

DISSERTATION

In Search of Race-Transcending Prophets: A Narrative Inquiry of the Role of Spirituality in the Leadership and Social Justice Practices of Black Men

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men. Utilizing critical transformational leadership - a theoretical framework grounded on the insights of Burns' (1978) transformational leadership and Dantley's (2003) critical spirituality - this narrative inquiry explores the stories of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio.

Scholars have suggested that the ineffectiveness of Black leadership against the threat of nihilism, a pervasive feeling of hopelessness in the Black community, yields a need for new models of leadership. West (1994) suggested that leaders who are race-transcending prophets can fulfill the need for new Black leadership, but this post-modern generation has yet to put forth such a figure. Race-transcending prophets are leaders who are uniquely positioned to critique social and political elites (including the Black component of the political and economic establishment) and who are able to put forth visions of fundamental social change for all who suffer from socially induced misery. This study argues that Black male leaders, who effectively apply critical transformational leadership to their respective contexts, emulate race-transcending prophetic behavior.

This research serves, in part, as one answer to the call by some scholars for new models of leadership in the Black community. It also adds to the limited body of research regarding Black men and their roles in leadership.

Findings suggested that participants defined their spirituality in terms of their relationships with a higher power, through which they filter their leadership practices.

Additionally, findings show variations in how participants meld social justice with leadership and spirituality.

As Black male leaders, all participants believe they have a responsibility to address societal inequities in their communities. Two leaders ground this responsibility in their spirituality. This integration illustrates critical transformational leadership. To this end, these men not only strive to live up to their spiritual legacies, but they also personify what West (1994) would consider to be race-transcending prophets. Finally, this study provides a framework and serves as a catalyst for future studies on leadership, spirituality, and social justice.

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Charles A. Montgomery, Jr.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my paternal grandfather, Oliver Montgomery, Sr. Our physical eyes last met when I was only three months of age. Still and all, I continue to sense your watchful eye upon me during this journey.

To my maternal grandfather, David Smith, whom I met intermittently throughout my formative years—indeed your memory forms an indelible imprint upon the canvass of my very identity.

To my father, Charles Allen Montgomery, Sr., who is the embodiment and my personal example of a MAN. Thank you for enlarging my capacity to be! I will never forget the ship that landed me.

To his twin sister, my aunt Carol Ann Montgomery, who was taken from us too soon. Who would have known that you teaching me “ABC’s” would lead to “P-H-D” behind our “shared initials.”

To my mother, who gave her all that I might have a chance. I continually strive to make you proud to affirm your living has not been in vain.

To my wife, Kimberly LeAnn, God’s gift to me and the tangible reminder of love that looks beyond faults and sees my need.

And to countless teachers, mentors, and sages: I am forever indebted to your investment in me.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Recent discussions about the plight of Black Americans - especially those at the bottom of the social ladder - have turned toward a call for strategies and solutions to ward off the nihilistic threat to their very existence. According to Princeton philosopher Cornel West (1994), nihilism – the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and lovelessness – is the single most important issue facing contemporary Black America. Two of the more significant reasons why the nihilistic threat is more powerful now than ever before are the saturation of market forces and market moralities in Black life and the present crisis in Black leadership (West, 1994). This crisis can be traced to hedonistic images promoted by the market-inspired way of life that edge out non-market values – love, care, and service to others – typically handed down by preceding generations. As such, some scholars argue that the crisis in Black leadership emanates from a middle-class, bourgeois *mentality* that has conditioned Black Americans (like many Americans) to seek self-pleasure rather than serving and leading others (Dyson, 2006; Franklin, 2007; West, 1994).

