

Leadership Practices and Pathways that Matter  
to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Faith-based Principals

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**Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Frederick and Janice Klindworth. You directed me along the Lord's path. You showed me love and encouraged me to aspire to great things. You were models of caring, selflessness, humility and service to others. You have given me a gift greater than you will ever know.

**Abstract**

The purpose of this survey research study was to examine the perceptions of Christian faith-based school principals in Minnesota and Wisconsin relative to leadership practices of principals serving in K-12 Christian faith-based schools. Leadership practices considered important by currently practicing faith-based principals were identified, along with the feasibility of such practices. Demographic data about the principals, their schools and communities were collected. Participants also were asked to describe their pathways to their current positions as principals and also to offer their views about design and curricular priorities for faith-based principal preparation programs.

A web-based survey was used to collect data. A total of 850 faith-based principals were sent surveys with 288 responding. This response rate resulted in a study confidence level of +/- 5%. Key findings indicated: 1) religious beliefs were significant considerations in decision making involving student discipline, enrollment and budgeting policies; 2) faith-based school culture was unique because religious beliefs permeated curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty relationships and community interactions; 3) principals in urban settings appeared to value faculty development more highly when compared to principals in rural settings; 4) principals of larger faith-based schools rated the value of personal relationships more highly as compared to principals of smaller schools; 5) faith-based principals with master's degrees or higher rated knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment more highly than principals with only baccalaureate levels of education; 6) an emphasis on the centrality of faith in the principalship was viewed as important for future faith-based principal preparation

programs, as was an emphasis on clinical experience; and 7) tension existed between maintaining denominational identity/integrity and a perceived need for marketing/recruiting efforts to maintain or increase enrollments. Implications for policy, principal preparation and continuous learning are offered.

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## **CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Leadership practices define a school leader and ultimately influence school effectiveness. Further, the specific culture of each school influences the ways in which each school leader functions. Christian faith-based schools present a unique cultural context for leaders. Leadership practices have evolved over the years, in part because of changing cultural and contextual realities. The practices of school leaders, specifically principals, have necessarily changed as well. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, principals were looked to as strong examples of respectability. (Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Effective school leadership in the early and mid-twentieth century came to mean the ability to efficiently manage a school organization (Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Principals responded to the challenge. They became efficient managers of their schools and faculties. In more recent decades, effective school leadership has come to mean leadership more specifically focused on advancing teaching and learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Principals today are judged on their ability to lead their schools so they positively affect student achievement.

Christian faith-based school leaders and their leadership practices are the focus of this research study. Christian faith-based school leaders have been faithfully working along side their faculties for decades to train students for Christian citizenship (Brandt, 2005). They have worked with their Boards of Education to manage their schools as efficiently as possible while working with limited resources (Rosenthal, 1999). In reality, most currently serving Christian faith-based principals have been trained as teachers. Many of them also concurrently serve as teachers as well as principals. As a



result they work and relate with their faculties in unique ways, as both colleagues to their teachers and as administrators for their faculties.

The administrative leadership role in the current climate of accountability provides unique challenges for many Christian faith-based principals (Cochran, 2005). Christian faith-based principals face many important administrative responsibilities. Division of time for many Christian faith-based school leaders, however, is between teaching in their own classrooms and administering their school. That division creates tension. Administrative responsibilities are important to ensuring the overall success of students in their school, to supporting the professionalism of their faculty and to connecting with their community. Many of those principals, however, do not have adequate time to spend on important administrative duties. The Christian faith-based principal feels pressure from within and without. The culture and climate of the Christian faith-based schools are increasingly creating tension and stress for principals.

Principal preparation programs for Christian faith-based school principals are not providing adequate preparation for the unique challenges faced in the twenty-first century (Inniger, 2005). School leadership expectations recently have been affected by increased emphasis on accountability for student achievement. Principals in public schools and in faith-based schools alike are subject to increased accountability pressures as well as the accompanying scrutiny. Have principal preparation programs kept pace with the demands of the profession (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997)? In addition to administrative responsibility, school principals today are expected to provide leadership in the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships. Principals in faith-based schools also recognize that

religion permeates the climate of their school as it interacts with curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships.

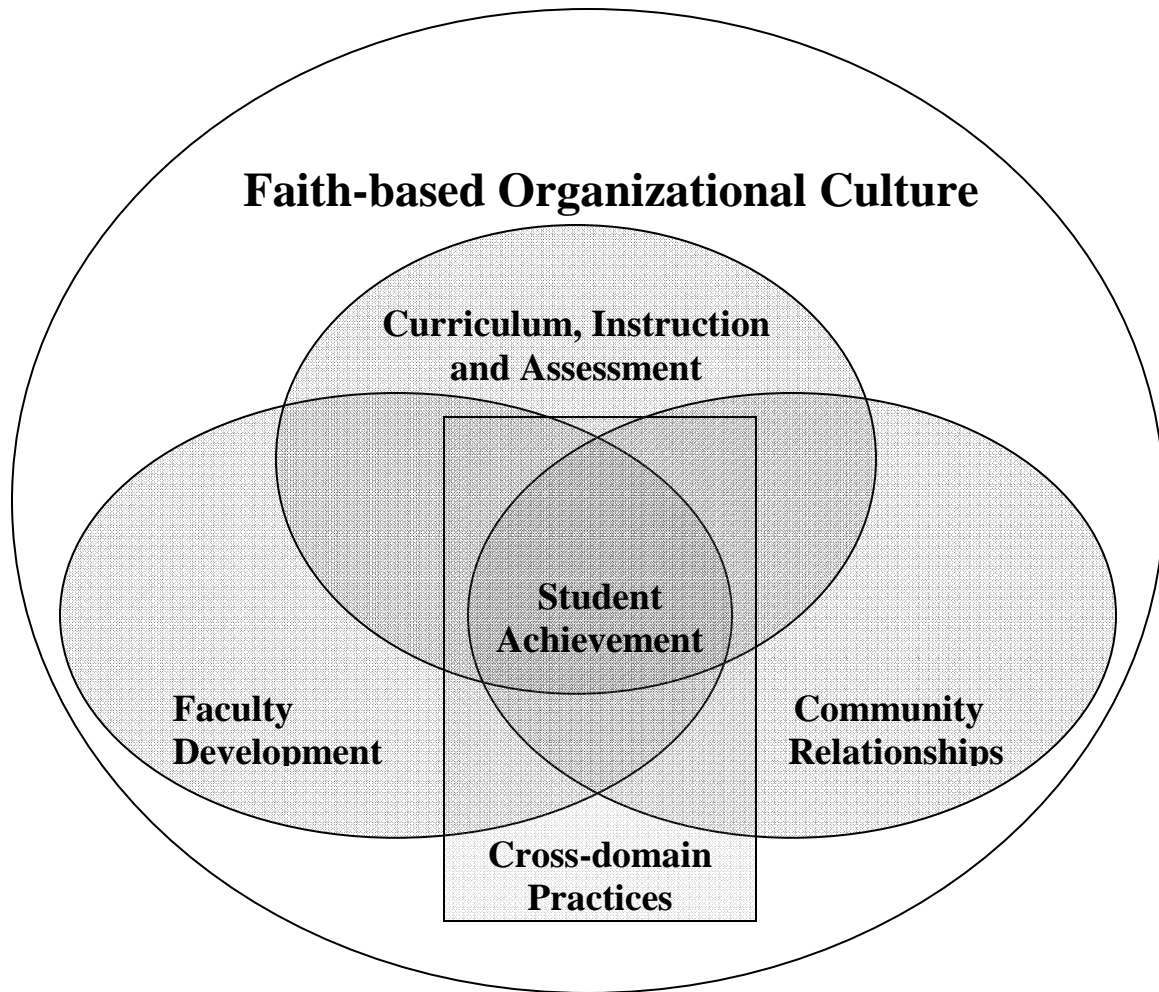
School principals are important to the success of schools, which is largely determined by the success of students (Glickman & Gordon, 2001). Literature indicates that principal leadership is critically important to school success (Clark & Clark, 1996). More demands and expectations are placed upon school leaders today than ever before (Leithwood, Rutherford, & Van Der Vegt, 1987). Students and their parents expect the highest quality school experience possible; both academically and socially (Lambert, 2003). School faculties also look to the principal for leadership (Reeves, 2004b). The community looks to the principal of their school for leadership and direction necessary to make the school a source of community pride (Comer, 2003). The expectations of students, faculty members and community members are increased as the standards based view of educational excellence receives even more emphasis as we begin the twenty-first century. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a stark reality in U.S. schools today. School principals are looked to for leadership that enables students, faculties and communities alike to realize their expectations (Marzano, 2003).

The current educational climate emphasizes the central role of principals as the leaders who direct their schools and ensure the academic achievement of the students in those schools. Like their public school counterparts, upon whom much of the current school leadership literature is based, faith-based school principals too, are central to the success of their schools. An often unrecognized group, their leadership currently impacts

the academic achievement of the millions of students in faith-based schools in the United States (CARA, 2006).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The emergent conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the review of school leadership literature and serves as the organizing structure for this study. As shown in figure 1.1, three interconnected leadership practice domains are curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships. Each domain is operationalized by specific leadership practices. There are also a set of leadership practices that reach across all three domains. At the intersection of these domains is student achievement. Faith-based organizational culture surrounds these domains illustrating that it is both influencing and influenced by the three domains of leadership practice. Studies of school leadership speak to the way school leaders influence students, teachers and community stakeholders. Three integrated reviews of educational leadership begin to provide an indication of the possible leadership practices of Christian faith-based school leaders (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).



**Figure 1.1: An Emergent Conceptual Framework for Administrative Leadership in Christian Faith-based School**

### **Problem Statement**

The work of school leaders is inherently complex, requiring a sophisticated set of understanding and skills in areas ranging from finances, governance, parent and community involvement, teacher development, to curriculum/instruction/assessment. As expectations for principals have expanded over the years, leadership practices have grown accordingly. While principals in the past were expected to be respectable and manage buildings efficiently; today they are expected to also provide leadership for school instructional improvement. They are expected to inspire their staffs to engage in school-wide improvement efforts, to provide leadership around curricular innovations and adoptions and to ensure accountability measures for the improvement of student outcomes. Community and governing agencies expect school principals to accomplish all this in the context of changing student demographics, increased accountability and increasingly limited resources.

While the above holds true for principals as a whole, one particular group, principals of faith-based schools, face unique challenges. The primary academic training of faith-based school leaders prepares them for teaching while their leadership training is added while they are teaching and being a leader at the same time (Cochran, 2005). The faith-based school typically has fewer students than its public school counterpart. As a result, faith-based schools often call or hire their school principals to teach in addition to serving as the principal. In excess of forty percent of faith-based principals begin their careers with no prior administrative experience or training (Inniger, 2005). Faith-based schools can no longer afford to assume or hope that their leaders will develop the necessary practices to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

### *Attrition*

Given the increased pressures on principals, it is no surprise that attrition rates for all principals are high. Attrition among school principals in both the public and private sectors, including faith-based schools, is occurring at a high rate. The annual rate of turnover among school administrators in the United States is about 30% (Eaton & Sharp, 1996). The attrition rate for faith-based principals is similarly high. As a result there is a looming principal shortage (Inniger, 2005). Candidates are being recruited from teacher ranks (Brandt, 2005).

A high attrition rate is costly to schools and to the multiple stake holders involved. High rates of principal turnover are also a concern in the faith-based school community as well as the public school community (Brandt, 2005; Inniger, 2005). Among those who leave leadership positions are many quality people whose gifts and abilities are lost to the profession. The high turnover rates translate into a costly loss of talent for faith-based schools in America (Nelson, 2005).

High attrition rate of principals in faith-based schools are especially problematic. Faith-based schools face some unique challenges when considering their leadership needs and the people who meet those needs. The pool of available faith-based school principals is smaller than the pool of leaders available to their public school counterparts because of the philosophical or doctrinal compatibility requirements of most faith-based organizations [Martin Luther College (MLC), 2006; Saint John's University (SJU), 2006]. The candidates for leadership roles in faith-based schools are necessarily considered on the basis of their religious beliefs, as well as the leadership qualities and characteristics they possess (Gostchock, 2000). Faith-based schools often consider the

faith, or belief system, of their school leaders as a primary qualification for employment. Faith-based school leaders are often placed in their positions based primarily upon their beliefs, with their leadership qualities are viewed as secondary in importance (Brandt, 2005).

The process of securing a faith-based school leader frequently involves the calling or hiring body considering a slate of candidates that seems most compatible with the requirements of the job. The candidates are considered on the basis of their faith first and other traits subsequent to that (Brandt, 2005). Faith-based schools often employ, consciously or perhaps subconsciously the trait model of leadership selection (Olson, 2005), with desirable traits including an attractive physical appearance and one who is verbally articulate, self confident and having an outgoing personality (Northouse, 2001).

### *Principal Preparation*

There is some question as to the effectiveness of current principal preparation programs, particularly in light of current needs and expectations (Jacobson, 1996; Lashway, 2003; Richardson & Lane, 1994). Is the current principal preparation curriculum relevant? Are the clinical experiences in principal preparation programs substantial? Jackson and Kelley (2002) and Levine (2005) pointed to a lack of preparation programs with curriculum relevant to the job demands of school administrators today. The researchers listed above were critical of preparation programs lacking adequate administrative clinical experiences.

Current principal preparation programs are rooted in theories that reflect long standing views of what school leaders should look like (Richardson & Lane, 1994). The internship experience offers practical experience under an experienced principal.

Problem-solving strategies are nurtured during the clinical experience or internship (Short & Price, 1992). Principal preparation programs are still primarily steeped in long standing tradition, despite the addition of contemporary variations like the internship (Glasman & Glasman, 1997).

Principal preparation reform looks to better prepare educational leaders (Clark & Clark, 1996). Innovative principal preparation programs that show promise focus on leading collaboratively, enabling and supporting teacher success, managing reform and extending the school into the community (Clark & Clark, 1996). In addition to the collaborative sense of purpose, more effective preparation programs draw knowledge from the world of practice. They include multiple clinical experiences focusing on problem solving and also include an enhanced candidate selection process (Clark & Clark, 1996; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). Literature has provided glimpses of promising ways to reform traditional principal preparation programs. Additional research is needed to determine the school leadership practices that inform Christian faith-based principal preparation (Lashway, 2003).

Formal principal preparation programs would provide one way to specifically address the unique issues of faith-based schools and their leadership requirements. In addition to being leaders of learning communities, faith-based school principals are expected to be examples of what their faith represents (Cochran, 2005; Nelson, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999). They receive religious training in order to thoroughly understand the doctrine and practices of the faith-based schools they lead (Rosenthal, 1999). As expected, faith-based principals are models of how to lead a life of faith. A primary requisite of faith-based school leadership is strong faith and ability to represent that faith



to students, parents, faculty members and members of the community (Cochran, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999). The faith-based school principal is trained in the doctrine taught by the supporting church body of their school (Cochran, 2005; Inniger, 2005; SJU, 2006).

In a report entitled, “Leading Lutheran learning communities: Standards for what principals should know and be able to do,” Cochran (2005) asserted that principal preparation programs for faith-based school principals should reflect six basic standards. The standards emphasize both management and leadership roles, set high expectations, demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement, create a culture of adult learning, use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools and actively engage the community.

Our Christian faith-based schools can no longer rely on past practices for support of their principals, which have ranged from virtually no preparation other than teaching to varying degrees of formal preparation and on-going support. Too often it has been assumed that faith-based school principals would be able perform or develop the leadership practices required in the specific school setting in which they serve. Faith-based schools can no longer hope that their leaders will gain the necessary knowledge and practice through idiosyncratic preparation or merely getting on-the-job training. The leadership practices and experiences of current Christian faith-based school principals can inform current and future programs that prepare principals to serve in faith-based schools.

### **Study Purpose and Research Questions**

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the leadership practices that Christian faith-based school leaders perceived as valuable in an effort to inform future

principal preparation programs. The informants for this study were Christian faith-based school principals in Minnesota and Wisconsin. They were surveyed about their perceptions of leadership practices. They were asked about which practices they perceived, in general, to be valuable for leading effective faith-based schools and about the feasibility of engaging in those practices. They also provided information about the contexts in which they work and their pathways to the principalship of faith-based schools. The surveys were web-based and were made available to the principals of Catholic, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod elementary and secondary schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The research questions for the study are:

- 1) What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?
  - a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
  - b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
  - c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
  - d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment.
- 2) To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?
- 3) To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?
- 4) What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?

The state and regional educational leadership offices of the Catholic, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin were informed of the research study, asked to endorse participation by their school principals and employ their electronic communication systems to contact individual principals.

### **Limitations**

This survey is limited to individuals serving as principals in K-12 faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The study does not generalize to leadership practices in other settings. Respondents were described as male and female. The number of males and females in the population, however, is not known. Therefore, it is not known if the respondents accurately represent the population. The data collected represents the perspectives of principals of faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Such perceptual data are influenced by many factors and may differ from actual practices exhibited by the responding principals. For example, respondents may provide responses they believe are most acceptable. Results, therefore, are necessarily qualified, recognizing reality may vary from perception.

Finally, because surveys were completed at the discretion of the principals contacted, the response rate was somewhat lower than desired. Further, with no way to account for the non-respondents, it cannot be assumed that the study results reflect the population of faith-based principals initially targeted.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Certain conceptual understandings are important to this research study. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

### ***School Leader***

The school leader is the school principal (Inniger, 2005). The school leader is the ultimate authority figure in the school building. The principal is responsible for implementing policy in the school building, supporting the faculty and seeing to it that the necessary staff is on hand to facilitate the smooth operation of the school building. The school leader is responsible for overseeing the functioning of the school for the benefit of the students attending the school.

### ***Faith-based School***

In the context of the study, the faith-based school is a Christian faith-based school associated with a particular supporting Christian religious organization or a school that represents a particular Christian belief system. Catholic schools, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod schools and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin represent a religious point of view and are extensions of their church (Cochran, 2005). The faith-based school teaches all the secular subjects in light of their religious philosophy in addition to dedicated religious instruction.

### ***Faculty***

The faculty of a school consists of the classroom teachers responsible for instructing the students on a day-to-day basis. Faculty members have a four year baccalaureate degree or beyond. Faculty members have been academically prepared and have credentials presumed to indicate they are qualified to teach the children for whom they are responsible.

### ***Community***

The community refers to the parents who have children enrolled in the school as well as the people who live in the proximity of the school (Leithwood et al., 2004). The parents have a vested interest in the operation of the school their children attend. Other community members are those who live in the proximity of the school but do not have children enrolled.

### ***Leadership Practices***

Leadership practices are the behaviors and activities demonstrated by a school leader with the intent of continuously strengthening curriculum/instruction/assessment, encouraging faculty development and facilitating building community relationships.

### ***Principal Preparation Programs***

Principal preparation programs provide training for future school principals (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lashway, 2003).

### **Thesis Organization**

The remainder of this thesis has four chapters. Chapter Two reviews related literature. Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology used to conduct the research study. Chapter Four presents the research findings. Chapter Five articulates implications for practice, policy and possible future research.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Every year nearly one in three school administrators in the United States leave their jobs (Eaton & Sharp, 1996). Some retire. Some move to other positions within the same district. Others move to a different district. Still others give up administration and go back into the classroom as full-time teachers. There are also those who are involuntarily replaced. There are still others who decide to give up education and look for different work altogether.

Principal turnover is becoming an increasing concern (Clark & Clark, 1996). Principal turnover affects the stability of schools. That in turn affects students, faculties and communities. The lack of consistent administrative direction tends to destabilize schools (Eaton & Sharp, 1996). Faculty members lack confidence in policy direction with frequent principal turnover (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Communities find it more difficult to identify with their local school if the leadership is constantly changing (Marzano et al., 2005). Principal turnover is a concern in the faith-based school community as well as the public school community (Brandt, 2005; Inniger, 2005).

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) supports the fourth largest faith-based school system in the United States (Brandt, 2005). In the WELS system, four in ten principals begin their callings with no prior administrative experience (Inniger, 2005). Some of those principals have spent years in the classroom. Some new principals are graduates who have neither teaching experience nor administrative experience. What do these statistics say about the current state of school leadership in some of our faith-based schools? The subject warrants further examination.

The role of school principals has changed over time. Principals were expected to be strong moral examples at the turn of the twentieth century (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Their leadership directed the training of upstanding future citizens of the United States. Principal leadership in the early and mid-twentieth century came to mean the ability to efficiently manage a school organization (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Principals responded by managing efficient schools that made the most of all available resources as they directed the business of education. School leadership, most recently, has come to mean leading a learning community (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principals today are concerned with how and what students learn and how well teachers teach.

The changing role of the principal is reflected in the way principals are prepared. Principal preparation programs are designed to prepare quality school leaders. Those programs are intended to provide school leaders with what they need to know and do. School leadership recently has been affected by the climate of increased accountability. All principals, public and private alike, have experienced increased pressure to have all their students perform up to predetermined standards. The changes in the demands made on principals have caused principal preparation programs to be reevaluated (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Because school principals today are seen as leaders of communities of learners, they need to be prepared to fill the role. Principals being produced by today's principal preparation programs are being judged on their ability to train students, support their faculties and connect with their communities.

Effective leaders are important for school success and ultimately for student achievement (Glickman & Gordon, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2004). This is true of school leaders in public and private schools, as well as in faith-based schools. More demands

and expectations are placed upon school leaders today than ever before (Inniger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 1987). The faculty and staff look to the principal for leadership. The students and their parents expect the highest quality school experience possible; both academically and socially (Epstein, 1995). The community looks to the principal of their school for the leadership and direction necessary to make the school a source of community pride (Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985). The expectations of students, faculty members and community members are even increased as the standards based view of educational excellence is emphasized as we begin the twenty-first century (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). School principals are looked to for the leadership that enables students, faculty and community alike to realize their expectations (Marzano, 2003).

The literature that informs this study rests in the areas of principal preparation and school leadership. Leadership practices influence curriculum/ instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships. School culture is constantly influencing and being influenced by the three leadership domains and school culture in the faith-based school community takes on the added dimension of religious faith.

### **Principal Preparation**

Principal preparation programs formally train administrative candidates to assume the role of school principal (Lashway, 2003). Several integrated reviews of principal preparation literature were consulted (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Jacobson, 1996; Lashway, 2003; Richardson & Lane, 1994). Glasman and Glasman (1997) conducted a literature review of principal preparation during the twentieth century. Glasman and Glasman (1997) researched how principal preparation developed



to become a combination of theory and practice. Richardson (1994) and Jacobson (1994) reported on research studies that examined deficiencies in traditional administrator preparation programs. Clark and Clark (1996) reviewed research studies focusing on the link between quality school leadership that fosters student achievement and school leadership preparation. Lashway (2003) reviewed an extensive 2001 survey study of principal and superintendent perceptions of leadership programs. The combination of these reviews reflect the history of principal preparation, the development of those programs and raise questions about the adequacy of current principal preparation programs (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lashway, 2003).

### ***Principal Preparation Programs***

Theoretical and practice based leadership components form the basis of most principal preparation programs in existence today (Lashway, 2003). The theoretical basis for principal preparation programs has a long curricular history in the United States (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Glasman and Glasman (1997) divide leadership theories into two categories: “traditional theories of leadership and assumption-based theories (modern theories of leadership)” (pp. 6-7). The traditional theories of leadership are the great man approach, the traitist theory, the situational theory and the behaviorist theory (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). The theory outlined by Glasman and Glasman (1997), emphasize various criteria for identifying leadership characteristics. The criteria range from psychological and physiological characteristics, in the case of great man and traitist theory, to sociological in the case of situational theory and action driven in the case of behaviorist theory (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Modern theories of leadership are more practice based and center on organizational concepts (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Glasman

and Glasman (1997), indicate that the “assumption-based theories (modern theories of leadership)” (p.7) have become a part of school leadership training.

Current principal preparation programs incorporate assumptions of Bolman and Deal as they affect organizational leadership theory. Those four structural assumptions, around which leadership decisions are crafted, include the structural frame, the human resources frame, the political frame and the symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Principal preparation programs utilize structural theory to design and implement goal setting and problem solving strategies. Human resource theory suggests that school leaders develop relationships enabling the school team to accomplish the mission of the school. School leaders are trained to engage political theory to develop coalitions and be able to negotiate effectively when allocating limited resources. Symbolic theory is used to provide direction for structure and activities of the school (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). These tradition based and practice based theories have framed current principal preparation programs (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lashway, 2003).

There is some question as to the effectiveness of current principal preparation programs in light of current needs and expectations (Jacobson, 1996; Lashway, 2003; Richardson & Lane, 1994). Principal preparation has also recently been questioned in a study done by Dr. Arthur Levine (Levine, 2005). Is the current principal preparation curriculum relevant? Are the clinical experiences prescribed for preparing principals adequate? What measures should be taken to ensure high quality candidates are admitted to principal preparation programs? The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA) has criticized principal preparation programs for a

number of perceived deficiencies (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). Jackson and Kelley (2002) and Levine (2005) pointed to a lack of preparation programs with curriculum relevant to the job demands of school administrators today. They were critical of preparation programs lacking adequate administrative clinical experiences. Principal preparation programs have been cited as lacking quality candidates due to inadequate program admission standards (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Levine, 2005).

Current principal preparation programs are rooted in theories that reflect long standing traditional views of what school leaders should look like (Richardson & Lane, 1994). Pohland and Carlson (1993) did a survey research study of academic programs in principal preparation offered by forty universities in the United States. The most common courses offered were educational administration, school law, educational policy, leadership theory, personnel administration, organizational studies, introduction to research, supervision of instruction, finance and an internship (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). The internship experience offers practical experience under an experienced principal. Problem-solving strategies are nurtured during the clinical experience or internship (Short & Price, 1992). Principal preparation programs are steeped in long standing tradition, despite the contemporary addition of the internship (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Lashway (2003) states that a recent Public Agenda survey of hundreds of school principals and school superintendents revealed that sixty-nine percent of the principals surveyed believed that typical leadership preparation programs were inadequate. Lashway (2003) found that eighty percent of the superintendents surveyed said that typical leadership preparation programs were “out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools” (p. 2). Murphy (2001) in his findings stated that

“putting academic knowledge at the center of principal preparation programs is inevitably self-defeating” (p. 3).

Principal preparation reform aims to better prepare educational leaders (Clark & Clark, 1996). The potential benefits of improved principal preparation programs is supported by literature (Beck & Foster, 1999; Clark & Clark, 1996; Lashway, 2003; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Innovative school leader preparation programs that show promise, focus on leading collaboratively, enabling and supporting teacher success, managing reform and extending the school into the community (Clark & Clark, 1996). Research suggests that effective preparation programs include a strong sense of purpose through the collaborative efforts of universities, school district mentors, principal candidates, community leaders and government policy makers (Clark & Clark, 1996; Jackson & Kelley, 2002). In addition to the collaborative sense of purpose, more effective preparation programs draw knowledge from the world of practice, emphasize several clinical experiences focusing on problem solving and include an enhanced candidate selection process (Clark & Clark, 1996; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). Literature has provided glimpses of reforms to traditional principal preparation programs that hold promise. Further research focused on current principal leadership practices and current principal preparation perceptions is needed to further inform principal preparation reform (Lashway, 2003).

