the employee to grow as an individual and a professional.

<div align="center">Essence of Servant Leadership</div>

The following paragraphs are research based metrics for describing servant leadership. Researchers and leaders in the servant leadership movement have begun to undertake studies both qualitative and quantitative in nature to more closely define servant leadership. The characteristics and lists below are how the researchers and leaders have contributed to defining servant leadership.

Larry C. Spears (2002) became the CEO of the Greenleaf Center shortly before Greenleaf's death in 1990. He advanced 10 characteristics of a servant leader: Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community. He went on to describe the 10 characteristics of servant leadership:

1. Listening – Servant leaders' communication skills are enhanced through a deep commitment to listening intently to the followers. Servant leaders seek to identify and clarify the

will of the group. Receptive listening and reflection are essential to the growth of a servant leader.

2. Empathy – Servant leaders strive to understand and empathize with others. They accept and recognize followers for their unique spirits; and they assume others have good intentions, even if they disagree with behavior or performance.

3. Healing – Servant leaders are adept at healing others as well as themselves. They help make others whole by facilitating the healing of broken spirits. Servant leaders share with followers the search for wholeness.

4. Awareness – Servant leaders exhibit a general awareness of what is happening in the organization. They possess a keen sense of self-awareness and an understanding of issues involving ethics and values. Servant leaders are often described as disturbers and awakeners.

5. Persuasion – Servant leaders employ persuasion rather than position authority when making decisions within the organization. They prefer to convince rather than coerce followers. Servant leaders are very effective with building consensus within the group.

6. Conceptualization – Servant leaders do not deal only with short-term goals and thinking. They are able to stretch their thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking. Servant leaders can nurture the abilities of others to "dream great dreams" and to think beyond day-to-day realities.

7. Foresight – Servant leaders are capable of understanding lessons from the past, seeing the realities of the present, and predicting likely consequences of decisions. They are adept at intuitive thinking.

8. Stewardship – Servant leaders are dedicated to holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. They are committed to serving the needs of others.

9. Commitment to the Growth of People – Servant leaders believe in the intrinsic value of people beyond their tangible contributions as workers. They feel responsible for nurturing the personal, professional and spiritual growth of employees.

10. Building Community – Servant leaders are dedicated to rebuilding the sense of community that has been lost with the shift to large institutions.

Spears was able to take the principles of servant leadership, along with many contemporary model viewpoints, and expand the theory. These 10 key components have been studied and expanded upon by other researchers.

Like Spears, Patterson (2003) attempted to place parameters around servant leadership. She found seven constructs that make up a servant leader. The seven constructs being agapao love, acts with humility, is altruistic, is visionary for the followers, is trusting, is serving, and empowers followers.

1. *Agapao love*. The highest form or ideal of love that is selfless in the process. Winston (2002) defined agapao love as love in a social or moral context. Because of this love the leader will consider each employee's needs and wants above just the bottom line.

2. *Humility*. Not to be considered as a weakness but one of gentleness in approach. Swindoll (1981) found that leaders that are humble do not consider themselves any lower than their counterparts but with a healthy ego perspective. It is not a lack of ability but a lack of focus on self to accomplish the needs of the organization. Mackay (2012) states that servant leaders are comfortable in their skin, and do not base their worth on their performance. Blanchard (2002) adds that people with humility do not think less of themselves but think about themselves less.

3. Altruism. Altruism involves personal sacrifice. Servant leaders give of him/herself to advance the organization.

4. Visionary. Servant leadership requires forward thinking about what could become. Blanchard and Hodges (2005) state that effective leaders cast a vision so that everyone in the organization understands their role in accomplishing that purpose. Without this first step, no matter how genuine and sincere a leader may be, employees are not likely to flourish.

5. Trust. Servant leaders must demonstrate trust in each of their employees. Organizations do not flourish when there is an atmosphere of fear. Meyers (2010) states that leadership begins with relationships. Only by dwelling with and understanding the needs of each member in the organization can trust be established.

6. Service. Serving includes a responsibility to others. The goal of a leader is to help people accomplish clearly articulated goals. De Pree believes that after casting the vision the role of leader is to serve those in the organization on a day- -to- day basis. Stott (2006) believes that it is indeed service and ministering to the others that bring the utmost satisfaction. Furthermore we begin to understand our calling and purpose through serving others.

7. Empowerment. Empowerment values and edifies everyone in the organization. Maxwell (1995) found that empowerment enables people to attain higher levels of professional and personal development. Leaders become great not through power or coercion, but because they are able to foster others' ambitions. Empowerment is about providing opportunities for those in your organization to employ their talents and letting them know you value them as a member of the team.

Page and Wong (2003) found seven leadership traits of a servant leader. The seven traits were empowering and developing others, vulnerability/humility, serving others, open participatory leadership, visionary leadership, courageous leadership, and inspiring leadership. Originally focusing on twelve leadership traits through their own Servant Leadership Profile with ninety nine questions, personal experiences of leadership and previous servant leadership studies, what emerged were the seven traits listed above. Furthermore they broke the seven traits into two categories with traits one through four being more about the personal character of the individual and traits five through seven dealing with interactions with others.

Other leadership studies have attempted to isolate particular traits to see if a person had leadership abilities (Tuohy, 1999, p. 167). Examples include situational leadership with the leader being flexible (Arbuckle, 1993), while still other studies focused on separating the leader from a manager in responsibility and function (Nahavandi, 1997, p. 5).

Although servant leadership is viewed as emerging and taking root among the leadership community, at least a few authors believe the foundation of servant leadership lacking. Without a guiding purpose, Rodin (2010) argues that servant leadership falls short of the true, most desired form of leadership. Because Greenleaf failed to state where the desire to serve others emanates, it does not fully explain why a leader would desire to serve others.

<div style="text-align:center">Criticisms of Servant Leadership</div>

Wells (2004) found that Greenleaf's definition of servant leadership should not be embraced by the Christian community without at least some adaptations. He wrote,

> The danger to the Church in Greenleaf's approach to leadership is that he bases servant leadership on an understanding of human transformation that comes from faulty and non-theological anthropology. The basis for Greenleaf's understanding of humanity is theologically unacceptable for a Christian. However, Greenleaf's

anthropology has been overlooked and his work accepted uncritically by the church. (Wells 2004, p. 3)

Without a foundation based on the principles of the teachings of the Bible, servant leadership falls short of true leadership.

Rodin further added that only steward leadership can adequately explain where the desire to serve others originates. Steward leadership is based on the premise that leaders are not the owner of their positions and that they have been called because of their humble hearts, gifting by their creator, and then can empower others to excel. A steward, therefore, is dependent on another for their provision (p. 82). Furthermore, Sergiovanni (1995) posits that only steward leaders could protect the school appropriately because of their care, commitment, and service to the organization. In his book *Mentoring Leadership* (1995) Sergiovanni concluded that "The leadership that counts, in the end, is the kind that touches people differently. It taps their emotions, appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with other people. It is a morally based leadership - a form of stewardship (p. 6)." Only a steward understands that he or she is entrusted with something that does not belong to oneself, but to another source.

Stokley (2002) believes that servant leadership is an ethic that one offers his spirit for the common good. Sokolow (2002) argued that only when we focus on enlightened leadership can we invoke divine wisdom to fulfill our duties as educational leaders. The key for these educational researchers was that those holding leadership positions must be most in tune with their spiritual calling.

It is possible that leaders will instinctively desire to serve others and foster that desire as they climb the leadership ladder. It is more likely that a leader that aspires to be a servant leader has had a heart transformation enabling him or her to fulfill their unique calling (Meyers 2010;

Kouzes & Posner 2007). Eims (2006) posits that people need help in learning how to serve (p. 104). One of the prime objectives of a leader, then, is to develop characteristics in those under their care that would mimic a servant's heart.

<center>Private Christian Education and Leadership</center>

For the Christian school educator, Jesus of Nazareth is the archetype of a transformational, servant leader. This is because compassion is the driving force behind his actions. Jesus did not lead by force, coercion or power but out of true humility. Leadership focused on Jesus gives the Christian school educator a framework to show compassion to others (Lavery, 2009).

This does not mean that Jesus was weak and ineffective, however. Many times he drove out money changers from the temple, resisted the temptations of the Devil, fed thousands of people, convinced men not to stone to death a person caught in culturally unacceptable behavior, trained twelve men to bring his message to the ends of the earth, and resisted the urge to lash out during intense moments of agony. This model of leadership revealed true character and compassion.

Servant leadership, therefore, begins with the understanding that there is more to actions than just pleasing self. Jesus spoke of serving others to please his father. He was quoted as saying that he did not come to be served but to serve others and lay his life down for others (Mark 10:35). He taught and led by example what it meant to be first in the kingdom of God. To be first you must be the very least and servant of all (Mark 10:44). In the most intimate of settings he was found washing the feet of his followers. To be the greatest truly meant to humble oneself of any pride and follow his example.

Allowing the little children to come unto him for nurturance and guidance was an instrumental part of his leading. When his followers felt that little children were a hindrance to his work, he quickly showed them that he came exactly for little children (Matthew 19:14). Christian school educators have a responsibility to encourage young children to come to them and to lead those children with compassion and heart of Jesus himself. To this end Jesus taught that it would be enough for the student to be like the teacher (Matthew 10:25). Christian school educators desire for their pupils to look like Jesus.

One would need to look at the followers of the teacher to conclude whether the teaching would stick. History records that the early followers of Jesus taught and communicated the message to thousands of people on many occasions (Acts 2:41). The early church shared all things in common and strove to help those that were in need (Acts 2:45, Galatians 5:13). The example was established and organizations today are known for charity and service to those in need.

A great example of a servant leader in the classroom was John Witherspoon. A man with a heart to mentor young men in the late 1700s, he saw great success by practicing what he called "true religion". He took time and nurtured men to be people of influence. Some of his protégés were James Madison, Aaron Burr, along with 49 members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Most of his mentoring was done in a small dilapidated school which today is known as Princeton University. During his tenure at Princeton there were less than 20 students graduating each year. However, to John Witherspoon the key to success was living out what was on the inside. He believed it was more important to live by example than just belief (Myers, 2010). Unless there is a transformation of the heart a leader may lack the motivation to continue to serve.

Private Christian schools have long existed in the United States. Their origin can be traced back into the seventeenth century (White House Domestic Policy Council, 2008) with the rise of Catholic based schools. The intertwining of faith in education co-existed in the USA for centuries until America became more secular in its educational approach in the latter half of the twentieth century. Up to this point, America's public schools instilled Christian values and taught from a distinctly Judeo-Christian perspective (CES, 2011, p. 9).

With the rise of the secularization, and the return of service men from WWII, began the Protestant Christian School movement as an alternative to public or Catholic education. Today there are about two million children in the USA that attend Protestant schools. The majority of these students attend mainstream denominational schools. One of the largest accrediting institutions for these schools is the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). ACSI helps schools understand and develop a framework for education with a biblical worldview approach. A part of the accreditation process for member schools is a self-study focusing on how a biblical worldview is incorporated into the curriculum (ACSI, 2012). Each ACSI educator must demonstrate a deep understanding of the philosophy of Christian education.

Christian education presents a holistic approach to nurturing the child and developing a consistent worldview. At the core of Christian education is the desire to prepare students to succeed academically, spiritually, to lead with a servant's heart and to perpetuate a consistent worldview message. By the time a child graduates from high school he or she will spend over fifteen thousand hours in formalized instruction. Private Protestant schools advance the notion that all learning is systematic and stems from the teachings found within the scriptures of the Bible. With a unified approach to learning and preparation valuing parents, children,

administrators, and faculty working in concert, students are equipped to face life's most difficult challenges and walk alongside their teachers as they become servants in the process.

ACSI member schools also focus on academic rigor. Rather than choosing high stakes testing, many member schools choose to administer alternative standardized exams such as the Terra Nova and Stanford Achievement Test. ACSI member schools, as a consortium, consistently score above the national average on the complete battery for every grade (ACSI, 2004). Although academic data overall for Christian schools are mixed, when compared in scholarly studies over the last forty years, students in Protestant Christian schools have outperformed their public school counterparts in many academic areas (Jeynes, 2008, p 266-267) and are more authentic in their faith upon graduation than are their Catholic schooled and public schooled counterparts (Pennings, 2011). This was further validated by a recent and comprehensive North American academic study.

Servant leaders understand the importance of relationships for effective communication and teaching. Servant leaders are not born they are trained, invested in, and given opportunities to succeed. Mentoring can be seen as the linchpin that connects one generation to the next and perpetuates selfless service (Biehl, 1996).

It is critical to cultivate or nurture relationships with the next generation. Myers (2010) views cultivation like tending to a garden whereby the gardener tends the soil, plants the seed, weeds the garden and daily communes with the plant. A mentor spends time that transforms the life of the mentee. When teachers and mentors are able to pour into the lives of young men and women, they begin to develop a heart to serve and model the way their teacher showed. Effective mentors will be authentic examples of truth and provide their mentees with opportunities to live it out (Egeler, 2003).

This type of mentoring has occurred for centuries. Socrates taught Plato, the Apostle Paul poured his life into the life of Timothy, and teachers partnering with parents invest into the lives of all students. Life on life mentoring is vital for the success of a nation's well-being. Lanker (2009, Unpublished Dissertation) found that high school students who had adult mentors in their lives, aside from a parent, were more secure in their faith, experienced their faith at a deeper love and felt more connected to God. When the older lead the younger, servants are born.

Educational Studies

Few research based studies have examined the impact of a Christian school education on society as opposed to publicly educated, Catholic, or other privately-schooled students. A recent study by the Cardus Institute of Ontario, Canada completed such a study, however, in 2011. The Cardus Institute is a North American Think Tank dedicated to renewing social architecture. They focus on four key areas namely cities, education, civic core, and work and economics.

The findings of their study indicate that ACSI and other Protestant Christian schools develop the whole child better than any other type of school (CES, 2011). The study focused on public, Catholic and Protestant Christian school graduates to examine how their worldview impacted the way they live today. The study focused on North American schooled adults ranging in age from 21-39 years old. Participants were asked to reflect back on their educational opportunities and share how their education and faith continue to this day. It may be the largest study ever conducted on examining these topics.

One of the leading researchers concluded that Christian school students and graduates from these institutions are the most morally conscience, participate in the most relief and missions work, are more sensitive to racially diverse matters and maintain higher academic achievement than their peers in the public schools (CES, 2011, p. 19). Evidence exists that they

continue to practice their faith and beliefs not only privately, but with their spouses and children at a higher rate than their peers trained in other educational settings. This indicates that the training and example of leadership they are exposed to at the school setting provides the catalyst for serving long after they leave the classroom.

The evidence suggests that Protestant school graduates are not polarizing in the community but integral to the social fabric. Not only do they contribute internally to their local church but volunteer in the community for other causes at as great a rate or than their peers (p. 26). Christian school graduates also tend to be motivated to work in the public arena and use their talents and abilities in the workforce alongside their peers from other educational settings.

At the core of ACSI schools are spiritual development, academic rigor and cultural relevance (ACSI, 2012). The Cardus Study helped verify that ACSI schools have had the least amount of theological shifts in core values over the last five years than any other group researched in the study (p. 36). These unified and consistent teachings promote understanding and meaning of the world for the student and the teacher. ACSI president, Brian Simmons, communicates that ACSI schools have 10 year goals and 10,000 year goals (Simmons, 2011). In the short term ACSI seeks to provide the most relevant and engaging curriculum for the student body. In the long term the goal is to see students serving Jesus long after they slip into eternity. That long term commitment and consistency is what makes Protestant Christian schools unique from their counterparts.

An additional study by Punnachat (2009) looking at Catholic education and servant leadership in Thailand, found four characteristics of servant-leadership that emerged in principals. These four included humility, benevolence, "heart" and staying true to the Catholic school mission. When leaders exemplified these qualities the leader-follower relationship was

strong and purposeful. The religious teaching and influence of the leaders were core to forming

personal values, which affect the way principals lead. This study helps reveal that servant-

leadership may go beyond the traditional characteristics as outlined by Spears.

<center>Servant Leadership as an Emerging Western Practice</center>

Whether publicly or privately educated, all educational institutions desire that their

graduates contribute to society. Furthermore, more than 50 collegiate educational institutions in

the USA ascribe to the servant leadership mindset in educating students (Punnachet, 2009). It is

evident from recent research on leadership that serving others and building cohesion amongst

team members is integral to the success of the organization. Whereas outward drive and

extrinsic motivation was the driving force behind leadership studies, many leadership experts

now see that character, intention and a heart motivated to serve others is the key to success.

Servant leaders are those that love people and desire to help them. The leader that serves

others finds great satisfaction and fulfillment in doing so. Rather than focusing on acquiring

power they actively seek ways to empower others to better the organization. Servant leaders are

confident about the direction and casted vision for the organization and treat colleagues as peers

viewing themselves as first among equals (Nagy, n.d.).

Leadership has long been critiqued. Should leaders manage, use their power to climb the

leadership ladder, invest in the needs of their employees and share success or seek pragmatic

approaches? Should leadership be studied from outside forces imposed on the leader or from a

change of heart within the leader? Models and the focus for leadership have changed throughout

generations but have ultimately cycled back to tried and true methods. Over 2000 years ago

Jesus of Nazareth taught that leaders should serve others and consider others' needs first. Other

philosophers have taught similar messages in how to ultimately lead.

Private Christian schools have had the benefit of a consistent historical model and scriptures that govern and guide the content in the classroom. Recent studies have confirmed that Christian school graduates are not divisive in communities, are active in volunteering, put their faith in practice at a high level and continue to teach a consistent worldview even in an increasingly secular culture. This would seem to indicate that students that are in an educational setting that reinforces the teaching at home and in their local church are more apt to be servant leaders.

One of the most important factors for being a servant leader is a heart transformation. For this heart transformation to occur, future leaders must *observe* others considering the needs of others first. They must observe individuals that are more concerned with the direction of the organization valuing the voice of all employees rather than power and coercive leaders. Studies have revealed how important mentors are in developing servant leaders (Meyers, 2010; Allen et al 2006).

Mentors are instrumental in nurturing and cultivating growth in their protégés. Private Christian schools are able to mentor students by putting their beliefs in action through the content they teach. Beyond just one on one mentoring, Christian schools create classroom environments that put the teaching of Jesus on display each and every day.

<center>Servant Leadership in Public Education</center>

Recent qualitative and quantitative studies have confirmed the need for servant leaders in all educational settings. Hoyle (2002) found that schools with servant leaders at the helm were more likely to have teachers with high morale, low student dropout rates, decreased violence and high graduation rates. Furthermore, schools that lacked spirited leaders were more prone to the opposite effects listed above. Other quantitative studies have confirmed a strong correlation

between servant leadership and job satisfaction, organizational culture, and student achievement (Drury 2004; Girard, 2000; Lambert, 2004; Laub, 1999; Thompson, 2002). Schools that embrace servant leadership understand the role of the leader in setting the vision, establishing high standards, but also perform with high standards knowing their voice will be heard.

Stephen (2006) studied public school administrators in Texas and found that secondary principals were more likely to embrace servant leadership principles based on Page and Wong's 7 factors of servant leadership survey instrument (2003) than elementary principals. However, in his study he did find that educational leaders, whether nominated for awards by the state or not, tend to exhibit the seven characteristics at a fairly high level. When educational leaders value employees and the organization, are able to cast a vision that is caught, and continue to empower others, the organization can foster servant leadership principles across the board.

Summary

Chapter 2 explored the history of leadership as a practice honing in on current pedagogical practices. From time on task models to empowering employees and recognizing the need for acceptance and achievement. Servant leadership is a relatively new player to the game of leadership, but one in which a framework is developing. Empowering others to lead and eliciting leadership qualities in others is a challenge for today's educational leader, but one necessary to ensure others are valued, appreciated, recognized, and committed to the profession.

The chapter brought together various perspectives on current leadership practices both in public and private school studies with criticisms of servant leadership and alternative, and perhaps parallel, movements such as steward leadership. Servant leadership is not solely for the business world, but education as well. It is not only for public education, but privately funded educational institutions as well.

Conclusion

Conceptually, servant leadership brings together a model for integrating the head, heart, minds, and personal growth of individuals within an organization (Black, 2007). Rather than focusing solely on outputs, servant leadership asks how each employees' affective needs are being met and how the leader can empower each employee to achieve new heights. In other words, rather than an employee being static and useful for only one task, they are made to feel as though they are a vital contributing member to the organization. Only when the head, heart, and mind is contributing will leaders and followers lead children to new heights.

Although there are more studies on servant leadership in education more study needs conducted on the nature of servant leadership in ACSI member schools. Public and Catholic schools have formulated both qualitative and quantitative studies on servant leadership but ACSI school studies in servant leadership are lacking in the educational arena. This study is not intended to compare Christian schools with public schools or promote servant leadership as being only something for Christian schools, but simply to shed light on if and how servant leadership may be employed in ACSI schools.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research seeks to answer the why and how questions that quantitative research often leaves unanswered. A purposive sampling of eight Christian school principals and superintendents were selected for the study. The previous two chapters presented the essence of the study and outlined servant leadership as a viable leadership philosophy. This chapter will further describe the methodology used in conducting this research. The result of this research could lead Christian schools and other non-profit organizations into a deeper appreciation and understanding of how various leadership practices may positively influence their organization and offer reliable practices to enhance the effectiveness of the organization.

Rationale for the Study

This qualitative research study is necessary for a variety of reasons. Few research studies evidence how servant leadership is being employed in Christian schools and what this model looks like. Although it may be assumed that educational leaders in Christian schools are employing servant leadership principles, to give evidence of such would give great impetus for reflection and practice for the Christian school community. This study could be published in Christian educational leadership journals to encourage and foster growth. In addition to the Christian education community, this study could have implications for leaders in other non-profit organizations.

The study, being qualitative using semi-structured questioning, will look for certain responses from educational leaders indicating servant leadership is guiding their decision making including Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community (Spears

2002). Patterson (2003) adds that certain virtues guide the servant leader including agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. What emerges from these researched characteristics and values may help answer what servant leadership means in a Christian school context.

Semi-structured qualitative research generates a fluid and flexible structure (Mason, 2004). Questions asked are generally focused around key concepts but allow participants to diverge and explain in greater length why they believe as they do. Whereas structured interviews follow prescribed questions and elicit very specific responses to questions, semi-structured questions allow for more divergence and new information to emerge. Another key aspect of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the interviewee to provide their own understanding to the researcher's interests and explore unintended trails based on the interviewees understanding of the content (Mason, 2004).

Another important aspect of the study was to give educational leaders a snapshot into fellow educational leaders' schools. Often educational leaders and schools act as islands unto themselves, whether by choice or by time constraints. A careful researcher who is able to capture the dynamics of another school through the educational leader will provide networking opportunities and leave questions for further inquiry. The field notes left behind not only will give a picture of the leader but also help the reader understand how the servant leadership approach, or lack thereof, impacts the school community including teachers, staff, and students.

<div align="center">Qualitative Methods</div>

The purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Merriam (2009) adds that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret experiences, construct meaning in their worlds and what

meaning they give to the experiences. Yin (2009) states that qualitative studies are best used when trying to uncover the why or how questions, when the investigator has little control over the events being examined and when the focus is on a contemporary study within a real-life context (p. 2).

Qualitative research methods have been effective methods for many studies of servant leadership (Stevens, 2006; Savage-Austin, Honeycutt, 2011; Black 2010). This is an effective methodology in education because as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state "multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality. Reality, consequently, is 'socially constructed'" (p. 23). Each educational leader interviewed has a very real lived experience that helps create and understand reality in a servant leadership perspective.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

The nature of this qualitative study is best understood in the framework of administrative leadership practices. Previous frameworks for studying educational leadership have included managerial, transactional, transformational and now servant leadership. Servant leadership as a theory looks at deep rooted beliefs held by the leader that cause action. Servant leadership is both a learned and internal philosophy. Educational leaders that lead from a servant first mindset exhibit certain researched traits including listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, team building, and a commitment to growing people.

An ethical and moral framework is also prevalent in the research. Leading from a moral basis allows leaders to positively influence others (Bottum & Lenz, 1998; Clawson, 1999). When examining what makes a person a servant leader, this study will focus on a biblical worldview interpretation. Worldview can be described as the lens a person uses to view the

world. Since the study aims to focus on Christian K-12 schools, participants in the study will have a worldview based on the Christian Bible. This will be taken into consideration when analyzing and reporting data.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the research project. This study utilized a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews. Validity and reliability were established by careful transcription, data analysis, and member checks conducted after each interview.

<div align="center">Appropriateness of Design</div>

Qualitative research seeks to answer why questions that are often left unanswered by quantitative research (Ying, 2008). Since educational leaders were the focus of the research study, and gaining a deeper understanding of how they lead and why they lead, this led to the employment of a qualitative research study design. Eisner (1991) found that qualitative studies helped "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (p. 58). The lived realities of educational leaders give purpose and meaning to why they lead as they do.

Furthermore qualitative research is a naturalistic approach to research seeking to understand context-specific settings, where there is no attempt to "manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The goal is to bring awareness, illumination and understanding to servant leadership in K-12 Christian educational settings (Hoepfl, 1997). There is no agenda in the research except to allow the data to emerge of what is actually being practiced in the Christian school setting as evidenced and understood by the educational leader.

Problem

- Describe leadership practices in Christian schools

- Discover how aligned leader responses are to research-based servant leadership models

Literature Review

- Leadership Theories
- Christian Education
- Public Education

Study Design

- Semi-Structured Qualitative Study

- Demographic Information

Conduct Study

- Voluntary Interview
- Semi-Structured

Data Analysis

- Transcription
- Categorization
- Comparison
- Member checking

Report Findings

- Present conclusions
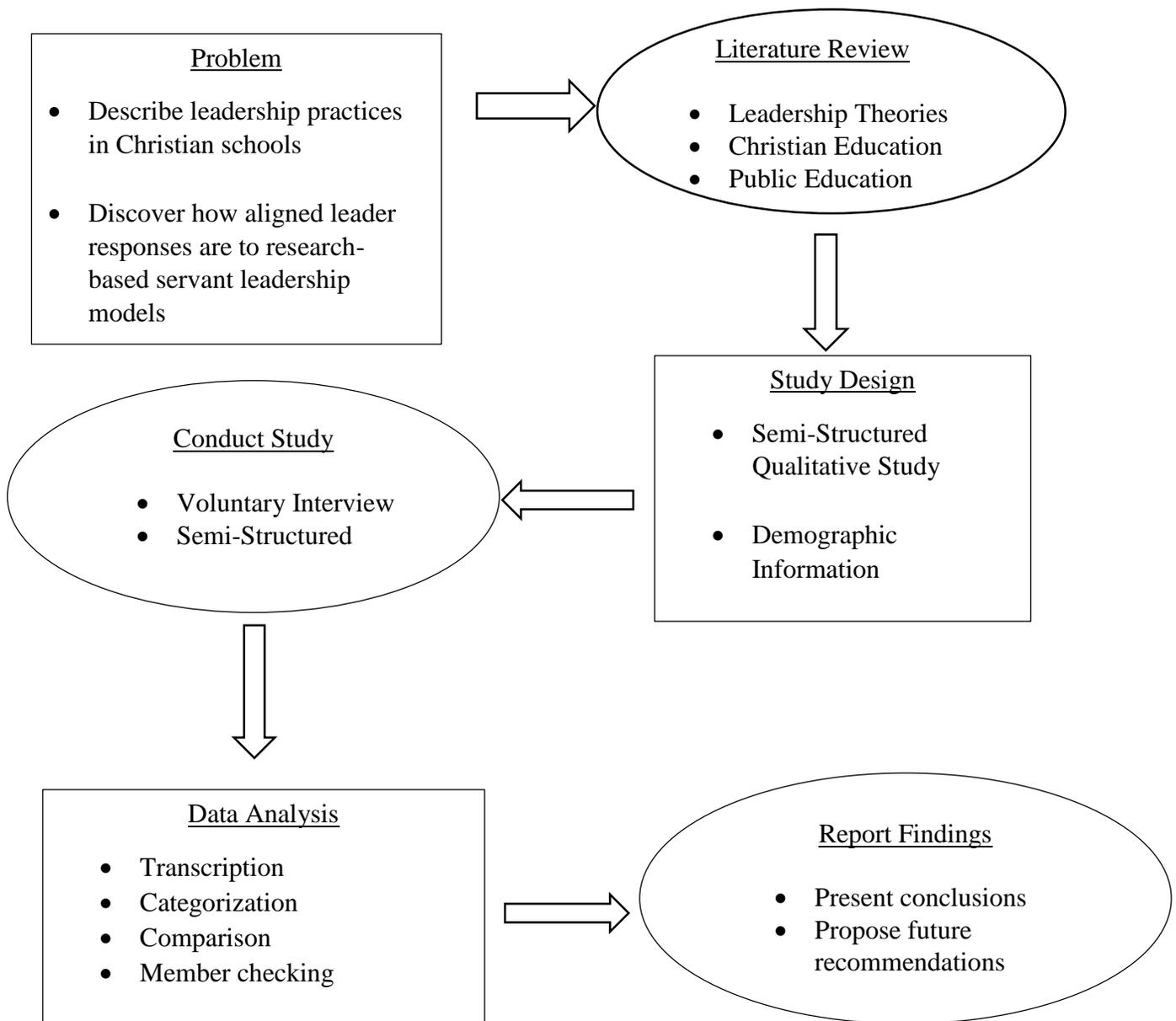- Propose future recommendations

Figure 3.1: Graphic representation of research process

Research Questions

The central research question guiding this study is:

- What role does servant leadership play in how Christian school leaders in Arizona operate his/her school?