The failure of the Black middle class to assume leadership in Black America can be explained by examining two related but distinct philosophies: the role of traditional, communal values and what W.E.B. Du Bois described as the “Talented Tenth” (Madhubuti, 1990; West, 1999). From the Western shores of Africa and into the enslaved enclaves of the Western world, Black Americans brought with them a collective community consciousness. This sense of community embodied traditional values of service and sacrifice, love and care, and familial networks of support (Franklin, 2007; Wilmore, 1998). Du Bois, in an effort to extend these communal values into what he

believed to be their natural progression of evolvment in America, advocated for gifted and exceptional Blacks to aspire and attain higher education, which was a critical key, he reasoned, to advancement in society. In particular, Du Bois envisioned that one in ten men who attained a classical education would return to the community as public intellectuals and become directly involved in leading social change (Du Bois, 1903).

Unfortunately, Du Bois was later resigned to revise his conception after recognizing that a conspicuous number of his Talented Tenth, instead of using their newly acquired skills and tools to build bridges to close the gap between social and economic inequities, had built their own personal bridges away from their former communities. Consequently, classism had a concretizing effect causing an even greater divide between middle class Blacks and those looking to these heroes as agents of change (James, 1997).

The failure of the Black middle class to provide leadership to the socially and economically disadvantaged within their communities has contributed to a gradual eroding of communal values and a cynicism (among many Blacks and non-Blacks alike) that encourages the idea that Black people are bereft of quality leadership that is capable of making a significant difference in changing their societies (West, 1994). Moreover, this cynicism mutes the voices of those within the Black community who are striving to make a difference. Consequently, some scholars (Dyson, 1996; Franklin, 2007; Walker, 1994; Walters, 2007; West, 1994) have issued a clarion call for studies of new models of leadership that not only question the silent assumptions about Black leadership (e.g. the notion that Black leaders are always middle class), but also give voice to race-transcending prophets, those leaders who never lose contact with their own particularity, yet refuse to be confined by it (West, 1994). As such, they have an uncanny ability to

creatively and effectively engage with a diversity of ethnicities; hence, enlarging rather than relinquishing their networks of belonging. Because of this, race-transcending prophets are uniquely positioned to critique hierarchical elites (including the Black component of the political and economic establishment) and put forth a vision of fundamental social change for all who suffer from socially induced misery (Dantley, 2003; Dyson, 1996; Franklin, 2007; Walters, 1997; West, 1994).

How are race-transcending prophets recognized? A composite sketch consists of at least four criteria. First, they are rooted and grounded in traditional communal values (West, 1994). One such value is spirituality. According to Dantley (2003), spirituality is the component of our total selves and community through which we make meaning and understanding of our world. In this sense, because spirituality is intimately connected to a person's identity, it is considered to be important in combating the nihilistic threat. Nihilism is a disease of the soul (West, 1994). Any disease of the soul must be conquered by the turning of one's soul. This turning is concomitantly connected to an affirmation of identity (Wade-Gayles, 2005; West, 2004; Wimberly, 1997). Second, such prophets demonstrate a commitment to social justice (Dantley, 2003; James, 1997; Walters, 2007; West, 2004). This is because any concept of Black leadership, considering the socio-economic status of the community it reflects, must by definition be change-oriented as it confronts the dominant culture, because Black leaders must secure the resources and the necessities that regulate the achievement of the vision of ultimate inclusion (Walters, 1999). Next, they operate on a local level—particularly through institutions in civil society still vital enough to promote self-worth and self-affirmation (Dyson, 1993; Franklin, 1997; West, 2000). Such leaders have earned the love and

respect of, and most importantly, have demonstrated local accountability in order to earn national respect (West, 1994). Finally, they are multi-gendered. This is because any serious movement in Black leadership must involve a balanced and inclusive cadre of both men and women who are engaged in serious struggle and tactical dialogue surrounding actualization and activation of more effective practices of leadership (Dyson, 1996; Madison, 1994; Morrison, 1994; Walker, 1994).

Apart from the work by West (1994), the literature offers remarkably few studies that profile race-transcending prophets. This may be because of the post-modern nature of the term and/or the infancy of studies in this area. While a number of scholars have put forth examples of race-transcending prophets, they predominately consist of iconic figures from the past. In fact, West (1994) concluded that this post-modern generation of Black Americans has yet to put forth such a figure.