### ***Faith-based Principal Preparation Programs***

Faith-based school principals are leaders of learning communities and they are also expected to be examples of what their faith represents (Cochran, 2005; Nelson, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999). They receive religious training and thoroughly understand the

religious position of the faith-based school they lead (Rosenthal, 1999). Faith-based principals are also looked to as an example of faith by their faculties and their student bodies. The primary pre-requisite of faith-based school leadership is a strong faith and being able to represent that faith to students, parents, faculty members and members of the community (Cochran, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999). The faith-based school principal is trained in the body of doctrine taught by the supporting church body of the school (Cochran, 2005; Inniger, 2005; SJU, 2006).

Principal preparation programs for faith-based school principals reflect six basic standards (Cochran, 2005). The standards are to balance management and leadership roles, set high expectations, demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement, create a culture of adult learning, use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools and actively engage the community (Cochran, 2005).

*Standard One: Balance Management and Leadership Roles*

Faith-based principals lead their school with a focus on student and adult learning while effectively managing the operation of the organization (Cochran, 2005). They recognize that the academic standards movement is a driving force in faith-based schools today (NLSA, 2005; WELSSA, 2003). This enables principals to facilitate the academic success of their students. Faith-based school leaders are prepared to create and foster learning communities, exemplify learner-centered leadership, delegate leadership responsibilities and connect the daily functioning of the school to learning goals (NAESP, 2005).

*Standard Two: Set High Expectations*

High expectations are held for the academic and social development of students as well as the performance of adults in the learning community (NLSA, 2005). The faith-based principal is trained to believe that all students can succeed. The school principal is to articulate a clear vision and ensure that all students have adequate and appropriate opportunities to learn and maintains a school culture that supports student achievement (Cochran, 2005).

*Standard Three: Demand Content and Instruction that Ensures Student Achievement*

Faith-based schools are organized around the development of upstanding citizens and academically successful students (NLSA, 2005; WELSSA, 2003). Faith-based school principals are prepared to hire and retain high-quality teachers who are accountable for student learning. The school leader monitors curriculum, observes classroom practices, provides up-to-date instructional materials and sees to it that students are taught to standards (NAESP, 2005).

*Standard Four: Create a Culture of Adult Learning*

Faith-based principal preparation programs train candidates to create a culture of continuous learning for adults that is tied to student learning. Faith-based school principals are instructed to encourage and support faculty professional growth (Cochran, 2005). The faith-based school principal understands adult learning to include reflection time (NAESP, 2005; WELSSA, 2003). Adult learning requires investments of time and money (Cochran, 2005). Faith-based school leader preparation connects professional development to school goals and also improves the professional practice of the principal (NLSA, 2005).

*Standard Five: Use Multiple Sources of Data as Diagnostic Tools*

Faith-based principal preparation programs teach candidates to use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement (NLSA, 2005). These data streams are used to facilitate student learning and evaluate teacher instruction (NAESP, 2005).

*Standard Six: Actively Engage the Community*

Faith-based school leaders involve their communities to foster recognition of a shared responsibility for student and school success (Cochran, 2005). The community engagement builds greater ownership for the work of the school and partners with parents and community members at large (NAESP, 2005; NLSA, 2005). Faith-based school principal preparation enables students and families to be connected to the health, human and social services they need to maintain their focus on learning (NAESP, 2005).

Faith-based principal preparation programs, as they attempt to apply these standards, are facing some challenges today. The school leader preparation programs for faith-based schools are primarily in-service or post-graduate programs (Cochran, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999; SJU, 2006). This poses a challenge as faith-based principal preparation programs face some unique realities (Cochran, 2005; Inniger, 2005). In recent decades the demands placed on faith-based principals have changed. These changing realities include declining enrollments, financial shortfalls, lack of administrative time, more special needs children and pressure to develop a quality school (Inniger, 2005). In addition to these challenges, in excess of forty percent of faith-based principals in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) begin their callings with no experience. Another challenge faced by faith-based principal preparation programs is a looming

principal shortage (Inniger, 2005). Current teachers with leadership potential are being encouraged to consider principal preparation. An administrative candidate training program is being conducted by the WELS Commission on Parish Schools (CPS, 2005). Faith-based principal preparation programs continue to face a number of challenges. Those challenges deserve consideration and evaluation (Cochran, 2005; CPS, 2005; Inniger, 2005; Nelson, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999).

### **School Leadership Research and Conceptual Framework**

There is a vast amount of literature in the area of leadership. The concept of leadership itself dates back to antiquity. Theories of leadership are many. There are “great-man” theories, trait theories and environmental theories (Marzano et al., 2005). Leadership literature has been organized in multiple ways during the past decades. There have been innumerable articles and books written in the leadership field. A review of a portion of that literature will form a backdrop for the school leadership literature and subsequent discussion.

The traditions and beliefs regarding leadership in schools mirror the traditions and beliefs about leadership in other institutions (Marzano et al., 2005). Significant school leadership studies date back to the nineteenth century. The emphases of these studies have changed over time and significant changes in how education views its leaders have occurred in the twentieth century. Those changes have continued into the twenty-first century. The conceptual continuum of leadership studies from the late nineteenth century to the present begins with school leaders being judged on their religious beliefs and their moral character, then moves to their efficiency and managerial abilities and today to their



ability to understand people and be agents of change aiming at the enhancement of student learning (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Marzano et al., 2005). Despite the very strong perception of the importance of effective school leadership, the studies of school leadership, up until 20 years ago, provided little clarity as to the connection between school leadership practices and student achievement (Donmoyer, 1985).

Three seminal integrated works were used as primary resources in the review of literature in the area of school leadership and the practices of school leaders (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Each of these works, their context and substantial findings are described below.

Leithwood and Duke (1999) conducted an integrated review of 716 articles around leadership literature from four highly respected educational journals. The journals selected for review were *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the *Journal of School Leadership*, the *Journal of Educational Administration and Educational Management and Administration*. The *Educational Administration Quarterly* and the *Journal of School Leadership* publish findings primarily from North America. The *Journal of Educational Administration* represents work in Australia and New Zealand. *Educational Management and Administration* represents educational leadership studies done in Great Britain (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Emphasized in this review were influences that defined school leadership during the past century. The review explored two primary sources of insight into school leadership; educational literature and historical/theoretical sources to which school leadership appealed for its authority. Educational literature revealed six dominant categories of school leadership:

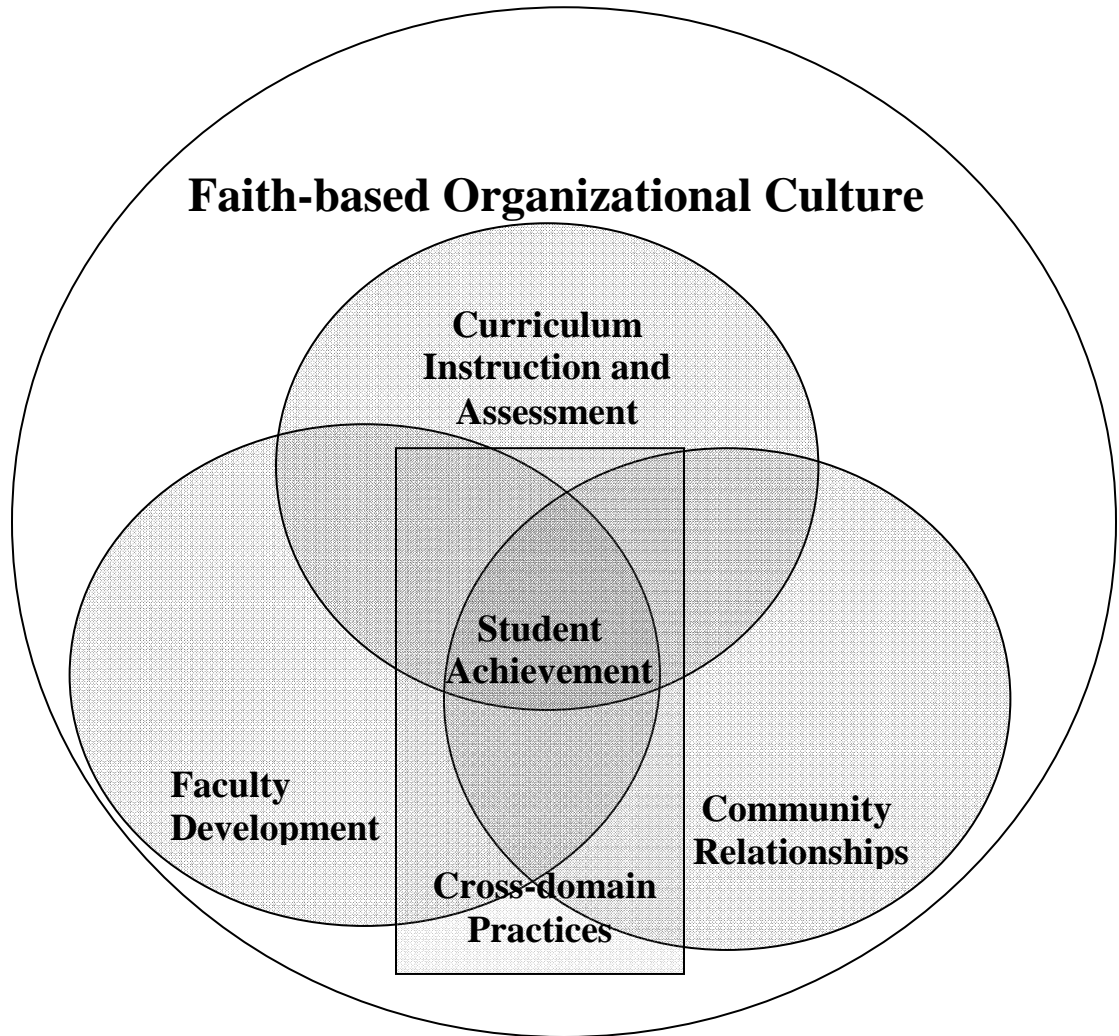
instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial and contingent forms of school leadership. Historical/theoretical sources of school leadership authority indicated in the study were: tradition, religion, psychology, sociology, and a combination of philosophy, social psychology and critical theory (Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) published a review of relevant research on school leadership. The review was funded by The Wallace Foundation and was carried out by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. This significant review summarizes a broad range of empirical research and related literature (Leithwood et al., 2004). Second to instruction, principal leadership was most influential in promoting student learning, setting directions, developing people and redesigning school organizations assuring that conditions and incentives in districts and schools fully support teaching and learning.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 research studies involving 2802 schools, 14,000 teachers, and 1.4 million students. This integrated work analyzed school leadership. It also analyzed student achievement and found a significant correlation between leadership behaviors and student achievement. Twenty-one leadership responsibilities were derived from this meta-analysis. These twenty-one responsibilities were affirmation, change agent, contingent rewards, communication, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, monitoring/evaluating, optimizer, order,

outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness and visibility (Marzano et al., 2005). These responsibilities had been mentioned in educational leadership literature for decades. Demonstration of a statistically significant relationship between the responsibilities and student achievement, however, constituted a new addition to research and theoretical literature.

The body of school leadership literature, as synthesized from the integrated works noted above, can be conceptualized as three domains of leadership practice with organizational culture being a pervasive consideration involving all three domains. This emergent conceptual framework, grounded in the review of school leadership literature, serves as the organizing structure for this section. As shown in figure 2.1, the three interconnected leadership practice domains are curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships. Each domain contains separate and specific leadership practices. At the same time there are a set of leadership practices that reach across all three domains. At the intersection of these domains is student achievement. Faith-based organizational culture surrounds these domains indicating that it is both influenced by and influences the three domains of leadership practice. This framework lends itself toward application of the literature studies around school leadership. Studies of school leadership speak to the way school leaders influence students, teachers and community stakeholders in practice. The three integrated studies of educational leadership begin to provide an indication of the possible leadership practices of faith-based school leaders (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). The literature informs the conceptual framework and the methods and the subsequent research study flows from the conceptual framework.



**Figure 2.1: An Emergent Conceptual Framework for Administrative Leadership in Christian Faith-based Schools**

### **School Leadership Practices**

In this section, the school leadership practices associated with each of the three school leadership domains illustrated in the conceptual framework are identified and described. The domains are: curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development and community relationships. Faith-based organizational culture affects and is affected by each the school leadership domains in faith-based schools. Additionally, a rationale or purpose for each faith-based leadership practice is included.

### ***Cross-domain Leadership Practices***

There are several leadership practices that are pertinent in each of the three core practice domains. These are referred to here as cross-domain leadership practices and include: demonstrating respectability, creating visible relationship building and optimism.

### ***Respectability***

Respectability, on the part of the school principal, is having a great reputation with those among whom they work (*Webster's Universal College Dictionary*, 1997). The students, school faculty, parents and other community members look up to the principal and have a high regard for the thoughtful leadership provided.

Effective faith-based principals practice respectability in their school buildings. Respectability originates with the belief system of the leader. DePree (1989) says “beliefs are connected to intimacy and beliefs come from policies or standards or practices” (p. 55). Respectability inspires followership (Bennis, 2003; Schwahn & Spady, 1998; Youngs & King, 2002). This practice is at the very core of faith-based school leadership. Faith-based school principals are the face of ethical practices that are

at the foundation of what the school represents (Nelson, 2005). Respected and principled school leaders provide the compass that gives direction to the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 2003). Faith-based school leadership is based upon the commonality of religious beliefs that the leaders share with their faculties (Prange, 2006). Principals share deeply held convictions with their faculties and together they demonstrate behaviors consistent with those ideals and beliefs as they work with one another and as they work with students (Marzano et al., 2005). The faith-based organization and the community in which the faith-based school is located not only hear about the respectability of the faith-based school leader but also see it in practice (Prange, 2006).

School leaders who practice respectability increase their credibility in the community. The parents respect a school leader who is honest, dependable and principled. The board members also value the traits associated with respectability. Board members expect their school leader to work with them as they share ideals and pursue mutual goals that are valued by their community (Bennis, 2003). Civic leaders are willing to work with a school leader who is respectable. The school leader who practices respectability has harnessed a powerful force that facilitates change (Youngs & King, 2002). Members of the faith-based community place special emphasis on the importance of a school leader adhering tenaciously to a set of ideals and a system of personal beliefs (Prange, 2006).

### ***Visible Relationship Building***

Visible relationship building involves having frequent contact with students, teachers, parents and community members in an effort to develop a personal connection with them (Marzano et al., 2005).

Effective personal relationships are essential for successful school leadership. Principals can personalize many of the other aspects of the role of the principal by intimately relating with students, teachers, parents and community members (Lashway, 2001).

The school leader, to the extent possible, should learn to know the students in the school. Developing relationships means caring enough about the students to get to know something about where they come from and who they are. Being proactive in fostering relationships with students can derail potential problems before they become discipline issues. When students need discipline and direction, having an existing relationship outside the office can make the experience less contentious. Principals practicing visible relationship building, make one-on-one relationships a higher priority than bureaucratic routines (Elmore, 2000). Principal visits to student classrooms should be the norm rather than a rarity (Marzano et al., 2005). The visibility of the principal extends to co-curricular and extra curricular student activities. When the principal attends an activity of a student outside of school it has a long reaching, positive impact. Attending a recital or accepting an invitation to a family event speaks volumes to students and parents alike. It shows that the principal cares and it facilitates discussions with students about important issues that may otherwise never be brought to light (Blase & Blase, 1999).

Fostering face-to-face relationships with a genuine interest in others is more important than most other management skills (Elmore, 2000). School leaders develop the trust of teachers in their schools so that the team remains strong when they encounter challenges (Fullan, 1992). Successful school leaders have frequent contact with their teachers. Visibility in the classroom provides the school leader with the opportunity for

informal evaluation and also the opportunity for professional support. It sends the message that the principal knows what is going on and also cares about what is happening in the classrooms of the school. The principal is more than an authority figure. The principal is a supportive colleague.

Building visible relationships with parents is an important aspect of this leadership practice. Parents see the principal not only at school events but as an active and interested member of the community. A school principal who is part of the community is a caring school leader (Whitaker, 1997). When the principal is out and about in the community, discussions around issues important to the school, parents and community can more easily take place (Blase & Blase, 1999).

The ability of the principal to establish relationships is important as the school leader relates to the community and builds external support for the school (Ronneberg, 2000). Principals establish relationships with other members of the community while becoming a part of the fabric of the community in which the school is located. When other community members feel a personal connection with the school leader, they also feel a closer connection to the school (Elmore, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005; McLaughlin, 1987). The school with close ties to the community and the support of community stakeholders is poised for success (Henderson, 1987).

### ***Optimism***

Optimism is having a positive perspective of future possibilities. Optimism expects the most favorable outcome of events or conditions (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997).



Optimism is an important school leadership practice (Blase & Kirby, 2000). The consequence of the school leader optimism is inspiring teachers to foster student success. The optimistic leader inspires faculty members, provides positive momentum for school related initiatives and demonstrates confidence that the teaching staff at the school is equal to any challenge (Kelehear, 2003).

Being optimistic is truly significant when considering community relationships. The school leader sets the tone for the image of the school in the community (Blase & Kirby, 2000). The school board is more willing to work with a school leader who works with them while demonstrating a positive attitude. The decisions made by the board of education cause their share of challenges because those decisions collide with a diverse community. A positive school leader, however, makes the job of the board members easier and more pleasant (Kaagan & Markle, 1993). The positive attitude of the principal is an inspiration to parents and the community-at-large. A positive school leader can be the driving force behind major initiatives as parents and community members are both encouraged to be supportive (Beck & Foster, 1999). The optimistic school leader is one who demonstrates the firm belief that great things can happen and this leadership practice gets community members involved so that great things do happen. The school becomes a community focus and that optimistic focus can ultimately benefit the students in the school (Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985).

### ***Leadership Practices for Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment***

Leadership is considered vitally important to the success of a school (Leithwood et al., 2004). School success is quantified in terms of improved student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). The school leader in the twenty-first century has an important

impact on student classroom performance (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Twenty-first century school leaders understand and provide hands-on direction for the core work in education: curriculum/instruction/assessment. The principal understands the importance of CIA and is able to craft coherent curriculum, inspire high quality instruction and oversee meaningful assessment that directly touches the lives of students and contributes to their academic success.

The school principal is critical to the development of a clear mission statement and clear goals that are grounded in commitments to achieve high levels of learning for all students (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; NSDC, 2001). Supervision of instruction supports continuous improvement of teacher classroom practices (Brookover & Lesotte, 1979; Miller & Sayre, 1986). Successful school leaders take responsibility for the organization of the curriculum and the instruction that takes place in the school (Bossart, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Oakes, 1989). Meaningful learning opportunities are fostered by effective school leadership (Duke & Canady, 1991; Murphy & Hallinger, 1989).

Leadership practices that influence curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA) are: advocating change, demonstrating systematic intensity, knowing and overseeing curriculum, instruction and assessment.

### *Advocating Change*

Effective school leaders advocate for and intentionally design administrative leadership changes that are significant, systemic and innovative. Fullan talks about this behavior in terms of “disturbing” the status quo (Fullan, 1992).

The principal may suggest deep systemic change necessary to move the school organization in a direction that is not initially comfortable or expected. The school leader sees change grounded in a belief system of continuous improvement as essential for students and moves forward. Marzano and others talk about first order change that is incremental and more comfortable. He also talks about second order change that is more drastic and more controversial (Marzano et al., 2005). The principal advocating change engages in Second order change is demonstrated by a principal promoting a change-over from traditional scheduling to block scheduling, for example. Advocating year-round school or suggesting a new organizational structure like the “house” system as an alternative to the way students are currently being taught is another example. Second order change might involve advocating that teachers move from teaching math, reading, social studies and science separately to an interdisciplinary curricular design. The school leader sees school improvement as an obligation to students and is willing to live with the challenge it may bring. This school leadership practice demonstrates an understanding that change is a risk but potential benefits are necessary, good and healthy (Clarke, 2000).

***Demonstrating Systematic Intensity***

Systematic intensity is the focus and energy the school principal employs to establish clear goals and keep those goals in the forefront of school attention (Marzano et al., 2005).

Principals demonstrate systematic intensity as they create school environments that are structured for success (Marzano et al., 2005). The goal of the successful school is to provide an environment where teachers teach and students learn (Leithwood et al., 1987). Principals and teachers cooperate to maximize student academic success (Marzano et al., 2005). The school leader protects the students and teachers from distractions that may have a negative impact on learning (Youngs & King, 2002). Systematic intensity is evident when the mission statement of the school is not only visible in the school and classrooms, but is evidenced through the teaching and learning process. It is important to have concrete curriculum/instruction/assessment goals of which the students and faculty are fully aware (Nunnelley, Whaley, Mull, & Hott, 2003). The principal clearly communicates expectations to students personally, as well as in hard copy and/or electronic handbooks. Systematic intensity includes establishing concrete goals for the general functioning of the school. Order is maintained and learning is enhanced when visitor policies are created and when announcements are made outside of class time, for example (Marzano et al., 2005). The school leader is responsible for keeping the attention of the faculty on learning goals and on general conduct goals (Marzano, 2003). Leithwood and others share that effective leadership involves purpose and direction (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leaders have a clear vision

of where their school organization should go. School leaders who demonstrate systematic intensity are compelled to be tenacious in pursuing their vision. They are accountable for the success of their schools in accomplishing declared objectives (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

### ***Knowing and Overseeing Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment***

Knowing and overseeing curriculum/instruction/assessment means school leaders are involved in planning, implementing and assessing what is taught in their schools. Knowledge and oversight of curriculum/instruction/assessment is critical to the twenty-first century concept of instructional leadership (Marzano et al., 2005).

The principal is directly involved in the design and implementation of what is taught, how it is taught and the manner in which student knowledge and understanding is assessed (Marzano et al., 2005). The school leader participates in the curriculum construction and analysis process, including assuring that the school curriculum is both aligned and coherent. Principals oversee how teachers are teaching curricular content. That oversight is a result of a team approach to instruction. Subject cluster meetings or common grade level teacher meetings regularly involve the principal. School leaders function as consultants and advocates for their teaching staffs (Marzano et al., 2005). Knowledge and oversight also mean making suggestions and soliciting teacher input as curriculum, instruction and student assessment is planned. This insures that excellent instruction is taking place in the classrooms. Knowledge and oversight requires the principal to support professional growth needs of the faculty, including reflective practice, best practices and use of research.

*Reflective practice*

Reflective practice is questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and encouraging the practitioner to see his or her practice through others' eyes. Those reflective eyes see relationships between time, experience and expectations of learning (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, & Montie, 2001).

The principal encourages reflective practice on the part of the faculty (York-Barr et al., 2001). Reflective practice breaks down the walls of isolation that are often present in schools and opens the channels of communication. Reflective practice emerges from an atmosphere of cooperation within the school team as instruction and assessment are evaluated. School leaders with CIA knowledge and oversight are involved in this process from the outset. Instructional involvement enables a school leader to understand instruction as it reaches the students. Involvement in assessment enables school leaders to work with their teaching staffs in evaluating student learning. The world of accountability, in which we live, dictates that leaders be intimately involved in student assessment. Recording and utilizing data from standardized assessment instruments as well as data from teacher based assessments are understood and used to improve student achievement (Bernhardt, 1998). Reflection upon curriculum/instruction/assessment is as important to school leaders as it is to the teachers they lead (Stein & D'Amico, 2000).

***Best instructional practices***

Best instructional practices means applying current educational theory together with research based instructional methodology leading to optimum student learning and engagement.

School leaders practicing CIA knowledge and oversight advocate and support implementation of best instructional practices as well as the acquisition and development of knowledge. The school leader understands the most effective means by which teachers engage students in the learning process. The principal is also able to use that knowledge to assist teachers in positively influencing student learning (Fullan, 2001). School leadership consists of guiding and directing instructional improvement (Elmore, 2000). Broad and deep knowledge of best practices helps teachers grow professionally as they are empowered to positively influence student achievement (Reeves, 2004c).

***Use of research to inform educational improvement***

Use of research to inform educational improvement means that the school principal recognizes quality research that can yield practical applications for more effective instruction for teachers and more beneficial learning experiences for students.

The school leader possesses extensive knowledge of reliable research that is used to enhance student achievement (Bernhardt, 1998; Marzano et al., 2005). Principals know how to access and use professional literature and reliable research in the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment. School leaders understand and are able to objectively evaluate and use educational research (Lauer, 2006). In addition to personal reading,

school leaders attend conferences that strengthen their curricular knowledge and assessment practices. This knowledge is shared with the faculty.

Examples of using research to inform educational improvement clearly indicate instructional benefits for teachers and learning benefits for students. A Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) study asked 350 teachers to indicate the amount of time it would take them to adequately address instructional concepts in core subject areas (Marzano, 2003). Study results provided a range of time teachers considered necessary for instruction in core subject areas. A middle school principal and faculty applied the study results to their math curriculum. They determined that essential curricular content would require 2000 hours of instructional time while the maximum suggested instructional time from the McREL study was 2200 hours. They decided that 200 hours for other than essential content was inadequate. Together, they agreed to increase discretionary instructional time from 200 hours or 9% to 30% of total time dedicated to math instruction. Application of credible research yielded instructional benefits for these middle school teachers.

Another McREL study resulted in math concepts being organized into topics that were sequenced enabling students ample opportunity to learn it (Marzano, 2003). A school district had its building principals lead their faculties toward applying the study findings to their math curriculum. The math faculties identified essential topics, organized them and established topic sequences enabling students ample opportunity to learn them. Use of quality research was the catalyst for improving student learning.



### ***Leadership Practices for Faculty Development***

Effective principals recognize the need to support ongoing faculty development. Faculty development begins with a positive, cooperative relationship between the school leader and the teachers. Effective school leaders are trusted and respected (DePree, 1989). Responsible school leaders value and support their teachers. The school faculty is confident in the ability of the school leader to make good decisions and provide direction with the best interest of the school and its students in mind (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The relationship between the principal and the faculty extends into the areas of consultation and mentoring, classroom supervision and professional growth (Glickman, 1993; Glickman & Gordon, 2001). School leadership practices that support faculty development provide an indirect conduit to positive student achievement. Teachers in the school touch the lives of students on a daily basis.

School leadership identifies specific leadership practices that influence faculty development, including: affirming success and fostering growth, communicating, demonstrating flexibility, fostering training and providing resources for the faculty. Each of these practices is described below.

#### ***Affirming Success and Fostering Growth***

Affirming success and fostering growth is reinforcing teacher and student accomplishments with positive recognition that encourages them to maximize their success.

The effective principal maximizes the positive and minimizes the negative, in terms of faculty successes and failures. Education, however, is being influenced by research that recognizes those organizations moving from “good to great” are

organizations that celebrate success and acknowledge failure in order to improve (Collins, 2001). It is easier to recognize success than to acknowledge failure. It is necessary, however, to do both in an effort to improve the organization. Continuous improvement is teaching the means by which continuous improvement of student learning is realized. Lashway asserts that the ability of the school leader to celebrate successes and acknowledge failures, foster both improvement and accountability yielding objective results (Lashway, 2001). This leadership practice helps the school develop positive momentum and it also facilitates retention of the “best and the brightest” among the faculty (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

### ***Communicating***

Communicating means sharing information with others in an effort to be as transparent as possible (Marzano et al., 2005).