The study will also seek to answer the following sub questions:

- What specific leadership actions do selected Christian school leaders employ to promote success in their schools?

- Do the responses of selected educational leaders in Christian K-12 schools align with research-based servant leadership characteristics?

The Researcher's Role

The method of research used in the study was a semi-structured qualitative interview. This method was chosen for its flexibility and fluidity in allowing data to emerge. As no statistical measure was required or expected in the study, but only perceptions and interviewee feedback, this method was the preferred choice.

The semi-structured interview instrument was loosely based on servant leadership research of Page and Wong (2003). They found seven factors of servant leadership including empowering and serving others, vulnerability and humility, serving others, open participatory leadership, inspiring leadership, visionary leadership, and courageous leadership. Their research was grounded in quantitative data. However, the questions in their seven factor leadership questionnaire have been adopted in the past as a qualitative leadership design (Stephens, 2004). These structured questions, in addition to researcher questions generated specifically for Christian school leaders, comprise the research instrument.

Page and Wong's servant leadership traits have been used by other researchers in the

past. Using a well-established and respected research tool gave a foundation to begin research, as well as branch out as needed when new leadership qualities emerged.

The researcher's main desire was to allow new patterns to emerge. All administrator leadership traits were examined within the context of Page and Wong's leadership traits of a servant leader. However, as certain traits emerged that did not fit into their framework, new codes were employed. The researcher contacted the interviewees asking if the codes fit their paradigm and if other codes should be considered in terms of how they define their leadership qualities.

The interviews were conducted in person and recorded using two devices. This allowed the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy. To ensure confidentiality names were changed and no school titles were listed specifically in the research.

Semi-structured interviews differ from structured interviews in that they do not explicitly direct responses from participants but function as a guide with the path chosen determined by the interviewee. There is room for emerging data that may not have been originally considered.

Furthermore, this method differs from open-ended and informal interviews in that there is a guide and research question seeing through the process. Open-ended interviews are very adaptable, open, and come with no predetermined questions. This study does not assume responses but does have a guide and purpose to the questions asked. Therefore, the semi-structured approach was chosen.

Holloway (2002) explains that qualitative studies can provide significant insights into the study of a topic. However, careful analysis and decoding is critical in the process. New concepts, relationships, insights, and findings may be explained in the process (Holloway, 2002).

Data Sources

The population for this study is Association of Christian School International (ACSI) educational leaders in Arizona K-12 accredited schools. ACSI has over 23,000 member schools worldwide and is the largest Christian school accrediting institution in the world. The participants were purposively selected using the ACSI website for initial contact. The eight participants were selected from a pool of twenty-four ACSI accredited schools in Arizona.

Each participant in the study had ACSI certification and had been serving as an educational leader in his or her current setting between one year and thirty-four years. All participants were Caucasian; four were males and four were females. One of the participants was a superintendent of a Pre-K-12th grade school, another a superintendent of a Pre-K-8th grade school, another a principal of a K-8 school, one was principal of a Pre-K-5th grade school, and four were 9-12th grade principals.

The schools ranged from 100 to 1500 students. All participants have a master's or doctorate degree from either public or private universities. Four participants had received only public university education training, two had both private Christian and public university education training, and two had only private Christian university education training. One participant is currently an adjunct professor at a local Christian university, and one is currently enrolled in a doctoral program online through a Christian university.

Originally twelve member schools were contacted, and eight member schools responded to participate in the study. Each interview took place in the administrator's office at a time of their choosing. Two of the schools were denominational church affiliated schools and six were non-denominational non-sponsored church schools. A full recording and transcription of their

comments were recorded and processed through the Dedoose online qualitative research application.

<center>Data Collection</center>

In advance of every interview the interviewee was contacted and an agreed upon time and location were established. The interviewees were also provided a copy of the questions at the time of the interview. The interviews took place in June and July 2015. Two recording devices were used during each interview to provide cross-checking as needed. After each interview one of the recording devices was downloaded to a laptop computer as an mp3 audio file for preservation purposes.

Shortly after each interview the data were transcribed using the Dedoose online qualitative research application before data analysis began. Each interviewee was sent a copy of the transcription for member checking to ensure their comments were accurate.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

Drawing from Creswell (2003), six steps to proper data analysis were included. They are as follows:

- **Organizing and preparing data for analysis.** The data was transcribed shortly after each interview and uploaded to Dedoose.

- **Reading through all the data.** It is recommended to get a general sense of what the data are saying by reflecting on the information. This was done with a careful, close reading to determine the accuracy and relevancy of each interview. Furthermore, each interviewee received a copy of his or her transcript for member checking.

- **Beginning detailed analysis with a coding process.** Coding began with Page and Wong's seven factors of servant leadership. As comments were made they were placed

under each factor and those comments not fitting in each category were analyzed and placed in new emerging factors. New codes emerged when multiple administrators used similar terminology and leadership practices that did not quite fit within the existing codes.

- **Using the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories and themes for analysis.** By generating descriptions complex theme connections can emerge as information is correctly coded and accurately documented. This was accomplished by accurately documenting the environment of each administrator and school setting, as well as taking into consideration the local economy, race, gender and cultural mores.

- **Advancing how the themes will be represented.** In Chapter Four, researcher comments were added to further explain and connect administrator comments. Themes emerged as multiple administrators provided similar comments and examples as to how and why they lead as they do.

- **Making an interpretation of the data.** This was accomplished by asking, "what lessons were learned" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the interpretation of the data new connections emerged, generating further questions for research.

<center>Verification</center>

Qualitative research does not look for the same measure of validity and reliability as does the quantitative researcher (Creswell, 2003, p. 158). The key is looking for consistent patterns and theme development that emerges. Creswell and Miller (2000) state that validity is much more important than reliability. Validity in that the findings are accurate in the way the

researcher presented the material. Concepts such as trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility help promote validity constructs.

This study used many of Creswell's (2003) recommendations for confirming accuracy. One such strategy was to conduct the interview, transcribe the data and present the information back to the participant to ensure it captures what was intended by the participant. Other strategies indicating accuracy in the data collection and reporting were discrepancies, much time spent in the field at various schools, and using a peer auditor to review the evidence (p. 160).

Others have termed the process member checking. Member checking as explained by Rager (2005) **-** is giving the data back to the participant to confirm the results. Other researchers indicate that you increase respondent validation, applicability, external validity, and informant feedback when using member checking (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spears, 2002). Member checking is also a form of debriefing to possibly gain more data and information to the study (Bringham & Joanning, 1999). Participants are not left wondering what will be published and reported based on their participation in the study but continue to be active contributors and refine their position to more accurately reflect their input.

The researcher transcribed the interviews and presented each interviewee with a copy of the transcription for member checking purposes. After approval from each participant, the data were entered into Dedoose and the coding process began. Following coding, the researcher contacted each participant to ensure the codes aligned to their leadership qualities as further validation.

Ethical Considerations

Each interviewee was given an information only informed consent form. The forms were sent electronically to each participant. The informed consent document is available in the Appendix section as Appendix A.

To ensure honesty each interviewee was guaranteed confidentiality in his or her responses. Participants were informed in writing and before the interview took place that the information was for research purposes in partial fulfillment of the researcher's dissertation and that all information disclosed would be confidential. The document informed the participants that they were free to participate or not participate, that they could walk away at any time during the interview, that they would remain anonymous and that they would receive a copy of the dissertation upon completion of the project.

Summary

The purpose of the qualitative research study was to determine whether ACSI school leaders were employing servant leadership practices. The study was based on eight semi-structured interviews with school leaders using an adapted Page and Wong servant leadership instrument. The qualitative data were analyzed using Renner's (2003) five-step process to interpret the data.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology and design, reviewed research questions, described the population, geographic location, explained the data collection and analysis procedures, and established validity and reliability. The research was designed to be semi-structured through a purposive sampling of certified ACSI school administrators in Arizona. Chapter 4 presents the research findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine leadership styles of ACSI accredited school leaders serving in Arizona K-12 schools. This chapter will present the findings and analysis of the research data. The study was qualitative by nature using semi-structured interviews of eight school administrators throughout the state of Arizona.

Results

The eight ACSI accredited school administrators were asked to answer questions based on Page and Wong's leadership instrument (2003) and researcher generated questions aligned to Christian school leadership. The central research question guiding this study is:

- What role does servant leadership play in how Christian school leaders in Arizona operate his/her school?

The study will also seek to answer the following sub questions:

- What specific leadership actions do selected Christian school leaders employ to promote success in their schools?

- Do the responses of selected educational leaders in Christian K-12 schools align with research-based servant leadership characteristics?

After analysis the data were placed into nine different codes in describing the leadership styles found within the interviews. The nine codes were prayer, Christ-following, courage, empowering, humility, prayer, serving, teamwork, trust, and vision casting. Each will be examined through evidence as presented by the administrators.

The criterion for placing interviewee comments into the established codes was based on interviewee statements aligning to the research of Page and Wong and their servant leadership

instrumentation. New codes emerged as many comments did not fit directly into one of the

established codes. Many comments were placed in multiple codes depending on the relevancy of

the content. Therefore it was possible for a comment to be placed in two or more codes.

The new codes were included based on frequency of use amongst interviewees. New

codes were developed and sent to the interviewees to determine appropriate code categorization.

A comment did not have to use the specific code terminology to be placed in that code if it met

the intent of the code.

Tables and Figures

The breakdown for participation responses in each category are listed below in table 4.1.

A 1 indicates the interviewee had at least one statement recorded in that category. A 0 indicates

that participant did not have any recorded comments to add to that field.

Table 4.1.

Code Presence in the Study. A "1" indicates recorded comments in that section. A "0" means no recorded comment in that code section.

Interviewee	Christ	Courage	Empower	Humility	Prayer	Serving	Teamwork	Trust	Vision Casting
#1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
#2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
#3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
#4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
#5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
#6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
#7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
#8	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1

The total number of excerpts recorded and coded from each participant is listed below in figure 4.1. While all interviewee comments were reviewed and many coded, not every coded response ended up in the body of the dissertation.
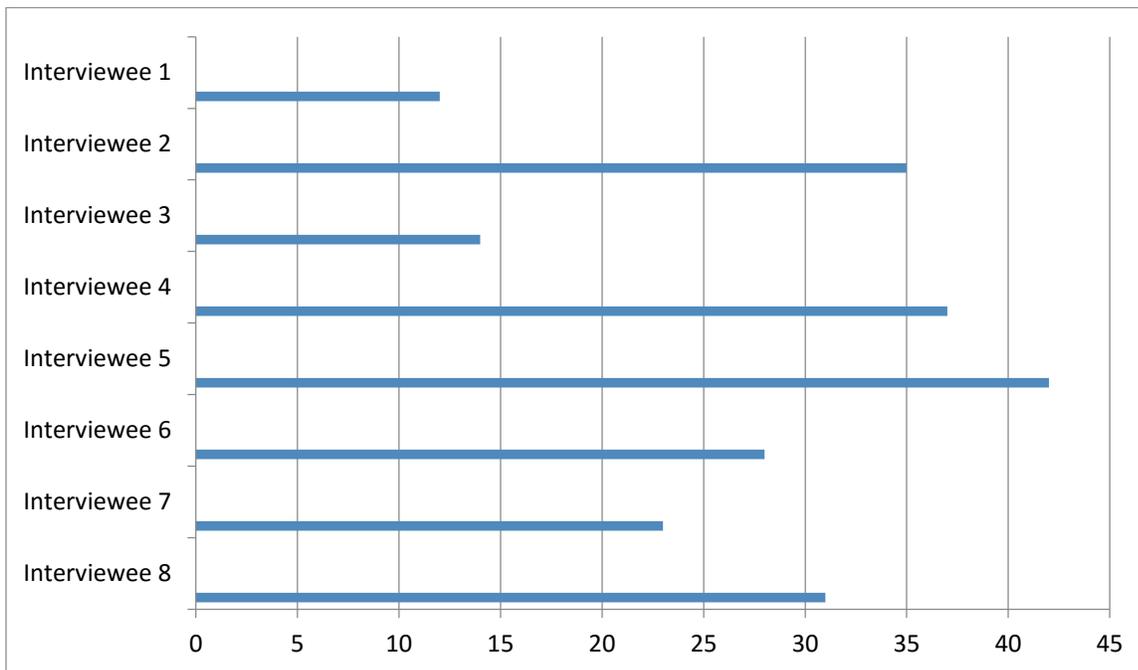
Figure 4.1. Number of Excerpts Coded by Each Interviewee

Finally Table 4.2 shows the number of comments recorded in each code for the participants in the study. Note that not every response in the table below is included in the dissertation but each response fit within the code created. Furthermore some interviewee comments were used in more than one code, hence, the code applications show more totals than the excerpt by interviewee.

Table 4.2.

Code Application. Interviewee total comments in each code and total responses included in the study

	Christ	Courage	Empower	Humility	Prayer	Serving	Teamwork	Trust	Vision Casting	Totals
#1	7	1	7	3	1	3	7	1	6	38
#2	3	2	4	1	0	5	5	3	9	36
#3	3	3	5	6	0	9	8	3	6	47
#4	11	3	10	5	10	11	4	5	14	79
#5	3	6	6	8	8	6	10	10	11	69
#6	2	3	1	1	1	4	4	3	2	22
#7	13	4	6	7	4	11	6	7	7	68
#8	4	0	2	0	2	3	3	3	1	18
Total	46	22	41	31	26	52	47	35	56	

Christ-Following

The single largest motivating factor as to why and how each administrator leads was because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. Having a sense of unity and purpose beyond themselves and constantly going back to following the Bible and equipping others to live out their faith was evident in every school. For the eight administrators in the study, knowing Jesus and serving him has guided them and given them meaning.

One area of following Christ shining through was in the area of understanding his will. One administrator commented, "I desire God's will. I believe in God's will. This is what he wants for my life right now." He wanted to be only do what God was calling him to do, which was to be the administrator for his school. Another administrator stated,

> The key is a relationship with Jesus Christ and living it out. Devotions help keep us focused as educators. A way to develop their gifts and talents. Our mission statement is to help our students live out their gifts and talents. Devotions help us to take a pray, rest and take a breather to focus on our mission.

Living out their faith in front of their staff and students was very important. Another administrator commented, "Again God's vision. Vision is hard to see the end of the day, but constantly praying and seeking where God is taking us." Knowing God's will and doing it are front and center on this administrator's mind. One other administrator takes much appreciation from her time studying the Bible to know God's will. She stated, "On a daily basis the word of God informs me. I get informed from my quiet time. I spend one half hour with the Lord in my Bible each day. It adjusts my mind to think biblically." In other words, spending time communing with God helps this administrator prioritize her day.

Becoming more like Christ, one administrator shared, helps her to be humble and honest with her leadership. She said, "You need to emulate Christ. Not that I am Christ or perfect…it keeps you on track." The guiding principle for this administrator is her relationship with Christ and it directs her decision-making on behalf of the school. When asked about what are the most important leadership traits for an administrator one said, "The number one, the biggest aspect is their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ability to tie in and hear from him and hear what he is doing. Number two would be their ability to influence or motivate others for Christ." The personal growth and emulation of Christ gives these administrators purpose and direction.

<div align="center">Courage</div>

One definition of courage is doing the right thing, even if it is not popular or easy. Many of the eight principals interviewed discussed making hard decisions and how they were able to make those decisions. Whether they were decisions regarding employment, direction, or

weathering hard economic times, many commented that they felt they had to make the right decision and do the hard, unpopular work.

One interviewee discussed how difficult it was to not renew a contract, but for very good reason. She stated, "I did have one person I had to fire. Not renew a contract. And I think part of that reason is that she wouldn't buy into what we were trying to do. I couldn't help her understand what she needed to do. I guess my strategy was to let that person go. But, that is so rare."

For another participant being honest and open have been paramount in their leadership approach. The interviewee stated,

> I do have a gift of discernment. I will work with people up to a certain point. If I feel they have or are bringing more contamination than good, they will not last here. It doesn't mean I agree with everything, we are brothers and sisters in Christ. I won't tolerate gossip, backbiting. You will be in my office talking about it. We'll put it on the table and we'll pray about it. If it doesn't improve you will be gone. I don't have time for it. I think that is Satan's means of getting a foothold in Christian organizations. I am pretty adamant about that. No patience for that.

Another participant stated regarding discipline, "It's like your kids. When you discipline your kids or you have issues with your kids. They might think you a jerk at the time but the reality is you love them and hopefully they love you and realize what you are doing, they might not see it at that point, but down the road they'll realize dad loved them are they are thankful.

Even when dealing with releasing an employee, there was a mindset of concern and care for the well-being of the individual as one interviewee stated

> Supporting their life and again demonstrating again they're more important. Even to the point of, I take very seriously, letting someone go. When I have to fire someone, I take that incredibly seriously. Something in me says when I fire a person or when I don't renew a contract, or when I release a student or family, that's one of the most important things I do. Because that is the place where they

are most likely to experience a stumbling block for their relation with Christ. I care about them more as a person to the point where I sit down and when I'm letting someone go, I am really counseling them into another place, helping them see this is not a fit rather than that there is something wrong with them or something like that.

Tough decisions need counsel and processing. For this administrator it was very important to teach and build up their self-worth even in the releasing from a contact position.

Another administrator took to heart gossip on school grounds. In dealing with a situation amongst parents on the playground she stated,

Somewhat disrespectful. What I did is go over, because we have a culture of trust and it came back to me. Someone said there was some ruckus conversation on the playground so I went and only found one of the dads and I said let me know what your discussion was about because I need to address that openly with you if you have an issue because it was overheard. Now we have those who are protective of our community disturbed by this.

Not allowing the situation to escalate was of utmost importance. She chose to get involved to deal with a situation and hopefully restore balance and order in the organization. The same administrator later stated, "I think as I have a responsibility as the head of school, I do not like conflict but I feel like I have a major role in making sure things are dealt with properly. So I like to be aware." She takes very seriously her role as leader and making sure the culture and climate of the organization is going in a positive direction.

Dealing with conflict does build courage and build bridges amongst schools and the home. Over half the participants specifically mentioned Matthew 18 as their guiding principle in dealing with conflict and acting with courage. One school leaders described it this way, "There is an uneasiness in talking with parents. Teachers are somewhat uneasy talking to parents. Parents are somewhat scared of teachers. Meeting together can bring down those walls. The conflict doesn't become conflict, it becomes partnership and open communication."

Conflict will take a toll on any individual in leadership. Courage allows the individual to constantly keep things in perspective. One administrator stated how important it was to not always be perfect but to do your best and keep focused on the calling. She stated, "We will fail 100% of the time if we try to be perfect. Perseverance is being accountable, open, and honest. Just because tired doesn't mean being called elsewhere. Just means tired. God will give you a fountain of rest."

<div align="center">Empowering</div>

Empowering others is one of the major components of servant leadership (Page & Wong, 2000). This aspect of leadership was also evident from the interviewees. Much of empowering is recognizing leaders within the organization and providing them opportunities to use their talents to further themselves and the organization.

One of the interviewees discussed how her school empowers others by encouraging advanced degrees. She stated, "Some people are working on masters, we cheer them on and advanced degrees." She also said in regards to empowering others,

> The reason for that is that I want them to be experts. I equip them, empower them….Even our handbooks we finished we had a think tank for different sections, for dress code, discipline procedures. Before we rewrote the handbook this summer, which I normally do, they spoke into some areas I felt may be weak."

Two of the administrators commented on their early years of leadership taking too much control and not delegating and empowering others, but acknowledged the importance thereof by stating, "I didn't delegate as much, and so I should have and it kind of felt like I was on an island a lot." That's a learned process. Mostly through pain that you learn to do it over time. I

definitely did not delegate responsibilities early on… Now getting into a place where I have a

pretty significant staff I can delegate things to."

Over and over again the leaders were glad to share moments of success in empowering

others in the organization. Whether through bumps and bruises along the way, there was a

gratitude for the staff they worked with and the ideas that come from all arenas. One

administrator let her students be involved in policy making, "For instance, my high schoolers

they developed policy. They developed the discipline and dress code policy. If you get them

involved, they own it and support it. That is fundamental." In terms of valuing her employees

professional growth she stated,

> We really individualize professional development. A couple ways we've done
> that is a few years ago we surveyed everyone and came up with 5 different tenants
> of commonality and then developed PLCs off that information. They then had a
> year to develop certain topics off of that which were relative for the common
> themes.   They had to do some sort of research data driven return on the area and
> present to each other.

In terms of professional development another administrator values his staff by surveying,

listening to, and establish teams for professional development that has meaning and purpose to

the team. He stated,

> I learned from them, because I sat back and listened to them before I developed
> the program, they said we want more time, but not by ourselves, but more time
> together. So we scratched our heads together and said do you put two weeks
> ahead or at the end and so what we did is develop cohort days. Four times a year,
> once a quarter. Each teacher has a group of three or four teachers they are off for
> the whole day together. They are not allowed to be on campus but they are not
> allowed to be at someone's house either. They have to be at like Starbucks or
> something like that. Their job is to be focused on, for the first half of the day,
> they have to work together on some sort of curriculum project, developing
> themselves in their area, building something for the school. Then the second half
> of the day they can split up and work by themselves working on certification, they
> can work on some professional reading. They can work on developing, they're
> not allowed to lesson plan. I have substitutes for that.

In this exercise the administrator was able to better equip his team to lead and to give them ownership of their professional development. Adult learners desire space and collaborative opportunities to craft their profession. There are boundaries and expectations in place but the team has the freedom to think, plan, and develop strategies which will empower them to lead in their classrooms.

Another strategy for empowering employees mentioned by two administrators was providing clear direction so each member knows their responsibilities and how to be successful. One interviewee stated, "We try to make sure people understand what their job is and their responsibilities are there… So loving means let me think about what you should do and help you know that so you can then begin your work." Another stated, "Give them guidelines, but then give them adult respect. Trusting them and then praising them when they do well. No one likes micromanaging but they will let you know when they need more guidelines."

<div align="center">Humility</div>

Humility is one of the critical leadership factors in creating an environment where people from various backgrounds feel united (Prime & Salib 2014). Humility is not a sign of weakness but one of honoring and recognizing one's place in an organization. Humility is about thinking about oneself less, rather than thinking less about oneself. Many comments arose in the interview process relating to humility.

One administrator saw serving and love as examples of humility. She commented, "Administration is very loving. If there is not love in administration the people feel anxious, they feel used, they feel vulnerable. So loving means let me think about what you should do and help

you know that so you can then begin your work." Implicit is the notion that love and humility mean helping people feel comfortable in the organization.

Furthermore, caring and concern was echoed by another administrator who stated, "People know I care. I think they realize I have their best interest in mind. I hope they see someone who's selfless someone who isn't about me looking good or those things…I want there to be a support."

For other administrators making sure they surrounded themselves with key leaders and mentors who will be honest with them and give them constructive criticism was important. One administrator commented,

> I guess is the question how to stay focused on my commitments? I hopefully
> have people around me who can be honest with me and say, I think I have a staff
> like that, hey do you remember this and things like that. Not making promises I
> cannot keep and having people around me who can be honest and transparent.

This administrator understands that the best decisions on behalf of the organization come from multiple voices and being willing to be an open book.

Three other administrators commented, "I think a lot of it is based off of my experiences. Really my mentors. Like I said the guy I worked for for ten years was a very never give up, never you know, just keep moving forward spirit. The kids and staff were successful. He learned from and took advice from his mentor. Another expressed her relationship with her mentor as follows:

> I believe strongly in having a mentor. I have had a mentor for over 20 years. He
> continues to be my mentor. He is turning 80 and has the most longevity in
> Christian education of anyone I know. So we continue to have monthly chats. He
> does not live in the state, and I highly rely on his wisdom as well. So I seek
> counsel and wisdom not only within the school, but from outside sources as well.

Realizing the wisdom in others and thinking less and less of oneself while relying on the wisdom of others has helped these leaders run their schools while also staying grounded.

One other strong indicator of humility was championed by all administrators in their reliance on God and the Holy Spirit to guide them. One stated, "When you have an authentic place where you are truly learning from, the best Bible lessons come from your own devotional life. So I would just say being in that authentic place. Another added, "I view it as basically as completely 100% dependent on God to gain wisdom, counsel and direction and support, and affirmation from God. I say this school is successful in spite of me." A comment affirming her dependence on God and her success in spite of her weaknesses and shortcomings. Finally another administrator posited regarding her leadership style

> Even with our Christian worldview we submit to Jesus Christ. They submit to me, because of my position and because they are Christians. I realize that I submit to them and I am their first servant. I am one serving alongside them. I need to be willing to be down on my knees scrubbing the toilets as well… It's not me, it's their relationship with the Lord which helps get all the hard work done to make this school great. It makes me think oh Lord I am not worthy to have this position. I tell them that sometimes. They are the ones who get it done.

She is willing to do whatever it takes for her staff to be successful. She is willing to place less emphasis on her own decisions in leadership and serve others around her. She believes her leadership is successful because of her faith, rather than her own abilities.

Prayer

The eight ACSI accredited school leaders were very similar in their foundational beliefs as to why they are in their current position. They all mentioned a calling from God to lead the school. Common responses included:

"I desire God's will. I believe in God's will. This is what he wants for my life right now."

"My mission is who I am through Christ, and what he wants for me and if I am following his will? Is this where God wants me in this time of my life? My relationship with Christ is my driving factor."

"I believe I am their first servant. My job is to listen to the Lord and all of my decisions have to be his decisions."

"Even with our Christian worldview we submit to Jesus Christ. They submit to me, because of my position and because they are Christians. I realize that I submit to them and I am their first servant. I am one serving alongside them. I need to be willing to be down on my knees scrubbing the toilets as well."

"I view it as basically as completely 100% dependent on God to gain wisdom, counsel and direction and support, and affirmation from God. I say this school is successful in spite of me."

The idea of submitting to a higher power, in this case Christianity, was paramount to each leader. It was clear in their leadership styles, that being under submission to a higher authority is where they believed they drew their strength. The idea of submission took priority for these leaders. In other words, it appeared to them their authority was not exclusively coming from their own natural abilities but through the talents God had blessed them with.

Prayer was repeated over and over again by each administrator as an important part of their leadership philosophy. Rather than making big decisions alone, or just in consultation with colleagues, many mentioned spending ample amounts of time in prayer, even over seemingly minor decisions. One response in response to how they deal with conflict was

> When I hear the conflict I run to the conflict on a good day, God help me. I say I
> think this doesn't feel quite right and I begin another series of questions. So, I
> guess I call that person on, out on it, to questions, and observations, and state
> what I have seen. Then usually I should say also I usually pray a fair amount

before I talk to the person directly. I might go and ask some other person in leadership over them to see if I am right. To see if I might be picking up on something and go to that person and ask questions. I always bring it back to, I know you want this to be a place that glorifies God. So let's work on this until it is good.