Contrastingly, a relative handful of contemporary, unpublished studies (Williams, 1999; Charleston, 2000; McClellan, 2006) have portrayed leaders that represent an alternative viewpoint to West's assertion. Williams, in response to West's call for new models of quality Black leadership, profiled five successful Black men, probing the practices and experiences that allowed them to acquire positions of leadership and power. According to Williams (1999), the premise of his investigation stemmed from West's assertion that race-transcending prophets of the postmodern generation should shun the idea of being the next "one Black national leader" or the voice of Black America, and instead work within their spheres of influence to mitigate the nihilistic threat. As such, Williams aspired for his investigation to produce strategies to aid in this endeavor. Similarly, McClellan (2006) portrayed five Black male leaders, studying how their

racialized and spiritual experiences factored into their leadership practices. In an insightful analysis, McClellan (2006) concluded though there may no longer be “one-mass leader” in the Black community, there is a multiplicity of leaders who wear the mantle of iconic figures of the past, perpetuating the struggle for social justice. Still further, McClellan (2006) acknowledged as a Black female leader studying Black male leaders, she may not have been in position to fully understand the concept of manhood, masculinity, gender, and other issues relative to Black men; consequently, a suggestion was made for future studies that investigated the intersection of leadership, spirituality, and social justice for Black men that are conducted by Black male scholars. This is because there is also a significant need for additional studies to add to the paucity of literature of successful Black male leaders.

The scarcity of information regarding the relationship of spirituality to the leadership and social practices of Black men is regrettable because it, potentially, deprives the Black community of a much-needed model of leadership that courageously combats the nihilistic threat and quells the cynical cries for quality leadership.

Statement of the Problem

The failure of the Black middle class to provide relief to the socially and economically disadvantaged people within their community contributes to a gradual eroding of communal values and a cynicism (among many Blacks and non-Blacks alike) that encourages the idea that Blacks are bereft of quality leadership capable of making a significant difference in changing their society (West, 1993). Moreover, this cynicism is buttressed by a conspicuous amount of studies on Black men that are rooted in a deficit model. The deficit model places the pernicious plight of the Black community at the feet

of the Black male and blames him, in many cases, for its egregious condition (Cones & White, 1999; McClellan, 2006). Conversely, there is a dearth of studies that portray Black men in a positive light as individuals who are striving to make a difference in the Black community. This study helps fill a gap in the literature by investigating the role that spirituality plays in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. In particular, this study serves in part as one answer to the call for the study and subsequent creation of new models of leadership in the Black community. Such models courageously combat the nihilistic threat and assiduously advocate for social justice for all Americans.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

This study investigated the role spirituality plays in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. The guiding research questions were as follows: (1) How do the stories of selected Black men reflect their understanding of leadership? (2) How does spirituality influence their leadership behavior and decision-making? (3) What role does social justice play in their leadership and how is this influenced by spirituality?

Significance of Study

This study is significant in the following ways. First, it amplifies the voices of Black male leaders endeavoring to make positive changes in their communities. This may help quell cynical voices that purport that the Black community is devoid of quality leadership that is capable of making a credible difference. Second, it adds to the limited body of research regarding Black men and their roles in leadership. Next, information

emerging from this research can be used to push for a new perception of Black men and their abilities to be leaders in society. Finally, the stories told by these leaders may be helpful to other leaders who are committed to championing social justice practices for all Americans.

Overview of the Methodology

I utilized narrative inquiry as a qualitative methodology and employed critical transformative leadership as a theoretical lens to analyze the data from the stories of the sample population. In particular, the data was analyzed for emerging themes that were useful to leaders who are interested in advocating for fair and just treatment toward those people they perceive to be disadvantaged.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was critical transformative leadership, which is an amalgamation of transformational leadership, critical theory, and Black-American prophetic spirituality. An examination of these elements show how each play a role in constructing the lens used to analyze data from the stories of the sample population. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership takes place when one or more persons engage themselves in an affiliation where both leaders and followers intentionally raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. In this sense, the purposes of leaders and followers become fused, and their respective bases of power become the mutual support and foundation essential to their achievement of a common purpose. Dantley (2003) argued that Burns' transformational leadership as perceived from a critical theorist's perspective yields a patriarchal underpinning that assumes "the leader is more skillful in evaluating followers' motives, anticipating their responses to an