The successful school leader is an effective communicator. Instructional leadership literature emphasizes the importance of communication skills (Bennis & Nanus, 2003; Deming, 1986; Gabriel, 2005; Glickman & Gordon, 2001; Marzano, 2003; Northouse, 2001; Wheatley, 1999). Communication is the school leader initiating and maintaining strong lines of dialogue with teachers, as well as among and between teachers. Effective communication is essential to any group whose work is interdependent. It facilitates providing a quality educational experience for all students (Marzano et al., 2005). Teachers are more comfortable when they feel their principal is open to and with them. School leaders communicate with teachers for effective information exchange that further engenders a level of trust. It has been said that

effective communication is both an implicit and an explicit feature of many aspects of leadership (Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

### ***Flexibility***

Flexibility refers to the way school leaders engage points of view that differ from their own. It also is evidenced by the ability to adapt and adjust plans and pathways given close monitoring of progress and given varied contexts of practice.

This leadership practice is an element of transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders are able to work within the structure of an organization and advocate for change consistent with their established goals. They are considerate of others, inspire and motivate others to follow them as they work toward accomplishing mutually agreed upon goals. The transformational leader is willing to listen to others, to consider the ideas of others and truly values each member of the school team (Northouse, 2001). Successful principals encourage discussion and participation from those who foster a different point of view (Lashway, 2001).

Flexibility calls upon effective school leaders to adapt their leadership style as different situations arise. They consider options and are sometimes directive and sometimes more facilitative, depending upon the situation. Faculty members benefit from hearing their leaders encourage varying points of view. Different points of view enrich a discussion and offer more options for consideration as a decision is considered. Principals practicing flexibility see change as an opportunity rather than as a challenge (Deering, Dilts, & Russel, 2003; Fullan, 2001). Flexible principals engage faculty members in planning and implementation of school policies.

### ***Fostering Training and Providing Resources***

Effective school leaders foster training and provide resources by offering their faculties the mental and physical tools to enable students to achieve excellence in their academic experience.

School leaders ensure that the faculty is abreast of current theories and practices in the profession. Effective principals encourage staff dialogue around research and educational theory (Lauer, 2006; Supovitz, 2002). They build professional growth opportunities into the regular experience of the school (Fullan, 2001; Lashway, 2001; NSDC, 2001). The practice of training others is best carried out by example (Kaagan & Markle, 1993). Truly effective principals provide their teachers with necessary staff development opportunities to maximize their teaching for the benefit of student learners (Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001).

In addition to faculty training, the school leader provides the faculty with necessary physical resources. The resource support provided to the faculty by the school leader includes necessary curricular materials. Effective school leaders provide their teachers with necessary physical materials including technology.

### ***Leadership Practices for Community Relationships***

School leaders are a vital link between the school and the community served by the school. Effective principals forge a bond between community stake holders and the interests and mission of the school (Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985). Community stakeholders include the school board, civic and business leaders and the parents of the students the school serves (Leithwood et al., 2004). Principals create positive public relationships by sharing student successes in athletics, math club, knowledge bowl and

test results. They also publicize faculty achievements. It also means that the community stakeholders trust and respect the school leader and are willing to support the mission of the school in their community through referenda (Simon, 2001). The desired result of developing community relationships is the tangible, measured success of the students in the classrooms (Schmoker, 2006). A specific leadership practice that advances positive and productive school-community relationships is openness.

### *Openness*

The principal is frequently the most recognizable “face of the school.” School leaders practice openness when honestly interacting with the community. Openness to sharing thoughts and ideas is an important factor in binding together all the other responsibilities of leadership (Scribner, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999). Reaching out to the community requires a proactive approach on the part of the school leader. One specific way in which community relationships are maintained is the principal interacting openly with the school board. Community members elected to the school connect the leader of the school building with the broader community. Open exchange fosters a positive atmosphere for advancing the mission of the school (Patterson, 1993). Openness with the board also promotes a relationship that can positively enable policy making (Fullan, Anderson, & Newton, 1986; McLaughlin, 1987). Being open with parents and community members-at-large occur on different levels. Openness with parents is motivated by having student interests in common while openness with community and business leaders is motivated by broader community welfare interests (Griffith, 2001; Reeves, 2004b).

***Making parent connections***

Parents form a significant sector of the community within which a school functions. The school leader needs to be open with parents in order to strengthen parental support for the mission of the school in the lives of their children. The principal initiates contact to develop a positive relationship. Parents are kept informed verbally, in writing and electronically. Openness with parents can lead to committed parental support in the form of volunteers or parent helpers. Participation fosters ownership. There is evidence that parental involvement in the education of their child influences student achievement (Griffith, 2001; Henderson, 1987).

Urban school leaders who are open with the parents of their students build relationships that break down cultural barriers. Minority parents in urban settings, generally, gain a respect for school leaders who care about their children and make an effort to reach out to them (Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997). School leader openness with minority parents is characterized by friendly, honest and culturally sensitive interaction in an effort to form an effective partnership with them (Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997). A recent study shows higher achievement in 90% of students who have a caring adult in their lives who is regularly involved in school support activities (Reeves, 2004a; Simon, 2001; Walberg, 1984). Parents, in the community, with pre-school aged children can be invited to parent activities as an outreach effort. Parents who are home-schooling their children appreciate being invited to parent activities as a goodwill gesture also. When school leaders are open with parents, they are forging a powerful alliance that will yield benefits for both the school and the community.

***Making business and community leader connections.***

Openness with civic leaders, business leaders and members of the community at large is extremely important for the school. School leaders in the twenty-first century actively engage the civic leaders, business leaders and members of the community at large (McLaughlin, 1987). Community communications can include monthly reports that feature successes of teachers and/or students (Reeves, 2004a). Principals make formal presentations at school board meetings and civic events. Building positive relationships between the principal and the community translates into prominent visibility for the school and its mission in the community. It means that the school board members, civic and business leaders will be inclined to hold a positive view of the school (Spillane, 1996). Invitations to civic leaders and business leaders seeking their participation in focus groups and two-way interchanges between the faculty, administrator and community members puts the school in the position of a strong and active citizen of the community. The public relations benefits are great and the possibility of future gifts and grants have also been significantly enhanced (Reeves, 2004c). The potential benefits for school leaders who are open with and reach out to their communities are great (Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985).

**Faith-based Organizational Culture**

An overarching aspect and integrating dimension of school leadership is knowledge of and effectively working within organizational culture. In the case of faith-based school leadership, an explicit aspect of organizational culture is the faith-based dimension. Given the dearth of literature about faith-based school cultures specifically, much of the following discussion focuses on the broader literature about organizational

culture. Understanding organizational culture provides insight into its pervasiveness and its importance in the context of school organizations (Schein, 2004). The school leader has the ability to assess the past and present culture of the school in which they are working (Hofstede, 1993; Sashkin & Walberg, 1993). Schein (2004), states that “the culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 17). Organizational culture can be understood in terms of how school leaders consider the conceptual context involving the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development and community relationships (Hofstede, 1993).

Organizational culture develops on three levels (Schein, 2004). First, the influences of taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and organizational biases are present. Second, beliefs and values take shape and organizational mission statements are crafted with goals being set. Finally, tangible artifacts reflecting the culture develop. Visible structures and tangible programs are put in motion.

Faith-based organizational culture in schools is no different. It has a starting point, grows, matures and varies over the history of the faith-based school (Stueber, 2000). Congregations and parishes have established faith-based schools for more than one hundred years to train their children to carry on their religious traditions (Rosenthal, 1999; Schnake, 2000a). Elementary schools have most often been extensions of a single congregation while secondary schools have most often been begun and have been



supported by a geographically contiguous group of parishes or association of congregations (CARA, 2006; Rosenthal, 1999). The initial cultural identities of faith-based schools develop from the religious tradition of the founding congregations. Principals of fledgling faith-based schools lead their schools while assuring student and adult learning in the context of having the founding religious tradition is at its center (Cochran, 2005). Changing demographics and/or changing philosophies about student recruitment may influence faith-based school culture as it matures (Schnake, 2000b).

Organizational culture is a pervasive, dynamic condition that influences curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development and community relationships in the faith-based school community (Tomlin, 2000). Tomlin (2000), indicates that administrators in Christian schools reflect their love of Jesus by selecting appropriate curricular materials and by helping teachers reach students more effectively (p. 23). Motivating faculty members with Christian staff development experiences translates into teacher-student interactions that reflect Christian principles (Cole, 1999). Faith-based school principals demonstrate Christian caring to parents by respectful personal interactions as well as timely, honest and regular communication (Cochran, 2005; Rosenthal, 1999).

Current organizational culture in the faith-based school community is a permeating condition. In the faith-based school community, its culture is grounded in the religious doctrine of the supporting religious organization and is reflected by the school principal and faculty. Faith-based school religion curriculums put in place by the principal and the faculty are both an academic and a living lesson for students at the same time (Prange, 2006). The Christian school community is intended to be a culture of

caring. Teachers pay close attention to student social needs in an effort to help them reflect their living faith (Morrison, 2003). An action research study of student impressions of faith-based school culture was conducted in 2003 (Bordewyk, 2003).

Student responses included:

- “Our school is a bully-free zone.”
- “I’m finally in a school where everyone believes what I believe and no one makes fun of God in any way.”
- “My teachers are great role models of faith in Christ”
- “The best thing about school is the Christ-centered atmosphere. The teachers are so wonderful; they care about us and encourage us in all that we do.”
- “The people at my school are loving, caring, trustworthy, loyal and Christ-like.”

Faith-based school culture is based upon religious beliefs. Principals, teachers and students reflect their beliefs as application of those beliefs shape the culture of the school.

Although limited information is available on culture in faith-based schools, extensive secular cultural studies can be used to inform what has been learned about faith-based school culture. Hofstede says culture “is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group or category of people from another” (p. 89).

Hofstede goes on to say that culture “can be compared to a forest, while individuals are trees” (p.92). Schein states that “a forest is not just a bunch of trees; it is a symbiosis of different trees, bushes, plants, insects, animals and micro-organisms and we miss the essence of the forest if we only describe its trees” (p. 92). In the same way, a culture

cannot be satisfactorily described in terms of the characteristics of a typical individual” (Schein, 1985). Culture in the faith-based school must be understood in terms of the philosophies and goals that are at the core of the supporting religious organization. It must also be understood in terms of the people who work there. In addition, it is understood from the perspective of those who are served. It is understood in terms of the history of the faith-based school and it is also understood in terms of what exists currently (Hofstede, 1980, , 1993).

School leaders must become familiar with the existing culture in their school, assess the culture as it exists, take the time to get “the lay of the land” and then school leaders will either reinforce the current culture if they are comfortable with it or transform the culture to what they determine it should become (Peterson & Deal, 2002). Principals establish priorities and tenaciously adhere to them, identify compatible teachers, are prepared to deal with conflict, set an example of consistency and resolve, are optimistic and move the school organization forward and utilize ceremonies, tradition, rituals and symbols to exemplify the common values of the school organization (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Culture is a powerful dynamic in schools. Understanding and working with the culture of their schools is an essential part of what principals, and in particular faith-based principals are able to do. Creating and sustaining a school culture that directly and indirectly affects student achievement is a strong message in school leadership literature today. School leaders promote unity of purpose among the staff, create an atmosphere of well-being for the teachers, craft a mechanism for developing a sense of purpose with the staff and promote a vision of excellence that the school can achieve (Marzano et al., 2005). The students, teachers and communities benefit from a

great school culture. Faith-based school culture develops from religious beliefs and is supported by the religious faith of the principal and teachers.

### **Summary**

This literature review covered principal preparation, school leadership practices and the important influences of school culture.

Principal preparation provides the initial academic training for principals. The candidates take a series of required courses, complete clinical experiences and they may construct a portfolio. Principal preparation programs have come under scrutiny (Levine, 2005). Reform of the preparation program for school principals has been considered (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Goldring, Spillane, Huff, Barnes, & Supovitz, 2006; Levine, 2005). Principal preparation of faith-based school administrators faces similar challenges.

Effective, high quality school leaders are important in the faith-based schools of America (Inniger, 2005). Preparation programs for faith-based school leaders are informed by the current literature around principal preparation programs in the public sector with an appreciation for the unique aspects of faith-based principal preparation (Cochran, 2005). Faith-based principal preparation programs will also benefit from school leadership literature. That foundation of understanding leadership provides a perspective for the research study of faith-based school leadership practices that can inform the unique aspects of principal preparation faced by faith-based leader preparation programs.

School leadership research has been summarized in three highly respected integrated reviews (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al.,

2005). The integrated reviews specific to educational leadership provided evidence of progression from a focus on the individual leader to a broader understanding of leadership in context and with other people. Also revealed in the literature is a strengthening connection between school leadership and the successful school in which student achievement was not only the goal but the standard. The stream of literature from the 1970's and before leaned heavily in the direction of theoretical leadership studies that emphasized the managerial capability of school leaders. More recent studies had shifted their emphasis to researching school leadership in the area of instructional leadership that recognized improved student achievement as the mark of a successful school. Successful schools were closely tied to leadership excellence. The major integrated works shaped the literature review by revealing leadership themes that resided in the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 2.1. The body of literature indicated that school leadership practices impacted the success of schools in the area of curriculum/instruction/assessment that directly touched students, in the area of faculty development that indirectly affects the academic achievement of students and in the area of community relationships that strengthened schools in ways that are just beginning to be explored.

Despite the vast amount of leadership literature and literature specific to school leadership, there are few scholarly studies investigating school leadership in faith-based schools. Effective leadership in the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development and community relationships are necessary for the ultimate benefit of the students in faith-based schools (Cochran, 2005). The need for quality school leadership in faith-based schools is important for the success of millions of students in those systems. Catholic schools in America are the largest private school system,

attracting in excess of 5% of the nation's student population with more than 2.4 million students in their K-12 schools in the 2005 – 2006 school year according to the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA, 2006; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) reported nearly 160,000 students in elementary and secondary schools across the United States during the 2005-06 school year (LCMS, 2006). The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) operates the fourth largest private school system in the United State and reports over 42,000 total students in PreK-12 and in excess of 33,000 students in grades K-12 during 2005-06 (WELS, 2006).

Leadership practices of school leaders can inform principal preparation programs. The literature review demonstrated a need to study leadership practice as a means to possibly redefine principal preparation. As much as existing literature seems relevant to leadership practices of faith-based school principals, additional study is warranted to discern areas in which practices differ between faith-based and non-faith-based school leaders. Herein lies the purpose of the present study that is guided by the following questions:

- 1) What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?
  - a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
  - b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
  - c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
  - d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment.

- 2) To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?
- 3) To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?
- 4) What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH STUDY METHODOLOGY**

The preparation of Christian faith-based school leaders varies from virtually no preparation other than teaching to varying degrees of formal preparation and ongoing support. Increasingly this is viewed as problematic because of the outward expectation that principals are qualified to lead their schools effectively and the inward expectation felt by faith-based principals as they face self doubts regarding the adequacy of their preparation. This study sought to identify leadership practices considered important by currently practicing faith-based school leaders in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The principals were also asked to share their perceptions regarding the feasibility of being able to engage in those important practices. In addition, demographic data were collected to describe the faith-based principals who responded and the schools in which they serve, as well as their pathway to their current position as principal. Also obtained were principal perspectives about key design features for programs intended to prepare future faith-based school leaders. Findings from this study will be used to inform both the content emphasis and design features of such preparation programs.

The conceptual framework, An Emergent Conceptual Framework for Administrative Leadership in Faith-based Schools, presented in Chapter 1 of this thesis, identified three domains of school leadership practice as substantiated in the school leadership research literature. The domains are: curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development and community relationships. Additional areas of importance were cross-domain leadership practices and faith-based organizational culture which influences and is influenced by the identified domains. This framework was used to guide the design and instrumentation of the present study. It should be noted, however, that the



studies that informed this framework were largely conducted in public school settings. A secondary purpose of this study, then, was to discern leadership practices of unique importance to leaders of faith-based schools which will advance the knowledge base in the area. The research questions for this study were:

- 1) What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?
  - a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
  - b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
  - c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
  - d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment.
- 2) To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?
- 3) To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?
- 4) What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?

### **Method and Rationale**

Survey research was selected as the methodology for this descriptive study of leadership practices of principals in Christian faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Such surveys administered by traditional or electronic means are a much more time and cost effective means of data collection when participants are widely spread geographically. Additionally, electronic surveys are efficient when the sample

size is large. Descriptive studies conducted using surveys also allow recording, analysis and measurement of the dynamics of a construct if the data are properly interpreted and summarized. Quantitative values allow large amounts of data to be summarized quickly. Quantitative research using survey collection is time and cost effective. Surveys probe the opinions, interests and values of those principals being surveyed. Surveys are frequently conducted for the purpose of exploring and describing a particular population. Survey methodology was the most logical choice for facilitating this research study. The research data were collected from the selected sample and used to describe the perceptions of those responding (Rea & Parker, 2005).

A web-based survey was used in this study instead of a traditional paper and pencil survey with an enclosed postage paid return envelope that is mailed to the potential respondents. Online surveys offer several advantages. The web-based survey method offers a convenient and efficient way of reaching potential respondents (Rea & Parker, 2005). They receive and complete the questionnaire in the privacy of their own home or office. This advantage is facilitated by the widespread availability of computer and internet access. Rapid data collection is also possible. Clear instructions to the respondents facilitate completing the survey and electronic submission of the completed questionnaire can be accomplished quickly. Online surveys are much less expensive to distribute and collect than paper questionnaires that are mailed to each potential respondent. Follow-up can also be done via email with corresponding cost savings.

There are, however, several disadvantages to conducting online surveys (Rea & Parker, 2005). Such surveys are limited to populations that have access to a computer and the internet. Also required is a minimal level of computer literacy in order to

complete and submit the questionnaire. The necessary level of technology competence among principals has improved but cannot be presumed. Surveys are also subject to a self-selection bias that can lead to lower response rates. Those who do not have easy access to the internet or those who do not feel comfortable with web-based technology exclude themselves from the survey project by not participating. Further, because there is essentially no interviewer involvement, respondents may answer based on faulty assumptions. Unclear questions cannot be clarified and respondents may be unable or unwilling to respond. These problems can impact the response rate and the validity of online survey methodology.

The online survey was not as complex or as costly as a mailed survey. However, it was critical that the researcher had the technical knowledge necessary to carry out the online survey successfully. Survey distribution and collection was conducted with confidentiality safe guards in place. A double blind survey distribution and data collection model was used to assure the privacy rights of those choosing to participate. The researcher had no access to the email distribution lists of the sample. The denominational leadership offices served as the third party that had access to the email addresses of the respondents as it was necessary to send mass emails to the entire distribution group. Those mass distributions were sent by the leadership offices. Mass email distributions introduced the study, invited initial participation and reminded non-respondents to participate on two occasions. The leadership offices, in turn, did not know which principals actually participated in the study. These safe guards maintained the anonymity of participating principals.

The purpose of the online survey was to invite participation but also provided safeguards that protected against multiple responses by the same respondent (Rea & Parker, 2005). It was important that the questionnaire was submitted to a secure server to ensure the privacy of the responding population. The researcher was able to apply a statistical program (such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS) to the data and prepared the necessary tables, charts and statistical analyses. The service of SurveyMonkey.com was used to facilitate the on-line survey. The SurveyMonkey.com service provided a user friendly format, utilized a secure server, segregated the data and provided anonymous data collection capability.

### **Participants**

An online survey was administered to a population of Christian faith-based school principals in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The web address enabling access to the survey was sent to the entire population of 850 principals of Catholic Schools, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Lutheran Schools and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Lutheran Schools in the two states. The population size of 850 required 451 participants for a confidence of +/- 3% and required 265 participants for a confidence level of +/- 5% (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Salant & Dillman, 2001). All the participating principals served schools within the K-12 parameter with some schools including PreK as well.

Phone contact was made with the state leaders of the three denominations making up the population. The rationale for the study was explained and their participation was invited. The leadership of the three targeted denominations expressed interest in participating in the study. A follow-up email was sent to the leadership offices. The email included a more detailed explanation of the survey project, goals of the project and

an electronic attachment of the survey instrument their principals would be completing on-line. It explained that the on-line survey was intended to gather data from the individual faith-based school principals invited to participate in the study. The email invited comments and questions about the project and/or the survey instrument itself. All three leadership groups enthusiastically endorsed the project. The leadership of the three faith-based systems agreed to participate and encouraged their principals to complete the survey. The survey was designed to gather data from the principals regarding their perceptions about educational leadership practices and pathways. It gathered principal perspectives as to how they supported their faculties, connected to their communities and promoted student achievement. Demographic data were also sought that characterized the principal respondent and the faith-based setting in which they served. The data, collected by the survey, were used to analyze the faith-based leadership practices that were perceived as valuable as they identified current principal preparation programs and as they characterized perceived needs in future principal preparation.

Table 3.1 illustrates the potential target schools. Each denomination participated and the school parameters of potential principal respondents for each denomination are shown. The denominational leadership offices shared the total number of schools/principals on their distribution lists. Five hundred fifteen Catholic principals were contacted with 111 participants for a 22% response rate. One hundred sixty Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod principals were contacted with 72 participants for a 45% response rate. One hundred seventy-five Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod principals were contacted with 107 participants for a 61% response rate.

Table 3.1: Target School Parameters Table

	Target School Parameters						TOTALS
	Minnesota			Wisconsin			
	Catholic*	LCMS*	WELS*	Catholic*	LCMS*	WELS*	
Elementary and Middle Schools Contacted	177	58	37	276	85	126	759
High Schools Contacted	26	7	3	36	10	9	91
<b>Total</b>	203	65	40	312	95	135	850

\*Catholic – Minnesota and Wisconsin Catholic Conference

\*LCMS – Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

\*WELS – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

## **Instrumentation**

### ***Initial Development***

Initial survey development used the evidence that emerged from the conceptual framework based on the literature review as illustrated by Figure 1.1 in Chapter One. The survey instrument was developed specifically for this research study and was designed to explore the constructs of the research problem. The survey instrument is shown in Appendix A.

The four major parts of the survey instrument align with the four research questions. Part one of the survey described the respondent perceptions about the importance of and feasibility of performing fifty faith-based leadership practices and concluded with one open-ended question that asked respondents to share an example of how their religious faith influenced an important school related decision they made. The fifty leadership practice items were subdivided into five sections. Those five sections were cross-domain practices, practices involving curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development leadership practices, practices contributing to community relationship building and practices that specifically relate to the faith-based school culture. The fifty practices that initiated part one of the survey, related to the first research question and attempted to determine the perceived importance and feasibility of Christian faith-based leadership practices in the five areas mentioned above, by having the respondents indicate their perceptions with scaled answer options. Respectability, visible relationship building and optimism were explored in an effort to describe cross-domain faith-based school leadership behaviors. Being a change advocate, demonstrating systematic intensity, knowing and overseeing curriculum/instruction/assessment were

areas used to describe leadership behaviors that influence curriculum/instruction/assessment. Affirming success and fostering professional growth, communication, flexibility and providing training as well as providing resources were descriptors used in connection with leadership practices affecting faculty development. Openness in building community relationships was explored as well. Understanding and influencing organizational and faith-based culture in the school were leadership practices explored in the last section of the fifty listed practices of part one. Respondents rated the perceived importance of the items on a five-point Likert scale - (1) Not important; (2) Not very important; (3) Somewhat important; (4) Important; and (5) Very important. They then indicated the feasibility of carrying out the practices on a three-point Likert scale - (1) Not very feasible; (2) Somewhat feasible; and (3) Very feasible. The fifty school leadership practices comprised the dependent variables in this survey study. These types of scales work particularly well in the context of considering a series of items that poll attitudinal data about specific subject matter (Rea & Parker, 2005). The open-ended question that concluded part one related to the second research question and asked about the extent to which religious beliefs were a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals.

Part two and part three of the survey instrument explored the demographics surrounding schools and principals. These demographic descriptions aligned with the third research question. Part two described the schools in which the responding Christian faith-based principals served. Information was gathered using a forced answer format. Questions 4-10 involved descriptive demographic information about the school setting of the respondents. The descriptive information in part two involved the following: school



denomination, school location, grades in the school, faculty size of the school, student body size of the school and percentages of faculty and students that hold membership in the church body supporting the school.

Part three gathered descriptive information about the principals themselves. The responses were gathered using a forced answer format also. This information was used to describe the respondents and served as independent categorical variables during data analysis. Part three consisted of questions 11-24 that gathered descriptive demographic information about the individual respondents. The descriptive information in part three involves the following: gender, age, total principal experience, total experience at the present school, if the principal was ever a principal of a secular school, if there were other formal leaders assisting with school administration, the level of education, professional credentials and the type of educational system from which the principal received undergraduate and/or graduate education.

Part four explored principal preparation and continuing education perceptions. This part aligned with research question four. It began with questions 25-28. The questions offered scaled responses involving respondent perceptions concerning principal preparation. Perceptions of principal preparation addressed the following areas: what principals perceive as valuable in their preparation for the principalship, principal perception of the importance of various content areas in principal preparation, the importance of issues facing faith-based principals today. Part four concluded with open-ended question that asked, "Finally, what would you identify as the three most pressing or interesting areas about which you would like to learn in the next year?" Respondents

shared their views on current and future principal professional growth in response to this question.

### *Piloting the Survey*

The survey was piloted prior to being made available to the intended audience of Christian faith-based principals. The pilot study of the survey was conducted to assess the effectiveness and clarity of the survey instrument. Those selected to participate in the pilot were instructed to respond to specific questions regarding relevance, clarity, format and time required to complete the survey.

The survey was piloted by 5 principals. The participants accessed the survey online. They represented the denominations of the target audience. They represented Catholic, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod principals. Three principals in the pilot group were located in Minnesota and two were principals in Wisconsin. One of the Minnesota principals was from a suburban school. The other two Minnesota pilot principals were from rural schools. The two Wisconsin principals both served in an urban setting. The group noted no questions regarding the relevance of the survey content. The format was not questioned. Several clarifying suggestions were offered. The piloting principals noted that leadership practices numbered 44 and 47 on part one of the survey were identical. Number 44 remained, "Prayer is part of the decision making process." The duplication was eliminated by having number 47 state, "Religious faith (beliefs) plays a role in our choice of curriculum materials." Leadership practice number 49 involved community interaction. The practice was stated as an intentional effort to share one's faith when interacting with the community-at-large. Several of the principals indicated that "intentional" indicated

something artificial to them and they suggested the item be changed to “religious faith (beliefs) influences interaction with the community-at-large.” The final clarification was suggested in connection with practice number 50. The original items indicated that religious symbols are “conspicuous” in the school. The pilot group indicated that “displayed prominently” was a more appropriate way of stating the practice. They indicated the amount of time required to complete the survey to be between 25 and 60 minutes. After piloting of the survey instrument, the suggested corrections amended the survey to appear as it does in Appendix A. The five principals who took part in the pilot project were thanked for their assistance and informed that by virtue of their participation in the pilot process they would be excluded from the regular survey research project.

### ***Survey Distribution***

The web-based survey instrument was made available to the targeted principals serving K-12 faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin following the piloting process. The educational leadership offices of the three denominations that agreed to participate in the study were contacted by email. The leadership was thanked for their important cooperation in conducting the study and asked to send an attached letter of invitation to their principals. They were given the option of attaching the letter to the email message they distributed to their principals or copying the letter of invitation into the email message they distributed to their principals. The WELS Commission on Parish Schools distributed the letter of invitation seen in Appendix D to WELS school principals in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Minnesota and Wisconsin Catholic Conference education offices distributed the letter of invitation seen in Appendix E to the Catholic principals in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Appendix F shows the letter of invitation

distributed to LCMS principals in Wisconsin and Minnesota through the South Wisconsin and North Wisconsin district offices and the Minnesota North and Minnesota South district offices.