For this administrator prayer was important when having to deal with personnel

conflict matters.

Other examples of prayer included

I'm big on prayer. I'm not just saying that, I believe prayer is really important. You see in that corner there is a prayer jar of every time God answers a prayer I throw something in there to remind me of how important my prayer life is. In the last two three years I have become increasingly convinced the number one reason I sit in this seat is because the thing I bring to the school, the value added that I bring is my prayer life…is my life with the Lord.

Even in terms of leading the school prayer was seen as the biggest value-added item this

administrator brings to the school. Other administrators commented,

I'll look inside, spend time with the Spirit and think about the implications. First of all prayerfully consider whatever needs to be on the table. We do a lot of praying around her. For each other not only on a professional level but on a daily basis, personal life.

"I prayerfully pursue timing and sometimes a little time helps. A lot of discernment and

in that when you show people you care and you actually address issues as they come up

respectfully you build trust."

"If I listen to mankind on everything. Then half our kids would be gone, half our faculty

or half our board. I know when it is time to release. That is strictly through communication with

God."

"I think also just I'm always prayerfully pursuing the big vision for the school. What do

we need to work on to get there? How is it measured?"

"Lots of prayer and you have some sort of list that gives you direction about what's the needs. Pray, pray, pray. Pray and God's word."

"Again God's vision. Vision is hard to see the end of the day, but constantly praying and seeking where God is taking us."

"Another thing I am trying to do is if they (staff members) need prayer, if they are struggling, then don't say I will pray for you but pray right now. If I don't pray and I forget later with the lists, I become a liar."

"Prayer, prayer, prayer. It sounds redundant. When I was younger I thought there was more to that, but as I grow and mature I realize that is all there is. It is not easy but it is so simple."

For the Christian school leader, prayer is important. Following the model of Jesus of Nazareth, many times he was found praying early and often or teaching his followers how to pray (Luke 11:1-13, Mark 1:35, Matthew 26:36-46). Often times prayer, as mentioned in the interviews, were for personal direction, vision casting, to assist in major school decisions or simply to encourage and assist members of the school community. It was not simply for one motive, but all encompassing.

Serving

Leaders who serve exemplify servant leadership because they empower others and set the example that nothing is below me and I value each and every employee (Covey, 1989; Greenleaf, 1978; Stanley, 2003). For the Christian school administrator serving was the example set by Jesus of Nazareth. He came to serve others and do the work of another, his father. It was not below him to wash feet, feed many people, and otherwise tend and care for the sick, elderly,

dying, and to look after children. Perhaps this is why so many of the administrators interviewed shared that leadership was more than just checking boxes off a list but serving people.

Many administrators commented the reason for serving and being a servant to others is to build relationships. One leader shared, "People are more important than ideas. All the programs and all the ideas in the world are not nearly as important as the people." Investing in and building up the team will make the most impact in the organization. Another stated the importance of knowing the people in the organization including new families coming to the school. She stated, "I have tried to really get to know people on the personal level. We are large enough I can't do that for 400, but I do personally interview every family coming in." This enables her to get to know and share the mission and vision of the school with every family.

Serving alongside the staff was vital for every administrator interviewed. The leaders stated, "I think it is important for faculty to see you are willing to be a servant." Also, "They need to know that I am in it with them. They need to see me out there picking up trash, they need to see me jumping and helping where I can and be a part of the team." Another administrator shared, "Whether scrubbing toilets, repair a pencil sharpener. Whatever it is, you need to be an example. Picking up trash on campus." Furthermore one leader looks to Christ as her example when she said, "As a servant leader, following the model of Christ, they need to know that modern day example, I am willing to pitch in." Serving for these administrators means empowering others and showing that every member of the organization is valued and their job has meaning.

Relationship building with staff takes on many forms, including giving staff opportunities to attend to family matters and attending conferences of their choosing. One administrator shared, "Giving time for rejuvenation, giving time for conferences, for and even personal

conferences. I had an employee or two this year who really wanted to go to a bible conference, a church thing, for personal growth." This administrator was able to serve his teachers by the gift of time. Rather than go, go, go, there was time for important growth that may not fit the mold of traditional professional development, but indirectly, the teacher was equipped and valued in the process.

Many of the administrators commented on not taking sole credit for successful programming but giving credit to those who originated the idea. For these administrators this was as an act of serving the team and building leaders. One administrator stated,

> Obviously giving credit and letting them be a part of the process. Feel like they have some say. Not top down at all. I am not that leadership style at all. They feel they've been a part of the process… I think being part of the process is important. Encouragement. Credit where credit is due. I think sometimes administrators try to steal the credit. I like to give credit where it is due with our employees.

Another administrator stated, "I really want them to realize they have a voice. That is one of the complements, the teachers appreciate it. They express that several times." He went on to state why he serves alongside his staff, "We'll do get-togethers throughout the school year. The beginning of the year we get together so they can see me in a different light. I want them to recognize me as part of the team." Another leaders shared her motivation for serving, "Once they know how much you care about and respect them, they will move mountains to do things for you to get things down." Organizations thrive when the team is striving for the same goal and when employees are empowered.   These leaders have chosen to build in to the calendar events and activities which build unity and unite the team while also serving alongside their team members.

Teamwork

Teamwork is a vital component of leadership success. As Jim Collins has pointed out having the right people on the bus and in the right seat is most critical to a successful organization. Organizations that are visionary, that are forward thinking, and plan well for the future understand the importance of teamwork. Although the final decisions ultimately come from the leaders of the organization, the behind the scenes work and collaboration found within the organization strengthen the core. The interviewees were very big on teamwork. One commented specifically, "There is no way I could do it all. I have to delegate." Whether from the aspect of bouncing ideas off the leadership team, empowering others to take on more of a leadership role, to being creative in how they recharge their batteries as a team and seek out more effective ways to educate and lead.

Many of the school leaders discussed the importance of bouncing ideas off the team. One leader stated, "You have to realize hey, we have to work together. I think a lot of it is just compromising being able to realize that it is not all about you." For him he realized his role is to lead but to not let the authority of the position inflate his ego. The best work is done together. Another administrator said,

> I have an instructional leader's team who are over a grade level or topic area. I
> defer to them quite a bit. I believe, I've been in administration, I was a teacher for
> twenty years and an administrator for eight. In those eight years I have lost touch
> with what is best for students. So I rely very much on my leadership team to tell
> me.

For her having a team that has very defined roles and can offer honest perspectives helps bring new ideas to the staff. When the leadership team is aware of change and has a hand in developing and bringing that change to the organization the leader looks more competent and has then built leaders in the process.

The same leader commented about the importance of placing the best people around her when she added, "I put people right under me who are the best. They model lessons. They model work ethic. They model working things out with people. They model continuing education, life-long learners. Right under me are all these hard workers." The reason they are successful is that they feed off each other and build organizational momentum. It is apparent this school leader does not consider her work to be her own, but a team process.

For many of the leaders interviewed taking a back seat and developing others has been very rewarding. One leader put it this way, "I am very comfortable, like my leadership style letting others delegate, and I said you know if we run into a problem I will help solve it but I don't have any problem delegating, no." Others may have better insight and solutions in solving the situation that may have arisen. Another principal stated through trial and error, "I'm delegating more and more. We're getting to the point now where we're able to delegate more and more."

Another administrator spoke of the importance of getting others involved through clear expectations. He said, "I delegate things through regular meetings, regular accountability, through job descriptions. Really trying to give people really clear roles. That seems to be a really key thing." For him giving them the boundaries and parameters to explore and take risks has saved him time and energy in the long run. His leaders feel more empowered and able to soar.

Always looking for needs in the organization and looking for who may best fill those roles is paramount in building teamwork. One leader spoke about the importance of filling roles specifically with the board of directors and the importance of finding intentional people who are willing to join the team. She said,

> These are committed, trusting, loyal leaders. I do the same thing with the board.
> We work to identify folks how would be a complement to the board and don't
> have personal agendas. Ones who understand Christian education and come on
> board. We don't want to make mistakes. We really have a core quality team. It
> is what I do with leadership on site.

One of her main priorities, therefore, is to manage the core leadership team. To ensure that

anyone who would come on board is serving with the right motive and perspective. Although

she does not have direct control of who comes on board, she does have opportunity to influence

the current board to ensure proper motives are in place and recommend placement or not.

Getting to know the team has paid huge dividends for many of the school leaders. Their

work is more than just work, but almost like spending time with family. One leader expressed it

this way, "Once they know how much you care about them, and respect them they will move

mountains to do things for you to get things done." This is not just about getting from point A to

point B but taking the time to bring every stakeholder along with you.

Furthermore valuing and honoring those in the organization has been critical for this

leader. She commented,

> We do a lot of committee work. I allow those that have an interest to take the
> lead… I have to realize that on many things I am not the expert. They do far
> better than I would do having to make all the decisions. When they collaborate it
> is way better. I am glad I don't run everything or make all the decisions.

For this leader empowering and knowing ones limits and capabilities equips and grows the

leadership capacity of the organization. There is a sense of gratitude knowing she does not have

to run the organization on her own but can delegate and empower others.

Trust

Trust is a two-way street. One aspect is the leader trusting his/her employees to get the

job done accordingly. This comes through well laid out job descriptions and expectations. What

is inspected is what is expected. The other aspect is the team trusting the leadership team of the

organization. Each administrator discussed the importance of establishing both. Whether

through job descriptions, spending time together, or through building relationships. Successful

leaders are able to delegate and are able to release and empower their employees to become

leaders.

For many administrators enabling others to lead through delegation was a huge part of

their leadership style. One leader commented, "I am very comfortable, like my leadership style,

letting others delegate and I say, you know, if we run into a problem I will help solve it but I

don't have any problem delegating." Furthermore one administrator was straight to the point

when he said, "There is no way I could do it all. You have to delegate. Another administrator

stated,

> Giving them that ownership and responsibility. Going back to the… we've asked
> some of our people in our Bible department to run our discipleship program, to
> run our service program. We did a one to one this year every student has an ipad.
> We've had teacher leaders who've taken those roles. Some have done amazing
> and some have not. But by me helping them along, it's getting better.

For this administrator, he worked on identifying teacher leaders and giving them

opportunities to succeed. Rather than create the programs and run them top down, he has

purposefully empowered the teaching staff to lead. Not that everyone has been extremely

successful in the implementation but they have been able to identify key leadership in

some and have data on how to pull others along.

Some administrators expressed how the leadership team has come together to obtain buy-

in from the whole community. One stated, "We have to get it in front of us saying, ok, where do

we feel we need to put our energy and effort and getting buy in? That includes student body,

parents, teachers, and community. Learning from the team and listening to their needs generated

new professional ideas in another school. The leader expressed the changes as follows,

> I learned from them, because I sat back and listened to them before I developed
> the program, they said we want more time, but not by ourselves, but more time
> together. So we scratched our heads together and said do you put two weeks
> ahead or at the end and so what we did is develop cohort days. Four times a year,
> once a quarter. Each teacher has a group of three or four teachers they are off for
> the whole day together.

This was not a top-down decision by the leader but a humble, human, honest, and open

decision which has enabled the staff to be more creative and strategic in professional

development. The administration listened, and the team responded positively as a result.

For many administrators listening to the team and allowing decisions to come through

those experiences has built trust in their organization. One administrator stated, "We do a lot of

committee work. I allow those that have an interest to take the lead. Our curriculum committee

is awesome. A couple of ladies use their gift from God to run the curriculum review process."

Another administrator just took a new role in the organization that is very demanding but she

realizes the importance of building trust with her team as there is anxiety on both ends of the

spectrum. She stated,

> I try to know them a little bit as a person. I make time for them. Like right now, I
> just got this new job. I really want to go home and figure out what I am doing.
> But you know what everyone else wants? They want to talk to me. Is what I am
> doing okay? What do you want? I have a whole new principal I feel
> uncomfortable. I have to resist the desire to go home and be by myself and plan.
> I have had four one hour meetings today. But so how I demonstrate genuine care
> for others? Understanding this is hard for them. If I listen to them, and receive
> their anxieties, and understand why they may be anxious, God will provide time
> for me to make that plan and I'll be able to make a better plan because of putting
> people first.

By her taking the time now to forge relationships she is setting herself up to succeed in the

future. Better to listen and equip early before the hustle and bustle of the school year than to

have the team fret in the midst of the school year.

The importance of the leadership team in setting the tone and direction of the

organization is a key ingredient for success as well. One leaders stated,

> Encourager, spiritual leader of the organization, vision setter, letting faculty know
> which direction we are going, but then empowering people to come alongside and
> share your vision, but you know obviously if they don't feel part of that or you
> don't convey it properly, they are not going to come alongside of you as well.
> Been reading through some things with the leadership. They have to trust the
> leader before they buy into your vision as well. Building trust. I guess because
> you know I have been here for thirty three years, people have trusted and know
> who I am, just being a part of that.

It is very important to establish a vision which others understand and come alongside to fulfill.

To buy into the leadership and vision, the employees have to trust the leader. For this leader it

has been a process of more than thirty years being steady and consistent. He later added when

asked about what traits are most important for a Christian school leader, "Trust. I think just

being a biblical person, they understand I am here to impact kids for God's kingdom in a Biblical

Christian aspect of that you have to be genuine in that. Caring about people is huge." The

culture of trust and meeting the needs of each employee plays a huge role in this organization's

success.

Not everyone in the organization is ready for the changes successful leaders bring to the

organization. One administrator shared,

> They have to trust me. There are a lot of times when they'll ask me what is going
> on and I can't tell them but you have to trust me it will work out. It has taken four
> years to get that to happen. We have lost some staff and things, with the
> leadership change and now I think things are we are in a good spot as a high

school. The staff here for the most part trust me as much as they can. I think that
is huge.

Not everything is available to share but being able to trust the leader, knowing the direction and

path is clear enabled colleagues to begin trusting this new principal four years ago. It has been a

process for the school but the end result of building trust has been to put the high school on a

solid trajectory. Those who struggle to trust the leader have to make a decision to stay or go.

Those who have stayed have agreed it is a direction they want to go.

The personal integrity of the leader may be one of the most important aspects of building

a leadership team. One leader shared, "One of the main things a leader has to have is they have

to have such an integrity of who they are. The need to be honest and trustworthy." Another

leader stated,

> Discipline. Personal discipline. One thing I did learn as a child if you say it, you
> must do it. It was something that was brought into my home culture. Be a person
> of your word. If your yes is a yes, make it a yes. If it is a no, make it a no. I
> think that was for personal ethics. In that bringing that into a profession was a
> natural bent. That is again how you build trust. It teaches discipline and
> responsibility which I think are important.

The idea of consistency and personal ethics building trust has helped establish the desired

school culture.

When the school leader is willing to be open to criticism and feedback this helps

build trust. One leader stated, "I love the fact that I can call on the team and that they can

speak freely. They'll list did you think about this, have you thought about it this way, or

I don't think that's a good idea." Being transparent gives team members the opportunity

to engage and empowers them to provide solutions to organizational issues.

Vision Casting

"Without vision the people perish," a recognized Proverb the Old Testament, is

something the school leaders were very clear of the importance of clearly articulating. Many

leaders commented on the importance of the leader in the organization spending time in prayer to

discern the direction for the school. When establishing the vision many of the interviewees

recognized the need to guard this aspect of their job and to take it very seriously.

One school leader recognized the importance of vision casting by stating,

And so people like me have my job not because I put in more hours and have
more productivity. People like me have my job like me because of the decisions I
make. Wisdom and decision making are the highest value if you look at our
economy. And so again this has to be a prayerful humble wisdom.

For him vision casting comes from the decisions he makes. No longer does value come from

putting in hours but from transforming decisions which have the ability to change the course of

the organization.   That wisdom does not come from any other place but through pray and asking

God for direction. He went on to state, "That vision needs to come from a very prayerful place.

That again comes back to that prayer life. Prayerfully setting the direction and the vision and

communicating that over and over." Not only spiritually being in tune with God but

communicating to the entire organization over and over. Another leader commented about the

detriment of not having a vision when she stated, "if you don't have vision or know where you

are going, that can stymie an organization.

One vision casting consideration mentioned by many leaders was being true to the

school's mission and staying the course. Rather than being an organization attempting to

appeal to every need, focus on the priorities which made you successful. One leader

expressed it this way,

> I think you have to be very intentional. You have to know what you are representing and putting out there. You have to stick with it, you cannot flip flop. If this is your vision, whatever it is, putting that out there, promoting it, having a plan to execution, measure, having a means to reassess. If you can put that out there and really assessing and communicating that, you know, I see this all over it drives me crazy, everybody tries to be something for all. You must be distinct in your school and represent that. Even in your vision.

Part of what makes this school leader effective is her ability to keep the main thing the main thing. Not everyone will understand the direction and may therefore walk away from the organization, but everyone who remains understands the direction and the reason behind it. Furthermore her leadership team has benefited as a result of this process. When looking to hire an assistant headmaster she took longer than normal because she knew the distinctive characteristics she needed to complement her. She said, "I don't set people up for failure. I really study people. She would tell you it took several years to cultivate her strengths and build on them…we complement each other and we are a good tag team." Knowing what you need in the organization and not settling for less has reaped huge dividends for this school.

In terms of meeting the mission statement many leaders commented," We do have a mission statement we wrote together. I frequently run things through, does this fit with our mission." Another leader quipped when talking about his role as leader, "We look at our mission statement first of all…Keep the mission statement in front of you." The same leader went on to state the importance of sticking to the school mission by adding, "Always staying true to your mission statement. Once you start to waiver from that, you can start to get really excellent at academics and then lose the Christian focus." To waiver from the intended outcome would miss the mark of the distinctive of the Christian school experience.

Another school leader stated, "The key is a relationship with Jesus Christ and living it out. Our mission statement is to help our students live out their gifts and talents." Finally another administrator stated, "The key thing is know your mission, and the goal is to fulfill your mission. Know, fulfill, and anything that comes along, know how it ties into the mission.   The mission of the organization helps each of these leaders prioritize and establish what is most important. Whether in small group leadership team meetings to large community wide announcements, the more the mission is communicated the more they believe it is impacting the organization for good.

Many leaders expressed the importance of listening to the members within the organization and helping collaboratively shape the vision. When it came to setting the course one leader said, "After I hear what everybody is saying, I have to make a hard decision that might not please everyone, but at least I feel it is involved." When asked about his role in the organization one leader stated, "Vision setter, letting faculty know which direction we are going, but then empowering people to come alongside and share the vision."

Heeding the advice of others and placing yourself in a position to lead was pivotal for many leaders. One leader expressed what gave him motivation to establish the vision for the school,

> A mentor of mine a few years back said you know, do you want to be a broom pusher or do you want to raise one hundred broom pushers. He helped me think more like a leader. The caveat is you can't always be in the kitchen. The biggest thing I have to think about, and my number two and I always talk about this is that there's a few things in this place that only I can do. My best service to this place is to do those things. Not that I do things others can do. There is an attitude of service in everything we do, but with the caveat of doing the things only I can do for the organization.

To be visionary takes others in and out of the organization to spur you on. There are responsibilities only leaders can engage in, and if they are able to focus on those roles, the organization prospers. Another administrator understood his role, "I take the superintendent's vision and I do what I can to make that happen within my division. I also work toward my vision and as long as it is not contrary to his, we can move forward." Together more is accomplished and each of these commented about getting away as a leadership team to make important decisions for the school so as to increase collaboration.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE
RESEARCH

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine leadership styles of ACSI certified school leaders in Arizona. This chapter presents discussion of the results from Chapter Four. The chapter will provide answers to the research questions and provide ideas for further study.

Conclusions

The main research questions of this study were based on the current literature on leadership practices. The questions were examined using semi-structured interviews and the data that emerged. Conclusions and discussions are presented below for each question in the study. The conclusions and discussions are based on the qualitative data derived from this study.

- Research Question 1: What role does servant leadership play in how Christian school leaders in Arizona operate his/her school?

Servant leadership is a leadership framework posited by Greenleaf in the 1970s. Many contemporaries have attempted to place parameters around the servant leadership ideal including Spears who in 1990 took over the Greenleaf servant leadership institute. He posited the following ten servant leadership qualities: Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community. Another contemporary of Greenleaf in 2003, Patterson, posited a list of seven servant leadership attributes including agapao love, acts with humility, is altruistic, is visionary for the followers, is trusting, is serving, and empowers followers.

The educational leaders interviewed made strong comments in many of these areas. Three of the interviewees specifically stated they were servant leaders. Each person interviewed

discussed the importance of building up and empowering others in the organization. All leaders discussed the importance of imitating and serving as Jesus of Nazareth served. This meant being open, forgiving, available, self-sacrificing, doing what it takes to advance the organization. All interviewees discussed the importance of team work and collaboration. Their aim was to empower others in the organization to be successful and to realize this is a team ministry, not accomplished by and through one person.

The leaders also expressed the importance of being visionary to advance the organization. This was an area many did not want to relinquish because they felt God was directing them and had called them to the position. In other words, they felt there were certain job functions only they could do for the organization and they wanted to focus on those aspects. Another important comment made by many leaders was the importance of building community. Many wanted the team to know they were available to take over a class as needed, to provide professional development which may seem a bit obscure, to give adults the opportunity to work on projects which were meaningful to them. Rather than lead with an iron fist, there was a listening spirit, a willingness to let go and let those in organization build community through the collegiality that comes through healthy organizations.

- Research Question 2: What specific leadership actions do selected Christian school leaders employ to promote success in their schools?

From the data that emerged it was clear that following Jesus of Nazareth was a driving factor for each and every administrator. Prayer was a very important aspect that drove campus decisions. All of the leaders discussed at least two of the following: the importance of spending time in prayer, reading the Bible on a daily basis, spending time with the faculty in prayer, and

using the Bible as their guide book to make important decisions, including discipline, school themes, and vision casting for the future.

The eight administrators interviewed were also very clear of the importance of delegating responsibilities and empowering others. They all recognized the importance of having a solid team around them who would challenge one another. They have attempted to build a culture which enables healthy discussion, especially when change is needed. Many of the leaders expressed how they have sought to build a cohesive team but also the ways in which they have spurred on others to take leadership roles. Whether through teacher requests to lead more, to leadership team meetings outlining the direction of curriculum mapping, empowering others is seen as an important function for these educational leaders.

Finally serving- the one code application which appeared more than any other was serving- doing what it takes to advance the organization. Showing the staff they were a part of the team and understood what was happening on a day to day basis was important. Many commented about how they would clean the toilets, pick up trash, cover a class, find resources for new teachers, meet with teachers outside contract time, and otherwise look for ways to serve even when they desired to get other things accomplished. In the serving category, however, three leaders expressed how important it was to have time away from school. From getting off campus to read the Bible and pray once a week, to being allowed to plan at home, time away provides personal refreshment in order serve and lead.

- Research Question 3: Do the responses of selected educational leaders in Christian K-12 schools align with research-based servant leadership characteristics?

To an extent the eight educational leaders interviewed in this study do align with servant leadership characteristics. There is no one definition of servant leadership but there are research-

based instruments and traits which represent servant leadership. As servant leadership is a relatively newer approach to leadership, as a theory, it will take time to develop more specific parameters for what does and does not constitute servant leadership.

However, when looking at the instruments by Spears, Page and Wong, and Patterson based on the code applications found in the research, these eight educational leaders met many of the criteria for being servant leaders. The leaders demonstrated evidence of how they incorporate service into their professional practice. They indicated that vision casting was a critical component of their position and their desire to empower others through their leadership. They were quick to give credit where it was due and indicated their position in the organization was valued, but each member of the organization brings value.

Many mentioned the importance of openness and making sure they were approachable. Taking the time to get to know the team members and listening to their requests has enabled many of the leaders to become better informed and better at meeting the needs of the organizational members. Listening and empowering others has been a learned experience for many of the leaders interviewed. With time and maturity they have come to realize the importance of leaning on others and equipping them to take risks to advance the organization.

Finally, many expressed the importance of spending time in prayer to understand the direction and vision for the school. Being sensitive to the leading of others, whether God or others in the organization, is a trait of servant leadership. The approach for these leaders is to delegate as opportunity arises, to work together as a team, to collaborate ideas, to learn from one another, to share in the triumphs of the school, and to listen and be receptive to the needs of others.

Discussion

This study provides Christian school administrators around the country with examples and evidences of how fellow Christian school administrators lead. The administrators who were interviewed came from a diverse background in terms of experience, location, and expertise. Although no leadership style was assumed, nor were they all trained in the same educational leadership models, it was evident that service, prayer, relying on Christ, empowering others, and visionary leadership were key components for these leaders. Many of these leadership traits fit in the category of servant leadership or steward based leadership. Perhaps the common belief systems amongst the participants draw them to organizations of like-minded approaches-i.e. ACSI Christian Schools.

Since the nature of the questions were not specific to Arizona, the data and evidences should carry over to other parts of the country. The concepts are not specific to Arizona and none of the questions were dealing with specific programs or content which would impact the generalizability of the study's results.

This study and other similar studies pertaining to Christian education do reveal the importance of Jesus of Nazareth in the day to day decision making of the school leaders. A key ingredient in terms of their unity is the Bible, prayer, fellowship with one another, and spending quality time with the members of the organization to empower and build up a positive culture. This study may confirm the practices already present within the school culture of ACSI accredited schools and/or may provide access into how to improve the culture of a school by highlighting eight other schools who have common threads holding them together.

It would benefit Christian school leaders to understand the components of servant leadership and to implement them with fidelity in the classroom. Schools need leaders who empower others, collaborate, are open to the community, and are able to establish a consistent vision. Those reading the contents of this study will see the importance and attention devoted to serving others in the organization and how important being intentional is to the overall mission and vision of the school.

Suggestions for Future Study

Based on the outcome of the study the following are recommendations for continued study regarding leadership practices and implications therein:

1. The study focused on qualitative methodology. Future studies could use a mixed methods approach employing a quantitative component based on the same authors' research. This would help quantify the level of servant leadership.

2. The study examined ACSI accredited school administrator leadership practices in Arizona. Future study could look at how the leadership approaches impact the staff as well as student outcomes. Are there commonalities of a student who graduates from an ACSI accredited Christian school? What are the desired student outcomes of an ACSI school graduate? Do the leadership traits impact the culture and climate of the school for staff and/or students?

3. The study focused on eight ACSI certified Christian schools in Arizona. Future study could utilize the interview questions in another geographic location to compare and analyze the data to see what similarities and differences exist.

4. The study focused on ACSI accredited schools. There are other accreditation organizations serving Christian schooling such as Christian Schools International and

other home school networks. Future study could be conducted on how school leaders in

these organizations lead.

5. The study focused specifically on Christian schools. Future study could be devoted to

    ministry personnel and leading churches. Changing a few words in the questions would

    open up the possibility of asking them in other industry.

6. The study focused on Christian schools. Future study could look at how Christian leaders

    in other settings such as other private schools, public schools, etc., respond to the

    interview questions presented. If completed, there would be more data to compare and

    determine if there are similarities or differences in how they view their practice.   It

    would certainly strengthen the focus on a higher power guiding and directing if in fact

    that was the prevailing notion from the school leaders in other settings who held a

    Christian worldview.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

(Adapted from Page and Wong's Seven Factors of Servant Leadership)

1. Empowering and Developing Others

a. Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

b. What is your decision-making strategy?

c. How do you cultivate good relationships among group members?

d. How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

e. How do you go about working through conflict with others?

2. Vulnerability and Humility

a. What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

b. Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others to solve school wide situations? Explain.

3. Serving Others

a. How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

b. How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

c. How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

4. Open Participatory Leadership

a. What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization? Explain.

b. How important are the following: kindness, honesty, trust and openness.

c. How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

5. Inspiring Leadership

a. How important is a winning team spirit at your school?

b. How do you get others to do their best?

c. How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

6. Visionary Leadership

a. How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

b. How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose for your organization?

c. How do you know what needs to be improved in your organization?

d. How do you maintain a focus on the "big picture" of education?

e. Why did you choose education as a profession?

f. Why did you choose Christian education as a profession?