initiative, and estimating their power bases, than the reverse” (p. 4). As a result, a certain superiority is both implied and assumed of the leader who plays a major role in articulating and cultivating the relationship with the follower(s) as well as assuming the responsibility for “ultimately carrying out the combined purpose of leaders and followers” (p 4). Such a perception, Dantley suggested, perpetuates asymmetrical relations of power inherent in traditional hierarchal and bureaucratic contexts. With this in mind, transformational leadership alone is not adequate as a framework to investigate the role spirituality plays in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men. This is because many Black men have historically been marginalized and disenfranchised not only by sundry bureaucracies, but also by a hegemonic American culture (Cones & White, 1999). Consequently, the discourse and praxis of conventional transformational leadership is less relevant to their context. For this reason, applying critical race theory (CRT) to transformational leadership may be instrumental in helping Black men (or other marginalized groups) to deconstruct asymmetrical relations of power and help bring about substantive change.

Critical race theory focuses theoretical attention on race and how racism is deeply embedded within the framework of American society (Parker, 2002). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) noted that CRT has three main goals one should consider. First, it presents stories about discrimination from the perspective of people of color. Since many stories advance White privilege through “majoritarian” master narratives, counter-stories by people of color can help to shatter the complacency that may accompany privilege and challenge the dominant discourses that serve to suppress people on the margins of society (Creswell, 2007). Second, proponents of CRT argue for the eradication of racial

subjugation while simultaneously recognizing that race is a social construct (Delgado, 1995). In this view, race is not a fixed term, but is one that is fluid and continually shaped by political pressures and informed by individual lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Finally, CRT addresses and is applicable to other areas of difference as well (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These differences can include gender, class, and virtually any inequity experienced by individuals. Consequently, CRT is an effective tool when combating systemic inequities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This notion is supported by Creswell (2007) who summarized CRT's use in research in the following way:

[T]he use of CRT methodology means that the researcher foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process; challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of people of color; and offers transformative solutions to racial, gender and class subordination in our societal and institutional structures. (p. 28)

Hence, transformational leadership, when grounded in critical race theory, empowers leaders to critically assess the asymmetrical relations of power in organizational and societal contexts and to deconstruct, through a critical hermeneutic, those practices and cultural artifacts that engender anti-democratic discourse in organizations and local communities (Dantley, 2003). Such action is the epitome of social justice. Moreover, because in a conceptual sense social justice does not reify the status quo but instead radically reconstructs it so that re-distribution of resources takes place, leaders who advocate for social justice on behalf of the lives of those with whom they are engaged must possess an intrinsic motivation to withstand this demanding process. Where does this motivation come from? Dantley (2003) suggested that

transformational leaders find motivation by embracing the need to make meaning, or to work within a context of knowing what they do as leaders is actually providing personal fulfillment or a sense of personal satisfaction or contribution to something higher than themselves. Making meaning demands a real transcendence from the daily tasks of leadership through contextualizing these goals in a broader sense of the greater good (Dantley, 2003). For this reason, prophetic spirituality should also be applied to transformational leadership.

Prophetic spirituality is a nuanced construction that blends the idea of critically perceiving one's situationality in its unpolished context, the "as is," while transcending one's political and social realities to project a different and in fact better "not yet" (West, 1999). The pragmatic character of this spiritual phenomenon is critical by nature, offers opportunities for reflection and transcendence, but demands an agenda of aggressive activism to bring about substantive change (Dantley, 2003). In this sense, prophetic spirituality is a relatively combative spirituality that frames the urgency for transformation.