Follow-up reminders and final reminders were distributed through the leadership offices indicated above at two week and four week intervals following the initial letter of invitation. The follow-up letter in Appendix G was distributed two weeks after the initial invitation to participate was sent. The final reminder notice shown in Appendix H was distributed to WELS principals. The final reminder show in Appendix I was distributed to LCMS principals. The final reminder letter shown in Appendix J was distributed to Minnesota Catholic Conference principals and the final reminder letter show in Appendix K was distributed to Wisconsin Catholic Conference principals.

The deadline for data collection was February 15, 2008. A few additional results were received until February 23, 2008. No survey data were received after February 23, 2008.

### **Data Collection**

The survey was a self-administered web-based survey that was distributed electronically. Leadership personnel of the three faith-based systems encouraged their principals to participate in the study in the initial invitation email. The leadership agreed to assist the researcher in explaining the purpose of the research and the importance of participation for their faith-based school organization.

Email contact was made with the participants through the denominational leadership offices that served as an independent third party. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary. Principals of the selected schools were invited to complete the

on-line survey. They received an explanation of how to complete the survey. They were informed, at the same time, that completion of the survey constituted their consent to participate. Each respondent was provided with instructions on how to access the survey instrument on SurveyMonkey.com. Those invited to respond to the survey were thanked for their participation but did not receive any additional compensation. The completed surveys were submitted online through a subscription to the SurveyMonkey.com website.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using quantitative methodology, descriptive, and inferential statistics. Data from the responses about the importance and feasibility of leadership practices, demographic information and principal preparation/professional growth perceptions were summarized and also analyzed by range, mode, mean, t-test and ANOVA significance tests using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Dependent variables, independent variables and perceptions regarding principal preparation were analyzed. The dependent variables in the study were the practices of the faith-based principals responding to the survey perceived as important and the feasibility of the principals being able to perform those same behaviors. The practices making up part one of the survey were organized according to five question groupings; cross-domain, curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development, community relations and behaviors specific to the faith-based culture.

The independent categorical variables consisted of the descriptive information that the respondents shared in parts two and three of the survey. The items reflected information about the schools the respondents served and about the individual

respondents themselves. Response analysis of the perceptions around the faith-based leadership practices was considered in terms of the independent variables.

The perceived importance of leadership practices and the feasibility of accomplishing them were summarized and described. Religious beliefs as a contributing factor in decision making for faith-based principals were described. Examples of principal responses to the open-ended question were shared.

Principal preparation perceptions in the areas of content, beneficial aspects of the principal preparation experience and the areas they perceived as affecting the work of faith-based school principals were described. They were correlated to school urbanicity, school student body size, principal gender, principal age, principal experience and principal education levels.

Please refer to Appendix C for correlations between dependent and independent variables.

### **Reliability, Analyses and Summary**

After the final survey was administered and results summarized, reliability analyses were conducted to determine integrity of scaled response items. Reliability analysis was applied to the scaled response options utilized in parts one and four of this survey. Reliability analysis was used with the 50 school leadership practices to which the 5 point Likert scale determining importance was applied. It was also used with those same 50 school leadership practices to which the 3 point Likert scale determining feasibility was applied. Reliability analysis was also used with questions 25 -28 of part four because they were questions with scaled response options. Question 25 asked, "How helpful were the following learning opportunities in terms of preparing you to be a

principal of a faith-based school?” The response scaled answers were: Not at all helpful, Helpful and Extremely helpful. Question 26 asked, “If you were charged with the responsibility of designing a preparation program for faith-based school principals, what degree of importance would you assign to each of the following content areas?” The scale of responses included: Not important, Not very important, Somewhat important, Important and Very important. Question 27 was, “How significant is each of the following items in terms of affecting your work as a Christian faith-based school principal?” The response scale was, Insignificant, Not very significant, Somewhat significant, Significant and Very significant. Question 28 asked, “As you consider ways to stay current and energized about your work as a Christian faith-based school principal, how supportive are, or would be, the following means of professional learning and growth?” The responses were: Not very supportive, Supportive, Very Supportive.

The reliability analysis calculates scale reliability and also provides information about the relationship between individual items in the scale. The analysis assures internal consistency of the scale and overall reliability of the survey items associated with scaled responses. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis was used.

Part one asked the respondents to indicate their perceptions of the importance of 50 school leadership practices on a 5 point Likert scale and asked respondents to indicate their perceptions of the feasibility of those same practices on a 3 point Likert scale. Leadership practice survey items 1-12 reflected cross-domain practices. The Cronbach Alpha analysis revealed a reliability level of .837 for survey items 1-12 (n=12).

Items 13-21 on part one of the leadership practices survey reflected practices dealing with curriculum/instruction/assessment. The Cronbach Alpha analysis revealed a reliability level of .911 for survey items 13-21 (n=9).

Items 22-30 on part one of the leadership practices survey reflected practices dealing with Faculty Development. The Cronbach Alpha analysis revealed a reliability level of .895 for survey items 22-30 (n=9).

Items 31-37 on part one of the leadership practices survey reflected practices dealing with Community Relationships. The Cronbach Alpha analysis revealed a reliability level of .907 for survey items 31-37 (n=7).

Items 38-50 on part one of the leadership practices survey reflected practices dealing with Faith-based Leadership Practices. The Cronbach Alpha analysis revealed a reliability level of .766 for survey items 38-50 (n=13).

The Cronbach Alpha analysis reliability level for items 1-50 is .948 (n=50). The reliability of survey items 1-50 determining the importance of specific faith-based leadership practices is very high.

The Cronbach Alpha analysis was performed on part one items 1-50 as those items were answered by the respondents relative to their feasibility. The Cronbach Alpha analysis was applied to ensure the reliability of those items as perceived by respondents on a 3 point Likert scale reflecting feasibility. The Cronbach Alpha analysis reliability level for items 1-50 when determining perceived feasibility was .920 (n=50). The reliability of survey items 1-50 determining the feasibility of specific faith-based leadership practices is also very high.



Part one of the survey concluded with an open ended question about an example of when faith influenced a decision they made. Parts two and three of the survey define the independent variables in the study. Those two parts consisted of demographic information about the school of the respondent and demographic information about the respondents themselves and due to their nature were not subjected to the Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. Those data are presented in Chapter Four.

Question 25 asked, “How helpful were the following learning opportunities in terms of preparing you to be a principal of a faith-based school?” The response scale for question 25 was: (1) Not at all helpful, (2) Helpful, (3) Extremely helpful, and (0) Does not apply. The response “does not apply” was eliminated from the reliability analysis of question 25 to enable meaningful analysis of the ordinal responses 1, 2, and 3. As a result there were 210 respondents excluded because those respondents had answered “does not apply” to at least one item. The Cronbach Alpha analysis of the eight response options in question 25 was based on 78 valid respondents. The Cronbach Alpha reliability level for question 25 was .599 (n=8). The reliability of survey question 25 was high.

The response scale for question 26, “If you were charged with the responsibility of designing a preparation program for faith-based school principals, what degree of importance would you assign to each of the following content areas?” was: (1) Not important, (2) Not very important, (3) Somewhat important, (4) Important, and (5) Very important. The Cronbach analysis of the twenty response options offered for question 26 was based on 252 valid respondents. The Cronbach Alpha reliability level for question 26 was .889 (n=20). The reliability of survey question 26 was very high.

The response scale for question 27, “How significant is each of the following items in terms of affecting your work as a Christian faith-based school principal?” was: (1) Insignificant, (2) Not very significant, (3) Somewhat significant, (4) Significant, and (5) Very Significant. The Cronbach analysis of the thirteen response options in question 27 was based on 260 valid respondents. The Cronbach Alpha reliability level for question 27 was .845 (n=13). The reliability of survey question 27 was very high.

The response scale for question 28, “As you consider ways to stay current and energized about your work as a Christian faith-based school principal, how supportive are, or would be, the following means of professional learning and growth?” was: (1) Not very supportive, (2) Supportive, and (3) Very supportive. The Cronbach analysis of the eight response options in question 28 was based on 259 valid respondents. The Cronbach Alpha reliability level for question 28 was .694 (n=8). The reliability of survey question 27 is also high.

The results of the study are detailed in Chapter Four.

This survey study was based on sound research design supported by experts in the field of research: Parker and Rea. The research observed the accepted standards of ethical behavior regarding confidentiality, rights to privacy and the oversight of the Human Subjects Committee of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Purpose**

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the leadership practices of Christian faith-based school principals that were perceived as valuable in an effort to inform future principal preparation programs. The principals were also asked to share their perceptions regarding the feasibility of being able to engage in the valued practices that were identified. The study determined the context in which the principal's work, demographic information about the principals themselves and also their pathway to their current position as principal.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?
  - a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
  - b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
  - c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
  - d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment.
- 2) To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?
- 3) To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?
- 4) What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?

### **Description of Respondents**

The invitation to participate in the study was sent to 850 Christian faith-based principals in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Of the 850 principals invited to participate, 288 completed the survey for a 34 percent return rate. The average response rate for on-line surveys is about 30 percent (Hardy, 2004). The 34% response rate is an acceptable rate of return. The population of 850 required a sample of 265 for a confidence level of +/- 5% (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Salant & Dillman, 2001).

The respondents were described by religious denomination and by personal demographics including their personal educational experiences. The respondents also were described in terms of the schools they served. Table 4.1 describes the targeted population by denomination and by school type. It also describes the responding principals in terms of the response percentage by school type and the response percentage of the total schools of the denomination invited to participate in the survey study. The survey instrument did not ask principals to indicate the state in which their school was located. The Table 3.1: Target School Parameters Table differentiated the population by states because the denominational leadership offices organized their email distribution lists by states. The offices shared the raw population numbers organized by the state in which the school was located.

Of the 850 schools contacted, 515 were Roman Catholic K-12 schools, 160 were Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), and 175 were Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Responses were obtained from 111 of the 515 Catholic schools for a 22% response rate; from 72 of the 160 LC-MS schools, for a 45% response rate; and 107 of the WELS schools, for a 61% response rate. Overall, then, the Lutheran

schools' response rate was about half and the Catholic schools' rate was about one fifth. Two of the responding principals chose not to identify their denomination.

In terms of the school level, of the 850 schools contacted, 759 were elementary and/or middle schools and 91 were high schools. Of the elementary and middle schools, 251 responded yielding a response rate of 33.1%. Of the high schools, 39 responded, yielding a response rate of 42.9%. Looking across denominations, the response rates at both the elementary/middle and high school levels were at least twice as high among Lutheran schools as Catholic schools.

The principals who responded to the survey indicated that 40.7% (n=116) of their schools were located in a rural setting, while 33.3% (n=95) were suburban, and 26.0% (n=74) were located in urban areas. Two of the principals who responded, chose not to indicate the location of their school.

TABLE 4.1 Response frequencies by religious denomination (response percentage in parentheses)

Target Schools Contacted				
	Catholic*	LCMS*	WELS*	TOTALS
Elementary and Middle Schools contacted	453	143	163	758
High Schools contacted	62	17	12	91
Total	515	160	175	850

Target Schools that Responded				
	Catholic*	LCMS*	WELS*	TOTALS
Elementary and Middle Schools that responded	90 (20 %)	61 (43 %)	99 (61 %)	250
High Schools that responded	19 (32 %)	11 (65%)	8 (67 %)	38
Total	109 (22%)	72 (45%)	107 (61 %)	288

\* Catholic - Roman Catholic

\* LCMS – Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

\* WELS – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Presented in Table 4.2 are data regarding the responding principal gender, age, level of education, professional credentials, total years in education, total years as a principal, total years as principal of their current school and whether they had ever served as principal of a school that was not faith-based. Most of the responding principals of faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin were males: 65% were males and 35% were females. Slightly more than a third (35.8%) were between the ages of 51-60; slightly less than a third (31.2%) were between 41 and 50. The highest level of education indicated by the largest percentage of principal respondents was a masters degree plus with 43%. The 278 principals responding to the professional credentials question indicated that 71.2% held religious certification, while 65.5% had state teacher licenses and 29.1% held a state administrator's license. Principals were asked to indicate all professional credentials they held and many principals indicated that they held multiple credentials. The principals shared that 64.6% of the 285 responding, had been involved in education for 21 or more years. 33% of the principals responding were involved in education for between 21 and 30 years and 31.6% of the respondents indicated that they

had been involved in education for more than 30 years. The largest number of respondents indicated that they had served as a principal for 0-5 years. 26.3% were principals for 0-5 years and 23.5% were principals for 6-10 years. Those figures indicate that nearly one-half of the principals responding, or 49.8%, have been school principals for ten years or less. When asked about their tenure at their present school, 49.6% of the respondents indicated that they had spent between 0-5 years as principal of their current school and 24.6% were at their present school between 6 and 10 years. The principal respondents indicated rich experience as an educator but a much briefer tenure with experience as a principal. Of the faith-based principals invited to participate in the survey, 95.1% indicated that they had only served as principal of a faith-based school, while 4.9% had served in both faith-based and non-faith-based schools. Faith-based school principal respondents appear to be committed to their work as leaders of faith-based schools.

Table 4.2 describes the responding principals with respect to their gender, age, level of education, professional credentials, total years in education, total years served as a principal, total years served as principal of their current school and whether or not they had ever served as principal of a school that was not faith-based.

TABLE 4.2 Description of respondents

Gender (n=286)	Female (35%)	Male (65%)			
Age (n=285)	22-30 (06.3%)	31-40 (14.7%)	41-50 (31.2%)	51-60 (35.8%)	>60 (11.9%)
Highest level of education (n=284)	Baccalaureate (13.4 %)	Baccalaureate+ (22.9 %)	Masters (17.6 %)	Masters+ (43.0 %)	Doctorate (3.2 %)

Professional Credentials (n=278)	Religious Certification (71.2%)	State Teacher License (65.5%)	State Admin. License (29.1)		
Total years as educator (n=285)	0-5 (03.5%)	6-10 (08.8%)	11-20 (23.2%)	21-30 (33.0%)	>30 (31.6%)
Total years as principal (n=281)	0-5 (26.3%)	6-10 (23.5%)	11-20 (22.4%)	21-30 (16.7%)	>30 (11.0%)
Total years as principal of current school (n=284)	0-5 (49.6%)	6-10 (24.6%)	11-20 (18.0%)	21-30 (05.3%)	>30 (02.5%)
Non-faith based principal (n=283)	Yes (04.9%)	No (95.1%)			

The survey study also gathered information about the personal educational experiences of the respondents. (see Table 4.3) The principals invited to participate were asked about their primary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate educations. They were asked if they attended private religious, private secular or public schools. The 285 responding principals indicated that 74% of them had attended private religious elementary schools and 26% had gone to public elementary schools. The secondary experience of the 285 responding principals showed that 59% attended private religious schools with 39.6% attending public high school. Of the participating principals, 1.4% attended a private secular secondary school. The undergraduate education of the 283 respondents, answering this question, indicated that 74.9% attended private religious colleges while 23.7% attended public colleges or universities. Once again, 1.4% went to a private secular institution. 19.9% of the 282 principals, answering this question indicated that post-graduate education did not apply to their situation. Of those principals who indicated their graduate status, 45% were attending or had attended a private



religious college, 31.6% were attending or had attended a public institution, and 3.5% chose a private secular college or university for their post-graduate experience.

In summary, the respondents to this survey are largely Lutheran (63% Lutheran, compared to 37% Catholic); and largely elementary or middle school level principals (87% elementary and middle school level, compared to 13% high school level). About two thirds (65%) were male and one third (35%) were female. Also about two thirds of the responding principals were between the ages of 41 to 60 and, notably, nearly two thirds held a least a master's degree. Well over half held religious certification and state teacher licenses, slightly over a quarter held state administrator licenses. The majority of respondents had 20 or more years experience as an educator. Years of experience as a principal were equally divided; with a quarter having 0-5 years of experience, a quarter with 6-10 year, a quarter having 11-20 years experience, and a quarter having more than 20 years experience. The respondents' experience as principal was almost exclusively in faith-based schools (95.1%). Finally, a strong majority of respondents had attended private religious primary, secondary and undergraduate schools as students.

TABLE 4.3 Type of educational experiences of respondents

<b>School Level</b>	<b>Private religious</b>	<b>Private secular</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>
Primary school (n=285)	(n=211) 74%	(n=0) 0%	(n=74) 26%	(n=0) 0%
Secondary school (n=285)	(n=168) 59%	(n=4) 1.4%	(n=113) 39.6%	(n=0) 0%

Undergraduate school (n=283)	(n=212) 74.9%	(n=4) 1.4%	(n=67) 23.7%	(n=0) 0%
Graduate school (n=282)	(n=127) 45%	(n=10) 3.5%	(n=89) 31.6%	(n=56) 19.9%

### Description of Responding Schools

The principals were asked to describe the schools they were serving in terms of the religious denomination, urbanicity, grades in the school, faculty size, student body size and whether the principal was assisted by an assistant principal or a dean of students (see Table 4.4). The 286 respondents indicated that: 37.4% were Catholic schools, 37.4% were WELS, and 25.2% were LCMS. The school settings of those responding indicated that nearly three fourths were rural and suburban; 40.76% were rural, 33.3% were suburban, and 26% were in an urban setting. Of those responding, 265 indicated the type of school in which they were serving; 64.7% of the responding principals worked in PreK-8 school settings, 11.7% worked in schools with grades PreK-6, 11.3% served in high schools, 7.9% in school with grades K-8, and 4.1% worked in K-5/6 level schools. Of those responding, 284 indicated the faculty size of their current school; 49.6% of the principals indicated that they worked with faculties of 10 or less, 31.3% had faculties between 11-20 teachers, and 19% of the principals participating in the study indicated working with faculties of 21-50+ teachers. Two hundred eighty-five participating principals indicated the student body sizes of the schools in which they served. Student body sizes of the schools served by the respondents were more balanced between the categories: <50, 51-100, 101-200, 201-300 and >300. The percentages of the respondents were: 11.1%, 27.4%, 34.4%, 13.0%, and 14.1% respectively. Of the

principals responding, 285 indicated whether or not they had an assistant principal or dean of students assisting them with administrative duties. They indicated that 23.5% had assistance and 76.5% did not.

Table 4.4 describes the schools served by those principals choosing to respond to the survey study. The denominational response rate and the urbanicity of the responding principals were well distributed. Of the schools served by the respondents, 76.4% involved Pre-K either combined with the elementary up through grade 6 or through grade 8. Of the schools served by the responding principals, 79.9% had faculties with 20 or less teachers. Of the schools served by principals responding to the survey, 72.9% had student bodies of 200 students or less and 76.5% of the responding principals served as the sole administrator in their buildings. These statistics seem to indicate that the majority of Christian faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin are consistently small across denominational and urbanicity demographics and Pre-K programs are part of most of those schools.

TABLE 4.4 Description of responding schools

Denomination (n=286)	LCMS n=72 (25.2%)	Catholic n=107 (37.4%)	WELS n=107 (37.4%)		
Urbanicity (n=285)	Rural n=116 (40.7%)	Suburban n=95 (33.3%)	Urban n=74 (26%)		
Grades in school (n=265)	Pre-school, K-8 n=172 (64.7 %)	Pre-school, K-6 n=31 (11.7 %)	K-5/6 n=11 (04.1 %)	K-8 n=21 (07.9 %)	Senior High n=30 (11.3 %)
Number of faculty (n=284)	1-10 n=141 (49.6%)	11-20 n=89 (31.3%)	21-35 n=33 (11.6%)	36-50 n=10 (03.5%)	>50 n=11 (03.9%)

Number of students (n=285)	<50 n=32 (11.1%)	51-100 n=78 (27.4%)	101-200 n=98 (34.4%)	201-300 n=37 (13.0%)	>300 n=40 (14.1%)
Assistant principal or dean? (n=285)	Yes 67 (23.5%)	No 218 (76.5%)			

The respondents were asked if they, their faculties and their students/student's families held church membership in a church of the same denomination as the school they were serving (see Table 4.5). The respondents indicated that they held membership in a church of the same denomination as the school they were serving 97.9% of the time. The principals are committed to the belief system they represent in their schools. Of the principals, 92.6% indicated that most if not all of their faculties also held membership in a church of the same denomination as the school they served. Of the principals responding, 83.9% indicated that most or all of the students/student's families were members of a church of the same denomination as the school they served.

In summary, the schools of the three denominations served by responding principals were primarily organized as Pre-K-8 or Prek-K-6 (76% compared to 24% high schools or K-8). About three quarters of the schools were located in either rural (40.7%) or suburban (33.3%) settings, with only about a quarter (26%) located in urban settings. Nearly four of five schools represented by respondents had 20 or less faculty members (79.9% compared to 20.1% with more than 20). Almost three quarters of the school principals reported having a student body size of 200 or less students (72.9 compared to 27.1% more that 200). More that three quarters of the responding principals were the sole administrator in their buildings (76.5%). Finally, a strong majority of respondents

indicated that they, their faculty and their student body entirely or mostly are members of the religious denomination supporting their schools.

TABLE 4.5 Church memberships of respondents, faculty, and students/families the same as the denomination of school

Principal (n=282)	Yes n=276 (97.9%)	No n=6 (02.1%)		
Faculty (n=286)	All n=162 (56.6%)	Most n=103 (36%)	About 1/2 n=10 (03.5%)	Fewer than 1/2 n=11 (03.8%)
Students/families (n=286)	All n=18 (06.3%)	Most n=222 (77.6%)	About 1/2 n=24 (08.4%)	Fewer than 1/2 n=22 (07.7%)

### Principal Leadership Practices

The principals choosing to participate in the survey were asked to indicate their perception of the importance and feasibility of leadership practices in the domains of curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development, community relationships, faith-based activities and those that were seen as cross-domain leadership practices. This section examines the principals’ scaled responses to the areas indicated above, beginning with curriculum/instruction/assessment leadership practices.

#### *Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Leadership Practices*

The principal respondents were asked to indicate the level of perceived importance of curriculum/instruction/assessment practices on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” being low and “5” being high. The principals also shared the level of perceived feasibility of the same curriculum/instruction/assessment leadership practices on a 3 point Likert scale with “1” being low and “3” being high. Results are summarized in Table 4.6

The respondents shared their perceptions about the importance and feasibility of nine practices; making current curricular resources available, providing their faculties with opportunities to evaluate curriculum, ensuring that their faculties had current instructional materials, making available technology as an instructional tool in the classrooms of their schools, evaluating the use of effective management practices, using student data to evaluate curriculum, encouraging the use of research-based best practices, encouraging teachers to use on-going classroom level student assessment and formally collecting data each year to analyze overall student learning and growth.

As shown in Table 4.6 respondents rated all nine of the curriculum/instruction/assessment practices as important with mean scores greater than “4” (on a 5 point scale with “5” being high) and with all modal responses at “4.” The range of responses indicating importance varied from “1” to “5” to “3” to “5.” In terms of feasibility of the identified practices, the range of responses was from “1” to “3” on each item, but the modal score was “2” and the average scores were all greater than “2.” Generally, respondents felt all the curriculum/instruction/assessment practices identified were important and a least somewhat feasible.

TABLE 4.6 Importance and feasibility of curricular, instructional and assessment practices

<b>Curriculum, instruction, and assessment leadership practices</b>	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
1. Ensure the availability of current curricular resources.	2-5	4(50.3%)	4.16	1-3	2(64.6%)	2.26
2. Provide sufficient opportunities for curricular evaluation.	2-5	4(50.3%)	4.16	1-3	2(58.0%)	2.28
3. Ensure the availability of necessary instructional materials.	2-5	4(46.5%)	4.35	1-3	2(56.0%)	2.38
4. Ensure teacher use of effective classroom management practices.	3-5	4(55.7%)	4.50	1-3	2(57.4%)	2.30
5. Identify areas in need of curricular and instructional improvement based on current student data.	2-5	4(46.0%)	4.34	1-3	2(54.8%)	2.37
6. Support learning of and use of research-based instructional practices.	1-5	4(46.2%)	4.01	1-3	2(66.3%)	2.19
7. Encourage use of ongoing, classroom level student assessment practices.	2-5	4(51.6%)	4.15	1-3	2(51.6%)	2.39

<b>Curriculum, instruction, and assessment leadership practices</b>	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
8. Formally collect data annually to analyze overall student learning and growth.	2-5	4(42.7%)	4.05	1-3	2(50.3%)	2.34
9. Utilize available technology as an instructional tool in school classrooms.	1-5	4(51.2%)	4.03	1-3	2(62.3%)	2.24

### *Faculty Development Leadership Practices*

The principal respondents were asked to indicate the level of perceived importance of faculty development practices on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” being low and “5” being high. The principals also shared the level of perceived feasibility of the same faculty development leadership practices on a 3 point Likert scale with “1” being low and “3” being high. Results are summarized in Table 4.7.

Respondents were asked to share the perceived importance and feasibility of nine faculty development leadership practices; offering professional growth opportunities for individual faculty members, providing professional development opportunities for groups of faculty members, giving regular professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect together about their instructional practices, opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes), inviting faculty input on student learning, faculty input regarding school/organizational matters, encouraging faculty members to become instructional leaders and providing adequate resources.



As shown in Table 4.7, six of the nine practices had modal responses of “4” with mean scores slightly greater than “4.” One of the items, “providing opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes),” received a modal score of only “3” with a mean score of just 3.55. Two of the items, “invite faculty input about student learning issues (e.g. curriculum, instruction, etc.)” and “invite faculty input about school or organizational matters that affect them” had modal scores of “5” and means scores of 4.49 and 4.40 for importance. A similar pattern of responding was evident regarding feasibility of these practices. Six of the nine practices had modal scores of ‘2’ with means slightly less than 2 to about 2.5. The low scoring item, “providing opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes),” received a modal score of “2” and a mean score of just 1.86. The two high scoring items had modal scores of “3” and mean scores of 2.70 and 2.64.

TABLE 4.7 Importance and feasibility of faculty development practices

Faculty development leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
1. Offer professional growth opportunities for individual faculty members as needed.	2-5	4(44.4%)	4.28	1-3	2(50.0%)	2.42
2. Provide regular professional development opportunities for groups or teams of teachers.	1-5	4(41.8%)	4.09	1-3	2(56.0%)	2.26

Faculty development leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
3. Give regular professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect together about their instructional practices.	2-5	4(46.9%)	4.02	1-3	2(59.6%)	2.16
4. Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes).	1-5	3(43.5%)	3.55	1-3	2(55.8%)	1.86
5. Regularly observe teachers and then engage in coaching conversations about their teaching.	1-5	4(48.3%)	4.10	1-3	2(53.8%)	2.22
6. Invite faculty input about student learning issues (e.g. curriculum, instruction, etc.).	3-5	5(53.5%)	4.49	1-3	3(71.2%)	2.70
7. Invite faculty input about school or organizational matters that affect them.	2-5	5(46.9%)	4.40	1-3	3(66.3%)	2.64
8. Encourage faculty participation in the work of instructional leadership.	2-5	4(49.1%)	4.22	1-3	3(48.4%)	2.44
9. Provide adequate resources for faculty development.	3-5	4(52.8%)	4.22	1-3	2(64.7%)	2.19

### *Community Relationship Leadership Practices*

The respondents participating in the survey project were asked to indicate the level of perceived importance of community relationship leadership practices on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” being low and “5” being high. The principals also shared the level of perceived feasibility of the same community relationship practices on a 3 point Likert scale with “1” being low and “3” being high. Results are summarized in Table 4.8.