7. Courageous Leadership – Integrity and Authenticity

a. How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

b. What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

c. Which leadership traits do you perceive (and others perceive) as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

APPENDIX B
HUMAN RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Austin Temperley

Temple University Dissertation

Human Research Study Participation Permission Form

Title of research: Servant leadership as defined by K-12 ACSI Christian School administrators in Arizona, USA.

Investigator and Department: Austin Temperley, College of Education: Psychology, Organization, and Leadership

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

We invite you to take part in a research study because the focus of the research is to examine whether or not Christian school principals in Arizona apply servant leadership in practice while leading their schools. Since the study is looking specifically at ACSI Christian School administrators you are qualified to take part in this research study

What should I know about this research?

- Someone will explain this research to you.
  - Whether or not you take part is up to you.
  - You can choose not to take part.
  - You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
  - Your decision will not be held against you.
  - You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to about this research?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, contact the research team at Temple University,

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This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or e-mail them at: irb@temple.edu for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Why is this research being done?

This study is designed to understand how ACSI certified Christian School leaders in Arizona lead their schools. There are a variety of leadership models available. Servant leadership, being a fairly recent phenomenon has been studied and implemented by numerous organizations and leaders with great organizational success and buy in. One area of servant leadership research which still needs development is whether or not ACSI certified Christian School leaders are employing servant leadership principles.

By using qualitative metrics and using narrative-based interviews of Christian School leaders coupled with already established research parameters of servant leadership as outlined by Page and Wong (2003), this study will analyze whether or not servant leadership is guiding and directing the acting administrators in Arizona ACSI certified schools.

Each interview will be recorded and transcribed accordingly to look for key words and concepts understood in servant leadership models. This study will be qualitative focused on current administrators serving in K-12 schools across the state of Arizona. With analyzing interview transcripts and discovering patterns that emerge a better understanding should emerge as to how ACSI Christian School leaders lead their respective school environments.

How long will I be in this research?

We expect that you will be in this research for a one hour interview conducted at your convenience and your K-12 school building. You may be asked to clarify comments at a later date and time via email, phone, or in person up to the submission of the dissertation by the researcher not to exceed one year from time of initial interview.

What happens if I agree to be in this research?

Should you agree to participate in this research project you will be contacted by the researcher, Austin Temperley, and asked to confirm a one hour interview time and date based on a servant leadership model as outlined by Page and Wong. The questions will be recorded by at least two separate devices so as to ensure accuracy and back up transcripts should they be necessary. All communication will be documented in writing whether by USPS mail or email exchanges.

The researcher will observe the environment of the interview and may take photographs of the school building and office where the interview was conducted.

All interviewee identities will be protected and names will be changed in the published dissertation so as to further protect the identity of each participant. The general size of the school, length of tenure in ACSI certified Christian Schools and region of the school will be, however, added to the published dissertation so as to provide a level of authenticity and allow the reader to understand further where the research was collected and whether more studies need to be conducted to gather more evidence for or against servant leadership.

The timeline for the interviews and conclusion of the dissertation are as follows

Item	Date
Interviews of ACSI Christian School Administrators	Summer 2015
Transcribe Interviews	Late Summer 2015
Contact interviewees for any further materials/information	Fall 2015
Finish rough draft of dissertation	October 2015
Defend dissertation	May 2016

Each participant will receive access to the finished dissertation once it has been completed. If at any time you would choose to be removed from the study you may do so by contacting the researcher and/or IRB committee at the published contact information above.

Is there any way being in this research could be bad for me?

There are no perceived risks in participating in this study. The research team will protect the identity of each participant. Interviewees will simply be asked to describe their leadership philosophy while the researcher analyzes responses and looks to determine what leadership patterns emerge in ACSI Christian School leaders in Arizona.

If the interviewee is uncomfortable at any time during the study, the informed consent will allow him/her to be removed from the study.

Will being in this research help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include greater understanding and research for K-12 Christian education as to how leaders lead their schools. You may decide to continue the research for yourself and dig deeper into servant leadership in Christian education. It is possible the study could encourage or foster growth as a leader by reading narratives of other Christian school administrators throughout Arizona.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

To the extent allowed by law, we limit the viewing of your personal information to people who have to review it. We cannot promise complete secrecy. The IRB, Temple University, Temple University Health System, Inc. and its affiliates, and other representatives of these organizations may inspect and copy your information.

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEWS

Interview #1

June 22nd, 2015

Do you delegate responsibility and if so how?

I do. Being a small Christian school there is so much to do and so there are so many hats to wear. If you get somebody doing the wrong thing you have to quickly identify so you have to be very careful in delegating. So far this is my first year as principal. Last year I allowed individuals who had gifts and talents in those areas ask and have several approach me in ways to help out. Able to delegate that way. That is one level teachers and staff can get involved.

Staff meetings we go through task meetings and as things pop up we see who can step up and take over that task. Sometimes things arise naturally and a teacher leader pops up and delegate that way. Sometimes I'll take one and do myself. Sometimes I delegate to myself. It is definitely a fine balancing act on not taking on too much and learning not to take on too much.

What is your decision making strategy?

Pray, pray, pray. Pray and God's Word. At the beginning of the year I figured the day starts when you wake up and I have all these decisions that need to be made, and there is a time pressure you feel. I made a few decisions thinking they were easy, and made them fairly quickly. Every one of those decisions came back to bite me in the backside.

My mentor who's been in Christian education forty years watched him and he helped me get through my coursework. Reading God's Word every day especially the Proverbs every single day is my number one go to in making big decisions. Gaining wisdom and it has been working well. I don't make as quick of decisions as some would want me to make, but less damage has been caused in the long run though with my decisions.

Taking a bit more time and thinking through actually has made a difference?

Saves time in the end run.

How do you cultivate good relationships among group members?

Authentic and transparent. Show them I am not perfect. I have issues. Not in a sense in airing dirty laundry. But knowing real and approachable. Being intentional when staff visit, or when you say something in the lounge. Stop and make eye contact and listen because I am a very bottom line individual. I am a very goal-oriented person I keep my head down and push through a task. I have learned I need to stop and pay attention to their lives. Be that servant leadership. It seems to pay off. They feel they can trust me, they are willing to do things for me because they know I care about them.

How do you contribute to your employees; personal growth?

A lot of times they'll come to me with needs and requests because something is going on at home and they need a day off or permission to come in a little bit later because of this or that. If I find out and they are able to communicate the reason why and it focuses on family, we do whatever we can to cover that because it communicates we care about feelings. If not stable at home, and feel not supported by being family friendly at school, I am not demonstrating what we are trying to teach about the importance of family and school.

From a personal professional standpoint I believe that their philosophy of Christian education is paramount. I can teach all math strategies and reading, but if I am not helping them develop their own personal philosophy of Christian education I am not doing my job. And they feel if I help them and give them that, the rest will come. Good things will sprout when rooted in Christ.

How do you go about working through conflict?

Definitely use Matthew 18 principle. When conflict between two individuals, a lot of time it is parents needing to approach teachers, I am not involved usually but they bring me into it because I am approachable, I just want to talk to you about this. I have to let them know, hey, have you communicated with the teacher?

There is an uneasiness in talking with parents. Teachers are somewhat uneasy talking to parents. Parents are somewhat scared of teachers. Meeting together can bring down those walls. The conflict doesn't become conflict, it becomes partnership and open communication. Therefore I always refer them back to that principle.

The issues still arise and tried to make attempts, then I listen and become involved. Then I always want a meeting with the three individuals as the mediator. It always comes down to communication. The heart intent is always the same. It is always for the prosperity of the student, but sometimes there is a disconnect. Definitely Matthew 18.

Even though uncomfortable, you still have to follow Matthew 18. Sometimes people like to be confrontational but don't like to confront the person they want to be confrontational about. When in person, the message changes.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Again it goes back to developing the Christian worldview and applying it to the school. Even with our Christian worldview we submit to Jesus Christ. They submit to me, because of my position and because they are Christians. I realize that I submit to them and I am their first servant. I am one serving alongside them. I need to be willing to be down on my knees scrubbing the toilets as well.

When you are authentic and don't sit in an ivory tower they will follow and listen to you. I've also learned that once you have the relationship and respect. It goes back to them knowing I care about them and their family. When you think about students, to me, the teacher student relationship is very parallel to the principal teacher relationship. Once they know how much you care about them, and respect them they will move mountains to do things for you to get things down.

Every staff in school has done just that. It's not me, it's their relationship with the Lord which helps get all the hard work done to make this school great. It makes me think oh Lord I am not worthy to have this position. I tell them that sometimes. They are the ones who get it done.

Is every day easy?

This is my first year as principal. It has been the most challenging mind blowing year of my life but it has been the most fulfilling, rewarding, serving the Lord year of my life too.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat in solving problems?

Absolutely. We do a lot of committee work. I allow those that have an interest to take the lead. For example, curriculum. Our curriculum committee is awesome. A couple of ladies use their gift from God to run the curriculum review process.

I just sit in on the in-service and provide input like a teacher would. The recommendation comes from me to the Board, but I have full faith in the work they do.

I have to realize that on many things I am not the expert. They do far better than I would do having to make all the decisions. When they collaborate it is way better. I am glad I don't run everything or make all the decisions.

How important is it for you to serve others?

Essential. I've realized after reflection of the last week, just came from a class in educational leadership. I realize areas I am not good at. I don't have the gift of hospitality or doing for others. I mean we do things for our employees but I don't think enough of my staff when we're planning things for the staff. Just to be transparent enough. Sometimes I think just throwing burgers out there is enough but realizing it is more than that. How my teachers feel they're being served communicates a lot. Part of my goals is to do much better in recognizing them. I need to do a bit more for them.

Ed leadership classes are very convicting. I don't think I did damage this year but need to improve.

How would you go about empowering others in your organization?

One teacher in particular, you could tell she came to a spot in her career, she has been in the classroom for a while, constantly praying. She needed sense of worth, more than just the classroom. She is ready for more. What I was able to do is help her go out with ACSI on their accreditation teams to other schools. I want her to know that she is valuable and so I recommended her to go out and represent our school and let her do those accreditation visits. Someday I'll be able to do the visits as well. One stipulation I gave her is that I wanted to let other teachers know about this as well so they then can get the sense of I am a leader in my own classroom.

One thing I am working on this year is empowering the teachers to be leaders in their classrooms. They always look at the principal and school board as leaders but these principles directly relate to them in the classroom. Because guess what we want our students to be doing?

If we want our students to be spiritual leaders in our country, we have to model that in the classroom as well.

You want your staff to be excellent to help students be excellent?

Absolutely because they are our mayors, doctors, lawyers. I want those that are spiritual leaders, not just leaders. We need to run our school through God's wisdom.

How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

I believe I am their first servant. My job is to listen to the Lord and all of my decisions have to be his decisions. I try to be connected as possible and not step without him. We do devotions twice a week. I lead on Tuesdays and the staff lead on Thursdays. They all get to visit. We went through one scripture. One of my biggest fears is that people would look at my leadership and see it as anything other than God directed. If we fail because society fails us I am okay with that. If we fail because of my choices, that is my biggest fear.

You have to be ready when God answers.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization?

Number one-the biggest aspect is their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ability to tie in and hear from him and hear what he is doing.

Number two would be their ability to influence or motivate others for Christ to follow them through servant leadership. Or just living the life.

The third vision. Again God's vision. Vision is hard to see the end of the day, but constantly praying and seeking where God is taking us. Not so much you take away from day or moment but if you don't have vision or know where you are going, that can stymie an organization.

Can't get so personally caught up because the Lord will supply and equip. The lord will supply and provide.

How important are the following: kindness, honesty, trust, and openness.

Lump them because they speak to the fruits of the spirit. The fruit is the evidence of a Christian life. If you don't have them, not that I would judge any man's heart, but are you a Christian if you don't do those things? So in a Christian school, that is the ultimate goal. That is what will come from our efforts.

They are great assessment tools. If our kids aren't kind then what else do we need to do?

Perhaps a barometer is the fruit of the spirit.

Not to be judgmental, but you have to see those. If they are not there something needs to be done about it. That is the ultimate goal.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

Stopping and listening to them. Putting the lists of things in your head away to the side and actually paying attention to them. Another thing I am trying to do is if they need prayer, if they are struggling, then don't say I will pray for you but pray. If I don't pray and I forget later with the lists, I become a liar.

How important is a winning team spirit at your school?

I think that is what builds the momentum to go toward the trajectory you want. A negative attitude can ruin a whole organization. Having winning team spirit, or positive, is very important. One thing I am implementing this year are PLCs. I think it is a great concept but also biblical. It was implemented far before someone coined the term so we are going to look at that, PLCs from a Christian perspective. Hopefully it will change the way we have discussions and small groups.

PLCs shape how we have discussions. With humans it is so easy with a challenging student, it slips into complaining or airing stuff that doesn't give the best construction of the student. Those things can crush an organization.

How do you get others to do their best?

Give them guidelines, but then give them adult respect. Trusting them and then praising them when they do well. No one likes micromanaging but they will let you know when they need more guidelines. There were times going into my first year thinking I am going to respect them and let them figure things out. But it makes them flounder.

You need to give them a vision, enough to let them know. Some run, some don't.

How important is communicating vision and guidelines early before the year begins?

That is what happened last year. We were coming into a new building and in-service was all about logistics going from this classroom to another, fire drills, etc. During the year all the other things were addressed to develop this and that.

The upcoming year will be my expectations, which are huge. They can hear something and want to go do something. If they don't know my expectations how can I fault them if they do not live up to them? So it comes back on me. It is essential to communicate that.

How would you get others to buy into that common goal or vision?

Lot of things I feel have happened in our school that I have not had control of to contribute. I feel I am the rudder. Momentum is a huge thing to buy in. Certain things either builds or stymies momentum. Everyone can get frustrated. We just came out of a school year with momentum. They are with me. They are lock step behind me. It has to do with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is huge in that. I can't get away from that. I need to stay as close to that as possible. Otherwise they will feel disunity.

We have an annual auction to help build shared vision to help everyone come on board. Will everyone come on board or not in the first year in the new building? This is our third auction. First year we made $60,000 last year $80,000 this year $126,000. We had the CEO of a

Christian college come and share his vision which is the same vision we have. He helped reinforce our vision. The vision is about Christian worldview and making that important. STEM careers too because God calls scientists too. Can you imagine if we get Christian scientists? God is the one who gave us the intelligence. We shouldn't just produce educators and pastors. The CEO has the same vision to round out other areas than just fine arts.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

Prayer, prayer, prayer. It sounds redundant. When I was younger I thought there was more to that, but as I grow and mature I realize that is all there is. It is not easy but it is so simple.

I've hear you say prayer, prayer, prayer, talk to me about the listening part?

Solitude, reading Bible, ongoing conversation with the Lord. Not that he is revealing new stuff, just that when you have a decision to make it either lines up with scripture or it doesn't. Not much gray area. When it comes down to it, it must line up. I am talking about taking all the chaos and throwing it all at the foot of the cross. You get to the moment when you are just here, not trying to talk, just whatever you have for me. As you continue in that dialogue, and read scripture, it is an affirmation. Sometimes accountability through others when in prayer for same things.

How do you articulate a clear sense of purpose?

Consistency. When consistent in talking about truth, the importance of prayer, Gospel, worldview, philosophy of education they are going to get it. The more big picture things, everything else falls into submission. All the little details aren't that big of a deal. Some of the questions for curriculum, say, that staff bring to me they start to filter out because they know what I will say to them. Is it a biblical principle, will it help us determine excellence? Is it a fad or more? It is helping the staff.

You are helping them to see the big picture?

This is leadership philosophy. So much bigger than our little circle. When you look at big picture, the little details work themselves out.

What do you believe is most effective in reaching your staff, large group, small group, individual?

Not sure, I haven't gotten feedback yet. I am trying to observe. As I think of it you have to do all of them. But I don't know what is most effective. At our end of year checkout time I visit with them and get to know where they are and how they are feeling. One thing that humbled me, I don't need the public accolades. I am not motivated by EPRs. I just like to do hard work. I value that. I don't really care what others think about me, so it is hard for me to hear praise. I don't like when people say I am good at this. I feel uncomfortable. The one thing I did take note of, however, is that many felt I am very wise.

It really threw me back because that is where I am so scared of not having. At the beginning of the year I wasn't. If I am now it is because of prayer and Proverbs. It has to be the evidence of that.

How do you know what needs to be improved

What I have been able to do as a systematic bottom line individual, two years ago we went through the accreditation process. I was working part-time as a math teacher and I took it on to go through the process. It helped me break the school up into the ten different standards, continual school improvement. It was a good way to get a temperature of how we are doing. There were many that revealed to me more than just being a teacher. I can see now how helpful it was to go through that process as a leader. It becomes very evident now what areas we need to improve especially reading through the report.

The recommendations have helped us know what to focus on. Through that we have found multiple other things we need to fix. We do have everything we need to be successful, we just need to work on doing better in areas that are blatantly needing improvement.

So the multiple minds have been good for you?

It was. The self-study has really helped us as well. I was the head of the accreditation process but we still broke down the material in committees and the teachers were able to speak into those areas as well, thinking outside the box. They were able to speak to many topics as well. They are able to come up with great ideas as well to improve.

It is not just me, I see things and help get attention to certain things like the crisis management plan.

They feel ownership, democratic piece.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

A lot of little things try to pull you off track. It goes back to keeping the main thing the main thing. The key is a relationship with Jesus Christ and living it out. Devotions help keep us focused as educators. A way to develop their gifts and talents. Our mission statement is to help our students live out their gifts and talents. Devotions help us to pray, rest and take a breather to focus on our mission.

How does your mission get lived out so not just a binder on the shelf?

All our committees when looking at improvements and action plans/steps. They always look at how it relates to the mission/goal. I love our mission statement because it is life applicable. We in partnership with the family, develop students' gifts and talents for the service of Jesus Christ. Really easy to like. All goes back to the development of student, spiritual leaders.

Why did you choose education as a profession and Christian education in particular?

From a young age I always wanted to educate. I truly know that it is something God placed in me. He created me to be in the field of education. I lacked confidence. I was scared of going to

college. My parents didn't get a college degree. But what God ordains and creates, it is going to come to fruition. I flunked out of college, joined the air force for 12 years. Got out and tried to go civil service always knowing I needed to be a teacher. Used the GI Bill and began education. I soon realized it is not that difficult if it is something you love.

God crushed and crumbled all the negative thoughts. In the journey and every experience directly lines up to the principalship of a Christian school. You need to have so much. Facilities, you have to do everything. I know that God prepared me.

I didn't start in Christian education. I was a para in a self-contained classroom. My husband was in seminary. I was in public school and the Lord convicted me. My heart bled for the public school kids' needs but knew I needed to take care of my own kids first. I homeschooled my kids because we could not afford Christian education. We wanted to obey God. He provided the whole way. After one year of homeschooling, my husband took a job and because of discounts we were able to go to the Christian school. They also needed a teacher so my children got free tuition.

Christian education is so much more than a school with Bible class.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

Do whatever you can do to do what you are going to do. If you fail on one and don't meet it, apologize. I know I promised it to you, still going to do it, but just not in time frame. Be real. If you have crossed deadlines, apologize. They are good with that. It gives them respect. I expect them to meet deadlines. Everyone does. To respect we have to meet our deadlines and fulfill our promises. If not, you deserve a why, not an excuse.

They often say we know you are busy, but that is not an excuse. I should have told them I can't get that done right now. It models to them the grace and mercy they need to give to their students. Very important to strive to persevere not be perfect. We will fail 100% of the time if we try to be perfect. Perseverance is being accountable, open, and honest. That is what I want from them.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

Has to be nothing but God's calling. Even on days discouraged. Sometimes I assume every principal thinks how long can I keep up at this pace. How long, what would plan B be? I told the Lord and school board I would do this as long as God asks me to do this. I do think sometimes Christians say when they're tired God is leading me to something else. Just because tired doesn't mean being called elsewhere. Just means tired. God will give you a fountain of rest.

I never pursued this job the school board actually saw leadership skills in me and asked me to take the job. I never aspired to be a school principal. I wanted to be a wife and a mom, two main goals in life. Wanted to do them well. But when they asked me it was that gut draw…that is exactly what I am going to do. I know it was the Holy Spirit that confirmed that. The Holy Spirit puts you in places you need to be in.

When it is time to go, it won't be ugly because the Holy Spirit will impress it upon the board and leadership. I may be too close to the matter to see it so I will defer to their leadership.

What leadership traits do you perceive and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

I'm thinking through because I just went through five traits this last week. I think it would be to inspire the heart. I don't know what quote that is from, but it was one that Jesus did. He inspired the hearts of others. I think once you can do that, you have to inspire heart.

How do you do that?

True, transparently living out the Christian faith. What you say to others is also what you do. It's being intentional about taking moments and telling the stories of how God is working in your life. Tell stories of how God is changing and working on you. Showing you his vision. How God is doing all that as a leader. Because others can be encouraged by your stories, both good and bad.

People can relate to you when they know your story. They can see you are doing the Christian walk. I hate it when people are put on pedestals. It is all about living an authentic, transparent life for Christ. I need to open myself up and be real. It does inspire others. I need to communicate to them the story because I can easily become a hermit and work. I need to share and communicate. Jesus modeled it. Continually looking at Jesus as the leader to model. Can't go wrong with Jesus.

Interview #2

June 22nd, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

Yes, and what when you say responsibilities what do you mean specifically? There is a lot of different answers. Yes, I delegate some responsibilities. Some are taken care of by teachers, committees, PTA, Vice Principal, and Office Manager. No way could I do it all. You have to delegate.

What is your decision making strategy?

Look for feedback. You have to identify if a problem or if just a perceived problem. If you want to get information, history, details, feedback from different constituents.

Would it be fair to say most of your decisions are not done in isolation?

Correct, I do have a vice principal, staff, board.

How do you cultivate good relationships among group members?

Active listener and good communications. Two of the keys.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

All kinds of growth that takes place in a person. Academic, spiritual, or just maturing as a person. As a school we help students continue further their education. So many teachers have become the student and worked on masters since I've been here. We have teacher in-service to address certain issues as well as conferences.

How do you go about working through conflict with others?

I think it goes a lot to cultivating good relationships. Listen and see what the conflict is. Get feedback from all involved. Goal is to make it a win-win situation. Covey speaks about seeking to understand before trying to present your part of it.

Is that like getting buy in?

Making sure and seeking to understand their viewpoint. They may have a different viewpoint and personal biases. Sometimes conflict is not with me, I am just the referee.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Lots of prayer. That may be too simple but true. Authority or control takes place through the team. It's teamwork. Staff members working with administration, teachers working with parents. Clear communications and not just follow this rule, but many times it is explaining to young people why this rule exists.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others to solve school wide situations?

It could be taken different ways, this question. The reality is that I am not there to say this is the way we are going to do it and strike the gavel. Sometimes it is asking teachers, don't just bring me a problem, but solutions as well. Then I will look it over and you tell me which you like the best and I will make the final approval. They will have then had a lot of stake in the process.

Is the purpose to make sure they are buying into you as a leader?

The accreditation process shows you that one person should not be in charge of the school but everyone involved. To help tell the story. My view is one corner. There are many other corners, or views.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

Extremely. It is vital because that is what Christ did. He modeled serving others. If we are not serving others, then why aren't we?

So you don't buy into you're the leader and everyone must buy into your authority?

No, but sometimes you are serving others and it can still be interpreted incorrectly.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

Empowering others comes through trust. It's a relationship of trust that is built upon, for me, we have lower elementary, upper elementary and high school teachers. Each group of those three have appointed a head. Once every two weeks they meet as a group. Then they bring problems, questions, concerns, or hot topics to me. Not that I don't want to meet with the group, but many times they feel more comfortable as peers talking amongst themselves. So they can get more accomplished because a title doesn't get in the way.

I can be out and about and not see the same problems they see. We all have different perspectives. My 5th grade teacher's perspective may only be upper elementary. My perspective is the whole academy.

I appreciate you saying that because you are trying to get them to see the whole perspective.

How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

The coach. I am the teacher. Just like the teacher's oversee their classroom. My classroom is 23-24 teachers. And making sure they are accomplishing. They have different needs some are A-type personality and some aren't. They want more direction. Just as I expect my teachers to know my students, I need to know my teachers and what motivates them and facilitates them.

Just as we differentiate our instruction for students, you do the same for your teachers?

Right. It doesn't always work but I am trying.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization?

The key thing is know your mission, goal is to fulfill your mission. Know, fulfill, and anything that comes along know how it ties into the mission.

How important is the mission in your responsibility as principal?

As a Christian school it was makes us uniquely different from a charter or another private school. We have to make sure we are fulfilling what we believe in our hearts. It is also part of our mission statement to promote Christian values, character, example that Christ set forth for us.

How important are the following: Kindness, honesty, trust, openness?

All are important. They are like the fruit of the spirit. They tie into each other. You can't have one without the other. Trust is one of the keys here. The other three go around it.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

The most obvious coming from a pastor is to pray for teachers, students. You also tell them, show them, through gestures, words of kindness, being honest. Giving them trust. Lot of times it is communication day to day.

How important is a winning team spirit at your school?

I think it's important because it's a unity factor. Unity of purpose goes a long way in working with others. Does it happen 100% of the time? Probably not, because people get in the way. Whether it's me or others. It is important it is part of the goal. A winning spirit means we are all heading toward the same mission. We are all bought into the same philosophy. For us we want to see others come to know Christ on a personal relationship and then grow and mature. If not, if they leave not ever becoming a Christian, then we want them to at least be open and educated. It is most important to have a heart knowledge. But if not then at least if they had a head knowledge then they are considering Christ and haven't rejected those principles they were taught.

How do you get others to do their best?

I don't know. Still working on that one. I think you educate, communicate, encourage. You take pride in what you do. Continue to give them the philosophy, vision, goals. Remind them for us it is a ministry. This is what God has for our life. Majority not all could make more money somewhere else but don't because they have chosen to work here. You know they want to get the bible out and use it. They love Bible time and seeing kids come to know the Lord.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

That phrase buy in is somewhat confusing, like luring them into something they don't want to do. The reality is that they have already bought into it if they want to teach here. That is why they signed a contract. They want to work with young people and see Christ.

How do you continue that is the day to day challenge, sometimes. Again I see the area of trust and communication having a philosophy that is well rounded. By them taking ownership of what their class is, or their subject matter they teach. Working together, do things together.

Sometimes Christian schools have the difference of trying to get a K-3 teacher to buy in in the same area as a math teacher. There is a world of difference in subject matter but the same cause.

What about families? How do you get them to buy in?

In today's philosophy I think you have families that are all over the board. Some would be here because of the philosophy, some only because of academics. I think our goal is to be, we are in a society in which we have to compete with charters, private, public schools to have a great product. To us it is a ministry, not just a product. To bring ministry and business together is a challenge. Teachers need to see that it is a business and a ministry. You have to have good PR, a part of it is to communicate. Taking the time to make sure your students, parents know what you are doing.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

What I focus on year to year is not necessarily my personal mission. My mission is who I am through Christ, and what he wants for me and if I am following his will? Is this where God wants me in this time of my life. My relationship with Christ is my driving factor.

Within that comes, does that mission of my life agree with my work? And they do. For the most part, the teachers have that same personal mission.

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose for your organization?

Sometimes I don't know if I do it good enough or not. The idea is good communication. Having it clearly defined-purpose, vision, mission, and putting it before people? It is educating your clientele.

How do you know what needs to be improved in the organization?

You listen to what, you always have people who have concerns and complaints. But sometimes you have to listen and see if it is a recurring thing, a bigger thing. Then you begin investigating. Asking specifics, teachers students parents. Finding out exactly what needs to be improved. Sometimes I'm told things need to be improved and go asking and there is nothing wrong. Other times teachers need more education and the process is good though.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

I don't really know how to answer that one. It just sort of happens. When I unlock these doors every morning. I know this is a Christian school. When I walk past the banners and see faces. when I have my devotions, I know what it is. Maintaining a focus on that is the key in having the big rocks big and the small rocks small. That doesn't mean small rocks don't get replaced by big rocks. You have to keep your big rocks which are your philosophy of why do we exist and who do we exist for.

Why did you choose education and Christian education?