The inclusion of critical race theory and prophetic spirituality broadens transformational leadership to create the theoretical construct of critical transformative leadership. Applying critical transformative leadership to this study will not only shape the questions posed to the participants, but also enables me to probe their stories for elements of social justice – blended with a prophetic spirituality – that seek to bring about transformational change. This race-transcending prophetic behavior can in turn be probed for elements to consider in the creation of new models of leadership.

Figure 1 depicts the intersection of critical race theory, prophetic spirituality, and transformational leadership that provide the theoretical framework for this study:

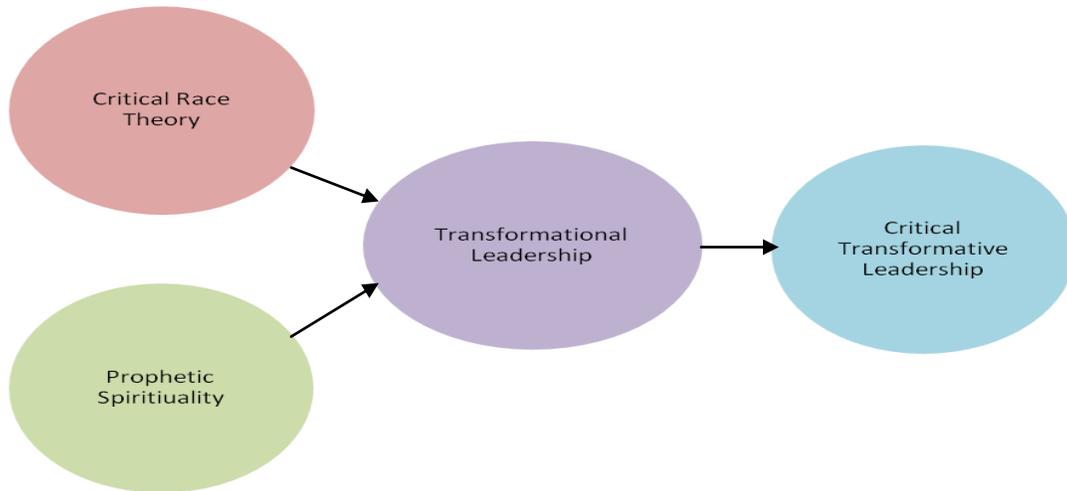


Figure 1. Critical Transformative Leadership Theoretical Framework

This conceptual framework suggests that critical race theory and prophetic spirituality create a re-conceptualization of transformational leadership, which evolves into critical transformative leadership. Leaders who effectively apply critical transformative leadership to their respective contexts are in effect emulating race-transcending prophetic behavior.

Definition of Key Terms

Blacks United States citizens of and/or belonging to an American ethnic group who are descendants of African immigrants and non-Hispanic in origin (McClellan, 2006).

Leadership A process that consists of a relationship of power for a specific purpose that is consistent, or eventually consistent with the motives, needs, and values of both the leader and the led (Fairholm, 2001).

Black middle class Blacks who self-identify with a middle-class status within the American class structure (Dyson, 2005)

Social justice A social concept where each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, and where basic rights and liberties are attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality and opportunity. The term can also refer to a re-scheming or redistribution of resources to benefit the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 1971).

Spirituality The component of our total selves and community through which we make meaning and understanding of our world. It is the foundation of values, principles, and ethics we exhibit in our interactions with others (Dantley, 2001).

Transformational leadership A process where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher level of human conduct and ethical aspiration, causing a transforming effect on both (Burns, 1978).

Overview of the Study

In this study, I investigated the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders in Central Ohio. The dissertation is structured in the following manner. Chapter I contains a brief introduction of the problem this study

seeks to address; namely, the pervasive perception that the Black community is bereft of capable leadership to combat the threat of nihilism. Following the introduction, I outline the research purpose and questions. Next, in the methodology a narrative inquiry is presented. Finally, I introduce the theoretical framework, critical transformative spirituality, and discuss some key definitions and terms. Chapter II contains a review of the literature categorized in the following manner: (a) social/historical overview of the research on Black males; (b) Black leadership; (c) Black leadership and social justice; (d) transformational leadership; (e) spirituality; and (f) spirituality, leadership and social justice. Chapter III presents the methodology for the research, including the sample population, data collection, data analysis, human subject consideration, assumptions, limitations, and a brief discussion of my role as the researcher. Chapter IV presents the narratives of the participants. Chapter V identifies, describes, and examines themes that emerged from the findings. Chapter VI contains a discussion of the findings leading to conclusions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. Appendix A contains the letter of invitation sent to participants. Appendix B includes the informed consent form. Appendix C is an account of the interview protocol. Finally, Appendix D contains the transcriptionist confidentiality form.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