Principals were asked to share their perceptions regarding the importance and feasibility of seven community relationship leadership practices; providing opportunities for parents to share ideas about teaching/learning at the school, providing opportunities for parents to share ideas about how the school operates, developing partnerships with community agencies or groups that serve children and families, creating opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school, sponsoring social or performing events that engage family members, sponsoring social or performing school events that invite community member participation and promoting the school in the community.

As shown in Table 4.8, five of the seven practices had modal responses of “4” with mean scores between 3.5 and 4. One item, “creating opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school” received a modal score of only “3” and a mean score of just 3.19. The item, “promoting the school in the community” had a modal score of “5” and mean score of 4.49. A similar pattern of responding was evident regarding feasibility of these practices. Five of the seven practices had modal responses of “2” with mean scores ranging from slightly less than “2” to slightly more than “2.” The low scoring item, “creating opportunities for community members to share ideas about the

school” received a modal score of “2” and a mean score of just 1.75. The high scoring item, “promoting the school in the community” had a modal score of “3” and a mean score of 2.58.

TABLE 4.8 Importance and feasibility of community relationship practices

<b>Community relationship leadership practices</b>	<b>Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)</b>			<b>Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)</b>		
	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about teaching and learning at the school.	2-5	4(45.8%)	3.77	1-3	2(65.7%)	2.16
2. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about how the school operates.	1-5	4(45.3%)	3.74	1-3	2(66.1%)	2.16
3. Develop partnerships with community agencies or groups that serve children and families.	1-5	4(38.1%)	3.59	1-3	2(66.4%)	1.96
4. Create opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school.	1-5	3(40.2%)	3.19	1-3	2(55.6%)	1.75
5. Sponsor social or performing events that engage family members.	1-5	4(42.3%)	3.87	1-3	2(48.4%)	2.11
6. Sponsor social or performing events that invite community member participation.	1-5	4(34.8%)	3.52	1-3	3(55.1%)	2.43

<b>Community relationship leadership practices</b>	<b>Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)</b>			<b>Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)</b>		
	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Mean</b>
7. Promote the school in the community.	2-5	5(59.4%)	4.49	1-3	3(60.4%)	2.58

### *Faith-based Leadership Practices*

The principal respondents were asked to indicate the level of perceived importance of faith-based leadership practices on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” being low and “5” being high. The principals also shared the level of perceived feasibility of the same faith-based practices on a 3 point Likert scale with “1” being low and “3” being high. Results are summarized in Table 4.9.

The principals were asked to share their perceptions about the importance and feasibility of thirteen faith-based leadership practices; emphasizing religious teaching as part of their school curriculum, celebrating religious holidays as part of the school calendar, convening joint worship opportunities for the faculty and students, convening joint faculty devotional opportunities, regularly including pastors or priests in faith-based activities at school, utilizing Holy Scripture as the primary guide directing school policy, specifically considering their religious beliefs when planning curriculum/instruction, considering religious faith (beliefs) in carrying out their admission policies, considering religious faith (beliefs) when designing discipline policies, choosing curriculum materials based on their religious faith (beliefs), not hesitating to demonstrate your religious faith (beliefs) while interacting with the community-at-large and prominently placing religious symbols in their schools.

As shown in Table 4.9, the level of perceived importance for all thirteen of the leadership practices were modal responses of “5” with mean scores ranging from 4.25 to 4.93. One item, “choosing curriculum materials based on your religious faith (beliefs)” received a modal score of “5” and a mean score of just 4.25. The item, “emphasizing religious teaching as part of our school curriculum” had a modal score of “5” and mean score of 4.93. A similar response pattern was evident regarding feasibility of these practices. All thirteen practices received modal responses of “3” with mean scores ranging from 2.48 to 2.95. The low scoring item, “choosing curriculum materials based on your religious faith (beliefs)” received a modal score of “3” and a mean score of 2.48. The high scoring item, “emphasizing religious teaching as part of our school curriculum” had a modal score of “3” and a mean score of 2.95.

TABLE 4.9 Importance and feasibility of faith-based practices

Faith-based leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
1. Emphasize religious teaching as part of our school curriculum.	3-5	5(94.1%)	4.93	2-3	3(94.7%)	2.95
2. Celebrate religious holidays as part of our school calendar.	3-5	5(85.6%)	4.82	1-3	3(91.2%)	2.91
3. Convene joint worship opportunities for the faculty and students.	2-5	5(77.4%)	4.72	1-3	3(88.4%)	2.87

<b>Faith-based leadership practices</b>	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
4. Convene joint faculty devotional opportunities.	2-5	5(65.8%)	4.59	1-3	3(72.8%)	2.71
5. Regularly include pastors or priests in faith-based activities at school.	1-5	5(57.3%)	4.49	1-3	3(59.1%)	2.53
6. Utilize Holy Scripture as the primary guide directing school policy.	2-5	5(76.8%)	4.71	1-3	3(78.8%)	2.78
7. Include prayer as part of your decision making process.	3-5	5(89.2%)	4.88	2-3	3(94.8%)	2.95
8. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) when planning your curriculum and instruction.	2-5	5(76.5%)	4.74	2-3	3(81.6%)	2.82
9. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) in carrying out your admissions process.	1-5	5(54.6%)	4.30	1-3	3(69.6%)	2.67
10. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) as you design your discipline policies.	1-5	5(73.7%)	4.65	1-3	3(83.3%)	2.82

Faith- based leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
11. Choose curriculum materials based on your religious faith (beliefs).	1-5	5(46.7%)	4.25	1-3	3(51.7%)	2.48
12. Do not hesitate to demonstrate your religious faith (beliefs) while interacting with the community-at-large.	3-5	5(80.4%)	4.78	1-3	3(82.1%)	2.82
13. Prominently placed religious symbols are visible in your school.	3-5	5(79.0%)	4.75	1-3	3(93.6%)	2.93

### *Cross-domain Leadership Practices*

The principal respondents were asked to indicate the level of perceived importance of cross-domain leadership practices on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” being low and “5” being high. The principals also shared the level of perceived feasibility of the same cross-domain practices on a 3 point Likert scale with “1” being low and “3” being high. Results are summarized in Table 4.10.

The respondents were asked to consider cross-domain practices because those practices are equally applicable to the curriculum/instruction/assessment domain, the faculty development domain, the community relationship domain and also the faith-based leadership domain. Those principals responding were asked to share the perceived importance and feasibility of twelve cross-domain leadership practices; spending time



getting to know individual students, creating a positive learning environment for students at their school, spending time getting to know individual faculty members, maintaining a safe, two-way communication with the faculty, creating a positive working climate for their school faculty and staff, developing policies to support a safe, orderly school environment, including their faculty members in conversations about policies that support a productive school environment, developing a school budget, managing available funds within the budget, applying current school law as it is required at my school, supervising school support personnel and utilizing available administrative technology.

As shown in Table 4.10, importance perceptions for ten of the twelve practices had modal responses of “5” with mean scores ranging from 4.27 to 4.90. Two of the items, “supervising school support personnel” and “utilizing available administrative technology” received modal scores of only “4” with mean scores of 4.12 and 3.89 respectively. One item, “creating a positive learning environment for students at their school” had a modal score of “5” with a mean score of 4.90. A similar pattern of responding was evident with respect to practice feasibility. All twelve practices received modal scores of “3.” The two low scoring items, “supervising school support personnel” and “utilizing available administrative technology” had modal scores of “3” and had mean scores of 2.35 and 2.28. The high scoring item, “creating a positive learning environment for students at their school” also had a modal score of “3” with a mean score of 2.86.

TABLE 4.10 Importance and feasibility of cross-domain practices

Cross-domain leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
1. Spend time getting to know individual students.	3-5	5(68.1%)	4.65	1-3	3(59.3%)	2.58
2. Create a positive learning environment for students at your school.	3-5	5(89.9%)	4.90	2-3	3(85.7%)	2.86
3. Spend time getting to know individual faculty members.	3-5	5(74.6%)	4.74	1-3	3(73.9%)	2.73
4. Maintain open, two-way communication with the faculty.	3-5	5(86.1%)	4.86	2-3	3(77.6%)	2.78
5. Create a positive working climate for faculty and staff at your school.	3-5	5(85.0%)	4.85	2-3	3(76.5%)	2.76
6. Develop policies to support a safe, orderly school environment.	2-5	5(66.9%)	4.63	1-3	3(77.3%)	2.77
7. Include the faculty in conversations about policies that support a productive school environment.	3-5	5(54.4%)	4.50	1-3	3(66.5%)	2.66
8. Develop a school budget.	1-5	5(46.2%)	4.27	1-3	3(64.0%)	2.61
9. Manage available funds within the budget.	1-5	5(48.3%)	4.32	1-3	3(55.6%)	2.52

Cross-domain leadership practices	Importance (1-low / 5 high scale)			Feasibility (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean	Range	Mode	Mean
10. Apply current school law as it is required at my school.	2-5	5(49.7%)	4.38	1-3	3(56.1%)	2.54
11. Supervise school support personnel.	2-5	4(43.0%)	4.12	1-3	3(53.5%)	2.35
12. Utilize available administrative technology.	1-5	4(50.0%)	3.89	1-3	3(58.6%)	2.28

### Influence of Religion in Decision-Making

Survey question 3 was an open-ended question that asked respondents to, “share one brief example of how your religious beliefs (faith) influenced an important school related decision that you made. You might want to include (1) general information about the circumstances, (2) who was affected by the decision, (3) beliefs and/or tension that were part of your thinking, (4) the decision you ultimately made, and (5) how you felt about the decision once it was made.” One hundred seventy-nine respondents of the 288 (62%) chose to answer the question. Responses were read, general categories were identified and individual responses were tallied by category. After reviewing the responses, seven categories were identified to summarize the responses: discipline policy, enrollment policy, budget policy, curriculum decisions, marketing decisions, staffing decisions and other decisions. Table 4.11 shows the frequency of response categories and the percentage of the total responses in each of the designated categories. The four most frequently identified categories were subdivided. Discipline policy decisions were most commonly influenced by the religious faith of respondents with 50 of the 179 (28%)

principals sharing examples that related to discipline. Of the 50 discipline decisions, 27 dealt with student conduct and 23 mentioned developing discipline policy. Forty-eight responses (27%) involved enrollment policy. Respondents shared decisions involving expanded school enrollment 37 times and consideration of enrolling troubled students 11 times. Budget policy decisions were mentioned 41 times (23%). Budget policy sub-categories and frequency were: tuition policy (20), funding raising (13), consider closing the school (5) and determining faculty compensation (3). Curriculum decisions were identified 25 times or (14%) of the total responses. Of the twenty-five curriculum policy responses, 20 decisions dealt with curricular content and 5 dealt with textbook selection. The other areas according to their order of frequency were from greatest to least frequency: marketing decisions (4%) and staffing decisions (3%). In addition, 3 (1.7%) responses were offered that did not fall into any of the more frequently mentioned categories. Of the 179 principals responding to this question, most (92%) of the examples offered fell into four types of decisions: discipline policy, enrollment policy, budget policy and curriculum decisions.

TABLE 4.11 Influence of religion (belief) in decision making

<b>School Related Decision</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of (n=179)</b>
Discipline Policy	50	27.92%
• Student conduct	(27)	
• Developing discipline policy	(23)	
Enrollment Policy	48	26.82%
• Expand enrollment	(37)	
• Enrollment of troubled students	(11)	
Budget Policy	41	22.90%
• Tuition policy	(20)	
• Fund raising	(13)	
• Consider school closing	(5)	
• Staff compensation	(3)	

School Related Decision	Number of respondents	Percent of (n=179)
Curriculum decisions	25	13.97%
• Curricular content	(20)	
• Text adoption	(5)	
Marketing decisions	7	3.91%
Staffing decisions	5	2.79%
Other types of decisions	3	1.68%
<b>TOTAL</b>	179	100%

Below are sample respondent comments to the open-ended question asking them to share an example of a situation in which faith influenced their decision making. Some comments pertaining to decisions about discipline are:

- “Suspended two students for "sex-talk" on the playground, overheard by others. Doing the right thing allows me to sleep well at night.”
- “A student threatened a teacher with the words ‘you better watch your back.’ The student appeared to have no remorse and was encouraged by her mother saying that she was justified in making such a statement. The student was asked to leave or told she would be expelled. The decision affected the safety and well being of the total student body as well as staff. In the end even though I felt badly for the student, I felt it was the right decision for the entire school family.”

Some comments pertaining to decisions about enrollment are:

- “1. Enrollment of a student that had a questionable past. 2. Family enrolling the student, current students and faculty. 3. Provide and expose the family to God's love and grace. 4. Accept the student. 5. Good - fulfilling the Great Commission.”
- “1. Whether to enroll a specific student or not when behavioral and/or financial

consideration needed to be taken into account 2. student's family, potential classmates and teachers 3. We're here to spread the Gospel- firm belief that God's Word works to change hearts and minds 4. enroll the student 5. Awesome to see new born children of God and seeing the Holy Spirit continue to cause faith to grow”

Some comments pertaining to budget decisions are:

- “Eliminated two-tiered tuition policy based on parish membership or non-membership. Living out the belief that all children are welcome regardless of specific religion or faith tradition.”
- “There was long and hard discussion regarding why our congregation should subsidize students who were not part of our congregation. There was concern we would be watering down who and what we were, our teachings, our theology. Finally, we did move forward to embrace a single tuition for all families and we removed the barriers that spoke exclusion rather than inclusion. It was a bold and huge step for our congregation and school but since that decision, there is a much more outreach attitude by the congregation as a whole than there was before. We are talking about new ways to reach out.”

Comments about curriculum decisions included:

- “The choosing of new curriculum materials has sometimes caused problems as I, as the school administrator, have tried to lead the teachers to see the importance of curriculum that reflects our Christian values. Some teachers prefer materials that they have used in the past which did not always reflect our Christian view point.”

- “We recently purchased Christian history textbooks. While these textbooks were not printed by our church body, we decided it is important to have a Christian versus secular perspective at our school.”

Some comments pertaining to marketing decisions include:

- “We began advertising in the local paper, running fliers for the opening of school. We started this thinking about reaching out to the lost.”

“In the planning of a new gymnasium, we specifically referred to it as the Community Center to invite the public. It is not a "school gym". We have been able to open time up for the community to hear about God and play basketball. The tension is for our school families who want only the school to use it. I feel better and better about the decision as we progress.”

Some comments pertaining to staffing decisions are:

- “We recently added a teaching position at our school. With class sizes barely into the high teens it was difficult to imagine going from a faculty of three fulltime and two part time teachers to four fulltime and two part time teachers, this meant a large % increase to our budget. Leaders prayed and considered the matter for 4-5 months. We also surveyed the parents in our school because the added teacher would mean a 50% increase of tuition for our church members and a 25% increase for our nonmembers. Amazingly, 95% of our parents favored the increase in tuition if it meant adding a teacher to our staff. The decision still was a difficult one. We decided to go ahead and add the position which took our average class size to 13. Now that we are half way through the school year, the support for making this difficult decision is overwhelming. Even those who

opposed it are now seeing the benefits. The Lord has truly blessed this decision.”

- “Demanding that teachers be practicing Catholics, registered in a parish. Sometimes times you have to reject good teachers who are still ‘seekers’.”

### **Perspectives about Preparation for Faith-Based School Principals**

Part four of the survey instrument solicited respondent perspectives about principal preparation. The principals were asked to share their perceptions about five principal preparation questions; the importance of suggested methods of principal preparation, the importance of principal preparation content, the significance of issues affecting their work as Christian faith-based principals, the importance of continuing professional growth activities for faith-based principals and pressing and/or interesting areas practicing faith-based principals wanted to learn about in the next year.

### ***Important Methods of Preparation for Faith-based Principals***

Principals participating in the study were asked to consider the degree of helpfulness various principal preparation methods proved to be for them. As shown in Table 4.12 respondents rated areas of principal preparation opportunities on a 1-3 scale with a “does not apply” option: (does not apply, 1 – not at all helpful, 2 – helpful, and 3 – extremely helpful). Eight methods of faith-based principal preparation were listed; college course work, principal internship, in-service workshops, learning on their own before becoming a principal, learning from experience while they were principals, learning from a principal mentor, interactions with other principals and experience they had gained while serving as a classroom teacher.

Two hundred seventy-seven principals responded to this question. Four of the listed principal preparation methods received modal scores of “2” with mean scores



ranging from slightly less than 2.0 to nearly 2.4. Four of the listed preparation methods also received modal scores of “3” with mean scores ranging from 2.24 to 2.80. One item, “learning from experience while serving as a principal” received a modal score of “3” identified by eighty percent of the respondents. It received a mean score of 2.80. The listed preparation method, “college coursework” received a modal score of “2” as identified by more than half of the respondents. It received a mean score of just 1.95.

Principal respondents utilized “does not apply” in all eight of the listed preparation categories. Five of the listed items received less than ten percent or just slightly more than ten percent “does not apply” responses. One item, “principal internship” received one hundred sixty-one “does not apply” responses for rate of 58.1%. Another item, “learning from a principal mentor” received ninety-two “does not apply” responses for 33.2%. The final item, “learning on my own before I assumed a principal's position” received forty-nine “does not apply” responses for a response rate of 17.7%. The non-response option allows respondents to indicate they did not have exposure to particular listed principal preparation methods.

TABLE 4.12 Important methods helpful for principal preparation (n=277)

Principal preparation areas	Helpfulness of principal preparation opportunities (does not apply, 1-low / 3 high scale)			
	Range	Mode	Mean	Does not apply (n=277)
Learning from experience while serving as a principal	1-3	3(80.6%)	2.80	12 (4.3%)
Interactions with other principals	1-3	3(62.5%)	2.61	11 (4.0%)

Principal preparation areas	Helpfulness of principal preparation opportunities (does not apply, 1-low / 3 high scale)			
	Range	Mode	Mean	Does not apply
Learning on my own before I assumed a principal's position	1-3	2(48.0%)	2.39	49 (17.7%)
Learning from a principal mentor	1-3	3(47.8%)	2.36	92 (33.2%)
In-service workshops	1-3	2(65.1%)	2.25	34 (12.3%)
Teaching experience	1-3	3(64.1%)	2.24	14 (5.1%)
Principal internship	1-3	2(43.6%)	2.07	161 (58.1%)
College coursework	1-3	2(55.4%)	1.95	18 (6.5%)

### *Important Content for Principal Preparation*

Respondents were asked about their perception of the importance of twenty content areas in their principal training/preparation, ranging from the importance of general curriculum and instruction and curriculum and instruction specific to religious teaching to instructional supervision to relating to the community-at-large. All the specific content areas are listed in Table 4.13 along with corresponding data summaries. Respondents were asked to rate their perceived importance of the listed content areas on a 5-point scale with “1” being the lowest and “5” being the highest.

Two hundred seventy-two principals responded to the question. The range of responses for all twenty items was either 1-5 or 2-5, with the exception of the item, “student learning and development” that ranged from only 3-5. Modal scores were either “4” or “5” for each content area. Mean scores were all in excess of 4 with the exception of “contemporary issues in faith-based education” at 3.92 with was close to “4” and

“supervision of non-teaching personnel” at 3.58, which was noticeably lower.

Essentially, all twenty content areas were viewed as important in the preparation of faith-based principals.

TABLE 4.13 Important content for faith-based principal preparation (n=272)

Faith-based principal preparation priorities	Importance of learning opportunities (1-low / 5 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean
Faculty relationships	2-5	5(57.4%)	4.50
Interpersonal relationships	2-5	5(52.0%)	4.41
Instructional supervision	2-5	5(47.8%)	4.37
Working with clergy	2-5	5(50.7%)	4.37
Organizational and school development	2-5	5(46.1%)	4.35
Teacher collaboration and team development	2-5	5(48.7%)	4.35
Curriculum and instruction-specific to religious teaching	1-5	5(50.7)	4.33
Student learning and development	3-5	4(53.4)	4.25
Marketing and recruitment	1-5	4(43.9%)	4.22
Curriculum and instruction-general	1-5	4(53.3)	4.21

Faith-based principal preparation priorities	Importance of learning opportunities (1-low / 5 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean
Assessment of student learning	2-5	4(51.7)	4.20
Finance and budgeting	2-5	4(40.7%)	4.18
Accountability for student learning	2-5	4(55.8%)	4.17
School law and regulations	1-5	4(48.5%)	4.14
Advanced religious learning and spiritual development for principals	2-5	4(48.0%)	4.12
Affective development of students	2-5	4(49.8%)	4.06
Relationships with the community-at-large	2-5	4(55.8%)	4.06
Leadership theory and practice	1-5	4(47.6%)	4.00
Contemporary issues in faith-based education	1-5	4(45.6%)	3.92
Supervision of non-teaching personnel	1-5	4(42.5%)	3.58

### *Important Issues Affecting the Work of Faith-based Principals*

The participating principals were asked to indicate their perceived significance of thirteen issues or potential influences on their work as a Christian faith-based principal. The issues ranged from the significance of culturally diverse student populations to the significance of competition and marketing their school to their own professional learning

and growth. A complete listing is easily viewed in Table 4.14. They were asked to rate their perception of the significance of the listed items on a five-point scale with “1” being the lowest and “5” being the highest.

Two hundred seventy-two principals responded to the question. The range of responses for all thirteen items was either 1-5 or 2-5. Seven of the thirteen items received modal scores of “3” or “4,” with between one third and slightly over 40% of the respondents. Mean scores were slightly below “3” to slightly over “4.” Three items, “my own professional learning growth,” “faculty relationships and supervision,” and “generating resources and funding” received modal scores of “5” indicated by about half of those responding. Mean scores for those items were 4.32, 4.31, and 4.18 respectively. Three items, “culturally diverse student populations,” “religiously diverse student populations” and “student access to drugs and alcohol” received modal scores of “2,” indicated by only a range of between a quarter to a third of the respondents. The mean scores for those three items were between just 2.6 and 2.8.

TABLE 4.14 Important issues affecting the work of practicing faith-based principals (n=272)

Areas affecting the work of faith-based principals	Significance to the work of faith-based school principals (1-low / 5 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean
My own professional learning and growth	1-5	5(47.2%)	4.32
Faculty relationships and supervision	2-5	5(47.8%)	4.31
Parent support of students and education	2-5	4(43.5%)	4.20
Generating resources and funding	1-5	5(49.3%)	4.18

Areas affecting the work of faith-based principals	Significance to the work of faith-based school principals (1-low / 5 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean
Academic achievement of students	1-5	4(42.0%)	4.13
Competition and marketing our school	1-5	4(36.9%)	3.96
Other personnel management issues	1-5	4(44.5%)	3.82
Parent involvement in curricular issues	1-5	3(39.8%)	3.20
Religion in the media and politics	1-5	3(33.6%)	2.88
Religious hierarchy	1-5	3(33.9%)	2.82
Religiously diverse student populations	1-5	2(32.0%)	2.77
Culturally diverse student populations	1-5	2(35.1%)	2.70
Student access to drugs and alcohol	1-5	2(26.7%)	2.63

***Important Continuing Professional Growth Activities for Practicing Faith-based Principals***

The pathways of current principals of faith-based schools involve their past experiences in principal preparation and also the professional development direction they see in their futures. Pathways led them to where they currently find themselves but they do not end there. The last two survey questions dealt with short-term and long-term professional growth. The pathway of each principal continues with professional growth areas that allow them to remain current and energized. The pathways of current

principals also involve those pressing or interesting areas of professional growth they see in their immediate futures.

Two hundred seventy one principals responded to this question. It listed eight professional growth activities ranging from engaging in formal coursework to regularly reflecting about leadership practice with other principals to on-line learning and networking. Specific professional growth activities are listed for easy reference in Table 4.15.

The rating scale of 1 -3 with “1” being the lowest and “3” being the highest was used for rating the continuing education activities. All eight activities demonstrated ranges of 1-3. Seven of the eight activities had modal scores of “2,” with slightly under half to almost sixty percent of the respondents represented. Mean scores of those activities ranged from slightly less than two to nearly 2.4. One item, “regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools of my denomination” received a modal score of “3,” with two thirds of those responding. The mean score was 2.63. The low scoring item, “regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of public schools in my area” had a modal score of “2” indicated by slightly more than half of the principals but it had a mean of only 1.83.

TABLE 4.15 Important continuing professional growth activities for practicing faith-based principals. (n=271)

Professional growth areas	Importance for professional growth (1-low / 3 high scale)		
	Range	Mode	Mean
Regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools of my denomination	1-3	3(66.2%)	2.63
Visiting other's schools to observe	1-3	2(54.1%)	2.37
Participating in a study or learning group with other principals	1-3	2(48.9%)	2.30
Attending in-depth conferences or retreats	1-3	2(54.6%)	2.28
Reading on my own	1-3	2(60.7%)	2.27
Engaging in formal coursework	1-3	2(57.6%)	2.16
On-line learning and networking	1-3	2(60.2%)	1.91
Regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of public schools in my area	1-3	2(51.3%)	1.83

***Important Areas Practicing Faith-based Principals Want to Learn About Immediately***

The last survey question was open-ended and asked, “Finally, what would you identify as the three most pressing or interesting areas of which you would like to learn in the next year?” Table 4.16 summarizes the responses to this question. One hundred ninety-nine principals responded to this question. After reviewing all these responses,



twelve categories of responses were identified into which all responses could be organized. In some cases, the response of one person addressed more than one category of response. There were 199 respondents and 560 responses. Recruiting and marketing strategies lead the way with 92 examples. Curriculum development /best practices were a close second with 90 examples shared. The next area most frequently mentioned was school finance and fund raising followed by leadership techniques, public relations, developing a more spiritual school climate, faculty/staff development, technology, student assessment, school law, parent involvement and areas of professional growth.

TABLE 4.16 Important areas practicing faith-based principals want to learn about immediately. (n=199)

<b>Most pressing or interesting areas for future professional development</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percent of (n=560)</b>
Recruiting/Marketing Strategies	92	16.44%
Curriculum Development – Best Practices	90	16.07%
School Finance/Fund Raising	76	13.57%
Leadership Techniques/Instructional Supervision/Policy Development	54	9.64%
Public Relations	41	7.32%
Develop a more Spiritual School Climate/Learning Community Atmosphere	40	7.14%
Faculty/Staff Development	35	6.25%
Technology	31	5.54%
Student Assessment	25	4.46%
School Law	22	3.93%
Parent Involvement	21	3.75%
Other pressing or interesting areas for development	33	5.89%

<b>Most pressing or interesting areas for future professional development</b>	Number of respondents	Percent of (n=560)
Total responses offered by 199 respondents	560	100%

### **Correlations between Faith-based Principal Practices and Demographic Variables**

Correlation analyses were done comparing the school leadership practices of part one of the survey and some of the dependent variables in part two. Spearman's rho was applied to all 50 leadership practice items.

In addressing the first research question; "What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?"

- a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
- b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
- c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
- d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment."

Correlation comparison, using Spearman's rho, of the fifty school leadership practices importance and feasibility found that all practices' importance and feasibility correlations were significant and positive.

### ***Faith-based School Urbanicity Correlations***

The second research question asked: "To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience, and education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?" The school leadership practices were grouped according to the ten factors resulting from factor analysis.

The standard ANOVA test was used to cross tabulate significance of the independent variable – school location. ANOVA was used because school location was described as rural, suburban, and urban. There was only one significant finding at the .05 level. The area of faculty development had a significance level of .014. The principals in urban locations appear to value faculty development more highly than principals in rural locations. Statistical significance in the area of faculty development is at the .05 level. The mean of rural principals is significantly lower than the urban principals. The mean of suburban principals is near 0. The Scheffe analysis of significance between the rural/urban principals is .020. The differences between rural and suburban and urban and suburban principals are not significant.