I was a teacher before an administrator and a pastor. But I was a Christian before I was a teacher. I knew there were people who made a difference in my life. I pretty much grew up in a

Christian school. I know that I understand the purpose of it. To me it's a great place, a great calling. Not sure what your belief is on calling but I am not sure if I chose it or it chose me. God led me to study, have experiences. Here I am in this position not because I pursued it but because God pursued me. God brought me back here.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

Wow. Lead by example. I don't know that I try to make a ton of promises. It's more leadership by example. I think it goes back to servant leadership. Most of my teachers have the same desire to serve Christ and their children and families. Working together we are committed to this cause. To me I am committed to keeping the Bible an important aspect in the young people's daily lives whether through Bible class or chapel.

Is servant leadership an integral part of your leadership style?

I'd say it is. I have studied it enough.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

I desire God's will. I believe in God's will. This is what he wants for my life right now.

Which leadership traits do you perceive and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

This will vary a lot with different people, with the word perceive. Some perceive me as easy going and easy to talk to and they come to me with problems. Others perceive me as militaristic, almost intimidated to come talk to me because nothing will change. There is a saying that goes perception is reality. Being perceived by some one way and others. It's almost like going into a church service and the music director leads a song. 1/3 love it, 1/3 hate it, and 1/3 say who cares. Kind of like Christian school. Some want to follow you, some say whatever, and some say it's his job.

How do you handle that as a leader? Does it upset you?

Not the percentage but sometimes leaders spend more time worrying about the 5% discontent than the 80% content. That is because, hopefully for the right reason. We want them to know that what we are doing is honoring God. We want them to know we care. When they think we don't care, the trust relationship is broken.

For me I know people will perceive me different ways. They may not hate you. They may love you or don't care.

I do think it would be honesty and the fact that I do want to get to know you. I do want, if there is a problem, to work through it. If there is a win-win, great. If not, ok. Can we agree to disagree? You understand my viewpoint and you, yours. I will have to keep mine because that is where the school is going. It's a process problem not a personal problem. Sometimes people have a hard time separating personal and process.

We will go this direction unless there is a good reason to change. Not just make a change because a few people were unhappy. You can make a change, a little one, and some are really happy. Sometimes people want philosophy change.

What would be a big hairy audacious goal to happen next year?

Revival. But that is up to the Holy Spirit. In the lives of me, teachers, and the young people. Day to day things I have control over, no, because big goals you would like to see you don't have control over. Even to see growth in numbers, I would like to see Elementary grow. If any class grows, it affects a lot. It can affect my teachers getting more bonuses and benefits. I would love to give more back to my teachers.

Interview #3

June 23rd, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities?

Absolutely. I think one of my responsibilities is to identify strengths and fits in others and to build forward leadership. We have several key folks on our team that have different responsibilities they execute. There is no way I would even attempt to do everything. So I think our strength and growth and development is relative to everyone's contributions.

I don't set people up for failure. I really study people. It took a real long time to find an assistant headmaster and develop her. If you were to interview her she would tell you it took several years to cultivate her strengths and build on them. But also build up her weaknesses so that we complement each other and we are a good tag team.

As far as my deans go it took a long time to get them identified and then empower them and then release them.

How has taking more time to find the right person benefited in the long run?

Longevity. These are committed, trusting, loyal leaders. I do the same thing with the board. We work to identify folks who would be a complement to the board and don't have personal agendas. Ones who understand Christian education and come on board. We don't want to make mistakes.

We really have a core quality team. It is what I do with leadership on site.

What is your decision making strategy?

First of all prayerfully consider whatever needs to be on the table. That is from not only the board level, sharing vision, but also as we make decisions at the site level, I use and value the inside of those who have leadership roles. But also those who really have good strong insight.

I believe strongly in having a mentor. I have had a mentor for over 20 years. He continues to be my mentor. He is turning 80 and has the most longevity in Christian education of anyone I know. So we continue to have monthly chats. He does not live in the state, and I highly rely on his wisdom as well. So I seek counsel and wisdom not only within the school, in terms of identified teams, but also outside of the school. Even consult.

How do you cultivate good relations with group members?

Just value them individually and having an interest in them. We do a lot of praying around her. For each other not only on a professional level but on a daily basis, personal life. I think finding time. I do what's called touch bases. I schedule people to come in so we can sit down and talk and share. I feel like I need to do it even more often. I at least do it in the fall and after the first of the year. Even if I am just on campus I can call them in or they will stop by. I have an open door policy. I try to invest back into them. One of the things we are committed to here is investing in you and you need to invest back into us. This is our philosophy.

We are trying to develop their skills and encourage them professionalism. We are also investing in their families. Their contributions back into the school. If you are an employee here you do bring your children here. It's a policy.

We get crazy busy. So I've found that if I am not intentional in that, I will not get it done. I have to really plan. I love having a diverse leadership team. Between all of us we try to get to everybody making sure we are on top of potential issues. We want to be in a preventative mode rather than reactive.

Open door, I encourage the deans to have an open door as well so we can be on things before they get out of control. Just keep a healthy culture which is really important.

How do you employees' personal growth?

We really individualize professional development. A couple ways we've done that is a few years ago we surveyed everyone and came up with 5 different tenants of commonality and then developed PLCs off that information. They then had a year to develop certain topics off of that which were relative to the common themes.   They had to do some sort of research data-driven return on the area and present to each other.

Last year we worked on accreditation. Normally we will survey and when we do our walkthroughs and formalized evaluations and talk with the teachers about what they want to build on. We can then sometimes identify and contribute to their plan. We sometimes find seminars for them. We don't just buy into ACSIs big umbrella of professional development. We look for what is local, we bring people in, we very much customize. Sometimes we will send a few here and there.

Is your PLC research kind of like SMART goals?

Yes. I call them target goals. So we have annual goals. The target goals are based on standardized testing. They also have professional goals on how they want to develop. We look at growth index every year. I have started to go through goals to see if they have made their progress or not. We will then publish that to the community.

One of the things I am finding is that schools mimic a lot. I want our school to be authentic to our needs. So I try to be careful on what we customize for us. Because I believe people need to do their homework and figure out what works best for them. I am very careful not to publish too much on our website.

How do go about working through conflict with others?

I think this is a very big area. We apply Matthew 18 to everything we do. It is a thread that goes all the way through. From administration, to teachers, to parents, to students, to the board. With that is we want the issue to be directly addressed between the parties, whoever was involved. We want one on one. If that isn't resolved, and we really promote that. So that is if someone tries to come through the main office and see me about a teacher or about a student, they are trained to tell them what to do. I mean my calls are screened. Sometimes because I have an open door policy it is tough but my first question is always have you gone back and addressed

the issue with person. If they have and there is still conflict, then I will act as a mediator and we will listen to what has been said and we will look for a solution. I really, part of that is protecting the integrity of the principal and the integrity of the school.

Having been here as a long as I have been, there are people who have left over different things. One thing I can say is that ninety five to more percent of conflicts have been peacefully resolved even though they may have left. And I feel like there is a return of respect where we are not attacked because it wasn't handled properly even if they choose to leave. I feel like we have done a pretty good job at modeling that.

It has to be really intentional. And it has to be bought into by all faculty and live and breathe it. It works well.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

I think it takes time to build trust and respect and it is something you have to work at. In doing that, reflecting back, I have tried to really get to know people on the personal level. We are large enough I can't do that for 400, but I do personally interview every family coming in. It is my first opportunity to lay out on the table who I am and this is what our school is about, this is what is expected if you come in and join our community.

I use that time to really be helpful in understanding our philosophy and culture. I think the other part of that is just continuing to be proactive rather than reactive when things come up. So when someone calls me I try to return the call as quickly as possible. If there is a volatile situation I prayerfully pursue timing and sometimes a little time helps. A lot of discernment and in that when you show people you care and you actually address issues as they come up respectfully you build trust. I am big in confidentiality. You will hear from me if you break confidentiality. Because that breaks trust. Then we have a real issue to deal with.

I address that openly. There is a standard I think people know about me. Parents, student confidentiality. I'll give you an example. A couple of dads were talking on our preschool playground and were very loud. Somewhat disrespectful. What I did is go over, because we have a culture of trust, and it came back to me. Someone said there was some ruckus conversation on the playground so I went and only found one of the dads and I said let me know what your discussion was about because I need to address that openly with you if you have an issue because it was overheard. Now we have those who are protective of our community disturbed by this.

I had a conversation and dealt with it. I called them on it. He apologized and said it was inappropriate. It was resolved. They are still enrolled.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat?

I think as I have a responsibility as the head of school, I do not like conflict but I feel like I have a major role in making sure things are dealt with properly. So I like to be aware. If it is not my area that I need to directly be involved, I like to be apprised of things. Sometimes I can give wise counsel and help people. Or I will seek wise counsel. I think that is one of the reasons the

school has been so successful in this area. So I think just being knowledgeable and not in the dark as a leader is very important.

Wise counsel allows other administrators to make good decisions?

Yes. A lot of things I have no need to be involved with. The bigger impactful decisions could go one way or the other, then I definitely want to be involved.

How important is it to serve others?

Really important. One of the things I learned in my first years as a leader in education is never ask of your people to do things you are not willing to do yourself. Whether scrubbing toilets, repair a pencil sharpener. Whatever it is, you need to be an example. Picking up trash on campus. I just think if you think you are better or that is not your role… I tell everyone here, I don't value, or I value the same my guy that does, amazing cleaner, we have outside service and our own, over the headmaster, admissions director or the person at the front desk we all have an important role to serve. Without that we would not function as we do. We have to value each other.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

We're very discerning in who we bring on. We want to make sure if we are hiring a teacher in primary, we want the primary team to have oversight and to be involved so we are looking at their strengths. Is this someone who will complement? Is this someone who can overcome past weaknesses who have left?

It is just a really specific pursuit we have. In doing that, then you do empower because you put them in positions to be successful.

If I listen to mankind on everything. Then half our kids would be gone, half our faculty or half our board. I know when it is time to release. That is strictly through communication with God. Is this the point? It took us all these years to put our high school together. Early on we knew God wanted us to have a high school, but God's timing is right. We start right in the middle of an economic decline to begin our high school and the timing was perfect.

How do you view your role as the leader?

I view it as basically as completely 100% dependent on God to gain wisdom, counsel and direction and support, and affirmation from God. I say this school is successful in spite of me.

I hear a sense of humility in that.   Maybe I didn't choose this but this is where…

God landed me, yes. I can be honest I turned the position down twice. I was back East and I would get materials. It was a school in a black hole. There was no rhyme or reason to organization, an abyss. I thought, I was coming from a premier school on the East coast. My mentor was there but my family was here. I was offered the moon to stay on the East coast. Our heart was yearning for our family. We were there four years.

We came back and this is where God landed me. I thought, wow, this is complete opposite. Polar opposites.

What are the three most important aspects for a Christian school leader to advance the organization?

I think you have to first of all understand what Christian education represents. You have to be completely sold out. You can't have your foot in both arenas. You have to understand what it represents. You have to be passionate about it.

That is number one. And then I think the other thing would be equipped, you have to have the skill set to lead. And I think there are some very skills you must have as a leader.

Then I think you have to really know that is where God is going to utilize your gifts to your fullest for his glory. Your gifts used to the best potential for His glory. If you can't get those lined up for whatever reason, you will not be successful.

Is it a calling?

It is a calling. You have to know that Christian education is a calling. Leadership is where you are going. I struggle when people flop back and forth because there is a distinct philosophy between the two. I think unless you can define the differences and are bought into them, you will have a philosophical mishap in your head on how to direct that school.

One of the things we are very committed to, if you come here, you are buying into a preschool through 12th grade program. You can't just say a part, you have to be committed. We have released people for that. They want a foot here because they like this part, but it is all or nothing.

How important are the following: kindness, honesty, trust and openness?

They are all have great merit in terms of Christian education. In the Word it talks about this and we have a spiritual theme every year that wraps around different attributes of building your life on Christ. I think that is just a dabble. Those are some of the fundamental characteristics for leadership but also for an individual's life in Christ. Developing each of those day to day are essential.

It is the tip of the iceberg. There is a lot more to consider. Those are fundamental but more beyond that. There is still more. You want to build each strongly so that is one of the ways our distinctive as educators is to look at what the Word says about the fruit of spirit and what characterizes the life of Christ. Looking to cultivate that out is paramount to Christian education.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others in the organization?

Sometimes being compassionate is a vice as well as, in the sense that it is, you know you are involving yourself in the lives of others, genuinely, so you take on that pain. Having been here for as long as I have we have lost employees, parents, extended family, and so I think that you have to surrender a lot of the care you give to others to God and entrust to him. It is overwhelming.

They can come to me because of me giving it over to God but with that I encourage them also to be dependent on God for resolution, answering that pain call or whatever it is. That is how you build trust in your faith and God. I don't think I could survive if I let everything weigh on me. That was the lesson I learned how many years into leadership. It was a leadership lesson learned. You do have to learn how to separate because it could easily interfere with your role as a leader and what needs to be accomplished if you let it weigh too heavy.

How important is a winning team spirit in your organization?

Morale is huge and teamwork. Keeping a pulse on that. One thing I feel I have figured out is that it only takes one bad apple. I do have a gift of discernment. I will work with people up to a certain point. If I feel they have or are bringing more contamination than good, they will not last here. It doesn't mean I agree with everything, we are brothers and sisters in Christ. I won't tolerate gossip, backbiting. You will be in my office talking about it. We'll put it on the table and we'll pray about it. If it doesn't improve you will be gone. I don't have time for it. I think that is Satan's means of getting a foothold in Christian organizations. I am pretty adamant about that. No patience for that.

It looks like you exemplify openness?

You have to adhere to that. I have just seen schools get destroyed because of not handling things honorably and openly.

How do you get others to do their best?

I think I try to live passionately and be an encourager. Enthusiasm. If you ever feel like, I always say when God is done with me here, he'll let me know. He'll let the board know, and I'll move on. I think as long as there is purpose and vision and I kind of encourage teachers to look at it that way as long as God has calling on life, that you love children, love to learn, passionate about subject area, moving positively forward in your calling, then you are on track.

I think that if the vision shuts down, if you are cranky, if you can't or don't like kids, you start to mumble, you have done your heart check, sometimes it is retirement, or getting out of education. Perhaps you didn't have the right calling. I think we try to address that fairly soon so that it doesn't become something bringing others down. You are not going to have a grand day every day, but you have to take care of yourself, physically, spiritually, emotionally make sure you have a balance going on.

I have learned the balance later years in my leadership. I remember working from seven to seven. That was a good five year regime. Just to get things in order. Then you start to realize that is not going to last long. My mentor has been wonderful to keep a balance. I just spoke with him yesterday and he asked, "Alright, when is your vacation? What are your plans?" Then I have to be accountable for that. I have some days here.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

We do a lot of orientation and consultation together. As a school, for instance, I want to hear, survey basic things like survey faculty, parents, board all of that. That is one way to get insight

into types of goals on the horizon. I think also just I'm always prayerfully pursuing the big vision for the school. What do we need to work on to get there? How is it measured?

We have a town hall one way to get open Q and A time. It is a lot of data, state of union. We do parent coffees to hear their voice. We here student voices. In terms of setting goals, you are setting goals that are representative of the community, there is much easier buy in. You have to definitely communicate that. They still need to be prioritized and executed but it is hearing voice and then using data to see if, you know everyone has an idea, and then it is reality. I see my major role for the school to be constantly in tune with the vision. But then the leadership and parent voices are integral and have to have a voice.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

I have to develop, too. I am constantly, I am going to take a course. I have taken three summers and I go and take a course on involving vision. It is a summer program. It is a secular university but what is important to me is to hear globally what is happening in education. I take that and make it work personally work at my level. I took a class before we really defined our distinctive. Any major goal or vision that way it's pursued on a professional and spiritual level. It all culminates. When I am ready I present to the board. When confirmed we present to the community and faculty.

In that then, nobody is left out.

Exactly. For instance, my high schoolers, they developed policy. They developed the discipline and dress code policy. If you get them involved, they own it and support it. That is fundamental.

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose?

I think you have to be very intentional. You have to know what you are representing and putting out there. You have to stick with it, you cannot flip flop. If this is your vision, whatever it is, putting that out there, promoting it, having a plan to execution, measure, having a means to reassess. If you can put that out there and really assessing and communicating that, you know, I see this all over it drives me crazy, everybody tries to be something for all. You must be distinct in your school and represent that. Even in your vision.

So if you say we are a college preparatory but no evidence, and no support, and then all of a sudden a special needs family comes, now you are a program, if you continue to chase the silver bullet like public education, you will never be successful.

Would it be true for you when you know the direction you are going, it makes it simple?

You have to make the tough decisions and hard calls. You can't service every type of student. We can't embrace that family. We have to keep true to our distinctive, mission, and vision.

How do you know what needs to be changed in the organization?

It is a lot of filtering, surveying, and interviewing. It's chats, it's keeping an ear to the track. Hearing what is working, not working, concerns. Not just recognizing and owning, but doing something about it. You have to prioritize again. We could kill ourselves off addressing every

issue. We have to get it in front of us saying, ok, where do we feel we need to put our energy and effort? That includes student body, parents, teachers, community needs, school needs.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

It is a daily pursuit. You can't get off track you know. There is so much that could get you off track. Providing the support you need as a leader to keep on track is important. I love being in the classroom. I still teach a little. I still teach the juniors. I wrote the senior thesis model for our seniors I introduce their second semester senior year and the freshman in their college and career class. I used to teach five periods a week. Now I only teach it three periods. I am working it out to empower someone to take it over within one more year so that I don't get off track. Because I love certain aspects of education I mean I teach at the graduate level which is to me one of the most fulfilling things I do outside of here because it keeps a pulse on what is happening in public and private and charter education.

So that I have to keep a balance and keep myself focused. This has to be number one for me where I put my time and energy and commitment. Keeping that priority number one. Yet, having an opportunity to keep some of the other passions alive. So it is something, a discipline. I would not always just only be focused on the vision. I would not have the insight I have gained if I was only focused on the vision.

It's not just you?

It's hearing, listening to others in education. It's learning from others in education. It's constantly determining what is distinct to us and what we want to value and cultivate. But also being willing to release to others what is not working.

How did you choose education as a profession and Christian education?

I think I remember being young and playing school. I am a third or fourth generation educator. I have two sisters admin certified educators. So I think it was a natural owning of my talents. In determining public or Christian, you know from the very beginning I had experience in public and it just wasn't fulfilling to me, and I had some reservations. I knew that planning for the future economically it would be beneficial. I just really had a heart for kids to have a purpose in their lives and owning it and something to anchor them, their identity, I discovered early on. I saw the dysfunction people were having early on and teaching junior high and different levels and realizing the entire core of being a person needed to be addressed, including spiritual. I just went after it. I knew it was want I wanted for my children and other families.

You have peace making the move to Christian education?

It was cemented once I had a taste of Christian education. That was what I wanted for my family. It grew from that. This investment is where we need to be.

How do you focus on keeping promises and commitments?

Discipline. Personal discipline. One thing I did learn as a child if you say it, you must do it. It was something that was brought into my home culture. Be a person of your word. If your yes is

a yes, make it a yes. If it is a no, make it a no. I think that was for personal ethics. In that bringing that into a profession was a natural bent. That is again how you build trust. It teaches discipline and responsibility which I think are important.

It helps empower other people if they see it in you, right, something different?

You are going to call back. If you are really practicing Christ in your position as a leader. You need to emulate Christ. Not that I am Christ or perfect, I mean I am on my knees regularly asking for forgiveness but I believe if you pursue it, your own personal vision is to love others through Christ, to accept others through Christ, to value others through Christ, to lead others through Christ the best of others in Christ. If you keep those as your personal mantra and mission, it keeps you on track.

Our new spiritual theme for the year is what does true spiritual wisdom represent? Be wise to the scriptures. Wisdom to and through the scriptures.

That is another thing. Everyone wants to give me a spiritual theme each year. This is the one thing, however, I don't release because I ask God to give me insight into what we have just gone through or come out of the last year and need in the future, next year. I do a reflection of the past year and what needs to be built upon and then he gives it. It is James 3:17. That to me is being real to the calling and real to leadership and real to what God is saying.

It's not about me.

What motivates you to continue to lead in Christian school?

I think that I grow and thrive and mature hopefully as much as I see others in my calling. I just look forward to it. There are good days and difficult weeks and life is not perfect and there is always a challenge on the horizon but when you are called to do something, when you have the good, bad, and ugly, it's surrendering yourself to being led, and directed, and used. As long as you feel God has placed you there for a purpose and you listen to that. It keeps you going.

You can't keep your eyes on man or you will be falling constantly. I think that is it. It is recognizing that all situations that come your way are for whatever reason, you are the person that God has appointed in this time and place to lead and to be used. I always say if someone, I mean this, if someone comes through this door and it is my time to leave and can take this place to the next level I will be the first to step out of the way. I tell the board that. Whenever it is my time to move out, because I get a lot of requests to go to other schools. I always bring it to the board and they say what does your heart say?

Which traits do you perceive and others see as most important to your success as a Christian school leader?

One of the things that is fundamental communication skills. I feel like I have to be a good listener, I have to be a processor. Which is part of communication that is one of my strengths. The other is I am a relational person. I genuinely care about and enjoy people. I think that is something that comes naturally for me. People are comfortable around me regardless of their

background. I was raised that way. We had so many people in our homes, vagrants to preachers staying and I think that cultivated that comfortableness with me.

Regardless of the background, I value people. I see them as created uniquely designed for whatever purpose. They may not know their purpose but…Communication, really enjoying people, and relating to them and then I think I am a passionate learner. I love education. I love learning. I will always be reading, taking something, growing myself, developing myself. We didn't have TV, I don't even remember when we got a TV. We read, discussed, and so I think that's a part of me that comes through as an educator.

Interview #4

June 24th, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

I think this is a team ministry. Definitely. We have directors of certain areas so we delegate, I delegate responsibilities to our directors. We have a fine arts director, athletic director, vice principal of curriculum and also a financial director and things like that. We have different areas of directors and we meet once a week as a team. Collaborate, bounce ideas off each other, most of the time come to consensus. If not, it's basically my decision from there. That is, I think we do a really good job of team work and delegation and working together.

This is my second stint around as administrator of the school. I was younger at first, we were building this place and it was a monumental task, I was getting my masters I was an elder at church, I was still teaching, coaching, still being a father, building this place and I just got burnt out. I was interim, supposed to be for one year, turned out to be four years and so I just stepped out for a while. At that time, the reason I say that is, I didn't delegate as much, and so I should have and it kind of felt like I was on an island a lot.

What is your decision making strategy?

We look at our mission statement first of all. Does it fit with our mission statement? Secondly after that you have policy and stuff. Does it fit with that? Is it Biblical? Is it going to enhance the school? Sometimes there has to be exceptions in regards to some policy and things like that. I kind of look at those things first and you know if I still feel it can meet the mission statement of the school and stays within guidelines of policy we have set, I kind of make decisions from there.

There are a number of policies we need to change as we look at them.

How do you cultivate good relationships?

Obviously giving credit and letting them be a part of the process. Feel like they have some say. Not top down at all. I am not that leadership style at all. They feel they've been a part of the process. When we come to make changes and things like that, not necessarily everyone is happy with change. Sometimes that is hard and sometimes you are not going to have one hundred percent consensus on things. I think being part of the process is important. Encouragement. Credit where credit is due. I think sometimes administrators try to steal the credit. I like to give credit where it is due with our employees. So I am there.

What does that style do for your employees, giving credit?

It is encouragement. I feel like they are important, valued in the process.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

I would count family as part of that. So I try to realize there has to be balance in somebody's life. I spent too much time here. I have to understand my employees don't have that same passion as I would. Sometimes I would fall in the trap of thinking of why don't you stay a little

longer to get that finished? I have to watch that. My personality is I would do it. Giving and remembering that there's life outside of this job for sure.

And then giving time for rejuvenation, giving time for conferences, for and even personal conferences. I had an employee or two this year who really wanted to go to a Bible conference, a church thing, for personal growth. I thought that was important. Maybe a little exception to the policy, we normally don't.

How do you go about working through conflict with others?

I said to my wife before I took this position again, I don't know if I want to do this. It is constant challenge, always conflict of some sort. I try to remember conflict is a time to define the real issues. So you know a lot of times there is an issue but the conflict is caused by another issue. Trying to get to the bottom of that hopefully two parties can sit down and talk about it if it is between two parties. I try to have face to face with people as much as possible. I know email is a big thing but so many things can get misconstrued through email and stuff like that.

Probably to my fault, and I find myself in this position, I can sometimes see both sides of issues. So then I have a tough time making a decision at times. You have to be open to listen. Sometimes you just let them speak and talk and say thank you. I'm hearing what you are saying and I'll let you know my decision. People have to be heard to work through conflict. We just started back again a parent survey at the end of the year. That helps parents feel like they have some say over some part of the process. Try to make changes from there. Some venting by parents is not accurate.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Just kind of always bring it back to the mission statement and policies. Policy the school board has set is sometimes nice to say, "Well this is board regulations". Being true to your mission statement and policies and procedures. People know there are rules but they think they have to be the exception to the rule. I just try to maintain.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others?

Absolutely, yeah. When I took this position, the board asked me I said you know I said I am not an upfront person necessarily, you know. I am very comfortable, like my leadership style letting others delegate and I said you know if we run into a problem I will help solve it but I don't have any problem delegating, no.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

It is important because they need to see you are willing to get your hands dirty. I don't have time for it but I still teach a class. The teachers really appreciate the fact I am still in the classroom. They understand and know that I understand what they are going through in the classroom. What they are going through.

Five days a week class, just one class but just it is good to be in contact with kids still. You know I try to have some encouraging type things to do for the faculty. Teacher in-service or gift cards or stuff like that. Really encourage our student council to serve our teachers as well.

I think it is important for faculty to see you are willing to be a servant. I mean last week Friday and Saturday I was painting the school hallways. I didn't have to do that it's kind of therapeutic, plus it's good for me to serve the school in a different way besides getting paid.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

Just by the delegation we spoke about before. We have directors. I give our directors supervision over certain people as well. I think they feel empowered that way. Just this week we are going through the handbook, I have input from five or six different directors on the handbook so just allowing them to have input. I think is empowering to them.

How do you recognize potential leaders? Do you help hand select, guide, mold them?

I think you kind of look at their vision, can they think outside the box, are they… do they stand up for what's right and do they have a little bit of a backbone as well. Not afraid to take criticism. So those are all the kinds of things I look at, for that.

How do you view your role as the leader?

Encourager, spiritual leader of the organization, vision setter, letting faculty know which direction we are going, but then empowering people to come alongside and share your vision, but you know obviously if they don't feel part of that or you don't convey it properly, they are not going to come alongside of you as well. Been reading through some things with the leadership. They have to trust the leader before they buy into your vision as well. Building trust. I guess because you know I have been here for thirty three years, people have trusted and know who I am, just being a part of that.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian School leader to advance the organization?

Always pursuing excellence. We may be good at something, really good at something, but God requires us to continue to excel in all things. Always staying true to your mission statement. Once you start to waiver from that, you can start to get really excellent at academics and then lose the Christian focus. And I keep harping on the fact that we can be excellent at academics, but how are you different than other schools down the street who are really excellent at academics. We have to be very focused on the integration of biblical principles. You cannot waiver from that as a Christian school or you might as well be a charter school. You have to have a product that indicates that as well.

You can be too spiritual as well. We are not a church, you have to guard against that at times because that is not our role. We are an educational institution which integrates biblical principles into all subjects.

How important are the following: kindness, honesty, trust, and openness?

Obviously as a leader you need all of those. I would say trust would be huge. I spoke about that before. If you don't have trust you're not going to move the school forward. The vision won't be met. That is a real important one to me, trust. Along with trust comes openness. That's hard to do at times, because there's just confidentiality stuff, sometimes the faculty wants to know more, but just honesty is always the best policy when it comes to personnel issues, you know that but it is hard to do at times. Trust, openness would be my top two.

Honesty comes with openness. Lump those with the same two. Kindness is I know a lot of kind leaders can get away with a lot too. I know they may not be good though. I would think that may be the bottom one for me.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others in the organization?