The intent of this study was to investigate the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. The literature that supports this intent is presented in this chapter and is categorized in the following manner: (a) social/historical overview of the research on Black males; (b) Black leadership; (c) Black leadership and social justice; (d) transformational leadership; (e) spirituality; and (f) spirituality, leadership and social justice.

Social/Historical Overview of Research on Black Males

In contextualizing the voice of Black men, I would be remiss if I did not present a social-historical overview of previous research regarding Black men in America. From 1950-70, research on Black males typically framed their experiences through a “deficit” perspective. The deficit perspective argued that the economic and social problems of Black males developed from their supposedly depraved genetic and cultural backgrounds. It also attributed the purported lack of responsibility of Black males for themselves and their families to the legacy of slavery. In the 1980s and 1990s, the emphasis in the research on this group shifted notably. Using the lens of institutional racism and discrimination, researchers considered how illegal drugs, pervasive crime, endemic violence, inferior schooling, economic instability, and substandard housing affected the behavior and attitudes of Black males. Four major themes emerged in the literature: 1) demographic and statistical issues; 2) psychosocial issues; 3) political/economic issues; and 4) educational issues (Gordon E.T., Gordon, E.W., Gordon-Nembhard, 1994).

What is missing from the seemingly comprehensive review by Gordon et al. is a plethora of scholarly discourse on Black males who managed to transcend the issues they

faced and ascend to levels of leadership despite the social, economic, and educational odds stacked against them. In fact, Gordon acknowledged that he and his research team found limited material on Black leadership as a whole. He based his conclusion on a limited review of Black theory and research on the theory and practice of leadership. He further stated that leadership practices and theories were primarily Eurocentric (Gordon, E.T., 1994). Because of this, Gordon – much like West (1993), Madhubuti (1990), and Walters (1999) – concluded there is a need for Black leadership styles to be included in leadership discourse.

A survey of the literature written from 1994-2008 revealed that much of the research and scholarship on Black males continues to be rooted in a “cultural” or “deficit” model. In other words, the lens used to explain Black male disparities in education and employment outcomes or their overrepresentation in the penal system was largely rooted in a framework that construed Black males as the source of their own problems, giving little consideration to contextual or structural factors. Because of the overuse of the deficit-framework, less research is available that explains how structural factors affect outcomes in the areas of education, employment, and holistic health for males. Because of this framework, the academy remains under-informed about how some Black males manage to avoid the pitfalls and hardships that beset other Black males, despite the aforementioned structural constraints (Cones & White, 1999; Noguera, 2003; Reese, 2001). Furthermore, much of the research also concentrates on “young Black males,” ignoring studies related to older males. This gap in the literature is especially critical because the dearth of such research limits the development of interventions that may promote key substantive and transformative changes for Black

males. In addition, without studies on older males who have overcome obstacles and ascended to positions of leadership, influence, and success, the research loses critical voices that have yet to be heard.