Tables 4.17 and 4.18 describe the correlations between the dependent variable faculty development and the independent variables around urbanicity.

TABLE 4.17 ANOVA significance test of urbanicity in correlation with faculty development

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Faculty Development	Between Groups			2	4.258	4.359	.014
	Rural	113	-.19937				
	Suburban	94	.07431				
	Urban	74	.21764				

TABLE 4.18 Scheffe method verification of urbanicity significance in correlation with faculty development

Scheffe Multiple Comparison

Dependent Variable	Location of your school	(J) Location of your school	Std. Error	Sig.
Faculty Development	Rural	Suburban	.1379	.142
		Urban	.1477	.020
	Suburban	Rural	.1379	.142
		Urban	.1535	.647
	Urban	Rural	.1477	.020
		Suburban	.1535	.647

### *Faith-based School Size Correlations*

The standard ANOVA analysis test was also used to cross tabulate significance of the independent variable – school size as it affects the perceived importance of the ten listed leadership factors. Significant differences were demonstrated in the areas of student relationships, knowledge of CIA, and faculty development. The principals in larger schools appear to value student relationships, knowledge of CIA, and faculty development more highly than principals in small schools. The significance level in the areas of student relationships, knowledge of CIA, and faculty development is at the .05 level. The mean of small school principal responses is significantly less than the responses of principals in larger schools. The Scheffe analysis of significance between the responses of the principals of small schools and schools with 201-300 is at .013 when considering the importance of student relationships. A significance of .033 was demonstrated by the responses of principals for schools with fewer than 50 students and those with a student population of more than 400. Principals with less than 50 students in their schools rated knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment lower than principals in schools with 201-300 students (sig.=.018) and lower than principals with

more than 400 students (sig.=.045). Faculty development was the final factor demonstrating a significant difference in responses when compared to school size. The responses of larger school principals rated faculty development higher than the responses of principals in schools with fewer than 50 students. The Scheffe analysis indicate significance levels of .007 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to schools of 201-300 students, .042 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to school of 301-400, and .018 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to schools with more than 400 students.

Tables 4.19 and 4.20 describe the ANOVA correlations between the dependent variables around student relationships, knowledge of CIA, faculty development and the independent variables associated with student body size of the school.

TABLE 4.19 ANOVA significance test of school size in correlation with student relationships, knowledge of CIA and faculty development.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Student Relationships	Between Groups			5	3.908	4.115	.001
	Fewer than 51	32	-.53936				
	51-100	77	-.13933				
	101-200	96	.03564				
	201-300	37	.36516				
	301-400	16	.05944				
Knowledge of CIA	Between Groups			5	3.720	3.894	.002
	Fewer than 51	32	-.55071				
	51-100	77	-.13119				
	101-200	96	.02099				
	201-300	37	.37192				
	301-400	16	.09571				
	More than 400	23	.41226				

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Faculty Development	Between Groups			5	4.952	5.314	.000
	Fewer than 51	32	-.57298				
	51-100	75	-.17288				
	101-200	97	.01713				
	201-300	36	.37694				
	301-400	17	.41747				
	More than 400	23	.41207				

TABLE 4.20 Scheffe multiple comparison method verification of school size in correlation with student relationships, knowledge of CIA, and faculty development.

Dependent Variable	(I) Student	(J) Student	Std. Error	Sig.
Student Relationships	Fewer than 51	201-300	.2352	.013
		more than 400	.2664	.033
	201-300	Fewer than 51	.2352	.013
		more than 400	.2664	.033
Knowledge of CIA	Fewer than 51	201-300	.2359	.018
		more than 400	.2706	.045
	201-300	Fewer than 51	.2359	.018
		more than 400	.2706	.045
Faculty Development	Fewer than 51	201-300	.2345	.007
		301-400	.2897	.042
		more than 400	.2638	.018
	201-300	Fewer than 51	.2345	.007
		301-400	.2897	.042
		More than 400	.2638	.018

### *Principal Gender Correlations*

The T-test was used to analyze the role of gender on the perceived importance of the leadership factors. The T-test indicated significance at the .05 level in the areas of student relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty participation, community relationships, faith application, faith sharing and spirituality.

Table 4.21 summarizes the raw number of respondents, the mean, mean rank by gender and indicates significance of the factors at the .05 level when cross tabulated with the gender variable. The higher the mean and the mean rank the more importance is perceived by the respondents. Student relationships, faculty relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty development, faculty participation, community relationships and faith sharing appeared to be valued more highly by female principals. Faith application and issues related to a climate of spirituality appeared to be more important to male principals.

TABLE 4.21 t-test significance test of gender in correlation with student relationships, faculty relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty development, faculty participation, community relationships, faith applications, faith sharing and spirituality.

Group Statistics t-test, parametric

Factors	Gender	N	Mean	Mean Rank	F	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
StudRela	female	98	9.67	156.87	8.853	284	<b>.027</b>
	male	188	9.48	136.53			
FacultyRela	female	97	14.56	151.07	6.518	282	.095
	male	187	14.37	138.06			
AdminRespect	female	96	31.41	170.83	10.238	281	<b>.000</b>
	male	187	29.41	127.20			
KnowCIA	female	95	39.17	165.58	.091	279	<b>.000</b>
	male	186	37.01	128.44			
FacultyDev	female	97	20.51	152.60	3.219	281	.073
	male	186	19.80	136.47			
FacultyPartici	female	97	17.69	156.92	.113	281	<b>.033</b>
	male	186	17.12	134.22			
CommunityRela	female	98	27.45	167.39	.377	281	<b>.001</b>
	male	185	25.50	128.55			
FaithApplica	female	94	22.45	124.16	1.737	276	<b>.023</b>
	male	184	23.09	147.34			
FaithShar	female	97	19.07	149.53	18.776	279	<b>.020</b>
	male	184	18.63	136.51			
Spirituality	female	95	18.33	108.32	14.188	277	<b>.000</b>
	male	184	19.26	156.36			

### ***Principal Age and Experience Levels***

The standard ANOVA analysis test was also used to cross tabulate significance of the independent variable – age of the principal as it affects the perceived importance of the ten leadership factors. No areas of significant difference were demonstrated by the respondents regarding their perception of the importance of leadership practices when considering their age.

Cross-tabulations were performed between the leadership practices and the experience levels of the responding principals. No areas of significance at the .05 level in the perceived importance of the leadership practices based on experience level were identified.

### ***Principal Education Level***

The standard ANOVA test was used to determine the significance of the responding principal's level of education. ANOVA was used because the level of education was described as baccalaureate, baccalaureate plus, masters, masters plus and doctorate. The doctorate level of education was discarded due to low response numbers. There were two areas of significance at the .05 level. Knowledge of CIA and faculty development were identified as significant. The principals with masters or masters plus level of education appear to value knowledge of CIA and faculty development more highly than principals with a baccalaureate or baccalaureate plus level of education. Table 4.22 shows significance in the areas of knowledge of CIA and faculty development at the .05 level. The means of principals with a baccalaureate or baccalaureate plus level of education are significantly lower than the principals with masters or masters plus levels of education. Table 4.23 demonstrates the Scheffe analysis of significance



between the principals with a baccalaureate and masters plus level of education at .043 when considering knowledge of CIA. The significance level between baccalaureate and masters plus educated principals is .026 when determining the perceived importance of knowledge of CIA. The level of significance between principal with baccalaureate plus and masters plus levels of education is .010 when considering the perceived importance of faculty development.

TABLE 4.22 ANOVA significance test of level of education in correlation with knowledge of CIA and faculty development.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Knowledge of CIA	Between Groups			3	4.889	5.132	.002
	baccalaureate	35	-.3511				
	baccalaureate plus	64	-.2742				
	masters	48	.1577				
	Masters plus	127	.1850				
Faculty Development	Between Groups			3	5.254	5.577	.001
	baccalaureate	34	-.2998				
	baccalaureate plus	64	-.3118				
	masters	48	.1884				
	Masters plus	128	.1941				

TABLE 4.23 Scheffe method verification of level of education in correlation with knowledge of CIA and faculty development

Scheffe multiple comparison

Dependent Variable	(I) What is your highest level of education	(J) What is your highest level of education	Std. Error	Sig.
Knowledge of CIA	baccalaureate	masters plus	.1863	<b>.043</b>
	baccalaureate plus	masters plus	.1496	<b>.026</b>
	masters plus	baccalaureate	.1863	<b>.043</b>
	masters plus	baccalaureate plus	.1496	<b>.026</b>
Faculty Development	baccalaureate plus	masters plus	.1485	<b>.010</b>
	masters plus	baccalaureate plus	.1485	<b>.010</b>

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

### Factor Analysis of the Practices of Christian Faith-based Principals

Factor analysis includes component analysis and common factor analysis. The purpose of factor analysis is to identify patterns of relationship among variables. It seeks to discover if the observed variables can be largely explained in terms of a much smaller number or variables called factors (Darlington, Wienberg, & Wahlberg, 1973).

Part One of the survey instrument is primarily composed of 50 school leadership behaviors that make up the dependent variables in this study. Those 50 behaviors were rated by respondents in terms of their importance and then again by their feasibility. Fifty items make up an unwieldy numbers of dependent variables with which to work. The factor analysis was applied to the 50 school leadership practices in an effort to reduce the working number of dependent variables being analyzed in the study. Factor analysis reduced the number of practices to 10 factors.

The factors resulting from cross-domain curricular practices were three: items 1-2 dealt with “student relationships,” items 3-5 were associated with “faculty relationships,” and items 6-12 involved “administrative respectability.” Table 4.24 shows the factor analysis of items 1-12.

TABLE 4.24 Factor analyses of cross-domain practices

Rotated Component Matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
1. Spend time getting to know individual students.	.046	.187	<b>.749</b>
2. Create a positive learning environment for students at your school.	.238	.114	<b>.717</b>
3. Spend time getting to know individual faculty members.	.159	<b>.731</b>	.208
4. Maintain open, two-way communication with the faculty.	.065	<b>.803</b>	.120
5. Create a positive working climate for faculty and staff at your school.	.241	<b>.564</b>	.121
6. Develop policies to support a safe, orderly school environment.	<b>.583</b>	.290	.099
7. Include the faculty in conversations about policies that support a productive school environment.	<b>.553</b>	.463	-.188
8. Develop a school budget.	<b>.801</b>	.069	.145
9. Manage available funds within the budget.	<b>.861</b>	-.038	.181
10. Apply current school law as it is required at my school.	<b>.720</b>	.142	.162
11. Supervise school support personnel.	<b>.659</b>	.329	-.005
12. Utilize available administrative technology.	<b>.521</b>	.327	.153

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

3 components extracted.

The second group of practices dealt with curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA). A single factor was developed for items 13-21: “Knowledge of CIA.” Table 4.25 shows the factor analysis of items 13-21.

TABLE 4.25 Factor analyses of curriculum/instruction/assessment practices

<b>Component Matrix</b>	Component
	1
13. Ensure the availability of current curricular resources.	<b>.763</b>
14. Provide sufficient opportunities for curricular evaluation.	<b>.804</b>
15. Ensure the availability of necessary instructional materials.	<b>.706</b>
16. Ensure teacher use of effective classroom management practices.	<b>.662</b>
17. Identify areas in need of curricular and instructional improvement based on current student data.	<b>.831</b>
18. Support learning of and use of research-based instructional practices.	<b>.782</b>
19. Encourage use of ongoing, classroom level student assessment practices.	<b>.827</b>
20. Formally collect data annually to analyze overall student learning and growth.	<b>.806</b>
21. Utilize available technology as an instructional tool in school classrooms.	<b>.710</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

1 component extracted

The third group of practices developed from the conceptual framework supporting this study dealt with Faculty Development. Two factors were developed for items 22-30. Items 22-26 dealt with “faculty development” and items 27-30 were concerned with “faculty participation.” Table 4.26 shows the factor analysis of items 13-21.

TABLE 4.26 Factor analyses of faculty development practices

Rotated Component Matrix	Component	
	1	2
22. Offer professional growth opportunities for individual faculty members as needed.	<b>.666</b>	.387
23. Provide regular professional development opportunities for groups or teams of teachers.	<b>.797</b>	.252
24. Give regular professional development opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect together about their instructional practices.	<b>.836</b>	.262
25. Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes).	<b>.799</b>	.151
26. Regularly observe teachers and then engage in coaching conversations about their teaching.	<b>.752</b>	.170
27. Invite faculty input about student learning issues (e.g. curriculum, instruction, etc.).	.206	<b>.816</b>
28. Invite faculty input about school or organizational matters that affect them.	.144	<b>.866</b>
29. Encourage faculty participation in the work of instructional leadership.	.347	<b>.763</b>
30. Provide adequate resources for faculty development.	.580	<b>.568</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

2 components extracted

The fourth group of practices dealt with Building Community Relationships. A single factor was developed for items 31-37: “Building Community Relationships.”

Table 4.27 shows the factor analysis of items 31-37.

TABLE 4.27 Factor Analyses of community relationships practices

<b>Component Matrix</b>	Component
	1
31. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about teaching and learning at the school.	<b>.804</b>
32. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about how the school operates.	<b>.773</b>
33. Develop partnerships with community agencies or groups that serve children and families.	<b>.825</b>
34. Create opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school.	<b>.834</b>
35. Sponsor social or performing events that engage family members.	<b>.765</b>
36. Sponsor social or performing events that invite community member participation.	<b>.823</b>
37. Promote the school in the community.	<b>.667</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

1 component extracted

The final section of school leadership practices were items 38-50 dealing with faith-based practices. Three factors extracted from the rotated component matrix after six iterations. Items 38, 45-48 were identified as “faith application,” items 39, 40, 42, and 50 were associated with “faith sharing,” and items 41, 43, 44, and 49 involved “spirituality influence.” Table 4.28 shows the factor analysis of items 38-50.

TABLE 4.28 Factor Analyses of faith-based leadership practices

Rotated Component Matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
38. Emphasize religious teaching as part of our school curriculum.	.003	.124	<b>.671</b>
39. Celebrate religious holidays as part of our school calendar.	-.046	<b>.794</b>	.118
40. Convene joint worship opportunities for the faculty and students.	.164	<b>.659</b>	.015
41. Convene joint faculty devotional opportunities.	<b>.684</b>	.486	-.083
42. Regularly include pastors or priests in faith-based activities at school.	.242	<b>.642</b>	.016
43. Utilize Holy Scripture as the primary guide directing school policy.	<b>.837</b>	-.029	.037
44. Include prayer as part of your decision making process.	<b>.725</b>	.072	.206
45. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) when planning your curriculum and instruction.	.499	.046	<b>.539</b>
46. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) in carrying out your admissions process.	.300	-.084	<b>.663</b>
47. Specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) as you design your discipline policies.	.446	.091	<b>.561</b>
48. Choose curriculum materials based on your religious faith (beliefs).	-.013	.325	<b>.531</b>
49. Do not hesitate to demonstrate your religious faith (beliefs) while interacting with the community-at-large.	<b>.595</b>	.151	.294
50. Prominently placed religious symbols are visible in your school.	-.026	<b>.445</b>	.219

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

3 components extracted

### **Factor Analysis Rationale**

Factor analysis is typically used when variables number between 10 and 100. Factor analysis was used on the set of 50 dependent variables for two reasons: 1) to demonstrate commonality in response patterns within identified groups of faith-based leadership practices and 2) to streamline correlation between the dependent and independent variables by effectively reducing the number of dependent variables. Twelve cross-domain practices resulted in three factors: student relationships, faculty relationships and administrative respectability. Statistical significance emerged as “student relationship” and “faculty relationship” factors were correlated with urbanicity variables. Urban principals appeared to be more concerned with forming relationships than principals in rural settings. “Administrative respectability” appeared to be a higher priority for female principals than for males. Nine curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA) practices were reduced to a single factor indicating clear respondent understanding of the items in the section as well as consistency of perceived importance and feasibility of the CIA practices. Nine faculty development practices resulted in two factors: “faculty development” and “faculty participation.” Those factors demonstrated statistical significance when correlated with respondent level of education. Principals with higher levels of education appeared to value both of faculty related factors more than principals with only a baccalaureate degree. Seven community relationship leadership practices yielded a single factor. “Building community relationships” was a significant factor as respondents appeared to be singularly focused on the importance of recognizing and utilizing community relationship building skills. Finally, thirteen faith-based practices resulted in three factors: faith application, faith sharing and spirituality’s influence.



These factors were seen as consistently important across denominations while collectively forming a unique faith-based culture.

### **Closing**

The survey responses received from the faith-based principals have been described. The four sections of the survey instrument have been evaluated. The 50 listed leadership practices detailed in part one have been analyzed in terms of the domains that were developed from the conceptual framework. The first research question also provided direction for considering the responses to those 50 leadership practices. The role of religion or faith on decision-making was evaluated in terms of the responses to question 3 at the end of part one of the survey instrument. Demographic information describing the respondents' schools and describing the respondents was collected in part two and part three. Correlations between the dependent variables and the independent variables provided data driven answers to the first research question.

Part four of the survey dealt with principal preparation and continuing professional growth pathways for principals. The forced answer questions and open-ended questions provided principals with the opportunity to reflect and also share their views on the direction the pathway to the principalship should look.

Findings in terms of the research questions will be detailed in the next chapter. Limitations will be pointed out and implications of the study will be considered. Implications for preparing Christian faith-based principals will be explored. Continuing professional development and support pathways will be considered and implications for future research will be suggested.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Purpose**

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the leadership practices of Christian faith-based school leaders that are perceived as valuable along with their perceptions of the feasibility of carrying out those practices. In addition, the study was designed to determine the context in which the principals work as well as their pathway to their current leadership position. Finally, current faith-based principals shared their perceptions on existing and future principal preparation.

### **Summary of the Study**

This study examined the perceptions of faith-based principals with respect to the value of leadership practices in the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment (CIA), faculty development, community relationships and faith-based practices. Principals of Christian faith-based schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin from the following three denominations: Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Roman Catholic and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod were invited to participate. A web-based survey was designed and made available on-line through SurveyMonkey.com. The state and regional leadership offices of the three denominations mentioned previously were enlisted to approve and endorse the survey. Upon approval and endorsement, they agreed to distribute the invitation to participate to the K-12 faith-based schools of their church body. Each denomination's educational leadership office utilized their electronic distribution list. The principals were invited to voluntarily participate, given instructions for completing the survey and informed that participation implied consent. The survey was submitted to SurveyMonkey.com when the participating principal clicked the

“submit” button upon completion. The survey study was a double-blind design. The principal investigator did not know who the organizations invited to participate by email and the organization did not know who submitted their complete survey to SurveyMonkey.com. Two reminders to participate were distributed by the faith-based educational leadership offices; one two weeks following the initial invitation and a final reminder four weeks after the initial invitation to participate was sent. Thirty-four percent of the eight hundred-fifty principals invited to participate completed the surveys. The three participating leadership offices requested executive summaries of the results when available. The questions used to guide this study follow:

- 1) What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?
  - a) leadership practices related to curriculum/instruction/assessment;
  - b) leadership practices related to faculty development;
  - c) leadership practices related to community relationships; and
  - d) leadership practices related to a faith-based school environment.
- 2) To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?
- 3) To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued?
- 4) What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?

### **Instrumentation**

The survey instrument was developed specifically for this research study and was designed to explore the constructs of the research problem. A pilot study of the survey was conducted to determine survey question clarity and content appropriateness in identifying the leadership practices developed from the conceptual framework based on the literature review. The four parts of the survey instrument were designed to address the four guiding research questions above.

Part one of the survey was designed to address research questions one and two. Part one consisted of fifty leadership practices organized into five sections: cross-domain, curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development, community relationships and faith-based practices. Part one of the survey explored the importance and feasibility of school leadership practices as perceived by faith-based school principals. It concluded with an open ended question addressing the second research question that asked survey participants to share a decision that was influenced by their Christian faith (beliefs).

Parts two and three of the survey instrument was intended to answer the third research question. They gathered descriptive demographic data. Part two collected information on the schools served by the responding principals; religious denomination, urbanicity, grades in the school, faculty size, student body size and percentage of faculty members, students and student families that hold membership in the religious denomination supporting their school. Part three gathered descriptive demographic data about the respondents themselves; gender, age, total years in education, total years as principal, total years as principal of their current school, whether they were currently assisted by an assistant principal or dean of students, if they had ever served as principal

of a school that was not faith-based, if they held church membership in the denomination supporting their school, level of education, professional credentials and type of school they attended at the primary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate level.

Part four gathered perceptions of the participants about their pathway to and preparation for the principalship. They were asked to share which learning opportunities they felt were helpful in preparing them to serve as a faith-based principal, their perceptions regarding the importance of various preparatory content areas, the degree of significance various items held in affecting their work, how supportive were suggested professional growth and part four concluded with an open-ended question soliciting principal identification of three areas of learning in which they would like to engage during the next year.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were submitted, by the participating principals, directly to a secure server at SurveyMonkey.com. SurveyMonkey.com provided the principal investigator anonymous access to both a copy of all responses and a summary of responses in Excel spreadsheet format. Data were analyzed using quantitative methodology, descriptive and inferential statistics. Data from the various parts of the survey were summarized, cross tabulated and analyzed by range, mode, mean, t-test and ANOVA testing. Survey response items exploring the importance and feasibility of selected leadership practices, making up part one of the survey, were tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. The fifty leadership practices were reduced to ten factors using principal component analysis rotation as part of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Dependent variables, independent variables and perceptions regarding

the influence of faith (beliefs) on decision making as well as perceptions about principal preparation were studied and tabulated.

The dependent variables in the study were the leadership practices for which the faith-based principals shared their perceived level of importance and feasibility. Ten factors extracted from the fifty indicated leadership practices were: student relationships, faculty relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty development, faculty participation, building community relationships, faith application, faith sharing and spirituality influence. These ten factors were used to develop correlations with the independent variables.

The independent variables were developed from the descriptive demographic information the respondents shared in parts two and three of the survey. The independent variables reflected information about the schools in which the respondents served and descriptive demographic information about the individual respondents.

School location was evaluated in connection with the perceptions of the respondents. School size was cross-tabulated with the leadership factors. Gender, age, experience and level of education were also analyzed in terms of their relationship to the perceived importance respondents placed on the ten leadership factors.

Principal preparation perceptions in the areas of content, beneficial aspects of the principal preparation experience and the issues facing principals today were analyzed and tabulated. Patterns in these areas will inform future principal preparation programs.

## Summary of Findings and Discussion

### *Importance and Feasibility of Leadership Practices*

The first research question asked, “What leadership practices are perceived as valuable for faith-based school principals and to what extent are these practices perceived as feasible?” The 50 school leadership practices, listed in part one of the survey, were used to determine the respondent’s perception of the importance of the practices and their subsequent feasibility. No areas of negative correlation were indicated by the perceptions of the respondents. Part one of the survey yielded the anticipated result. If principals perceive a leadership behavior to be important, they also perceive it to be feasible. The literature indicates that school leaders share deeply held convictions with their faculties and together they demonstrate behaviors consistent with those ideals and beliefs (Marzano et al., 2005). Spearman’s rho was used to correlate the importance and feasibility of; curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development, community relationships and faith-based leadership practices. The correlations between the importance and the feasibility of all 50 identified leadership practices were positive. A summary of findings in the areas of curriculum/instruction/assessment, faculty development, community relationships, faith-based and finally cross-domain leadership practices follows.

Respondents rated the curriculum/instruction/assessment practices as important with mean scores greater than “4” (on a 5 point scale with “5” being high) and with all modal responses of “4.” The highest scoring practice for importance in this section, with a mean score of 4.50, was, “ensure teachers use of effective classroom management practices.” School leaders who support positive classroom management strategies

support student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). The lowest scoring practice, with a mean score of 4.01 was, “support learning of and use of research-based instructional practices.” Principals who are seen promoting quality research are positive examples to their faculties (Bernhardt, 1998; Marzano et al., 2005). In terms of feasibility of the identified practices, the range of responses was from “1” to “3” on each item, the modal scores were “2” and the mean scores were all greater than “2.” The highest scoring practice for feasibility, with a mean score of 2.39, was “encourage use of ongoing, classroom level student assessment practices.” Principals and teachers are equally responsible for systematic student assessment (Marzano et al., 2005). The lowest scoring practice for feasibility, with a mean score of 2.19, was “support learning of and use of research-based instructional practices.” Principals increase teacher confidence in cutting edge teaching strategies by modeling research-based techniques (Bernhardt, 1998; Goldring et al., 2006; Lauer, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005). Generally, respondents felt all curriculum/instruction/assessment practices identified in the survey were important and feasible. Results are illustrated in Table 4.6.

Responding principals rated faculty development leadership practices as important with all modal responses of “4” with mean scores slightly greater than “4.” The highest scoring practice for importance in this section, with a mean score of 4.49, was, “invite faculty input about student learning issues (e.g. curriculum, instruction, etc.).” Empowering teachers to become involved in planning to improve student learning encourages faculty ownership of successful student learning. That is what works in schools (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). The lowest scoring practice for importance, with a mean score of only 3.55 was, “provide opportunities for teachers to



observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or video tapes).”

Teachers grow professionally by seeing and then doing best practices. Students benefit from teachers employing best practices (Marzano, 2003). A similar pattern of responding was evident regarding feasibility of these practices. The highest and lowest scoring practices for feasibility were the same as those scoring highest and lowest for importance with mean scores of 2.70 and 1.86 respectively. Site-based management makes leadership a shared experience with student success as the focus (Glickman & Gordon, 2001). Responding principals felt that all the identified faculty development practices were relatively important and relatively feasible. Results are detailed in Table 4.7.

Principal respondents rated community relationship leadership practices as moderately important with modal responses of “3”, “4” and “5” on a 5 point scale and with mean scores generally ranging from about 3.50 to 4.50. The highest scoring practice for importance in this section, with a mean score of 4.49, was, “promote the school in the community.” Principals in schools today embrace a powerful partner when they reach out to their community (Schmoker, 2006; Scribner et al., 1999). Currently serving Christian faith-based principals understand the importance of engaging their communities also. The lowest scoring practice for importance, with a mean score of only 3.19 was, “create opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school.” A similar response pattern was evident regarding feasibility of these practices. The highest and lowest scoring practices for feasibility were the same as those scoring highest and lowest for importance with mean scores of 2.58 and 1.75 respectively. Non-faith-based principals recognize change as an opportunity rather than a challenge (Fullan et al., 1986; McLaughlin, 1987). Principals responding to this survey study have yet to embrace the

opportunity fully. Responding principals felt that all the identified community relationship leadership practices were at least somewhat important and somewhat feasible. Results are detailed in Table 4.8.