Trying to meet their needs I guess. Understand and listen to them. Understanding like I said before, this is not necessarily a life, it's a job here. They have a life outside the school. Probably making an exception at times to show I really understand their needs.

How important is a winning team spirit?

Morale is huge. Five years ago morale here was not great, the economy was poor. We were kind of on our last leg of classes. You know when the recession hit most of the families here did whatever they could to stay, but incoming they could compromise. So enrollment was down, we had to make cuts as well. Probably weren't done it the best of ways. Morale was low. And now the morale is really high, people will probably do more than what is expected when they see things are moving forward and there is a vision and things are going well. So I think that is huge.

Did you try to infuse some morale into the employees during the recession?

I was not the leader at the time. There was some things that were done, but there was a lot of mistrust with faculty and staff.

My predecessor did a great job calming things. He had to do some tough things as far as personnel.

How do you get others to do their best?

I think back to the things we discussed before, encouragement, empowering them, coming alongside of them and in a positive way. Critique them as well. When we do evaluations at the end of the year point out the good, but point out areas to work on if they feel you are sincere and genuine they respond to that.

Is it because of trust they know what you say in evaluation isn't just attacking them?

Try not to make it personal. Obviously when it comes to personnel they do take it personal sometimes and we use a variety of different methods as well from three different staff people doing evaluations to parent surveys to student surveys and so when they can kind of see that they are all in sync together, they understand there is work to be done.

How would you get others to buy into the mission and vision of the organization?

Obviously it has to be a goal or vision that people see is worthwhile. Has to be a goal or vision that meets the mission statement of the school. To get real buy in they have to see benefit for themselves. If they do not see benefit for themselves you're probably not going to get a lot of buy in. Unless they are really bought in and understand that we are here for the students and this is best for students. Just a small example. Making a master schedule, teachers want their classes certain times and we have to do this for the students, what's best for the students, sometimes that is hard.

Are you trying to get them to see the whole picture?

Yes, that is right. You try to but yet we are human, we see only probably three inches in front of us.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

You always have to align it with the mission of the school. I sometimes ask myself is my faith strong enough? I have sometimes think big vision big ideas for the school and think I can't do that, but so, I think as you grow, as a school grows and accomplishes a lot more, it empowers you to think of different areas, what could a Christian school be? What effect could we have on this community, state or even, I am thinking now thinking reaching out to missionary students as a virtual classroom and stuff like that. You have to think of, you know, what are the possibilities for a Christian school and we are here to impact the kingdom of God and redeem what is broken. Through all subject areas kind of a take from Abraham Kuyper.

Everyone is going to go into something different-not just prepare students to be pastors and teachers, we have to get into whatever calling.

We are here to redeem the sin and brokenness of the world. I get a little uptight when we talk about salaries at the board level and they say it is kind of mission work. I say that makes no sense to me. As a Christian business man do you sell your product for so much less? I mean we are expected to be above par and academics and athletics we have to compete and facilities but when it comes to teacher salaries it is less and I just don't get that.

Is that valuing your employees?

Every aspect of God's kingdom needs to be impacted by Christians. May that be journalism, may it be politics, I kept preaching that in the classroom. We need Christian scientists, journalists, Christian actors. Course my youngest son is now going into acting, I think gosh, but it is such a liberal field, but the Lord…

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction?

Board is part of that. The board is really the vision strategy, direction. I kind of lean on that. We use parent surveys to different other surveys we use help us understand the direction we need to go. External things as well. What is environment like as far as education in our area helps us determine our direction

How do you know what needs to be improved?

We do a lot of surveys, getting feedback from people. Comparing probably looking at best practices that have been done in the past. Kind of look at that and are we doing the best we can in this area by using the best practices. All those types of things.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture?

Like yesterday I came into the office with not much on my schedule but by the end of the day I didn't have time for anything. Summer as well. How do I survive during the school year? Again I think you have to go back to your mission statement, what are we here for, what is the purpose of the high school? You always have to be brought back to that. Keep your mission statement in front of you. Obviously we want our students to be well prepared for college, that's our main goal with a Christian emphasis which is our mission statement.

The mission statement, I guess, does not just hang on a wall but your staff know it pretty well, it comes up often at meetings, to see how we are doing?

Twice a year we go as an administrative team, end of semester we break our mission statement into about five pieces; what have we done this year here in each category to meet our mission. Last two years we probably had ten things in each category of how we are meeting our mission statement.

Why do this exercise?

What is main purpose and to stay focus. Sometimes mission statements do hang on a wall and mean nothing.

Why did you choose education and Christian education?

Christian education first; been part of Christian education all my life. Grew up in a real rural conservative area in Northwest Iowa. Public schools were great. My parents not rich by any means, just that aspect that God was into every subject was very important to my parents so Christian grade school, high school, college, went to all of them. It is in my fabric as far as Christian education.

How I got into education, really wasn't intending to go into education. I wanted to go into environmental science. When I graduated from college most environmental science jobs are in the government area and in '82 they were cutting and cutting, not there at all. And so my wife is from Arizona and moved to Arizona and knew this Christian high school was starting so I inquired and asked what does the future look like for science teachers at your school? They said why don't you apply? I don't have a teaching degree. We can get that done they said. I applied, got the job, and the process got my teaching degree, masters degree. I kind of look at a number of things, am I where God wants me to be, is this biblical? Can I affect people for God's kingdom for eternity? Do I enjoy it and fourthly, am I affirmed in it? If I can answer three of four most of the time, I feel it is where God wants me to be so I keep asking myself those questions as I have to renew contracts.

Sometimes I don't like this job.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

If I try not to promise anything I may not keep. Maybe to my fault too. I probably don't sell something like I could, like a salesman, if I am so gung ho this is going to happen. That is the first thing, I don't try to make promises I cannot keep. That helps me. If I am committed to something, I guess is the question how to stay focused on my commitments? I hopefully have people around me who can be honest with me and say, I think I have a staff like that, hey do you remember this and things like that. Not making promises I cannot keep and having people around me who can be honest and transparent.

It sounds like you want those around you who will keep you accountable.

What motivates you to continue to lead?

Those four things I talked about. Is it biblical? Can I have an impact God's kingdom for eternity with people? I look at is it something I enjoy? Am I affirmed in it?

Which leadership traits do you perceive as the most important?

Trust. I think is a big one. I think just being a biblical person, they understand I am here to impact kids for God's kingdom in a Biblical Christian aspect of that you have to be genuine in that. Caring about people is a huge one as well that helps you be successful as a leader as a school principal. Those are big ones for me.

Interview #5

June 24th, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

You know it's, I'm delegating more and more. When I first started, I just finished my fourth year here. As you know we do it all as the principals. We're getting to the point now where we're able to delegate more and more. We have a guy who does discipline. We work together on major stuff and he does the discipline. We have an athletic director and someone who does my discipleship program and someone who does my service. I have my hands in all of it, but have done as much as I can to delegate those things.

Putting together it's, I've found, it helps with the buy in. It's not just coming from the top, but the grass roots. We just don't have the budget to delegate more. I'm still doing way more than in other schools.

What is your decision making strategy?

Several different approaches. The biggest is I do a lot of running things by my key leaders and getting an idea of their thoughts. Kind of getting some feedback and I take it to the next leadership group like department chairs along those lines. Then from there you typically go to the whole staff to talk through something. We let them know. Major decisions like policy changes we went through a couple this last semester and we had a couple key committees where we talked through late work policies and grading policies and things like that. We did those by committee and worked our way. If it's a decision that might be, needs immediate attention, I usually just make the decision myself or run it by some key leaders. In a school this size those key leaders are the ones you get the key feedback from.

Feedback has to help with buy in?

I really want them to realize they have a voice. That is one of the compliments, the teachers would appreciate it. They express that several times.

How do you cultivate good relationship among group members?

I try to be as visible as possible. I want teachers to see me out there, to talk to them at lunch in their little lunch bunch. Go in there and hang out with them and talk. Get their…, find out how they are doing. Try to take an interest in their personal life. We'll do get togethers throughout the school year. The beginning of the year we get together so they can see me in a different light. I want them to recognize me as part of the team. Not I would say in teacher verses administrator role. If I am engaged in what is going on there, it really helps.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

I think professionally it's, I'll take it from that point of view, I am a big self-reflector. I want people to do a self-reflection. So when I do my evaluations, it's always hey this is, explain what I've seen in the few times I've been in but really they are the ones, tell me what you are doing that works, what are you struggling with, searching challenging them in that way. A lot of it is

giving them the data. Hey, this is what the data says. Let's talk about this. What are some things you can do to change it. Many times if we're not changing, we're just moving forward no matter what job we have and not reflecting. We're always looking for what is the next thing, the cement.

What does the self-reflection do for them?

It goes back to the buy in. I can say you need to work on x, y, or z. If they are reflecting, oh my gosh, I am not very good at such and such. They can realize it themselves. I think you're more apt to fix it. As opposed to the boss telling me I have to do this and this. It's more shoot, as you think about I need to work on it. It's the same thing as if you walk away from a conversation with someone and say I wish I wouldn't have said that. I am more apt to do that than if someone comes in and says you shouldn't have said this. You think boy it was perfectly fine and lost the context.

It's when you are coaching them to see their own issues.

How do you go about working through conflict?

Never have any conflict so I wouldn't know. Conflict with me or with two people and I am trying to mediate?

Either way. I assume there is a process for resolving conflict.

We do the Matthew18 principle where they need to go to that person and talk before it gets to me. There's a lot of times in administration and teaching where there's, you know, you'll get a parent who gets upset or another teacher who will make a comment to you about someone else or a student even. 95% of the time I send them to that person they have issues with. If a parent calls or something that a teacher needs to address first, I send them to a teacher first before it gets back to me. Or I will help get the teachers to respond. So there is that conflict there that I deal with.

I try to beat around the bush some when dealing with conflict with teachers, because I want them to understand it and see it themselves. A lot of times I can see what the issue is and I'll say let's talk about it.

What does it take to work through conflict?

Nobody wants to deal with conflict. You have to be open to being wrong. Open to change, open to realizing there are some compromise that has to happen. Usually when conflict is happening it's either misunderstanding, I tell you something and you misunderstood what I said or it came across a different way and I need to realize that. So there's conflict there. If it's simple I want this and you want that personally and there is conflict on who's going to get it. You have to realize hey, we have to work together. I think a lot of it is just compromising being able to realize that it is not all about you.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school setting?

I wish I was better at this. It's out of control. Visibility. I think for the students they need to see me. They need to realize that I'm going to hold the standards. I think that's across the board. I'm one of those guys, for whatever reason if it's arrogance, fear, I don't have any idea but if my name is attached to something, it's going to be as good as it can be. So, even when I have a hard time when we are making decisions when I have to compromise something. If I feel like it is not meeting my standards, and so if my name is attached to something, if my name is attached to a discipline policy, or at the school I want it to be the best school it can be.

In this setting the principals really work closely together. Because we have to… there are certain things you are not going to share with other people. But the principals are all on the same page and so if we have a major discipline issue, the dean and I work together but also the middle school principal or superintendent for that matter. There are four of us we get different perspectives we can hash it out. Which is how we kind of help keep the order because there's unity amongst the principals in a K-12 school. We have three principals and a superintendent and a dean with a unity. We always talk about we can hash it out behind closed doors but when we leave there we have to be united whether we are in full agreement or not on decisions. And so we do that. I also try to stay consistent. If I am…I don't…you do a little bit naturally but I try not to play favorites. There are kids you will give the benefit of the doubt a little more but more because you have the experience or trust of those people.

At the same time I am going to treat my kids like anybody else. Across the board. That helps keep some of that order. Keeps people on board.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others?

I'm willing to listen to others. I think I probably take a back seat often enough. Probably more often than a lot of principals do. To get it done is why. If I am moving my own agenda all the time, then it might not get done as quickly. At the same time I don't want to burn myself out. I was in public schools for ten years before I got here. Four years as assistant principal. In this job today I am in, I am basically doing the job of two or three assistant principals. In those areas you have the ability to delegate a little more, when the principal just got that information and helped make decisions that way. Here the principal has to make more of those decisions. I am involved in every aspect of it. You wouldn't get anything done.

We've seen that over the years. We have been blessed that we have been able to hire a discipline guy. It is a, there is still more that needs to be done but it definitely has helped. It really has helped. The discipline is a perfect example. It has helped us devote that needed time to discipline. Focus on some of the small things rather than just the big things.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

Huge. Huge. They need to know that I am in it with them. If I'm not serving and just ordering, then it becomes a monarchy and not what I am looking for. They need to see me out there picking up trash, they need to see me jumping and helping where I can and be a part of the team.

Has that always been a philosophy of yours?

I think I've always had that servant leader attitude, and the principal I worked for ten years really modeled that really well. The superintendent I work for now models that really well. There are times I am sure when I am not jumping in because other people are doing it. There are certain times for it and not. Even through the ages that example there was I think it is probably happening more than people realize. But at the same time I would not ask them to do something I would not do or haven't already done.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

Giving them that ownership and responsibility. Going back to the… we've asked some of our people in our Bible department to run our discipleship program, to run our service program. We did a one to one this year every student has an iPad. We've had teacher leaders who've taken those roles. Some have done amazing and some have not. But by me helping them along, it's getting better.

How have you identified leaders?

Both. Some have come to us and said I really have a passion for this, others I assume they have done that before and some have a passion for it. Some are just "hey you need to do this, I feel you could really do this". It stretches them a little bit. We started a committee in the English department this year and tasked a few English teachers, but one in particular, to do it. It took eight to nine months to get going. You know what I am saying. We kept pushing and gave them some flexibility. These are new staff members we have asked to lead but it's giving them the flexibility and you can work on this, you've seen it, now let's make it happen.

How do you view your role as the leader of this organization?

I take the vision of the superintendent and I do what I can to make that happen within my division. I also at the same time work toward my vision and as long as it is not contrary to his, we can help move that forward. My job is to keep the organization moving forward. We have in four years a lot of different things. This school looks vastly different than four years ago, not because it was bad but because we have moved forward. The way society is now and so it is to continue to move forward.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization?

I think the first one is your relationship with Christ, the leader has to have a continuing growing relationship with Christ. From personal experience and being vulnerable, there are times I have not been growing and you can tell in my leadership, attitude I am not in the best place. I think that is the number one thing right there.

The second thing I think is knowing the vision or mission of the school and trying to figure out where your division is in that. So for example, my second year here I recognized the fact that we do a lot of stuff. In the public schools we don't do as much in public schools because it's all about testing. Here it was very different atmosphere because of field trips because of all the stuff we are doing.

My second year I sat everyone down in the spring to make sure we are all on the same page. We went through the whole exercise of are we a school or a church? We did this whole exercise. It was interesting because about half said we were a church and half a school. Each half thought the other half felt the same way as them. It was an eye opener for a while. It took us three or four meetings to come together on what we were and really what does a graduate look like. I had to make sure I was on the same page as my staff and that it aligned with the superintendent and school board.

I feel that Christian school leader needs fellowship with Christ and know the mission and vision and be on the same page and be able to move their staff and really empower their staff. That is probably the biggest thing I try is to empower my staff to reach the kids. When I first got here the school board said they wanted me to have relationships with all the kids and parents and all these things. I figured out pretty early on that is very difficult when you are in this position. But if I can empower the teachers to have that, then it makes it easier.

It's that relational part of Christian schools.

How important are the following kindness, honesty, trust, and openness?

I think I look at the four words and if I start with openness and work backwards. You need to be as open as I can with the staff and students as well. I have always had an open door policy. I have students come in at lunch to ask this or that or just talk. The same thing with teachers they need to know where I stand on certain things. There are certain things in leadership everyone doesn't need to know. I want to be as open as I can to a point. I think trust is probably the biggest thing of the four. They have to trust me. There are a lot of times when they'll ask me what is going on and I can't tell them but you have to trust me it will work out. It has taken four years to get that to happen. We have lost some staff and things, with the leadership change and now I think things are we are in a good spot as a high school. The staff here for the most part trust me as much as they can. I think that is huge. Honesty and kindness goes along with that. They have to realize I am doing things for a reason. They might not think I am the kindest person but the reality is if they trust me they'll realize it is kindness in a different way.

It's like your kids. When you discipline your kids or you have issues with your kids. They might think you are a jerk at the time but the reality is you love them and hopefully they love you and realize what you are doing, they might not see it at that point, but down the road they'll realize dad loved them and they are thankful.

How do you show genuine care for others?

I would like to say this is an easy one. It is easy for people you really care for. There are certain staff members you don't…I care for all my staff but there are staff members who will drive you kind of nuts. Different things hey you should be working harder, they should be, people you are dragging along. I think for me that word genuine is hard because to be honest I have to be purposeful in asking how their day is going, about their family, if I know something is happening with their family, hey how did this ever get resolved and really show care.

Why is it hard to be intentional?

We are humans. I do think it's tough. I would wonder with the people you've interviewed if personality wise, what is their personality like? Me, I have a harder, I'm fine relational, but there are people on staff who are amazing personal wise. That is not me. Our dean is an amazing relational person. Disciplining someone they may say he's a jerk but he still loves them. He comes across as a very genuine man. He is, but it's…I'm much more matter of fact. I'm going to tell you like it is.

Definitely makes it easier especially in discipline aspect of things. You're dealing with kids in crisis. You're dealing with families who might be embarrassed because of what a child did. It is the goofiest things. Hey your kid was tardy today and the parents blow up. We are so sorry for our kid. But the kid was just tardy.

How important is a winning team spirit at your school?

I think it is huge. It goes back to the point of you want your…it's important because empowering your staff. It goes back to the idea of if I can do everything I can so that they are successful in the classroom, they are going to have good relationships with kids and classroom so I think if that winning team spirit is not there and they are down in the dumps, it makes for a rough environment for everybody. Winning is one thing but win at all costs is not good. I am in the feel good spirit reality.

How do you get others to do their best?

I think part of it is the relational part, and encouragement. Part of it is the never settling. Asking them and challenging them to continue to grow. Challenging them to look for ways to inspire. Really that is…inspire their students and themselves. It goes back to that winning team spirit. If we have settled we are not going to win. But if we are continuing to win we may have won in this area but we see I want to get better we have that…it's very easy in education to have the defeated spirit. Especially as the year goes on. You have a kid that's a jerk, or parents are jerks and you know that teacher has 120 kids in a day and one parent that is a total jerk to them and all of a sudden the day is ruined. Don't look at that, look at the 119 kids doing amazing and parents love you. We are real big on surveys. We are always asking parents their thoughts on this, this, and this. And kids every once in a while.

I have to do it myself. I get…I'll have two or three negative comments out of fifty and I have to realize I can't just take those three personal but realize I am making a difference. In this environment, as you know, it is I get beat up more than I did in the public schools here.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

It's I don't know it's a good question. We've had some staff turnover the last few years. Some of it was burn out. Some was not wanting to follow vision. That is fair. You work for someone for a couple of years and realize do I really want to work for this person. The people who are on board are on board with myself, the superintendent and the things we are doing. That is probably the easiest way to get that common goal so when I lay the vision out for next year, hopefully they are on board with that and realizing this is where we are going and they are already going in that direction.

How do you determine your personal mission and vision?

I think a lot of it is based off of my experiences. Really my mentors. Like I said the guy I worked for for ten years was a very never give up, never you know just keep moving forward spirit. The kids and staff were successful. These have played into where I am now.

My personal mission and vision doesn't tweak too far from that. At the same time my walk and what God is teaching me at that time falls into place. It changes some and I am at the point, to be honest, I'm trying to figure out where I see myself twenty years from now. God hasn't revealed it to me yet though. I have to keep moving forward.

What you say sounds pretty simple, with mentors sharing never give up, never give up on these kids, always push forward. Does it make it easier when your mission is settled?

The mission part is very easy. It's the whole kids will rise to level of expectations. That is what I talk to my staff about all the time. Once again it's very easy to say that but then in the back of my mind this is the message and this is what I know. How do I keep moving forward, keep myself energize, how do I keep myself fresh?

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose?

I've always tried to model as much as I can. To be as clear and precise that way. For me it's I've noticed in the last few years if I model it and have one on one or small group conversations and discussions, that's really how I best articulate it. Getting up and trying to give it in front of a group of thirty people I can't get as much…I don't articulate it as well. I don't know if that is just my stage of life, I don't know, but if I am in a group of one or five or six or department chair meeting and they can ask questions and I can clarify questions, and we've had a chance to process, that is how I can articulate it best.

How do you know what needs to be improved in the organization?

For me personally it's just taking a step back and looking at the big picture. Looking at various areas and trying to see what needs to be changed. What can we do different, is it an issue we can do this year, next year issue? Just trying to, the biggest thing is taking a step back.

I think the biggest issue we have being a small school and where we are at now is you are doing it all. It is easy in the midst of doing it all to miss what is going on around. I have had the ability to step back and look at the issues and kind of evaluate.

Has the ability to step back with more people increased for you to evaluate?

To be honest because of where I came from, I actually, I felt like I was decent at that before this environment and went back a little now to where I was at before. I think as I continue to move forward and really look at the different visions there is a lot of value in what we do with the other principals. Because we really truly work as a team here. So not being an island per se. It helps a lot. I know a lot of Christian schools in the area in the past have had superintendents meetings to talk or principals and because of that and the superintendents are doing that still, although there has been turnover. For us as a school we are big enough we have people we can talk to.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

We try to look at multiple facets of educational process. We recognize the fact we are a Christian school and that is our distinctive and that is our main focus. We do take that step back and look at it. Our Superintendent puts together a thing about rowing and drifting, a big data presentation with fifty data points to judge things. Instructionally we do walkthroughs once a month and different stuff, our standardized test scores to look at big picture to see how we are doing there. Lots of different data points. A lot of it is just observation and looking at, from my viewpoint, where are we at, and trying to see things. It goes back to the improvements in the organization of what are we missing, what am I missing?

Are you asking yourself frequently about how are we doing?

To be honest it is sporadic. Some points it is every couple of days, at some it is once a month. Definitely in the summer as you reflect and get ready for the next year, it is a good time to think about. In the year if I am in the midst of crisis at all I probably don't look at it enough. It's hit or miss.

Why did you choose education as a profession and why Christian education?

I was a late to the party guy for education. Out of high school I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I did what most of my friends did business administration. I went to a community college for a semester. I grew up in Flagstaff and moved to Mesa. First semester did not like it, moved back to Flagstaff. Got an AA degree in general studies. I worked at Safeway since I was 16 and didn't know what I wanted to do. Got married a few years later and moved to Phoenix to get my youth studies, I went to Grand Canyon to be a youth pastor. My wife had just finished an intern with Young Life. She did a two year intern with them. At the end of the internship they were looking, in the valley, Christians who wanted to be teachers so they were going to emergency certify her. They interviewed her and she got the job and coached. As we first came down we were coaching freshman girls' volleyball at a public school and loved it.

I decided to get my teaching degree. My program was geared toward adults. Got my bachelors and was coaching. I coached three sports the first two years. Student taught, subbed and all that stuff. Two years later I was hired. Taught for four years. Then I moved districts with the principal I was with and became his assistant principal. Did that for four years, he got let go for some political reasons. I applied for his job, did not get his job and through that whole time my kids were in a Lutheran school and we always thought of this school and eventually…we didn't know a lot about it but this was the school that most went to so long story short the guy who got the job, was the principal here. So we were competing for the other job. I knew I wouldn't get the job and I got this job. The superintendent got my name from another guy who I was in a Bible study with years earlier. I was contacted and a few weeks later I was the principal. I was not, in the state of Arizona you need ten years to be fully vested, I have eight so my thought was two years from then I might start looking at private schools, but I wasn't in any position at that point to look. I didn't know much about Christian education except for my kids who were in Christian education.

It was a big decision. I kind of jumped in both feet not knowing a lot. Obviously it has been good. I am extremely blessed to have my kids in this environment. At this point, I don't how they would do in public school because they have never had it. I am in it for the long haul.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

I feel I am pretty good at this. The big thing is not making promises I cannot keep. If I say I am going to do it, I do it. On the negative side for me personally is I don't make lots of promises. I try to be as open as I can to say I would love to see this happen but I can't guarantee it.

One teacher I just hired I interviewed beginning in June and wanted to offer the job. A week later I said pending board approval you have the job. The board meets in a week. I am 99% certain you will get it but you never know what will happen. I try to be as upfront and honest as I can. That dishonesty drives me nuts.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

I like seeing the results. I like knowing the kids. I like having a relationship with the kids. It drives me nuts seeing kids who take this for granted. I have been in public schools. I have kids here who take this environment for granted. So it drives me nuts. Being in a community the one I am in, to be honest, I love having my kids here. They are not in the high school yet, but I love to be in the same place as my kids. There are a lot of those different motivating factors. I like Christian education. I wouldn't say I am in love with it, to be upfront. It is not perfect, I wish it was. If I had a magic wand we would have camp highs all the time. It would be awesome. We have kids we are serving who are kids.

How do new students coming in change the dynamics?

To a point there is. We are a covenant school so every family interviews with me. Some are stronger than others, spiritually. Some have memorized what a testimony should be. We find out later on. The ones who I know are coming straight from a public school, it is fun to watch them. They get it for the most part.

What is it?

I hope it's the staff. I hope they understand, "hey, I get to go to chapel once a week". We have a discipleship program that is going decent. I think seeing some of those things and having support helps. I think it is frustrating for them to see kids living a double life style. They know but are living their own thing on the outside. We interview when they first come in but if they came in at kindergarten we interview only one time. Each year they fill out the re-enroll form where they are attending church. Some attend church once a month, every other month.

I was talking with someone yesterday who said your viewpoint of what a walk should look like might be different than someone else's. I tend to be on the more conservative side. We have families here who don't own a TV and families where kids can watch whatever they want.

Which leadership traits do you perceive and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

People know I care. I think they realize that I have their best interest in mind. I am not just… I hope they see someone that's selfless someone who isn't about me looking good or those things. I'm not one in the forefront. I don't want…I want there to be a support for them.

I am consistent. I guess that I care. I think that's…I'm a big guy I love change. Sometimes changing things up and keeping it fresh. Usually it's we're changing things next year for our chapel schedule. We do a discipleship program after chapel a ten, fifteen minute small group time. Next year we are changing it to chapel before lunch and do an extra-long lunch so they can have lunch with their discipleship group. I think those are things I hope people see.

Interview #6

June 29th, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

I try to delegate responsibility. For example chapel planning was totally off my plate last year. It continues to be off my plate. Sometimes I have to be there, sometimes I feel it is important for me to make an appearance but if I skipped chapel it would not be a big deal.

Why is it so important to delegate those responsibilities?

Those details, of something every week that needs to be done, if it doesn't get done and I'm scrambling on Friday morning to come up with a chapel topic. The fact that someone else is totally handling it allows me to be able to talk to the public if I need to be at a Friday morning breakfast with a Christian women's group or something like that. It gives me those opportunities.

What is your decision-making strategy?

Usually the problem arrives first and we make a plan whether it's hiring somebody and you have to interview or those types of things. Lots of prayer and you have some sort of list that gives you direction about what's the need. Will this solve the problem? Or, in case of hiring someone, do they have the qualifications. Which ones do they meet, not meet, you want to make those things. There's those, usually a leading of the Holy Spirit that leads in the direction you need to go.

Decisions don't always come quickly, but a lot of thought is that correct?

Sometimes with the theme of the year, we have these ideas and God will give us clues and we think it is fun and hilarious. Hey, I got a clue, did you see this!

How do you cultivate positive relationships among group members?

That is probably my God-given skill, talent. I love people. I have a very easy time connecting with them. There's always something that is similar or I find that is similar. I am not afraid to go "do I know you?" Being a longtime resident there are a lot connections. I recently met a person whose older sister I was in school with, that kind of thing. There is some sort of connection or friend we have. Or also things in common like their dad was a construction engineer and so was mine. Wildcats, U of A Wildcats.

Being a Baptist, growing up Baptist in Arizona. My parents came when they were teenagers. My very best friend, her dad went to camp with my mom in the fifties. We would camp together in the seventies. There are all these circles of oh, I know someone from such and such. I just work at finding those.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

We have a professional development plan. We'll identify an area they want or need or I recommend they have some growth in. Whether it's phonics training for all of my K-4. You're

all going to get it, smile and be happy, let's go. This is the phonics program we embrace and use, you'll get this.