This shortage of leadership studies that deconstruct the deficit model of Black males and introduce positive portraits and successful practices of mature Black male leaders in leadership discourse begs the question of why there is not more research conducted on leadership and Black males. Madhubuti (1990) examined this question and offered the following reasons:

Much of the published scholarly work on Black people is by Black men and many of them do not see the importance of public self-analysis; 2) it is easier to get studies on Black women or the Black family published; 3) few Black male scholars wish to “wash dirty clothes” in public - - and the other side of that is if the Black male leadership (or the lack thereof) is accurately assessed, it also means for the intelligent scholars and activists to “clean up their own acts;” 4) studies that bring clarity and direction to the Black male situation as an integral part of the Black family/community are unpopular, not easy to get published and very dangerous. (p.60)

If Madhubuti is correct, there is an increasing urgency for Black scholars in general and Black male scholars in particular to study and submit into leadership discourse alternative models of research on Black male leaders. This urgency is sensed by Franklin (2007), who challenged post-modern Black scholars to deconstruct the deficit model by critically constructing models aimed at restoring hope in the Black community. Fluker (2008) agreed and further argued that Black scholars have the ethical

responsibility help uplift, reconstruct, and transform the pernicious perception of Black males. Such action is the epitome of responsible Black leadership (Fluker, 2007, Franklin 2007), a subject to which we now turn.

Black Leadership

According to Walters and Smith (1999), both of whom are noted scholars in the field of Black leadership, an overarching concept or definition of leadership has yet to be sharply defined. Walters, in an attempt to contextualize Black leadership within the general field of leadership, suggested that leadership itself is currently on uncertain footing as a sub-discipline of political science; however, there is important work being performed to determine what contribution leadership studies might make to the discipline and to the furtherance of the goals of a democratic society (Walters & Smith, 1999). In my review of leadership literature, Seligman's 1950 article entitled "The Study of Political Leadership" was the first such article specifically devoted to the general subject of political leadership in the 44-year history of the *American Political Science Review* (Seligman, 1950; Walter & Smith, 1999; Barker & Johnson, 2001). In the general social science literature, the concept has been used in such diverse ways to characterize such varied phenomena that there is a lack of agreement regarding even the basic properties of leadership (Burns, 1978; Gibbs, 1950; Goethals & Sorenson, 2006).

This ambiguity in the general concept of leadership is reflected specifically in Black leadership literature, which includes a depth of information, books, and research studies dating back to the 1930s (Bunche, 1939; 1973; Cox, 1965; McClellan, 2006; Mydral, 1962). Such studies encompass the racial, social, and political problems faced by the Black community that have traditionally been ignored in the mainstream discourse

on leadership (McClellan, 2006). West (1994) bifurcated Black leadership into two genres: Black intellectual leadership and Black political leadership. The scope of this study focuses on the political and intellectual genres of Black leadership, spanning from the civil rights movement into the post-modern generation.

Within the canon of political Black leadership are a wide variety of definitions, both implicit and explicit. Mydral, for example, wrote that we “should not start from an attempt on a priori grounds to define the principal concept... We have only to settle that we are discussing the role and importance of individual persons in the sphere of social action” (Mydral, 1962). Similarly, Walters (2007) observed that little effort was made at the outset to develop any full and precise definition of Black leadership because the study as a whole is centrally concerned with defining it. However, in general, Ladd (1966) noted that Black leaders are considered to be persons able to make decisions affecting the choice of race objectives and/or the means utilized to attain them. Matthews and Prothro (1966) used what they called an “operational definition” for Black leaders, that is, “those persons most often thought of as Black leaders by Blacks.” Wilson (1960) understood Black leaders to be “civic leaders - - persons who acted as if the interests of the race or community were their goal” (p.2). Thompson (1963) used what he called a “functional approach to leadership” in designating the individual actor as a leader who for some period of time overtly identifies with Black efforts to achieve stated goals. In the most parsimonious definition, Burgess (1962) defined a leader as an individual whose behavior affects the patterning behavior within the Black community at any given time.

Conversely, in a departure from their predecessors, most modern students of Black leadership literature largely ignored the problem of the leadership concept (Walters

& Smith, 1999). This is because much of the literature is essentially about Black elected officials who are implicitly assumed to be leaders by virtue of holding political office. However, Hamilton (1981) pointed out that this implicit assumption regarding the Black leadership role of Black elected officials may be misleading. Defining a Black leader as “one who is racially Black in a leadership role and who speaks and acts on matters specific (but not necessarily exclusive) concern to Black people as a direct purpose of occupying that role,” he argued, “if one were racially Black and, say, mayor of an all white town who never spoke or acted on issues of specific concern to Black as such, it would not be proper to designate such a mayor as a ‘Black leader’” (Hamilton, 1981, p. 8).