Respondents rated faith-based leadership practices as highly important with all modal responses being “5” on a 5 point scale and with mean scores ranging from about 4.30 to 4.93. The highest scoring practice for importance in this section, with a mean score of 4.93, was “emphasize religious teaching as part of our school curriculum.” Christian faith-based principals enable their schools to be a quality Christian environment that develops disciples of Christ who reach their maximum potential (Cochran, 2005). The lowest scoring practice for importance, with a mean score of 4.30 was, “specifically consider religious faith (beliefs) in carrying out your admissions process.” Principals facilitate positive school cultures (Schein, 2004). Christian faith-based school principals facilitate the spiritual climate of their school. The admissions process is understood to contribute to that spiritual climate (Stueber, 2000). The highest scoring practice for feasibility, with a score of 2.95 on a three-point scale, was “emphasize religious teaching as part of our school curriculum.” Identified as equally feasible, with a rating of 2.95 was “include prayer as part of your decision making process.” Prayer gives Christian faith-based principals confidence as they lead schools dedicated to the academic, physical and spiritual development of their students (Cochran, 2005). The lowest scoring practice for feasibility, with a score of 2.48, was “choose curriculum materials based on your religious faith (beliefs).” Christians make all subjects “captive” to the Gospel of Christ. All subjects are taught from a Christian perspective (Prange, 2006). The respondents felt

all the identified faith-based practices were both highly important and highly feasible. Results are detailed in Table 4.9.

Respondents rated the cross-domain practices as important with all modal scores greater than “4” (on a 5 point scale with “5” being high) and with all mean scores between 3.89 and 4.90. The highest scoring practice for importance in this section, with a mean score of 4.90, was, “create a positive learning environment for students at your school.” School leaders enable teachers to be effective classroom instructors by maximizing their ability to positively impact student academic achievement (Blase & Kirby, 2000; Kelehear, 2003). The lowest scoring practice for importance, with a mean score of 3.89 was, “utilize available administrative technology.” A similar pattern was demonstrated in terms of feasibility. Modal scores were all “3” on a three-point scale with mean scores ranging from 2.28 to 2.86. The highest scoring practice for feasibility, with a score of 2.86, was “create a positive learning environment for students at your school.” While lowest scoring practice for feasibility, with a score of 2.19, was also “utilize available administrative technology.” Technology is an administrative tool principals use to increase their efficiency as well help their faculties be more effective instructors in a rapidly changing technological environment (Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001). Responding principals felt all the cross-domain leadership practices identified were both important and feasible. Results are illustrated in Table 4.10.

### ***Religious Faith as a Decision Making Consideration***

The second research question asked: “To what extent is religious belief (faith) a consideration in decisions made by faith-based school principals?” Survey question 3 was an open-ended question asked respondents to, “Please share one brief example of

how your religious beliefs (faith) influenced an important school related decision that you made. You might want to include (1) general information about the circumstances, (2) who was affected by the decision, (3) beliefs and/or tension that were part of your thinking, (4) the decision you ultimately made and (5) how you felt about the decision once it was made.” One hundred seventy-nine respondents chose to answer the question. They offered examples, in order of frequency, dealing with: discipline policy, enrollment policy, budget policy, curriculum decisions, marketing decisions, staffing decisions, and other types of decisions. Faith-based principals placed a high degree of importance on policies and decisions dealing with discipline, enrollment, budget, curriculum and marketing (Prange, 2006; Rosenthal, 1999; Schnake, 2000b; Stueber, 2000). Most (92%) of the situations shared involved decisions in the areas of discipline policy, enrollment policy, budget policy and curriculum decisions.

The principals who answered this question showed the substantial influence of faith in their lives and particularly as an influence in their professional lives. Faith-based practices were indicated as highly important by the principals sharing their perceptions regarding the importance and feasibility of indicated leadership practices. Their responses to this question were consistent with their earlier perceptions. Comments below reflect the importance of faith (beliefs) in guiding decisions.

- *“Discipline of students and the encouragement of parents to follow Scripture in talking with each other when the conflict came up.”*
- *“1. Enrollment of a student that had a questionable past. 2. Family enrolling the student. current students and faculty. 3. Provide and expose the family to God's love and grace. 4. Accept the student. 5. Good -*

*fulfilling the Great Commission.”*

- *“For the first time in school history, non-LCMS churches will be allowed to become associate members of our Association. The decision was made to broaden the base of students from which we can recruit. This was defeated 12 years ago, but accepted now as long as we remain accountable to our faith and doctrine.”*
- *“The question is who attends a private Catholic high school. Many who can afford it reject the invitation flat out. This is a chronic problem. Those who are not on the original guest list are sought out. The issue is: Tuition vs. Family ability to pay. Sometimes it’s the family’s ability to pay anything at all. The Gospel of Matthew Chapter 22, 1-14 frames the dilemma. There is a constant struggle about who should attend and do they appreciate what they are given. How do we get all the students and a parent to appreciate what is being given to them? Are we able to balance the Gospel demand: What ever you did onto my least brothers and sisters, you did unto me. I have felt differently depending on each case. Especially the families that refuse the offer of a Catholic education and could easily afford it. I can only pray that we are doing is consistent with the Gospel.”*
- *“We recently purchased Christian history textbooks. While these textbooks were not printed by our church body, we decided it is important to have a Christian versus secular perspective at our school.”*
- *“Should a part time child caregiver be WELS member? Candidates for the*

*position were affected and more importantly our children and their parents will be most affected and quite possibly ultimately the future staffing of our day school will be affected by not going for a ride on the "slippery slope". Our belief is that teaching goes on in our child care through modeling and by what is not always necessarily taught but by what is caught. Our decision is to employ only WELS and/or ELS members in our child care. I felt pleased, happy and relieved in our ultimate decision."*

### ***Influence of Demographic Variables on Leadership Practice Perceptions***

The third research question asked, "To what extent do demographic variables such as school location, school size, gender, age, experience and level of education influence the extent to which specific leadership practices are valued? The school leadership practices were reduced to ten factors resulting from factor analysis described earlier. Reducing the number of dependent variables made cross-tabulation with the independent variables much more manageable. School location was cross-tabulated with the leadership factors. There was only one statistically significant finding at the .05 level. Faculty development was the factor having a significance level of .014 when cross-tabulated with school location demographic data.

#### ***School Location***

The standard ANOVA test was used to cross-tabulate the significance of school location when considering the importance of the school leadership factors. ANOVA was used because school location was described as rural, suburban and urban. There was only one significant finding at the .05 level. The area of faculty development had a

significance level of .014. The principals in urban locations appear to value faculty development more highly than principals in rural locations.

Urban principals are possibly more concerned with faculty development because they have larger faculties. Urban principals partner with teachers and parents to energize student success (Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997). Urban areas may have greater faculty turnover resulting in a greater degree of emphasis on faculty development. The data does not necessarily mean that faith-based principals in rural locations consider faculty development less important. Rural schools are typically smaller than schools in urban areas. Faculty development probably is not a high a priority for smaller and sometimes more indigenous faculties. This finding would benefit from further study.

### ***School Size***

The cross-tabulation of school size with the leadership factors resulted in three areas of significance at the .05 level. Significant differences were demonstrated in the areas of student relationships, knowledge of CIA and faculty development. Principal leadership does affect student learning. Principal relationships with students and teachers translate to student achievement (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).

The standard ANOVA analysis test was also used to cross-tabulate the significance of school size as it affects the perceived importance of the ten leadership factors. Significance findings were demonstrated in the areas of student relationships, knowledge of CIA and faculty development. The principals in larger schools appear to value student relationships, knowledge of CIA and faculty development more highly than principals in small schools. Statistical significance in the areas of student relationships,

knowledge of CIA and faculty development is at the .05 level. The mean of small school principal responses is significantly lower than the responses of principals in larger schools. The Scheffe multiple comparisons analysis of significance between the responses of the principals of small schools and schools with 201-300 is at .013 when considering the importance of student relationships. A significance of .033 was demonstrated by the responses of principals for schools with fewer than 50 students and those with a student population of more than 400. Principals with less than 50 students in their schools appeared to value knowledge of curriculum/instruction/assessment less than principals in schools with 201-300 students (sig.=.018) and principals with more than 400 students (sig.=.045). Faculty development was the final factor demonstrating statistical significance when compared to school size. The responses of larger school principal seemed to indicate valuing faculty development more than the responses of principals in schools with fewer than 50 students. The Scheffe analysis indicate significance levels of .007 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to schools of 201-300 students, .042 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to school of 301-400 and .018 when comparing schools with fewer than 50 students to schools with more than 400 students.

Many faith-based school principals in schools with fewer than 50 students are teaching principals (Brandt, 2005; Inniger, 2005). The respondents of the small schools probably know all the students in their school on a first name basis and more than likely teach many of them. Therefore, respondents from small schools perhaps feel they have meaningful relationships with students, know about CIA because they are teachers or are very close to teachers and probably take faculty development for granted because they



are both an administrator and a faculty member. On the other hand, principals in larger faith-based school perceive student relationships more highly perhaps because they have to intentionally develop them. Knowledge of CIA and faculty development are higher priorities with principals in larger schools because they deal with a larger number of faculty members in a more distinctly administrative role.

### ***Gender***

The T-test was used to analyze the role of gender on the perceived importance of the leadership factors. The T-test indicated significance at the .05 level in the areas of student relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty participation, community relationships, faith application, faith sharing and spirituality. The higher the mean and the mean rank indicates a higher degree of importance is perceived by the respondents. Student relationships, faculty relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty development, faculty participation, community relationships and faith sharing appeared to be valued more highly by female principals. Faith application and issues related to a climate of spirituality appeared to be more important to male principals. This finding, however, may benefit from further examination. All responding principals in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) were male. Therefore the significance levels of .05, or below may not truly reflect gender differences but may be related to denominational religious differences. More analysis is necessary to separate the gender and denominational variables to determine the natural areas of significance.

### ***Principal Age and Experience Levels***

The standard ANOVA analysis test was used to cross tabulate significance of the independent variable – age of the principal as it affects the perceived importance of the ten leadership factors. No areas of statistical significance were demonstrated by the respondents regarding their perception of the importance of leadership practices when considering their age. The three secular integrated school leadership studies reviewed for this research study did not find principal age to be a statistically significant factor (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).

ANOVA cross-tabulation was performed between the leadership practices and the experience levels of the responding principals. No areas of significance at the .05 level in the perceived importance of the leadership practices based on experience level were identified.

### ***Level of Education***

The standard ANOVA test was used to determine the significance of the responding principal's level of education. ANOVA was used because the levels of education were described as baccalaureate, baccalaureate plus, masters, masters plus and doctorate. The doctorate level of education was discarded due to low response numbers. There were two areas of significance at the .05 level. Both knowledge of CIA and faculty development were identified as significant. The principals with masters or masters plus level of education appear to value knowledge of CIA and faculty development more highly than principals with a baccalaureate or baccalaureate plus level of education. The statistical means of principals with a baccalaureate or baccalaureate plus level of education are significantly lower than the principals with masters or masters plus levels

of education. The Scheffe analysis of significance between the principals with a baccalaureate and masters plus level of education was at .043 when considering knowledge of CIA. The significance level between baccalaureate and masters plus educated principals is .026 when determining the perceived importance of knowledge of CIA. Preparing successful principals requires candidates willing and able to pursue personal professional growth. High quality professional growth goals for principals benefit their faculties and ultimately their students (Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Lashway, 2001; Levine, 2005). The level of significance between principal with baccalaureate plus and masters plus levels of education is .010 when considering the perceived importance of faculty development.

This finding validates formal professional growth for school administrators. Principals with masters and masters plus levels of education were much more concerned with high quality curriculum. Formal professional development leads school principals to be more concerned about quality instruction and best practices. Many of the principal respondents indicated an interest in learning more about student assessment when indicating what topic would energize their future personal professional growth. This finding concurs with the literature that indicates the importance personal professional growth for school leaders (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

### ***Principal Preparation Suggestions***

#### ***Helpfulness of various principal preparation methods***

The fourth research question asked, “What suggestions do currently practicing faith-based school leaders have for advancing principal preparation?” Section four of the survey instrument addressed the question. Principals participating in the study were first

asked to consider the degree of helpfulness various principal preparation methods proved to be for them. Eight methods of faith-based principal preparation were listed; college course work, principal internship, in-service workshops, learning on their own before becoming a principal, learning from experience while they were principals, learning from a principal mentor, interactions with other principals and experience they had gained while serving as a classroom teacher. The most helpful item was identified by the respondents as, “learning from experience while serving as a principal.” It received a mean score of 2.80. This response is consistent with the premise of this study. Faith-based principals lack adequate formal principal preparation (Inniger, 2005). The item, “college coursework” received a mean score of just 1.95. Secular studies of principal preparation programs have been critical of curricular content being out of touch with what principals are facing today (Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Jacobson, 1996; Lashway, 2003; Levine, 2005).

Principal respondents utilized “does not apply” in all eight of the listed preparation categories. One item, “principal internship” received one hundred sixty-one “does not apply” responses for rate of 58.1%. The non-response option allows respondents to indicate they did not have exposure to particular listed principal preparation methods. The principal internship is conspicuous by its absence. Secular literature on principal preparation reform suggests consideration of internships (Glasman & Glasman, 1997; Gonzalez, Glasman, & Glasman, 2002). Faith-based principal preparation programs might do well to consider the potential of principal internships.

***Important principal preparation content***

Survey question 26 asked the principals if they were given the responsibility of designing a preparation program for faith-based school principals, what degree of importance they assign various content areas. Principals indicated their perception of the importance of the practices by rating them: not important, not very important, somewhat important, important and very important. The highest rated content area, with a mean score of 4.50 was “faculty relationships.” Faith-based school principals recognized the significance of developing positive relationships with teachers. Teachers have direct contact with students. Relating well with teachers better enables student success (Gonzalez et al., 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). The responding principals indicated the least important content area in principal preparation, with a mean score of 3.58, was “supervision of non-teaching personnel.”

***Significant issues influencing work of faith-based principals***

Participating principal respondents were asked to indicate their perceived significance of thirteen issues affecting or potential influences on their work as a Christian faith-based principal on a five point scale (1 being low and 5 being high). Three items with the highest mean scores of 4.32, 4.31, and 4.18 respectively, were, “my own professional learning growth,” “faculty relationships and supervision,” and “generating resources and funding.” These indicators are consistent with faith-based leadership and faith-based culture literature (Cochran, 2005; Schnake, 2000b). Three items, “culturally diverse student populations,” “religiously diverse student populations” and “student access to drugs and alcohol” received mean scores of between just 2.6 and 2.8. It appears that faith-based principals do not see student diversity or student drug and

alcohol issues as being as significant as personal administrative issues or when working with faculty.

***Current and energizing areas of principal professional growth***

The pathways of current principals of faith-based schools involve their past experiences in principal preparation and also the professional development direction they see in their futures. The pathway of each principal continues with professional growth areas that allow them to remain current and energized.

Two hundred seventy-one principals responded to the question asking about principal professional development opportunities that keep faith-based principals current and energized.

The professional growth opportunity with the highest mean score was “regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools of my denomination.” “Regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of public schools in my area” was the least regarded professional growth activity for the responding faith-based principals with a mean score of only 1.83. Faith-based principals appear to value sharing experiences with principals in situations that parallel their own (Schnake, 2000a). Faith-based principals could possibly benefit from sharing experiences with non-faith-based principals in their communities. Local principal’s conferences provide rich opportunities for growing professionally (McLaughlin, 1987). Faith-based principals might to well to consider expanding their professional growth horizons in this area.

***Pressing areas of learning of immediate interest to faith-based principals***

The last survey question was open-ended and asked, “Finally, what would you identify as the three most pressing or interesting areas about which you would like to

learn in the next year?” There were 199 respondents and 560 responses. Recruiting and marketing strategies were identified most frequently. Faith-based schools continue to face declining enrollments (Brandt, 2005; Schnake, 2000a). Recruiting and marketing strategies are probably seen as necessary to reverse the trend and stabilize enrollment numbers.

### **Study Conclusions**

Faith-based leadership literature makes it clear that faith-based school principals have more responsibilities than ever before (Inniger, 2005; Schnake, 2000b). This study attempts to better understand the importance practicing faith-based principals assign to certain identified leadership practices. Those leadership practices were developed primarily from three integrated secular leadership studies (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). The identified leadership practices took shape in the conceptual framework. Implications of the study impact our understanding of faith-based principal practices and faith-based principal pathways/preparation.

### ***Faith-based Leadership Practices***

Reflecting on leadership practice is as beneficial for faith-based principals as it is for non-faith-based principals (Benecivenga & Elias, 2003). Participating principals recognize the importance of practices that support curriculum, instruction and assessment (CIA). Faith-based principal respondents rated all CIA practices important with average mean scores greater than “4” on a five-point scale. CIA leadership practices have been shown to influence student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Faculty development was seen as a vital element for strengthening schools and making a direct and positive difference in the lives of students in faith-based schools (Cole, 1999).

Recognizing faculty development as an important leadership priority is consistent with secular literature (Glickman, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).

Principal respondents indicated their understanding of the importance of developing positive community relationships with those supportive of their denominational identity but respondents indicated some reluctance to pursue relationships with the community-at-large. This was indicated by the mean scores of only 1.75 and 1.96 (on a 3 point scale) respectively in the areas of creating opportunities for community members to share ideas about the school and developing partnerships with community agencies or groups that serve children and families.

The principal participants in this survey research project indicated their significant personal commitment to faith-based practices. Faith-based leadership practices result from their core belief system that intrinsically motivates them to be who they are and do what they do (Schnake, 2000b). Faith-based leadership practices was the only area indicating the importance of leadership practices in which all identified practices received had modal scores of “5.” Respondents emphasized religious teaching in their curriculums, celebrated religious holidays, regularly convened school worship opportunities, utilized Holy Scripture as the primary guide directing school policy, included prayer as part of the decision making process and prominently placed religious symbols in the school. Faith-based schools are distinctly different from non-faith-based schools. Faith-base school culture defines faith-based schools. Curriculums are distinctly influenced by religion. School schedules are distinctly influenced by religious beliefs. The absolute standard, Holy Scripture, distinctly guides policy making and prayer is part of the decision making process. Religious symbols distinctly identify faith-



based schools. Religious beliefs define faith-based school culture. Faith-based school culture permeates faith-based principal leadership practices in the areas of CIA, faculty development and community relationships.

### ***Faith-based principal preparation***

This study was designed to inform faith-based principal preparation programs. The study respondents shared suggestions for pathways to the principalship. Faith-based principal preparation pathway options offered the respondents included: helpful methods, valuable content, issues affecting their work, important areas of continuing professional growth and areas of immediate interest or importance.

Methods selections included: learning from experience while serving as a principal, interactions with other principals, learning on my own before I assumed a principal's position, learning from a principal mentor, in-service workshops, teaching experience, principal internship and college coursework. All identified principal preparation methods selections were listed in order of their mean scores from the greatest, 2.80, to the least, 1.95, on a 3 point scale. The three most popular principal preparation methods identified by respondents were informal methods of preparation. In-service workshops and teaching experience are on-the-job experiences. College coursework had the lowest mean score. Principal internships and principal mentorships were preparation methods that 58% and 33% of the respondents respectively indicated “did not apply.” These findings are consistent with literature suggesting many faith-based principals begin their careers with little or no prior experience (Inniger, 2005). Respondent indications suggest college coursework provides inadequate preparation as shared by a recent Public Agenda survey (Lashway, 2003). Respondent selection of “does not apply” indicates the

lack of exposure to principal mentorships and principal internships. Principal mentorships and principal internships have been used successfully in some innovative secular principal preparation programs (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997). Principal mentorships and principal internships might well be piloted as part of faith-based principal preparation programs. Piloted mentorships and internships merit program development evaluation.

Content selections included: faculty relationships, interpersonal relationships, instructional supervision, working with clergy, organizational and school development, teacher collaboration and team development as well as curriculum and instruction-specific to religious teaching. Faith-based principal preparation content selections above all had mean scores of 4.3 or greater. These content areas provide faith-based principal preparation programs with future inclusion options. Faculty relationships, interpersonal relationships, instructional supervision and team development are some leadership skills the integrated literature studies identified as important (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Faith-based principal preparation programs may include all these suggested content areas with future studies examining pre-graduate input and post-graduate principal input.

Issues identified as affecting faith-based principal's work included: my own professional learning and growth, faculty relationships and supervision, parent support of students and education, generating resources/funding and academic achievement of students. The above issues affecting the work of faith-based principals all had mean score of 4.10 or greater on a five point scale. Issues identified as having less impact on the work of faith-based principals were religiously diverse student populations, culturally

diverse student populations and student access to drugs and alcohol. Least impactful issues had mean scores ranging from 2.77 down to 2.63 of a five point scale. These findings suggest faith-based schools are parochial religious settings primarily located in less ethnically diverse areas.

Important continuing professional growth activities for practicing faith-based principals were: regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools of my denomination, visiting other schools to observe, participating in a study or learning group with other principals. All previously mentioned continuing professional growth activities had mean score or 2.3 or greater on a three point scale. These activities suggest faith-based school loyalty to their supporting denomination and their identifying strongly with fellow faith-based school principals for support and professional growth (Schnake, 2000a). The lowest scoring activity, with a mean score of 1.83 on a three point scale was, “regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of public schools in my area.” Faith-based school principals could potentially benefit from such contact. Further study is warranted in the area of faith-based principal continuing professional growth.

The most pressing or interesting areas for future professional development receiving the greatest number of responses, ranging from 54 to 92 of 560, were: recruiting/marketing strategies, curriculum development – best practices, school finance/fund raising and leadership techniques/instructional supervision/policy development. Recruiting/marketing strategies importance is consist with faith-based school enrollment challenges and over-all school competition for students in the climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Brandt, 2005; Robelen, 2008). Areas identified with greatest

frequency, from curriculum development to leadership techniques/instructional supervision/policy development, were consistent with areas of importance identified by leadership literature in general (Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). These areas of interest and need could be incorporated into faith-based principal preparation mentorships and/or internships.

### **Implications of the Study**

This research study had two primary purposes. It explored what faith-based principals considered important practices related to their leadership role and at the same time determined faith-based principal perceptions about the feasibility of engaging in those practices. The second important purpose was to gather currently practicing faith-based principal perceptions about faith-based school principal preparation. Principals validated both the importance and feasibility of specific leadership practices offered for their consideration. Those practice perceptions combined with potential principal preparation feedback, however, indicated that faith-based principal preparation is often considered inadequate.

Faith-based school principals are subject to many pressures as they lead their schools into the twenty-first century. All too often, unfortunately, their leadership preparation has not fully equipped them for the many challenges they face. Their principal preparation is often practice based rather than program oriented. Responding principals shared insights about their principal preparation pathways. Participating principals overwhelmingly, nearly 81% of the respondents, indicated the most helpful principal preparation method was “learning from experience while serving as a principal.” Over 60% of the respondents indicated that learning from “interactions with

other principals” prepared them to be a faith-based principal. They rated these informal preparation methods as being most influential for them. “Learning on my own before I assumed a principal’s position” was selected by nearly half of those principals responding. Forty-nine of two hundred respondents, or about 18%, however, indicated that “learning on my own before I assumed a principal’s position,” did not apply to their experience. That response choice probably indicates those principals began their teaching and principal careers at the same time. Table 4.13 illustrates response patterns to perceived importance of various learning opportunities. When considering continuing professional growth issues, as illustrated by Table 4.15, spending time with fellow principals of the same denomination ranked highest. While on the job experience and informal professional growth opportunities may be important, appropriate formal preparation is critically important also (Clark & Clark, 1996; Glasman & Glasman, 1997).

Further support for addressing faith-based principal preparation program development can be drawn from data collected. Table 4.12 illustrates principal responses regarding the helpfulness of various principal preparation methods. While informal methods like learning on the job and interacting with other principals were highly rated, some formal preparation methods were conspicuous by their absence. Principal mentor programs were indicated as not applicable by more than 33% of those responding. Principal internships did not apply to nearly 60% of the responding principals. Neither principal mentorships nor principal internships were principal preparation options experienced by many of the responding principals. Other formal preparation methods were not highly regarded. College coursework had a mean score of 1.95 on a three-point

scale. Table 4.13 had the formal study of leadership theory ranked 18<sup>th</sup> of 20 important learning opportunities. Faith-based principals indicated college courses and theoretical studies they experienced either were not intended to prepare principals or were ineffective in doing so. Issues relating to fostering relationships dominated content of greatest perceived importance. Areas affecting faith-based principal work, shown on Table 4.14, rated personal professional growth and funding along with marketing issues being of greatest importance. Table 4.16 illustrates professional development areas that are most pressing or interesting for practicing faith-based principals. Two of the top rated areas were recruitment/marketing and school finance/fund raising. Principals indicated a number of areas they considered important to faith-based principal preparation.

In light of these data, revised faith-based principal preparation program design emerged. Program design would involve three primary preparation components: academic content, methods training and an extended clinical experience. Table 4.13 began to suggest appropriate formal content. Program design might consist of academic leadership content courses like: student learning and development, school finance, school law for faith-based schools and leadership theory. Methods training would include: developing human relationships, curriculum and instruction for faith-based schools, marketing your school, assessing student learning and making important community connections. Table 4.12 indicated that a principal mentorship and/or internship were not experienced by responding principals. Further investigation of these forms of clinical experiences is needed. This emerging program design is based on the findings of this research study. It also conforms to the six standards for principals established by the

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). They are: 1) effective principals lead schools in a way that places student learning and staff development at the center, 2) effective principals set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of all student, 3) effective principals demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed upon standards, 4) effective principals create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals, 5) effective principals manage data and knowledge to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance and 6) effective principals actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development (Connelly, Brown, & Hahn, 2008). The preparation program's academic and methodology courses could be on-campus, on-line or of hybrid design. An internship might take place in a school under the supervision of an exemplary principal mentor. The principal trainee could experience hands-on training while working with the supervising principal. All participating denominations have an existing training model in place in the form of their extended vicar training programs for future pastors and priests. The vicar training model, if supported by denominational leadership, could possibly be used to train future principals. The faith-based school principal preparation program design might also include a culminating comprehensive portfolio presentation.

### **Future Research**

This study was a base line study of faith-based school leadership. Much has been learned and those data gathered were primarily quantitative. Qualitative methods such as: interviews, focus groups and case studies can continue to shed light on the topic.

Some issues warrant further study. In small faith-based schools, principals are likely to be part-time teachers and part-time principals. Principals functioning in these dual roles would provide an additional demographic with which correlations to leadership practice perceptions could be made. A better understanding of principal mentorships and principal internships is warranted. Practicing principals have offered direction for faith-based principal preparation program revisions. Revisions focus on addressing specific shortcomings. Where should those programs be developed and how should they be most effectively delivered? Further research is needed. What input do faculty members, clergy and parents have to offer with respect to school leadership practice and preparation? What are community connections and impressions of faith-based schools and their principals? How do the congregations and parishes view the work of their principal? What is and/or what should be the role of the denominational leadership in supporting principal preparation? What is the funding requirement of revising principal preparation and what are funding sources? What is the role of private and faith-based higher education institutions in facilitating principal preparation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? These questions await further investigation.

### **Policy Implications**

This research study implies several potential faith-based school leadership policy considerations. National and more specifically state governments are responsible for school oversight and evaluation policies impacting principals (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Education policies, such as NCLB, apply to the public sector. Faith-based educational leadership, however, might do well to consider oversight and evaluation policies encouraging/requiring principals to be



accountable for student learning in their schools. The higher in the denominational hierarchy this policy is developed, the more consistent will be its potential application. Faith-based school principal preparation varies from virtually no formal preparation to various forms of formal and informal preparation. This inconsistency is a concern. It may impact students and school faculties negatively. A policy requiring faith-based principals to have classroom experience prior to becoming a principal should be considered. Faith-based principals should also be required to complete a formal preparation program leading to an administrative credential. Another policy having possible indirect impact on faith-based principal would be encouragement for faith-based schools to seek accreditation. These policies would go a long way to honor the principal perceptions shared in this study. These policies would make real progress toward addressing the problem that formed the basis of this research study.