There is the management pieces. I have Harry Wong's books because he is the guru. Those are always available. I handed one out last week. We use the Connexus through ACSI system and I will direct them places or say go find, go check and see if they have, I'll suggest that.

Personal growth the realization that I am not the young fun one anymore, I am in the middle. I've had the opportunity to pour into young mothers, surviving of twins. I had a two year old and twins. I do not remember the first six months of their lives, but I survived. Had an opportunity this year to embrace a couple that was my first grade teacher who was adopting a baby and happened rather quickly. I said okay do you have a baby bag and they were like no. I said okay, hold on. I got on the phone with a teacher on assignment who is only here one day a week because she has two babies at home.

What is in your baby bag? It was a matter of how can I help you. How can I help you with this? You are going to have this in about twenty four hours. How can I help you? At first they were like I am fine, I said no. You will need this.

The other teacher next door, kindergarten. Can you help her understand what she will need? Stop your whining and take it! We lovingly encouraged her to take the gifts she was about to receive.

Sounds like you saw a need and tried to assist in any way you could.

Oh yeah. Two years ago when the firefighters died I had a widow and mother in law on staff. I said do you need me. She said yes. Then it was a call every morning at 5:30 a.m. asking what you need. I helped them find it. I had a network. I have a network of people in town who could be two or three circles out. We were not immediately affected except I loved the guy. I am not a wife or in-law or relative but we were able to support. I had a connection in another town that had pop up tents the day they did the drive by, the funeral processional. My friend at Cabela's made sure there was ten pop up tents. Hey you need to contact this person.

How do you go about working through conflict with others?

I begin with the Matthew 18 principle. For example I say to the parent have you talked to the teacher. Then from there it is if they have talked to each other and it's gotten to a level where they need an additional person, I will join in. If it is beyond that the next authoritative body. Next door the church has a counselor pastor on staff. I have had teacher, parent, myself, and him as the additional counseling authority, once thank goodness in five years.

It's harder for me personally. If I have a conflict with someone else. Who do I bring in that additional person? Being a conflict of interest with you know personnel person.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Capital punishment. No, I am sorry. We have school some basic rules. We believe everything comes down to respect, responsibility and safety first. The question to the crazy kid jumping out

of line is are we being responsible or are you safe. Some other things like stay to the right that would be the procedural thing around school. We have some definite directions for parents during drop off and pick up. Everyday daily procedures we're pretty clear on. Laying those out.

When you get to organization, we have a weekly Monday memo I send out to them that outlines the week of what is on the calendar this week, who's on campus and off campus. To my staff, that includes people who are out for subbing, or if there is a field trip, or what we can expect. I also put below on the bottom what is next week, what do you see coming and after that. We can plan in advance sort of. We kind of know, nothing is a surprise.

We have good email communication and old fashioned intercom. We try very hard to stay on top of things. Texting has been very helpful with disciplinary issues. Teachers to principal as well as teacher to parent. Crazy example I get a text that says so and so's had three problems. Two in the previous class and one in this class can you come get him? Yes. The teachers have been talking to each other so I come get him and set him down here and ask, "What's the deal?" Meanwhile I am getting the message from the teacher he did this and this. The kid is like how do you know?

It hasn't disrupted the class. Hasn't been a call on the intercom. It's been very quiet. No one else really know. I get the parents on texting. How do I know he's telling the truth? The dad says back, if he looks away he is lying. I say he's looking straight at me. Dad texts back and says he's probably telling the truth. I could tell the kid was telling the truth, but confirming it with the dad.

Is it because of relationships you can do that?

There's about 100 kids. I make sure I know all of their names and the cars driven through pickup. I have this connections gift. I have preschoolers where I need to take more time to know their names especially if I want to encourage their parents to pursue Christian education.

It is something I believe is important because if kids know somebody knows my name, besides my teacher, they ask me about how my game was. If they know a detail about me I will get a better result. Their anxiety is down, their performance is up.

I want to know them because I love kids.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat?

Yes, certain things. Service projects. We were asked to participate in a service project of reading the bible out loud. The people wanted us to do it during the full school day. Classes would have changed their schedules and interrupted and come down. We would have had to schedule it to not miss lunch or specials. The teachers brainstormed together and said could you start it at 2:00 and if a parent wanted to pull their kid from the last hour of the day and participate or go at three and participate then, our students would have the opportunity to participate with their parents then it is not just the teachers doing it. It was a great solution. Not many students participated. It was me reading from 2-8. We had partnered with the church and there were some church members who came and it was our first time.

It was a good suggestion. If classes wanted to come they could. We could not add another thing.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

As a servant leader, following the model of Christ, they need to know that modern day example, I am willing to pitch in. If I am willing to do it they are more likely to pitch in. For example there is a flood in the bathroom. I will go running toward the flood in the bathroom while I'm on the phone with maintenance, I won't just call. I will make sure the kid with wet shoes gets shoes. I'll give them directions you can take your kids down to this bathroom until this is fixed. We will come up with solutions together. They have seen me with a mop in my hand. Filling in on recess duty because a person is sick or late. Grabbing a kid with the bloody nose. You take the nose and I'll do this. The majority of the time I am present.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

The leadership roles of team leaders in the elementary team and the mid high team, they have the authority to handle disciplinary issues that can be handled before it gets to me. You are chatty patty today, let's go give you ten minutes or five minutes of chat time and get it out before class. Go talk to another teacher for a few minutes. They will make a plan that is reasonable for kids. If it is a serious offense that involves physical danger, safety issues, or legal issues that schools have to handle, they know to pass that off right away. Kids trying to be kids and one up each other and gossip, they can usually get a handle on that.

They make decisions on redirecting changing the procedure, leaving chapel because they knew something I didn't. We're going to walk this way today and they give me a look and I say you sure can. You just gave me the eye that says I need to go this way.

How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

I have all the keys. In all honesty there are times when I am okay making those decisions and then others when I am like dang, why do I have to make that decision. It's mixed. I love the fact that I can call on the team and that they can speak freely. Speak freely. I can take it. They'll ask did you think about this, or have you thought about it this way. Or I don't think that's a good idea and I'll hear them out. Ultimately I have to make the decision.

I've said you have brought it to my attention that this needs to be done or changed and so for this reason because you expressed you can, or we will do it this way. Funny things are like dress code teacher dress code. Part of it is they are just giving me a bad time. Part of it is humor and part is they want to be comfortable. I think they look like bums!

We had our Spanish teacher native of Mexico, get her citizenship. The day before she went to the ceremony we had a red, white and blue day. They said blue jeans? I said no red white and blue day. They said, red white and blue jeans day. I looked at them and said FINE! Because it was humorous, funny, it was going to be a Friday, it was May and they were so happy.

They absolutely loved it and thought it was the greatest thing in the world they could wear blue jeans on red, white and blue day.

What are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization and why?

This is a hard one to answer. That element of faith and works. You can't sit here and know that people will walk through the door because it is a business. There is some planning activity that has to happen in order to carry out God's work as a Christian school. But when you get to that point of okay, this is a step of faith and you wonder, alright Lord how much action is this going to take or I've done all this action you've got to do this. The prayer and the faith and the trust and how that blends with who's going to make the copies. It's a really awkward thing. So that I guess the faith is important. Very it has to be the most important. The actions that carry out the business very important.

Everything you do as unto the Lord, but without the faith you say it wasn't good enough guilt sometimes happens when you're separated by sin. That balance of okay Lord what next.

Is it that our connection comes by faith in God but we also have a responsibility to work, right?

I sometimes jump ahead. I have ninety five percent faith is my joke. I totally trust and believe and about this last percent let's talk. How are you going to do this? Show me or give me a heads up. I think it would be a good idea Lord if you did this. I put simple terms to it about ninety five percent. I am getting an A. I am okay with my A.

But I don't want to doubt. Bottom line, how are you going to do this? We can't say I am not going to wait and this needs to be done now. This starts in two weeks, I need a social studies teacher now.

How important are the following: Kindness, honesty, trust, and openness?

Well kindness the happy, smiling face with all of them the small acts of kindness whether you need a Dr. Pepper or can I run those copies for you, or yes I'll cover your class to leave early to make it to your doctor's appointment, or dog's doctor appointment. I am okay with that. I can cover your class. Those small things show a level of I am willing to support you in whatever you need, to be better at your job. As well as with kids and parents, show that the love of Christ is here, kindness is a fruit of the spirit. Part of that goes back to relationships. It is an act of caring for one another. That is important.

Honesty is important, the level of saying things in love needs to be carefully crafted, maybe practiced. Gentle. Without harm, the direct blunt harm. Sometimes it is delicate.

Trust, the follow through, you do what you say you will do and expect them to do what they say they will do. As well as the idea, I don't have to come check up on you because I trust you will get it done. Once you check a couple times, hold accountable, you build that trust. It is not an accidental thing.

Openness again that caution with the intention that I am not trying to hurt but to be clear. Tell me what you think and I am good. I am going to not take this personal. If it does, that hit me personally, so I need a few minutes or a day. You need openness.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

Acts of kindness. Acts of service. Yes. My office person was hospitalized for four days. I sent her a humorous text. I knew it would make her grin. If she had an uplifting giggle, maybe that would help you know.

Is it about being in people's lives?

Yes. In people lives.

How important is a winning team spirit?

Positive upbeat, happy is good endorphins. If a kid is smiling he is more likely to learn than if he is sad and in the doldrums. Happy birthday. Things are pleasant, they're more open. I think I can find the research on that again.

How do you get others to do their best?

Encouragement. Praise. Every time a kid has an art award, speech meet, winning thing, one hundred on spelling bee, you know, those kids are celebrated out loud and publicly. The kid who is not so great but is improving and I know they are not doing so great and they show signs of improvement, teachers have permission to go show me their progress. I have allowed the teacher to use me as a reward. That is for her help. I don't want to give another piece of candy. Find something that is meaningful to kids. I will say things to the parents in the parking lot.

A sixth grader approached the pastor at the end of a service on Sunday to ask a question. Mom said you know she is going to ask questions now, I think she is trying to find ownership in her faith. You know the pastor's kid also goes here and during pick up while driving forward in carline I got in the car and said you know that girl is learning about Christ. "That is what I want to know", is what he said.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

I lead the parade by example. I give them really fun flags. I work with repeat, repeat, repeat, we'll say this seven times. It takes seven times for a person to make a commitment. We tell them, and again, and might have a cute little chatsky to go with it. Humorous emails which encourage, where are your eyes are they on the prize?

The reviewing of it, we've been on our current vision, strategic plan for four years. We started looking at it last year. We need to give them ownership in it.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

I am a mess at keeping balance. I do good but while I am doing good in this area, this one is a roller coaster. It is, okay, very personal. I have three kids. Are my kids' needs being met? If I am not making sure I am filled with regular reading, I love music, lot of music, constantly have on Christian music that's very…My song now is soul on fire. It plays in my head.

Self-care I was not good at. I would sacrifice. Because I needed to help them and I'll take care of me later. I have recently been smacked upside the head and I need self-care and started last

year getting more. It is good. It is really hard because this could go to this and that but those few hours I give myself a month…

Why do you sacrifice?

There is always something to be done. It is never done. Realizing it is never going to be done. The hardest thing to me out of the classroom to this, is it is not. On May 22nd you were done. You checked out and you had two months to yourself. Sort of. If you chose to, you know I didn't like math this year, I am going to rewrite the order I do things, you could. But if you chose not to, you didn't have to.

You are never done in this role. Next school year starts way before this year is finished. That is the hardest thing for me, knowing, okay, I'll be done, I'll take a weekend and then restart. Fall break, Christmas, ooh, I'm done with the quarter. That's part of it is I think momisms. Mom things. Part of it is growing up in that we give to others and make sacrifices. People make sacrifices. I thought it was the right thing to do. I didn't see a lot of self-care. I've had to figure that out.

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose?

It's something we chose to do together. It is something we write down. Something we review and discuss. We celebrate when we have good results in this area. Our long term goal of starting a Spanish program four years ago was for students to articulate enough to have a conversation or understand a conversation. We had an eighth grader who'd had it for four years at a basketball game her sister was playing. Her friends who are now freshman taking Spanish were like struggling with their homework, trying to get it. She said well you do it this way. I heard it from a parent who observed it. I went back and celebrated big time.

Our long-term goal is our kids go on mission trips, there are a lot that get sent to Mexico. So if they know Spanish and they can understand what they are saying, how helpful, how much more they could communicate.

Sounds like a big purpose for teaching Spanish?

It's part of service. If they are going to serve someday, it might be the way they find their gifts. Just like the kids we teach music too, like guitar or cajon, rhythm. He might end up being worship team leader. Give them the chance to try it.

How do you know what needs to be improved in the organization?

We do a strategic little survey thing. Like we'll ask parents to fill out surveys twice a year. We walk the building two or three times a year. People will point stuff out like that. We, the structure of big picture things like curriculum, we'd review things like test scores or noticeable gap. We noticed a gap in measurement. They need to have it more than is listed in the math in fourth grade in order to do fifth grade science. So how do we do this? Do we do it in fifth grade math before science or fourth grade? And so we talk about things like that. Usually when we do a curriculum review; that came up during that review.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

This movie plays through my head. Usually it is at the end of the day. Did whatever happen today, good or bad, lead toward the big picture? May is still a great time. The kids that graduate from eighth grade I had in second grade. I can't do the math. I think about that little, you know, brat who wouldn't listen, the big joke is that I tossed a marker at him. I strategically launched it so it would bounce of his desk and go and he did and the whole class was watching and the whole class knew I would do it. I was so glad he learned how to pay attention at graduation. He ended being the technical team of the worship team. The first time I had to do chapel on his first day of technical team. He was there and ready, handed me the microphone, this is how you turn it on. This is your clicker for the PowerPoint. Do you need anything else? I said, you're paying attention. You could see growth.

Having ten years here and watching kids grow up helps.

Why did you choose education and Christian education?

Education. I realized that you don't get two weeks off at Christmas time if you are in the business world. Especially I was headed toward hotel restaurant management at NAU. I thought it would be great because I loved to throw parties. I can be good at this, event planning. I can handle this, it'll be fun. The biggest time of the year for that industry, especially Arizona is holiday time. I didn't want to do that. Especially as a mom.

So I switched it up then. I was always told I was good with kids. I taught swimming lessons and taught AWANA groups. I'll do this. I had family, I wanted to be a good wife and participate. So that kind of changed my plan. Then I found I loved it. I always knew I loved kids. That was a good thing.

I taught ten years in the public system. Loved every minute of it. Believed I was light, salt and kids knew that I cared and loved them and I am still friends with one hundred. I saw one last night at Elevate. Didn't expect her to be there, didn't know she was coming. That was nice. She was from my public career. I think she knew I was a believer, but I didn't know she was though.

Christian education. I came back to the area with three kids, spent three years at home, that was the deal. When we get to three kids we are going to move home. I was put in a position where you probably need to go get a job. It was unexpected at the time, but I thought I could walk in to the school where I had gone K-12, where I still had a great reputation where half of my teachers were still there. Here, here's a job. Because I was the student body president of the high school. I was I mean I was the town's jewel. I thought it would be great.

They didn't have a position that fit. I didn't interview well. It was the technology era where we went from just email to email with attachments and videos and color monitors and you could do what? Having been at home with three little kids for three years, I missed so I know it was the technology questions. Well I know you could do graphs. No clue, so obviously God had a different plan.

I knew people here, the board members in charge, they had had some changes. I said well if you need me to teach math while kids are in preschool I could do that. I had a good reputation as a classroom teacher. That is how it got started. I figured out at the end of my first year, this is my calling. Because I got to tell them real life stories to mid high students I was teaching at the time. The relationship part because you are brothers and sisters in Christ.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

I try to make a list. I try to not commit to too much. It's tough when it's very demanding on your time. It's very tough. Notes, comments, my plans. I have an emergency now I need to do this instead of that, can we move it to another time. I try to inform people. But oh yeah, I do forget. I am typing something was due this morning, still.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

The idea, and this is big picture, that some of these kids are going to end up in ministry or making a difference for the Lord. The school has a thirty five year history. The preschool has a forty year history. We know kids who are now missionaries. In ministry, have gone on to be servants in some way or another. Whether it's official ministry public or private or any kind of confirmation. That motivates me. The fact that I won't call them famous, but there are some really cool stories of some that were like wow! Even if they are here for just a year or two, the idea they were here. They heard about the Lord. God, creation, the foundational pieces that are true, and ended up changed and we know they passed through here. I know what impact teaching truth can have on a student.

Which leadership traits do you and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a school leader?

Relationship. I know who you are and I want to know who you are. I will take the time to sit with you and sit with you to know who you are. I will make the call to the parent and ask where she is on this. The idea of it's beyond did they get seventy five on their spelling test. There is more to it. Where they came from. We've got some kids who are adopted who we don't know their health history. From before. Okay, so knowing what we can know about them, how do you minister? They know that I care about their kids.

Interview #7

July 6, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so, how?

I definitely delegate responsibilities. That's a learned process. Mostly through pain that you learn to do it over time. I definitely did not delegate responsibilities early on. One because I didn't know how, but two there wasn't anyone to delegate to. As the school has grown from 32 to 290 this coming fall I've been through that whole experience of working too many hours almost killing myself. Now getting into a place where I have a pretty significant staff I can delegate things to.

I delegate things through regular meetings, regular accountability, through job descriptions. Really trying to give people really clear roles. That seems to be a really key thing. If you can give everybody a clear job description, a clear set of things of expectations and then have on-going communication with accountability and good communication they can come in and say hey, I did this is, that okay? Or like I just told someone just now, my guidance counselor, she just asked me, she's helping build this tutoring program last year we had some troubles running it. She had some questions. I was purchasing some things and I'll run this by you. I said anything under this dollar amount go ahead and take care of it. I have learned more and more how to empower others by saying here's your role and then communicate with me about these things, and these you don't.

Regular meetings that are intentional and short.

What is your decision-making strategy?

I'm big on prayer. I'm not just saying that, I believe prayer is really important. You see in that corner there is a prayer jar of every time God answers a prayer I throw something in there to remind me of how important my prayer life is. In the last two, three years I have become increasingly convinced the number one reason I sit in this seat is because the thing I bring to the school, the value added that I bring, is my prayer life. Is my life with the Lord? I think it was Blackeby who said that people have complicated leadership over and over and over again.

Leadership, look at Jesus and they build all kinds of charts and strategies. Jesus did one thing, he went out and spent time with his father. He listened to him and he came back and told the people what the father said. That I think, in fact, my number two, my assistant headmaster and I we read that together a couple summers ago and have come to believe that more and more. We have to be listening. Because I can sit down with all my experience, and obviously I just talked to another administrator about this the other day. I can sit down with my all my experience and all my books and say, okay, if this happens then I'll just formulate this. But then I am not listening to the spirit, listening to God.

That is number one. Number two I am somebody, my wife teases me, I don't have hobbies. My hobby is to have lunch with seventy year old men. I'm the kind of person that seeks mentors. I usually have two or three at a time. If there is a big decision I need to make I am running it past

them, I am talking it over with them. I talk it over with my wife. I'm processing it. I am not a fast decision maker most of the time. Almost always my staff will come in and tell me, Mr. Maestri what do you think about this? Easy things I'll say go ahead, but on things where it is going to be more impactful I say you know what, get back to me in a couple of days let me think about it. Even if I don't spend intentional time chewing on it, I'll just marinate in it and I'll have kind of a sense, I'll look inside, spend time with the Spirt and think about the implications. So those kind of things.

And also always I'm an "if this, then this" type guy. I tend to try to play things out in my head. In my earlier years that was a problem but now it's a tool.

My favorite passage in scripture is John 6 when Jesus is coming to his disciples and he says, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you cannot be my disciples and people are like I'm out of here, what in the world is he talking about? And then he doesn't turn around and say no, no, no, let me make this easier for you. No he says unless you take up your cross and die you can't be my disciple. People just peeling off in droves, this guy is crazy. He doesn't turn to his disciples and say let me explain. He says, "Are you going to go too?" Peter says, "to where will we go? We have come to know and believe you are the holy one of God and have the words of eternal life".

To me the modern translation to that is something I've said to the father often, father I have no idea what you are doing, I definitely don't want to eat your flesh and drink your blood as I understand it, pretty sure I don't want to die, but I am not going anywhere and I trust you. I don't know what you are doing. So I try to make decisions based on faith more than just because I've got it all figured out.

How do you cultivate good relationships in the organization?

A lot of that is culture that you build. I believe in a really strong relational culture. So there's times when meetings are very much command oriented, but more often than not they are collaborative in nature. People want to stay at an organization where they feel like they are contributing, more than money they want to feel like they are contributing and so making sure they feel like I am listening making sure, not just that they feel like, but that I am. And then also laughing together. We laugh a lot. There's a lot of, you can ask all my staff, we have a lot of enjoyment in all of what we do. We don't take ourselves so seriously that every meeting is this philosophical tome. No, let's go get ice cream or just spend time together and appreciating them helping them understand. I always tell my faculty, and to a fault, there's time when I care, I put people over programs. And but I always tell my faculty I care more about you as a person than you as a function in this machine. And so it's really important for them to develop that culture around each other as well.

There's some intentional strategies and some I would say just building a culture is more of a thing you do.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

That is another thing I think people want. So, as a teacher, I want to work here if you listen to me and you provide for me. And so I make a big deal out of professional development. It was about five years ago I was in the Van Linden program and I chose my project to focus on faculty development. And so I just studied professional development and understanding that better and I developed a program that focused on what they needed that involved their spiritual life as well. And but on the professional side we moved from, we had several meetings and what I learned from them, because I sat back and listened to them before I developed the program, they said we want more time, but not by ourselves, but more time together. So we scratched our heads together and said do you put two weeks ahead or at the end and so what we did is develop cohort days. Four times a year, once a quarter.

Each teacher has a group of three or four teachers they are off for the whole day together. They are not allowed to be on campus but they are not allowed to be at someone's house either. They have to be at like Starbucks or something like that. Their job is to be focused on, for the first half of the day, they have to work together on some sort of curriculum project, developing themselves in their area, building something for the school. Then the second half of the day they can split up and work by themselves working on certification, they can work on some professional reading. They can work on developing, they're not allowed to lesson plan. I have substitutes for that. The students only experience it as my teacher's gone three more times a year. We backed it off to three recently because the fourth quarter was not a good quarter to do that in. Only the first three quarters now.

That is one example, with that and other things we did with our schedule we moved from 36 professional development hours to 92 professional development hours for my teachers. We made sure they had that. We go to ACSI every other year and do the Connexus. We make sure they have, I'm very big, not this year but next year I am going to roll out another internal training program that develops them into classical teachers because that is what they are always asking, help me to develop into a classical teacher. And so we developed some things around that. That also includes some financial incentives to step up the ladder because they are more valuable to the organization at that point. It is a lot better than having to hire someone new again.

How do you go about working through conflict with others?

That's something that happens and we talk a lot about a grace filled, I said this to my staff repeatedly this year, a grace filled culture requires accountability. And so we often put those two opposed to each other. We talk a lot about that, in the culture. We keep short accounts with each other. We have a Matthew 18 standard in our handbooks and with our parents. I always tell my teachers, if a parent comes to me about you, the first thing I'll do is say have you spoken to that teacher. And they will go and make sure they have done that. If they are not willing to, fine, but let's go have a meeting and I will tell the teacher you came first so that we'll do that.

But as far as with me with conflict with others, I approach it from a standpoint if I am having a conflict, I will approach that person, if someone is having conflict, I work hard to be approachable. It is hard when you are the head guy, people are afraid naturally of the position. But modeling that and letting them see that, look, I've called staff members sometimes on a

Saturday and said you know that conversation we had yesterday? I am really sorry, I think maybe I offended you and I shouldn't have done that. I want you to know that wasn't my intention. I have found that just modeling that really opens a door and that person feels more free and also telling my staff, my leaders particularly, I don't want you to be yes men. If you have an issue please speak up and being open to that. We need to talk about this or, I have one staff member in particular. He's my cold air. He and I understand that about each other and in this office we have some pretty significant conflicts but outside this office nobody knows this.

You wouldn't be able to know who it is. We have an agreement on this. I appreciate this about him, because he helps me see things I don't always see because he thinks differently than me. He is from a different part of the country. I am from the west, touchy feely, he is from the Midwest, tell it like it is. And so I tend to be a bit more psychologically aware and he tends to be more truth telling. That iron sharpens iron.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Again, I think it's a lot like parenting in that if you're walking around shouting orders at people and you're constantly having to bring them to attention with your voice, then something went wrong. I would say I approach it very relationally. I also believe in this great talk years ago, he does it every year now by Matt Witling it's called covenant disciplining. Just the idea that God was clear and preparatory with his people. And I think that's a principle you take into dealing with adults and with students.

When you are clear and preparatory, we talk about that a lot in our classrooms, you don't have to manage, you have to train. We talk about classroom management. Management is no don't touch that, stop that. Training is you know exactly the routines, what to expect. Sort of the Wong approach if you will. Where we train them rather than manage them. And so I feel the same way about adults. As long as I give them clear, I am big on here is your job description, let's be clear on what your job is then you have to do less, you still have to do it, but less of those things.

If I was better at it, I would say that I believe this principle, but I don't apply it as well as I want to, and that is what you inspect is what people expect. I am working on that the last couple of years, but I am still not, that is the area of my leadership I wish I was better at. I was better at holding people on a routine basis accountable to things rather than…

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others to solve school wide situations? Explain.

Yea, in fact I have had experience at both where I have chosen to say this is how it is going to be and you will all get on board, that usually doesn't work. And then I have had other times where I have said look, I am still going to make this decision but I really want your input. Can you please give me your input? And then they have shifted my position based on listening to them. Because it is not something I need to win on, or something that I have thought enough about and they have helped me see things I didn't see.

And as long as the people in the room are learning to think like me, where, I don't mean that in the sense they have to think like me personally, but like an owner as they used to say. So that's something I'm big with my leadership council is that you need to be thinking not just about your area, so don't just think about athletics but how it impacts development and facilities and how it impacts all that. So how is all that happening? As long as they are beginning to think like that, I am more and more comfortable with their ability to make those decisions.

So if I get into a discussion with them about something, what I might do is instead of telling them my position, I might say this is how this may impact this, can you see that? Then let them wrestle with the same things I am.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

Vital. If the top person the person who's the leader doesn't serve, then no one else will because they'll think well this must be…I'm a big believer in that culture flows down. What I put together as how I talk, how I spend my time, you know, if I'm shouting at people then others will think, oh, I can do that too. If I'm saying nope I don't have time for you, then more will feel that way too.

I think it is vital. It is non-negotiable if I want others to serve, which I do. I think it's vital but my caveat is this, and it's my book of Acts caveat. That is the apostles were given a job to lead and when table serving came up they didn't say alright we are going to take shifts now and leave back the praying and receiving from the Lord and we're going to now serve the tables. They said we need to raise someone else up to serve the tables.

A mentor of mine a few years back said you know, do you want to be a broom pusher or do you want to raise one hundred broom pushers? He helped me think more like a leader. The caveat is you can't always be in the kitchen. The biggest thing I have to think about, and my number two and I always talk about this is that there's a few things in this place that only I can do. My best service to this place is to do those things. Not that I do things others can do. There is an attitude of service in everything we do, but with the caveat of doing the things only I can do for the organization.

For me it would be, I'm not uncomfortable vacuuming the floor after a staff event but I better not be vacuuming the floor every Friday, because who is going to sit here and deal with the Board issues.

How would you go about empowering others in the organization?

Again, I think it has to be intentional. It has to be, you have to give people some freedom. So don't make all the decisions for them. Answer some questions with questions sometimes. When someone comes in to talk about this or that, say what do you think? Giving them, we talk about growing people from being a task oriented sort of step and fetch it type person where they just go and come back asking what to do next and growing them into a realm person where I am checking into the realm and I am looking at the end and not as interested in the process as long as the process is in keeping with the values.