### **Closing**

The purpose of this survey research study was to describe the leadership practices of Christian faith-based school leaders in Minnesota and Wisconsin as they perceived their value and feasibility, determine the context in which the principals work as well as their pathway to their current leadership position and finally inform existing and future principal preparation programs.

Respondents indicated that all indicated faith-based leadership practices were both important and feasible. Faith-based principals shared how faith influenced their decision making. Answers indicated that the faith of responding principals was an important aspect of their decision making process. This aspect of faith-based leadership coupled with specific faith-based leadership practices combined to facilitate a cultural

climate unique to faith-based schools. One hundred seventy-nine principals responded to the open-ended question about the role their faith had on decision making. They shared examples of genuine concern for students and faculty members. Concern for supporting Christian conduct was rated most highly. Extending enrollment as a means of offering Christian education to a greater number of potential students was rated highly. Crafting budgets that were fair to student families yet adequate to meet the needs of dedicated faculty and staff were conscientiously undertaken. Curriculum decisions honored religious viewpoints to benefit faculty and students alike.

Correlations between dependent and independent variables revealed statistical significance between location and faculty development, between school size and student relationships, knowledge of CIA and faculty development, between gender and student relationships, administrative respectability, knowledge of CIA, faculty participation, community relationships, faith application, faith sharing and spirituality, and between principal education levels and faculty development and knowledge of curriculum/instruction/assessment.

Finally, responding faith-based principals shared suggestions informing future principal preparation programs. They shared methods, content areas, issues affecting their work, energizing professional growth areas and topics having immediate impact. Results created a framework for programs aimed at preparing capable and qualified future faith-based principals. Faith-based principals are well prepared to respond to a climate of school accountability. Faith-based principals understand their role in a world of high expectations. Respondents recognized the importance of honoring their religious tradition. Principals also indicated a need to reach out to their membership and/or those

outside their membership to maintain enrollment to insure financial viability. Principals were introspective relative to theological doctrine and embraced outreach relative to increasing enrollment revenue. This dichotomy produced tension. Yet, this tension is at the heart of why faith-based principals serve where they do. They walk a delicate balance that honors their faith base and at the same time lead schools making an effort to share it with others.

Appendix A:

**Faith-based School Leadership Practices Survey**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research study is to determine the leadership practices viewed as important and feasible by faith-based school principals. Findings will be used to inform the siding of initial preparation and continuing education program for such leaders.

I recognize that completing this survey requires the use of your valuable time. Your participation is very important for gaining a better understanding of Christian faith-based school leadership practices. The more principals that respond to this survey, the more valid will be the findings.

I sincerely appreciate your thoughtful consideration. Your responses will remain anonymous. Should you have any questions as you respond to the survey, please feel free to contact me at: [rkindwo@hickorytech.net](mailto:rkindwo@hickorytech.net). Thank you. R. F. Klindworth

**Part One: Faith-based Leadership Practices**

*Directions: Please check one response for each item below. You will be asked both the importance and the feasibility of each item given your current position as a faith-based school principal.*

	Please rate the degree of importance for each of the following school leadership practices relative to your work as a faith-based school principal to their importance?					How feasible is it to engage in the practice?		
	(1) Not important	(2) Not very important	(3) Somewhat important	(4) Important	(5) Very Important	(1) Not very feasible	(2) Somewhat feasible	(3) Very feasible
<b>Section 1. (Cross-domain practices)</b>								
1. How important is it to spend time getting to know individual students? How feasible is it?								
2. How important is it to create a positive learning environment for students at our school. How feasible is it to do so?								
3. Spend time getting to know individual faculty members.								
4. Maintain open, two-way communication with the faculty.								

5. Create a positive working climate for faculty and staff at our school.								
6. Develop policies to support a safe, orderly school environment.								
7. Include the faculty in conversations about policies that support a productive school environment.								
8. Develop a school budget.								
9. Manage available funds within the budget.								
10. Apply current school law as it is required at my school								
11 Supervise school support personnel								
12. Utilize available administrative technology								
<b>Section 2. (Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment)</b>								
13. Ensure the availability of current curricular resources								
14. Provide sufficient opportunities for curricular evaluation								
15. Ensure the availability of necessary instructional materials								
16. Ensure teacher use of effective classroom management practices								
17. Identify areas in need of curricular and instructional improvement based on current student data.								
18. Support learning and use of research-based instructional practices								
19. Encourage use of ongoing, classroom level student assessment practices								
20. Formally collect data annually to analyze overall student learning and growth.								
21. Utilize available technology as an instructional tool in school classrooms								
<b>Section 3. (Faculty Development)</b>								
22. Offer professional growth opportunities for individual faculty members as needed								

23. Provide regular professional development opportunities for groups or teams of teachers								
24. Embed regular opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect together about their instructional practices								
25. Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching (such as classroom observations or videotape)								
26. Regularly observe teachers then engage in coaching conversations about their teaching								
27. Invite faculty input about student learning issues (e.g., curriculum, instruction)								
28. Invite faculty input about school or organizational matters that affect them.								
29. Encourage faculty participation in the work of instructional leadership								
30. Provide adequate resources for faculty development.								
<b>Section 4. (Community Relationships)</b>								
31. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about teaching and learning at the school								
32. Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about how the school operates								
33. Develop partnerships with community agencies or groups that serve children and families.								
34. Create opportunities for community members to share ideas.								
35. Sponsor social or performing events that engage family members								
36. Sponsor social or performing events that invite community member participation								
37. Promote the school in the community.								
<b>Section 5. (Faith-Based Practices)</b>								
38. Emphasize religious teachings as part of our school curriculum.								
39. Schedule the celebration of religious holidays as part of our school calendar								
40. Regularly schedule joint worship opportunities for the faculty and students.								

41. Regularly schedule joint faculty devotional opportunities.								
42. Regularly include pastors or priests in faith-based activities at school.								
43. Holy Scripture is the primary guide directing school policy.								
44. Prayer is part of the decision making process.								
45. Religious faith (beliefs) plays a role in our curriculum and instruction.								
46. Religious faith (beliefs) plays a role in our admissions process.								
47. Religious faith (beliefs) plays a role in our discipline policies.								
48. Religious faith (beliefs) plays a role in our choice of curriculum materials.								
49. Religious faith (beliefs) influences our interaction with the community-at-large.								
50. Religious symbols are displayed prominently in our school.								

Please share one brief example of how your religious beliefs (faith) influenced an important school related decision that you made. You might want to include (1) general information about the circumstances, (2) who would be affected by the decision, (3) beliefs and tension that were part of your thinking, (4) the decision you ultimately made, and (5) how you felt about the decision.

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**Part Two: Descriptive Information about your School** *(Please check one response for each item below.)*

**4. Denomination of your school**

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod \_\_\_\_\_

Roman Catholic \_\_\_\_\_

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of your school**

Rural \_\_\_\_\_

Suburban \_\_\_\_\_

Urban \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Grades in Your School**

Preschool and K-8 \_\_\_\_\_

Preschool and K-6 \_\_\_\_\_

K-5 or 6 \_\_\_\_\_

K-8 \_\_\_\_\_

Middle School or Jr. High \_\_\_\_\_

Senior High \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Specify please \_\_\_\_\_



**7. Number of faculty in your school**

- Fewer than 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-35 \_\_\_\_\_
- 36-50 \_\_\_\_\_
- 51-100 \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 100 \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Number of student in your school**

- Fewer than 25 \_\_\_\_\_
- 26-50 \_\_\_\_\_
- 51-100 \_\_\_\_\_
- 101-200 \_\_\_\_\_
- 201-300 \_\_\_\_\_
- 301-400 \_\_\_\_\_
- 401-500 \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 500 \_\_\_\_\_, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Approximate percentage of your faculty members that holds membership in a congregation of the same religious denomination as your school.**

- Most \_\_\_\_\_
- About half \_\_\_\_\_
- Fewer than half \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Approximate percentage of the students or students' parents that hold membership in a congregation of the same religious denomination as your school.**

- Most \_\_\_\_\_
- About half \_\_\_\_\_
- Fewer than half \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Three: Descriptive Information about You**

*Please check one response for each item below, unless indicated otherwise.*

**11. Your Gender**

- Female \_\_\_\_\_
- Male \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Your Age**

- 22-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 31-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- 41-50 \_\_\_\_\_
- 51-60 \_\_\_\_\_
- 61 or older \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Your total years of experience as an educator? (e.g. teacher and principal)**

- 0-2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 31-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 40 \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Your total years of experience as a school and principal?**

- 0-2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 31-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 40 \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Your total years of experience as principal at your present school?**

- 0-2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 31-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 40 \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Have you ever been a principal of a school that was NOT faith-based?**

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Is there an assistant principal, dean of students, or other formal leader who works with you to lead this school?**

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Do you hold membership in a congregation of the same religious denomination as this school.**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

**19. What is your highest level of education**

Pre-baccalaureate degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Baccalaureate degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Baccalaureate degree plus \_\_\_\_\_  
Masters degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Masters degree plus \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctorate degree \_\_\_\_\_

**20. What professional credentials do you hold? (check all that apply)**

Religious certification \_\_\_\_\_  
State Teacher's license \_\_\_\_\_  
State Administrator's license \_\_\_\_\_

**21. What type of primary school did you attend as a student?**

Private, religious \_\_\_\_\_  
Private, secular \_\_\_\_\_  
Public \_\_\_\_\_

**22. From what type of secondary school did you attend as a student?**

Private, religious \_\_\_\_\_  
Private, secular \_\_\_\_\_  
Public \_\_\_\_\_

**23. From what type of system from which you received your undergraduate education?**

Private, religious \_\_\_\_\_

Private, secular \_\_\_\_\_

Public \_\_\_\_\_

**24. From what type of system did you receive (or are pursuing) a graduate degree?**

Does not apply to me \_\_\_\_\_

Private, religious \_\_\_\_\_

Private, secular \_\_\_\_\_

Public \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Four: Your Perspectives about Principal Preparation for Faith-Based School Leaders**

*Please respond to each of the questions below using the rating scales that are provided. Mark one response box for each listed item.*

**25. How helpful were the following learning opportunities in terms of preparing you to be a principal in a faith-based school?**

	Not at all helpful	Helpful	Extremely Helpful	Does not apply
College coursework				
Principal internship				
In-service workshops				
Learning on my own before I assumed a principal position				
Learning from experience while serving as a principal				
Learning from a principal mentor				
Interactions with other principals				
Teaching experience				

In what other ways has your development as a principal been supported? (please specify)

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**26. How would you rate the importance of principal training/preparation in each of the following content areas?**

	(1) Not important	(2) Not very important	(3) Somewhat important	(4) Important	(5) Very Important
Curriculum and Instruction-general					
Curriculum and instruction – specific to religious teaching					
Assessment of student learning					
Affective development of students					
Teaching learning and development					
Teacher collaboration and team development					
Organizational and school development					
Instructional supervision					
Supervision of non-teaching personnel					
Leadership theory and practice					
Advanced religious learning and spiritual development for principals					
Contemporary issues in faith-based education					
Finance and budgeting					
School law and regulations					
Accountability for student learning					

Marketing and recruitment					
Interpersonal relationships					
Faculty relationships					
Faith-based relationship building					
Relationships with the community at large					

Please specify other areas of high importance in the design of principal preparation programs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**27. How significant is each of the following items in terms of affecting your work as a Christian faith-based school principal?**

	(1) Insignificant	(2) Not very significant	(3) Somewhat significant	(4) Significant	(5) Very Significant
Culturally diverse student populations					
Religiously diverse student populations					
Academic achievement of students					
Student access of drugs and alcohol					
Competition and marketing our school					
Generating resources and funding					



Parent involvement in curricular issues					
Parent support of students and education					
Religion in the media and politics					
Religious hierarchy					
Faculty relationships and supervision					
Other personnel management issues					
My own professional learning and growth					

Please identify other areas or issues that significantly affect your work as a Christian faith-based school principal.

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**28. As you consider ways to stay current and energized about your work as a Christian faith-based school principal, how supportive are the following means of professional learning and growth?**

	(1) Not very supportive	(2) Supportive	(3) Very supportive
Engaging in formal coursework			
Reading on my own			
Visiting others schools to observe			
Regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools that are like my school			
Regularly reflecting about leadership practice with principals of other schools in my specific school system.			

Participating in a study or learning group with other principals			
Attending in depth conferences or retreats			
On-line learning and networking			

Please share other ways in which you do or would like to engage in continuous professional learning that supports your leadership development and practice \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Finally, what would you identify as the three most pressing or interesting areas of which you would like to learn in the next year?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I will gladly provide you with an executive summary of the finding from this survey. If you are interested, please send me your email address to: [rkindwo@hickorytech.net](mailto:rkindwo@hickorytech.net). I anticipate having a summary prepared by Fall 2008.**

**Thank you very much for your time and your valuable input. It is greatly appreciated.**

Appendix BSurvey Construct Development With Corresponding Author References

<b>Conceptual Category and Resulting Constructs</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Cross-Domain Behaviors</b>	
Respectability	(Bennis, 2003; Bennis & Nanus, 2003; Cottrell, 2002; DePree, 1989; Prange, 2006; Schwahn & Spady, 1998; Youngs & King, 2002)
Visible Relationship Building	(Blase & Blase, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 1992; Lashway, 2001; Marzano et al., 2005)
Optimism	(Blase & Kirby, 2000; Kaagan & Markle, 1993; Kelehear, 2003; Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985)
<b>Behaviors Affecting Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</b>	
Advocating Change	(Clarke, 2000; Fullan, 1992; Marzano et al., 2005)
Demonstrating Systematic Intensity	(Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Nunnally et al., 2003; Youngs & King, 2002)
Knowing and Overseeing Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	(Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 1992; Marzano et al., 2005; Stein & D'Amico, 2000; York-Barr et al., 2001)
<b>Behaviors Impacting Faculty Development</b>	
Affirming Success and Fostering Growth	(Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Burns, 1978; Collins, 2001; Lashway, 2001; Northouse, 2001)
Communicating	(Bennis & Nanus, 2003; Deming, 1986; Glickman & Gordon, 2001; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Wheatley, 1999)
Flexibility	(Bennis, 2003; Burns, 1978; Collins, 2001; Lashway, 2001; Northouse, 2001)

<b>Conceptual Category and Resulting Constructs</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Behaviors Impacting Community Relationships</b>	
Openness	(McLaughlin, 1987; Reeves, 2004a; Scribner et al., 1999; Thiemann & Ruscoe, 1985)
Cooperation	(Bennis, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2004a)
<b>Behaviors Affecting Culture</b>	
Organizational Culture	(Hofstede, 1993; Schein, 2004)
Faith-based Culture	(Prange, 2006; Rosenthal, 1999)

Appendix C (The alternate shading of the Dependent Variables indicates the sections developed from the Conceptual Framework)

## **Data Analysis Grid for Faith-based Leadership Practices Survey**

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Independent Variables</b>
Maintains open faculty communication	Denomination
Develop policies to support safe and orderly school environment	
Develop a school budget	School location
Manage funds within the budget	
Apply current school law	Grades in the school
Supervise school personnel	
Utilize available administrative technology	School Faculty Size
Make available current curricular resources	
Make available necessary instructional materials	Student body size
Ensure teachers use of effective classroom management practices	
Use current student data to improve curriculum and instruction	Faculty members holding membership in a congregation of the same denomination as the school.
Support research based instructional practices	

Offer professional growth opportunities for faculty members	Students/student families holding membership in a congregation of the same denomination as the school.
Embed regular opportunities for teacher collaboration and reflection	
Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers teaching	Gender
Regularly observe teachers and then engage in coaching regarding the teaching	
Invite faculty input about student learning	Age
Provide adequate resources for faculty development	
<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Independent Variables</b>
Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about teaching and learning at school	Education
Provide opportunities for parents to share ideas about how the school operates	
Develop partnerships with community groups that serve children and families	Years of principal experience
Sponsor social or performing events that engage community members	Years as principal of present school
Promote the school in the community	
Make religious teachings part of the school curriculum	Professional credentials
Schedule religious holidays as part of the school calendar	
Regularly schedule joint worship opportunities for the students	Undergraduate system of education
Regularly schedule joint faculty devotions	
Regularly include clergy in faith-based activities at the school	Graduate system of education
I attend worship services regularly	
I attend church sponsored activities regularly	
I model a faith-based lifestyle for faculty and students	
Religious symbols are displayed prominently in our school	

Appendix D: Letter to the WELS introducing the survey study

January 9, 2008

Dear Faith-based School Principal,

I am doing a survey research study of leadership practices in faith-based schools. Participation is completely voluntary. Your consent to participate will be demonstrated by your clicking on the link below, completing the survey, and submitting it upon completion.

This study is unique in that one like it has never been done before. I have served as a parochial school principal for over twenty years. I am committed to faith-based school success. As we enter the twenty-first century our schools and you, as their leaders, face some sizeable challenges. We live in an age of accountability. The demographic profile of our school population is changing. Resources are limited. Competition for our students is greater today than ever before.

Pressure on faith-based school principals is increasing and turnover among you and your peers is occurring at an alarming rate. I need your help to better understand the work you do. It is my aim, with your help, to improve faith-based principal preparation programs.

This study has been endorsed by Jim Brandt and Jeff Inniger of the WELS Commission of Parish Schools in Milwaukee, WI. I have been asked by these leaders to share with them the findings of this study. The validity and usefulness of the findings is directly related to the response rate of individuals contacted. By responding to this survey, you can make a difference in the way faith-based school principals are prepared and in how future principals lead the development of their schools so that of our next generation of young people are well served. Our students deserve the very best we can offer as they learn to navigate their lives and their world.

I appreciate your consideration of participating in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: [rkindwo@hickorytech.net](mailto:rkindwo@hickorytech.net). In anticipation of your time and invaluable response, I thank-you. Please copy and paste the following web address into your Internet browser to access the on-line survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0\\_2f1kHMw\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0_2f1kHMw_3d_3d)

Robert F. Klindworth  
Martin Luther College, Professor of Education  
University of MN – Twin Cities, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix E: Letter to the Minnesota and Wisconsin Catholic Conferences introducing the survey study

January 9, 2008

Dear Faith-based School Principal,

I am doing a survey research study of leadership practices in faith-based schools. Participation is completely voluntary. Your consent to participate will be demonstrated by your clicking on the link below, completing the survey, and submitting it upon completion.

This study is unique in that one like it has never been done before. I have served as a parochial school principal for over twenty years. I am committed to faith-based school success. As we enter the twenty-first century our schools and you, as their leaders, face some sizeable challenges. We live in an age of accountability. The demographic profile of our school population is changing. Resources are limited. Competition for our students is greater today than ever before.

Pressure on faith-based school principals is increasing and turnover among you and your peers is occurring at an alarming rate. I need your help to better understand the work you do. It is my aim, with your help, to improve faith-based principal preparation programs.

This study has been endorsed by the leadership of Minnesota Catholic Conference Education Office and the Wisconsin Catholic Conference Education Office. I have been asked by these leaders to share with them the findings of this study. The validity and usefulness of the findings is directly related to the response rate of individuals contacted. By responding to this survey, you can make a difference in the way faith-based school principals are prepared and in how future principals lead the development of their schools so that of our next generation of young people are well served. Our students deserve the very best we can offer as they learn to navigate their lives and their world.

I appreciate your consideration of participating in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: [rkindwo@hickorytech.net](mailto:rkindwo@hickorytech.net). In anticipation of your time and invaluable response, I thank-you. Please copy and paste the following web-address into your Internet browser or click on it to access the on-line survey:  
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0\\_2f1kHMw\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0_2f1kHMw_3d_3d)

Robert F. Klindworth  
Martin Luther College, Professor of Education  
University of MN – Twin Cities, Doctoral Candidate



Appendix F: Letter to the LC-MS introducing the survey study

January 9, 2008

Dear Faith-based School Principal,

I am doing a survey research study of leadership practices in faith-based schools. Participation is completely voluntary. Your consent to participate will be demonstrated by your clicking on the link below, completing the survey, and submitting it upon completion.

This study is unique in that one like it has never been done before. I have served as a parochial school principal for over twenty years. I am committed to faith-based school success. As we enter the twenty-first century our schools and you, as their leaders, face some sizeable challenges. We live in an age of accountability. The demographic profile of our school population is changing. Resources are limited. Competition for our students is greater today than ever before.

Pressure on faith-based school principals is increasing and turnover among you and your peers is occurring at an alarming rate. I need your help to better understand the work you do. It is my aim, with your help, to improve faith-based principal preparation programs.

This study has been endorsed by Mr. William Cochran of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod School Ministry office in St. Louis, MO.

Dear principals,

I strongly encourage you to participate in the Faith-based leadership survey that is being conducted by Professor Robert F. Klindworth. I believe the survey results will have a great benefit to the future direction of our Lutheran schools. Thank you for your willingness to participate. May God continue to richly bless your schools and your ministry.

William D. Cochran

Director of School Ministry, LCMS

I have been asked by him to share the findings of this study. The validity and usefulness of the findings is directly related to the response rate of individuals contacted. By responding to this survey, you can make a difference in the way faith-based school principals are prepared and in how future principals lead the development of their schools so that of our next generation of young people are well served. Our students deserve the very best we can offer as they learn to navigate their lives and their world.

I appreciate your consideration of participating in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: [rkindwo@hickorytech.net](mailto:rkindwo@hickorytech.net). In anticipation of your time and invaluable response, I thank-you. Please copy and paste this address into your browser to access the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0\\_2f1kHMw\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7u3lW6i9JBBhSXt0_2f1kHMw_3d_3d)

Robert F. Klindworth, Martin Luther College, Professor of Education,  
University of MN – Twin Cities, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix G: Email follow-up letter

January 22, 2008

Dear Faith-based School Principal,

During the past week you received an invitation to participate in a survey research study. The survey investigates principal perceptions in the faith-based setting. The findings are intended to influence future faith-based school principal preparation.

If you have completed the survey – thank you very much for your time. I appreciate your invaluable input.

If you have not had a chance to complete it yet, please consider doing so in the next few days. I know you are busy. I value your time and I sincerely appreciate your assistance with the project. I have been asked by your denomination's educational leadership to share the project findings. In order to do so, I need an adequate number of responses for those findings to be statistically significant. I have not yet reached that number. We need your response. Your completed survey will make a difference.

The survey is designed to be completely on-line. Just click on the surveymonkey link below or copy and paste it into your browser address line. You will be connected to the survey. It is intended to be completed on-line and submitted electronically when you are finished. The responses you provide are anonymous and completely confidential. It may take 30-40 minutes of your time depending on your level of detail on the open ended questions.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your expenditure of time and your invaluable input are greatly appreciated.

Blessings be yours,

Robert F. Klindworth

Appendix H: Final reminder letter to WELS principals

February 6, 2008

Dear WELS School Principal,

Back in mid-January you were invited to participate in a faith-based school leadership survey research study. The findings will influence future faith-based school principal preparation.

I recognize how busy you are and appreciate your taking the time to share your perceptions. If you have already completed the survey – thank you very much for doing so. I appreciate your invaluable input.

If you have not completed it yet, please consider doing so in the next few days. I value your time and I really need your assistance with the project. I have been asked to share the project findings with Jim and Jeff at the CPS office in Milwaukee. In order to do so, I need an adequate number of responses for those findings to be statistically significant. I have not yet reached that number. We need your response. Your completed survey will make a difference. Please complete the survey by Friday, February 15, 2008.

The survey is designed to be completed on-line. Just click on the surveymonkey link below or copy and paste it into the address line of your browser. You will be connected to the survey. It is intended to be completed on-line and submitted electronically when you are finished. Just click “Done” when you are finished. The responses you provide are anonymous and completely confidential. It may take 30-40 minutes of your time depending on your level of detail on the open ended questions.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your expenditure of time and your invaluable input are greatly appreciated.

Blessings to you and your important work,

Robert F. Klindworth

Appendix I: Final reminder letter to LC-MS principals

February 6, 2008

Dear LCMS School Principal,

Back in mid-January you were invited to participate in a faith-based school leadership survey research study. The findings will influence future faith-based school principal preparation.

I recognize how busy you are and appreciate your taking the time to share your perceptions. If you have already completed the survey – thank you very much for doing so. I appreciate your invaluable input.

If you have not completed it yet, please consider doing so in the next few days. I value your time and I really need your assistance with the project. I have been asked to share the project findings with Bill Cochran at the LCMS Office of School Ministry in St. Louis. In order to do so, I need an adequate number of responses for those findings to be statistically significant. I have not yet reached that number. We need your response. Your completed survey will make a difference. Please complete the survey by Friday, February 15, 2008.

The survey is designed to be completed on-line. Just click on the surveymonkey link below or copy and paste it into the address line of your browser. You will be connected to the survey. It is intended to be completed on-line and submitted electronically when you are finished. Just click “Done” when you are finished. The responses you provide are anonymous and completely confidential. It may take 30-40 minutes of your time depending on your level of detail on the open ended questions.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your expenditure of time and your invaluable input are greatly appreciated.

Blessings to you and your important work,

Robert F. Klindworth

Appendix J: Final reminder letter to Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC) principals

February 7, 2008

Dear Minnesota Catholic Conference School Principal,

Back in mid-January you were invited to participate in a faith-based school leadership survey research study. The findings will influence future faith-based school principal preparation.

I recognize how busy you are and appreciate your taking the time to share your perceptions. If you have already completed the survey – thank you very much for doing so. I appreciate your invaluable input.

If you have not completed it yet, please consider doing so in the next few days. I value your time and I really need your assistance with the project. I have been asked to share the project findings with Dr. Peter Noll at the MCC Education Office in the Twin Cities. In order to do so, I need an adequate number of responses for those findings to be statistically significant. I have not yet reached that number. We need your response. Your completed survey will make a difference. Please complete the survey by Friday, February 15, 2008.

The survey is designed to be completed on-line. Just click on the surveymonkey link below or copy and paste it into the address line of your browser. You will be connected to the survey. It is intended to be completed on-line and submitted electronically when you are finished. Just click “Done” when you are finished. The responses you provide are anonymous and completely confidential. It may take 30-40 minutes of your time depending on your level of detail on the open ended questions.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your expenditure of time and your invaluable input are greatly appreciated.

Blessings to you and your important work,

Robert F. Klindworth

Appendix K: Final reminder letter to Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) principals

February 7, 2008

Dear Wisconsin Catholic Conference School Principal,

Back in mid-January you were invited to participate in a faith-based school leadership survey research study. The findings will influence future faith-based school principal preparation.

I recognize how busy you are and appreciate your taking the time to share your perceptions. If you have already completed the survey – thank you very much for doing so. I appreciate your invaluable input.

If you have not completed it yet, please consider doing so in the next few days. I value your time and I really need your assistance with the project. I have been asked to share the project findings with Kim Wadas at the WCC Education Office in Madison. In order to do so, I need an adequate number of responses for those findings to be statistically significant. I have not yet reached that number. We need your response. Your completed survey will make a difference. Please complete the survey by Friday, February 15, 2008.

The survey is designed to be completed on-line. Just click on the surveymonkey link below or copy and paste it into the address line of your browser. You will be connected to the survey. It is intended to be completed on-line and submitted electronically when you are finished. Just click “Done” when you are finished. The responses you provide are anonymous and completely confidential. It may take 30-40 minutes of your time depending on your level of detail on the open ended questions.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your expenditure of time and your invaluable input are greatly appreciated.

Blessings to you and your important work,

Robert F. Klindworth

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