Growing, for example, my guidance counselor who is new. Last year or a couple years ago she needed to come in and meet once a week and now she is taking over whole realms and I am saying on the other end did we do this and this and she says yes. I don't concern myself with her day to day just that the work is getting down. I think empowering others is, and also, not being too hard on them when they make mistakes.

I had a basketball coach who every time you made a mistake you got pulled out. So I never played because every time I would go in I would freak out and get pulled out. And that doesn't empower anybody to do anything. So when a mistake is made someone loses a check, something happens, you know things happen in school. If I jump all over it, then they don't feel freedom for creativity and those sorts of things. Plus modeling handling how I handle when I make a mistake and saying you guys I made a mistake I am sorry. Not that is not a big deal, but not moving heaven and earth because I or they made a mistake.

How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

My job is to primarily be the visionary and primarily be along with the board, setting the direction of the ship. And then providing for the members of the school the support they need to carry out the things they do. My job is to select who gets to be on our team, I still do that quite a bit. And to decide when someone has to leave our team. But while they are here to provide them the most support I can so they can be the best they can be at what they are called to do. And then addressing when someone gets out of their lane, a problem that arises.

But always applying what I do for the organization is I bring to mind all of who we are to the things we are dealing with. I am the one who holds the big picture, the vision. I'm also the one who with the board sets the direction of where we are going. I say yes or no. I set priorities based on a strategic plan. I set the strategy, I don't set the okay from 8:15 to 3:15 I want to have this done for a half hour, I don't do that. If someone wants my advice, they can talk to me about it. But they have others they can talk to about that.

Does it help when you have the big picture in mind?

What ends up happening is, again I am speaking from experience, someone who had no strategy from the beginning. I was 23 with 32 kids, I was working, teaching 5th-8th grade during the day and administrating in the afternoon and high five meetings in the hall with three people. I had no idea what I was doing. What I learned over time is then you chase everything. When you have a strategic plan, which I have come to learn one of my strengths is strategy, and you have a plan and these are the five or six rocks we are focusing on. When someone brings up a lacrosse team or ministry opportunity, you can say sorry it doesn't fit. Or it may fit exactly with what we are doing.

People bring leaders ideas all the time. If you just go yeah, that sounds good, there is not unified whole vision of what is going forward. That vision needs to come from a very prayerful place. That again comes back to that prayer life. Prayerfully setting the direction and the vision and communicating that over and over. When I have a meeting with a parent, I can't just have a meeting with the parent, I have to have a vision-setting meeting as well.

I had a meeting with a staff member who's upset. I can't just have a meeting to solve the problem, I need to help them see the bigger picture.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization?

I think that the leader has to communicate the vision. No one else can do that. No one else will do that. If someone else tries, it's not going to go well. You need the person making decisions to communicate the vision. That is the first thing.

The second thing coming to mind is I would say that, well let me tack it on to that one. They need to communicate a vision that comes from their time with the Lord. Really clarity of getting up on that mountain with father. I put those two together.

Second they need to be able to make decisions. I don't know if you are familiar with the purple cow guy. He is a marketer. Anyway, what he talked about was Seth Godin, what he said was we have transferred in our organization, this freed me a lot. I am sorry you have to transcribe all my words, I am a very wordy person. Seth Godin said years ago, our economy has moved from an agricultural economy to an informational economy. And so people like me have my job not because I put in more hours and have more productivity. People like me have my job like me because of the decisions I make. Wisdom and decision making are the highest value if you look at our economy. And so again this has to be a prayerful humble wisdom. But I would just say that biblical wise decision making is character trait number two.

And then number three would be that this person has to be good at motivating people. People have to be drawn to this person. If you are turning everyone off, no matter what your vision is and what decisions you are making, good luck with that buddy because you have to be able to motivate people to follow. They have to want to be around. I think they have to be relational enough to draw people in.

How important are the following: kindness, honesty, trust, and openness?

Those are essential. That's one piece that I feel like we haven't addressed. I try to address a little bit. One of the main things a leader has to have is they have to have such an integrity of who they are. The need to be honest and trustworthy. You're not going to have those relationships and vision if you're not kind. No teacher's going to want to do what you need them to do, no leader will follow you if you are not kind to them. The kindness, openness, the trust, I am a huge believer, in fact openness gets me in trouble sometimes. I tend to be a little more open than I should be. I sometimes burden some people with more of my own thinking and feeling than I should. That's an area that I would say I have grown in, figuring out who needs to hear this and who doesn't. Do they really, can they handle being on this roller coaster with sometimes. I have overestimated that sometimes.

I just think that trust is what one of my teachers said to me, our school, one of the main characteristics of our school's culture is relational. You cannot be relational without trust. So I think trust and openness, and kindness are all under the category of relational. As an organization that stands for the Kingdom of God, you are serving a different king. Because I

don't understand that at all. If you are just getting results and you have the college prep environment down and the kids are not getting an authentic experience of the kingdom of God, then you might as well be a charter school. That is where I go with that.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

I would say stopping, pausing, allowing a meeting to go too long sometimes. A mentor of mine always used to say, he taught me, people are more important than ideas. All the programs and all the ideas in the world don't matter nearly as much as the people. The way you demonstrate that is with a teacher's kid is sick, go home. I don't feel good, go home. I got an anniversary coming up, go home. Supporting their life and again demonstrating again they're more important. Even to the point of, I take very seriously, letting someone go. When I have to fire someone, I take that incredibly seriously.

Something in me says when I fire a person or when I don't renew a contract, or when I release a student or family, that's one of the most important things I do. Because that is the place where they are most likely to experience a stumbling block for their relation with Christ. I care about them more as a person to the point where I sit down and when I'm letting someone go, I am really counseling them into another place, helping them see this is not a fit rather than that there is something wrong with them or something like that.

And I think just talking to people, being open with them, being honest, shows care. And again having fun with them, remembering things in their life and talk to them about it. So when I talk to teachers or people in the hallway, I better not just be about their classroom, I better ask them about their marriage and talk about their kids every now and then.

Honestly, that is the other side of it. For my own self and for everyone else, everyone needs to believe they are important while they are here, but that none of us is essential to stay here. That our path is much bigger than our school.

How important is that winning team spirit at your school?

I don't associate as much with that business mentality where we're going to win. We focus on more on excellence, service. We talk a lot in the office the three character traits are efficient, cheerful, and demonstrating spiritual maturity. I don't relate as much to that sort of business let's win today, let's go out there and win. These are kids, these are lives, not a product. I would say I don't care nearly as much of winning as I do about greatness in the kingdom. They don't have to be opposed to each other.

How do you encourage others to do their best?

Continuing to remind them who they are in Christ is huge. Identity is big for me. For people to believe they are not their past but who God says they are. That we have been fully redeemed in the kingdom of God and to give them a vision for their lives that goes beyond performing for me. It goes into what our theme verse was this year. Ephesians 2:10 good works God has called us into. So we are doing this unto our father not unto me. If you are not doing it unto the father

you will not make it here anyway. It is just not going to be the attitude you want to hold. As that is the attitude most of my employees hold.

I think that as well as accountability, which again is the area of my leadership I wish I did better. Some of this results orientation is not as much me. It is becoming more me and I am growing into that more. But as you can hear I am such a relational person. Sometimes relational can be synonymous with mediocrity so you have to be careful of that as well. So I think I am growing in more the last four or five years in making sure mediocrity doesn't come along with that.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

I would just say make sure they have input into the process, give them buy in while you are shaping that goal or vision. Help them see it as not just coming down from the top. And then connect it to the things we already care about.

How do you determine your personal mission/vision?

I spend a lot of time with mentors analyzing myself. I am one of these people that loves taking batteries of tests and analyzing myself to figure out how I can get better, understanding myself. It drives my wife crazy sometimes. I'm always in an analysis. In fact I just signed up for another round of coaching with an executive coach. I'll be coached for the next six months. I just read, I'm reading through Andy Stanley's book the Next Generation Leader. I read a lot. I constantly try to think through. My two questions I am posing, because I haven't had a coach for three four years, what are the best things I can be doing for this organization the last seven years, because I think I am shooting for twenty years here and then it is time to go do something else. My second question is I want to know more and more about who God made me to be and what works, that fits better. Just doing those kinds of things helps me to continue to develop that.

How do you articulate a clear sense of direction and purpose for the organization?

The main thing being working with a strategic plan from the board level. We have a board retreat this coming July to re-up that. It has been about four years. It has to be the board's conversation. We have a whole day we will sit down and say what are our high priorities, what are low priorities? And what do we want to focus on and from there articulating that into a really nice plan and sharing that with my leaders, and with the parents, and then I'm getting better at it and I have written about seven or eight I want to get up to ten or twelve articles throughout the year that are vision casting articles where I take up something in our philosophy and who we are and put it in front of parents, teachers, put that in front of donors. And just say that.

And then I speak at least half a dozen times a year at large settings the beginning of the year we kick off with a vision from me, where I share what the passage is the Lord has given us to focus on as a school and how that fits with our school. I share a bit about what is coming down the road and then I do more of that during the faculty week where we do some prayerful time with vision and where we are going. And then throughout the year those articles and again just those touch points of where I try to think of myself as when I have a meeting this is a vision meeting, not just deal with the problem in front of us, people need to see the bigger picture almost every time we talk.

Through writing and speaking.

How do you know what needs to be improved in the organization?

We study ourselves a lot. Just as I survey myself by taking all these surveys, I try to have everyone else do surveys. Parent surveys come in. I have created a culture of come tell me your issue because I really want to know it. Somebody comes in and says so and so about this teacher, but this other teacher says something but didn't want to come talk to you, I tell them to come talk to me.

Continuously listening. Maybe that should fit on that list of three, listening is important. I need to see myself as a big ear as well because you have to work at it in this position. Most people won't tell you, they will only tell you the good stuff. They don't want to tell you when you are in this seat until they are piping mad then they will tell you. But I need to listen to everyone from the parents to the person who is sweeping the floor to the students, and then I need to weigh all that to be able to tell that.

And then third party standards, industry standards. We do an intentional, we go out and make sure we know what is happening in the education world, we have accreditation standards. I serve on accrediting teams so I know what other schools are doing. So because I have been on seven, eight other campuses. Plus my school on the off year we don't do ACSI, with the exception of this year with accreditation, I take my whole staff to another school and we go observe for three or four hours and we debrief who are we, who are they, how is what they do better, how is what we do better? We just kind of analyze those things. Both internal and external reviews.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture of education?

Again strategic plans, review those from time to time. Dashboards, I do a dashboard annually. Then I am teaching my leaders to develop their own dashboards. Then to bring reports to each other to see again, always looking into everything. And then always being the guy who is everywhere, show up everywhere. And see things as much as possible so I am out on the sidewalk talking to parents and the next minute talking to a kindergartener. The next minute I am in the gym meeting with high school students. Making sure my eyes are in many places.

But also just inquire and letting father remind me of what I need to see. Father is saying to me a lot lately, this is a season of growth. Eighteen percent growth this year and eighteen percent last year. And father in my prayer closet is saying walk, slow down, you're fine. So I told my staff that at the end of the year, our theme is not explosion and keep developing, it is refine. We are about refining ourselves because that is what father is saying to me so I am saying that to them. You have to shut it all down at some point and be quiet and listen.

I have a practice that I am inflicting on my leaders as well, it is called boss time. It doesn't mean I am the boss so I have time, but it means I spend time with God who is my boss. Every Monday for four hours, I am not here. I am going to spend time, when it works well. I would say I get it about twice a month.

Why did you choose education and why did you choose Christian education?

My story is an interesting one. My senior year of college I had decided I wasn't going into a Ph.D. in philosophy and I decided I didn't want to do that because I decided I wanted to talk to real people. Every career test told me education, ministry, leadership all that. But I wanted to make money. And so I went to, I came here and worked in a hotel and then I substitute taught a little bit in the public school. And then I came up to town and began working at a video store, I was writing a novel, I was just looking for jobs. Everything I was looking for was in education. The father spoke to me and I am not one to say God said this, but he did speak to me and said, "Why aren't you teaching?" I said because I want to make money. He said two things back to me. One you are doing a great job with that, I was making $6.25 an hour living in a fifth wheel on my grandparent's property. The second thing he told me was it is man's idea that teachers and preachers have to be poor. It is man's idea that wealth is measured in money. Go and I will always take care of you.

So I started teaching in a little school. I taught 11 subjects a day. Greek, Logic, English, Math, writing, art, music to third through fifth graders and sixth through twelve graders. It was a one room school approach. Through that, through a set of circumstances, this school opened and I was called to start that. That was year two in education.

Education chose me in many ways, God chose me rather than me choosing it. I didn't want to go there. I wanted to make money in business and the father said no, this is where you ought to be. I am here in the end because God wanted me to do this. It is my calling, I love it. It is my gifting, I am a teacher. I didn't think I was an administrator but my dad said I was and he was right. I still teach in the classroom but I also teach in meetings. And so I do it because God is calling me to it and because it is exactly what I was made to do.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

I would say that's a hard one because I tend to overcommit, overpromise. I tend to overestimate what I can get done. I would say you just keep working at it and then you work on promising less, committing less.

I think that's what you know I know these things, I can quote them to you and sound really good but to be honest it is something I struggle with. Not struggling with promises in the sense of you doing, but like a meeting running late or not getting something done I said would get done or over committing. That is something I would like to say if I could say answer that in five years I would hope to answer with committing less. Not overestimating my own abilities. I hope it gets better because that is something I was talking to the Lord about last week with my wife. It is something in particular, it would really mean the world to her to be home at 5:15 the nights I don't have meetings. There is no reason I can't, but I just don't get there. So I think the answer to be totally honest is say less, commit less.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

The number one thing that motivates me to lead in a Christian school is what is happening to Christian kids when they graduate from high school and how it appears that in the Christian school movement we are turning the tide to a degree. Keeping our kids more in the last twenty

years we have made a lot of growth in preparing them with a worldview and so when I look at those kids, the first graduating class, this one we just graduated I think this is, these are kids who have a kingdom vision who can walk with the Lord and will make good decisions with their marriages, with their homes because of what the culture is doing we need that. God's church, I will be so bold, I think the best strategy God's church has going is Christian education. I think that particularly in the United States it's our best mission strategy to keep our kids in Christian schools. I won't go so far as to judge everyone who is not, but I will say that I see this as a mission field.

It is integration. It's not just compartmentalizing truth. So they, and they need to see the world as whole and themselves as…we have two key things we teach the kids from a biblical perspective. One we want them to see who they are in Christ which is the number one thing that will help kids as they go through all the garbage in the next decade. And two they need to understand that the kingdom is this vision for all of life and it has started now. It's not something they can look forward to when they get to heaven. It's not something they live on Sunday. The kingdom is real and their salvation is just the starting point of the kingdom. I am abig Dallas Willard fan as you can tell.

Which leadership traits do you perceive and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

I think it goes back to my prayer closet as being the most valuable thing I bring. My relationship with the father has I can tell you story after story when the father just even in hiring decisions where I was yeah, then I went to the prayer closet and the father was like no, and I got someone way better.

I can tell you times I went before the faculty and said we can't pay you. We have to cut everyone's check to make it and the father worked us through that. Now we are where we are. I can tell you stories where I hit those Red Seas and I'm like John 6, I don't know what you are doing but I am staying here. Whatever you have planned, I am here for it.

Number two I'm just, I'm relational to a fault. I love people. I want them to feel loved. I take very seriously the idea that I represent Christ in my relationships with people. I am a perfectionist in my relationships. Pray for my wife. That has to be there. If I was just charts and tasks leader, I've seen those kinds of leaders. Part of why I never want to be a part of a school that is huge, God forbid you can do it, but I've seen losing the sense of relationships in larger schools.

Third, I am a learner. I am constantly learning. I inflict everyone with that. We don't have this figured out. We need to work hard at this. We need to keep trying. We need to keep working hard to, as we say in the classical movement to recover the lost tools, to repair the ruins of our own education of our own upbringing before we do that to our students.

Your leadership has to come from an authentic place. People don't follow leaders who are faking it. That is why some candidates are having a tough time. When you have an authentic

place where you are truly learning from, the best Bible lessons come from your own devotional life. So I would just say being in that authentic place.

Interview #8

July 9, 2015

Do you delegate responsibilities and if so how?

Yes, I delegate responsibilities. I have a team of people, they all have job descriptions so we have put together a really nice team to cover the needs we have. Two weeks ago I received the honor of doing the principal of the K-8 Campus rather than the K-5. That's part of the craziness of the whole week here is that, you know, I had that for a week, then I was on vacation for two weeks, and I am back in my second week of the new level of that. But with all that said, we not only delegate responsibilities, but we try to make sure people understand what their job is and their responsibilities are there.

So my philosophy of administration is that good administration is very loving because it is loving if you can tell people what they are going to do and get a little bit ahead of them so you can lead and then allow them to work and use what God has given them to bless the school. And enjoy using their gifts. Therefore administration is very loving. If there is not love in administration the people feel anxious, they feel used, they feel vulnerable. So loving means let me think about what you should do and help you know that so you can then begin your work.

What is your decision making strategy?

Mostly I ask questions. That's my strategy.

Do I hear you correctly in saying that you don't want to make decisions rashly but you want to get others involved in the process?

I'll begin to think who can be mostly involved in that issue. I will go and ask questions, try to ask questions, be a good listener so I can understand. And then because everybody is myopic except for the principal, I pay them to be myopic in their area and let them work in their area, but they don't often realize how what they want affects others in their area. So therefore, that question they're asking helps me understand so much. If I am going to change a choir person I need to ask a person who teaches high school choir how that will affect them. That is loving. If he finds out two weeks later I switched and did not consider him, that is frustrating. After I hear what everybody is saying, I have to make a hard decision that might not please everyone, but at least I feel it is involved. Often times the solution comes from God by the passions already in place.

How do you cultivate good relationships among group members?

Sometimes the Holy Spirit just gives that to us. We have a very peaceful place. Everyone loves their job, why that is, maybe it goes back to the administration. So, I spent, I finished my principal certificate through NAU two years ago. One of the most common questions was amongst the secular people getting their certificate, was how do you motivate your staff. I would sit there and think, that is not my problem. My staff is more like you need to go home, make sure you have balance in your life. Because they are serving the Lord through their position. It is a completely different motivation.

I just think finding out what people need, listening, and honoring people. If there is a conflict or a problem, get in there and don't avoid it. Conflict is opportunity and I don't want Satan to get a foothold in our school.

Conflict is hard but I would rather do front end work than back end.

How do you contribute to your employees' personal growth?

We do have regular professional growth opportunities. The week before school we are calling in specialists to teach, we use our own staff to teach. We do a lot of professional development here. We do send some off campus, to other campuses. We go to ACSI conference. Some people are working on masters, we cheer them on and advanced degrees.

How do go about working through conflict with others?

Because I am listening, and probably picking up some conflict. In this world you will have tribulation. When I hear the conflict I run to the conflict on a good day, God help me. I say I think this doesn't feel quite right and I begin another series of questions. So, I guess I call that person on, out on it, to questions, and observations, and state what I have seen. Then usually I should say also I usually pray a fair amount before I talk to the person directly. I might go and ask some other person in leadership over them to see if I am right. To see if I might be picking up on something and go to that person and ask questions. I always bring it back to I know you want this to be a place that glorifies God. So let's work on this until it is good.

By this all men will know if you love one another. Will know you are my disciples. If we do not have love for one another, I feel we should go home, I mean that with my heart.

What is your strategy to maintain authority/control in your school?

Never had trouble with that. So I don't know my strategy.

I've never had major conflict.

Does that have to do with the culture at school?

Let me take that back. I did have one person I had to fire. Not renew a contract. And I think part of that reason is that she wouldn't buy into what we were trying to do. I couldn't help her understand what she needed to do. I guess my strategy was to let that person go. But, that is so rare.

I think the constant, you know, working on the environment and working on conflict keeps it pretty good.

Are you comfortable in taking a back seat to others to solve school wide situations? Explain.

Yeah. I have an instructional leader's team who are over a grade level or topic area. I defer to them quite a bit. I believe, I've been in administration, I was a teacher for twenty years and an administrator for eight. In those eight years I have lost touch with what is best for students. So I rely very much on my leadership team to tell me. Usually it works like this, they see something

and they want it. They think it's a good idea. I listen to them and say what about this or that. They say this is what I think, and then they say okay. Sometimes I say we really ought to do this what do you think? And they say how about this or that and morph into a new idea. I am not only comfortable in taking a back seat, I think I sit in the back seat most of the time.

The reason for that is that I want them to be experts. I equip them, empower them. There are things I don't want them to do because it takes too much time. All the time hiring. Even our handbooks we finished we had a think tank for different sections, for dress code, discipline procedures. Before we rewrote the handbook this summer, which I normally do, they spoke into some areas I felt may be week.

I don't want people to do my job, burden them, free them up to be teachers, but they shape this school big time.

How important is it for you to serve others in the organization?

Very important. That is what Christians do.

How would you go about empowering others in your organization?

Well I just had a phone call with a new teacher and he feels a little hesitant to put his ideas out there. So I said to the new teacher, there is a three year cycle to being a new teacher. You will try things and fail and some will be really great. I'll walk with you through that time when you say help me I don't know what to do. We'll brainstorm together.

Year two you'll throw out the things that did not work and try some new things. Tweak what you did and you'll feel good about it. Year three you'll add to it and be off and running. You are not going to do that great your first year. I think that empowers him to relax and realize he has some space to fail and try things. That is very empowering.

How do you view your role as the leader of the organization?

I think servant leadership is good. I also think I am a buffer to tension, and stress. I don't plan the curriculum but I may give them the money they need to buy it, okay it. So I'm a servant leader, I'm a buffer, resource getter. I'm a part of the bigger admin team. Keeping my eye on the big picture of the school. Making sure everyone is flowing into that.

What would you say are the three most important aspects of a Christian school leader to advance the organization? Explain.

Emotional intelligence. Flexibility. And strong faith. Because you have got to know how people feel around you. If you are clueless everyone is going to hate you. Flexibility because it is very hard to do this job. Someone is always moving my cheese. A lot of people can't take that. So I have to say okay, let's run with that, okay. So if I am not flexible, if I need too much structure, I am going to not survive.

Faith because without Jesus it doesn't make sense to do what we do. So that is really important. Our desire, engine to keep going.

How important are these terms: Kindness, honesty, trust, and openness?

Kindness is very important. I have talked about that. Boy I really believe in honesty. I think you can, if you lose trust, trust comes from honesty. If you lose people's trust, you lose a lot. You cannot function. You won't be able to function. Those last three are very similar. You know what, if I cannot tell people something it's, "I know it but I cannot tell you. You'll have to wait until I can tell you." I tell when I can.

It's hard for us to wait but we know you'll tell us.

How do you demonstrate genuine care for others?

I try to know them a little bit as a person. I make time for them. Like right now, I just got this new job. I really want to go home and figure out what I am doing. But you know what everyone else wants? They want to talk to me. Is what I am doing okay? What do you want? I have a whole new principal I feel uncomfortable. I have to resist the desire to go home and be by myself and plan. I have had four one hour meetings today. But so how I demonstrate genuine care for others? Understanding this is hard for them. If I listen to them, and receive their anxieties, and understand why they may be anxious, God will provide time for me to make that plan and I'll be able to make a better plan because of putting people first.

How important is a winning team spirit at your school?

I guess it's very important. I mean I'm not a big rah rah person, I could be better at that. I wish I was more fun. I am very thoughtful and contemplative in my personality. But I get people to do rah rah stuff. So, I think it's good. Important to have fun together and to feel great about our school and support it. I do that more with children when I stop to think about it than my team. I talk to my team about being kingdom people and how God has given us this place to work. It is important.

How do you get your staff to do their best?

Somehow I'm able to get respect. People see my product and they say I want that too. I work for excellence and that is contagious. I put people right under me who are the best. They model lessons. They model work ethic. They model working things out with people. They model continuing education, life-long learners. Right under me are all these hard workers. I am not blowing off anybody this week. I'll be here at 6:30 tonight if they need to talk with me. You won't work out here if you don't come along.

How would you get others to buy into a common goal or vision?

I'll give you something practical. Being at your classroom door before the bell rings is important. If you saunter up three or four minutes later you send a message of whatever. We are putting a new clock where we have lunch. Underneath it will say something like shoot for excellence, be on time yourself. What I am saying there is you need to be on class on time to set a tone. I want you there. I want you greeting them, not running behind. They may be fighting because you are not there.

I am going to put a clock up to help them.

I do feel that I am running around too fast today. God has ordained this time. Sometimes I do apologize for being scattered or rushed or late but I do want to be with you here.

How do you determine your personal mission and vision?

Well, I don't know. Covey, you know, the guru, so this summer I did go back and write a mission and vision for myself. It was actually Covey material. I have done that before. And I took my summer and made this calendar and put..., do you remember sharpen the saw? Sharpen the saw along the bottom are you being physically refreshed, enough sleep, fun and the other part is where do you want to invest your time? My husband, grown children and granddaughter, work, church. I actually sat down in June and I decided how I was going to spend my time. I have more flexible time in the summer. I did go back and review a mission statement.

On a daily basis the word of God informs me. I get informed from my quiet time. I spend one half hour with the Lord in my Bible each day. It adjusts my mind to be a Christian and think biblically. Everything pulls out of my accordingly.

He just changes our hearts, above all else guard your heart because everything else flows from it. I don't have time to stop and think about my mission, it just happens. You better ask God for mercy and you better have a new heart or you're in trouble.

How do articulate a clear sense of purpose and directions for the school?

We do have a mission statement we wrote together. Educate the mind. Engage the heart and foster faith in Jesus Christ. I frequently run things through, does this fit with our mission.

How do you know what needs to be improved?

Just listening plus sometimes I see stuff. I have been in education a long time. I have taught every grade from Pre-K to college. I have been a specialist. That is the best gift for this position because I think this is not that good, because I have seen good or bad. It is experience and listening.

How do you maintain a focus on the big picture in education? You mentioned once the school year rolls around your day is dictated a lot.

I meet once a week with the superintendent. That is really helpful. I meet once a week with him and once a week with the other administrators.

Why did you choose education and Christian education as a profession?

Actually I have a degree in journalism and literature because my parents were educators and I didn't want to go that way. When I got out I thought I am not journalist material. I am not that aggressive. So I got post degree certified in education. When you are raised with an educator you are trained to educate. Why did I choose Christian education? A man that was the principal here pursued me for several years pursued me. I was in public education and God just worked it out.

Before that I ran a Christian pre-school. I feel I am in my fifties so this is my last gig, well at least I hope that I have to take a paycheck for, so it does seem God has ordered everything in my life. I have been a pastor's wife. Everything has been ordered for such a time like this. God has put me here and it is a good fit.

How do you focus on keeping your promises and commitments?

I don't know. I just, I think one thing I have learned is, I used to say I'll take care of that, now I'll say can you ask so and so about that and get back to me. I can't do this right now, would you take this over. I do try to, practically, I take notes in a meeting and make sure I go back and do what I said. With parents I'll take notes and at the end of the week I'll review. I do a lot of Google Calendar and put a date with myself to fulfill something.

One of my weaknesses, okay, right now I am spending my mornings at home to have some planning time because it is absolutely essential. I think organization is the key to success. And you have to have organization to have success.

This might be helpful because I just took over the middle school I don't even know what I don't know so I tell people what I have been telling people who ask me what should I do about this? Details important to them but I didn't even know that existed. What I have been saying is I want you to think of this transition as a puzzle. Right now trying to put the corners and edges. If you will help me build the edge as we go through this year, we will fill in the middle. But I am going to have to say, I am not as up to speed as the last person.

What motivates you to continue to lead in a Christian school?

I don't think I'd work back in secular now that I have been able to fully tell the truth. So just the ability to be myself is huge. I very much respect Christian's in public schools.

It looks like you have married your two loves-the Lord and Christian education.

Which leadership traits do you perceive and others perceive as the most important in contributing to your success as a Christian school principal?

I think people would say about me that I am very reliable and organized and they can count on me and that makes them happy. It goes back to how I started. Good administration is very loving. I just think you can count on that person. I'm a hard worker. I never want anyone to feel like I am going home when you are working hard. That is a deal breaker, too. I try to be, although, sometimes they'll say we're fine, just go home. If I consistently dumped on them and went home that would not be good.