Similarly, regarding Black appointed officials (such as Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas) Smith (1981) questioned under what conditions and circumstances Black presidential appointees should be viewed as leaders of the race. The important point here is that the race leadership of officials of the government (or other major American institutions such as the Ford Foundation) is a matter to be explicitly demonstrated rather than implicitly assumed (Walters & Smith, 1999). Such demonstration oftentimes involves championing issues of social justice by struggling for inclusive, inalienable, and equitable rights amidst a dominant culture where such concepts are arguably articulated yet systemically denied (Baker & Johnson, 2001). Hence, the struggle for social justice and equality is, to many scholars, (Du Bois, 1903; Franklin, 2007; Walters, 2007; West, 1998) a hallmark of responsible Black leadership.

Black Leadership and Social Justice

According to several scholars of Black leadership discourse (Dyson, 1996; Walters, 2007; West, 2000), quality leadership among Blacks has generally been marked by long, persistent, and frustrating struggles for social justice and civil rights, as articulated by this nation's greatest thinkers and expressed within the Constitution. The notions of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" have historically been evasive for many Blacks living in what Frances Cress Welsing referred to as "these yet to be United States" (in Gibbs, 1988, p. 16). The fight for these inalienable rights, inclusivity, and access to equal resources amidst disproportionate odds stacked in favor of a White privileged, male-dominated society has long been a hallmark of Black leadership (Booth, 2000). W.E.B. Du Bois – the noted scholar, activist, and the first Black to earn a Ph.D. from the prestigious Harvard University – originally believed that the fight for social justice would be led by a specialized group of Black Americans called the "Talented Tenth." The phrase "Talented Tenth" first appeared in Du Bois' *The Negro Problem* (in James, 1997):

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the *Talented Tenth*; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races. (p. 15)

Du Bois penned *The Negro Problem* as a "manifesto – like response" to what he and a number of Black intellectuals of his time sensed as an overemphasis for Blacks to solely receive industrial training; this is evidenced, for example, by the plan proposed by

Booker T. Washington in the 1895 Atlanta Compromise (James, 1997; Wood, 2000).

While industrial training had its place, Du Bois and other contemporaries argued such an emphasis would confine Blacks permanently to the ranks of second-class citizenship. In order to achieve political and civil equality, Du Bois stressed the importance of educating African American teachers, professional men, ministers, and spokesman, who would earn their special privileges by dedicating themselves to “leavening the lump” and “inspiring the masses” (James, 1997; Williams, 1999). That is to say, Du Bois envisioned the “Talented Tenth” as the most able and exceptional among Black Americans who carried the responsibility for uplifting the race by providing morally sound, socially conscious, and thoroughly unselfish leadership (Barker & Johnson, 2001; West 2000; Williams, 1999). In 1948, however, Du Bois recanted this claim and became and became disillusioned, disappointed, and despondent, acknowledging that he did not realized the extent to which egotism, self-interest, and self-righteousness would prevent the “Talented Tenth” from serving its intended purpose (Bryson, 1998; James, 1997; Williams, 1999). The failure of this elite population in fulfilling its purpose to champion social justice has contributed to a crisis of leadership in the Black community (Gordon, 2000; West 1994).

West (1994) argued that current Black intellectuals are continuing to follow a similar pattern, pursuing self-aggrandizement and failing to fight for social justice. That is to say, instead of using education and advancement as tools to build bridges between “have” and “have-nots,” many successful Blacks use these tools to build bridges from ghettos to suburbs and move away from those who are less fortunate (Franklin, 2007). Consequently, the contemporary Black intellectual, or the new “Talented Tenth,” remains

detached from real problem areas encountered by common Black people (Foote, 1986; James, 1997; West, 2000).

James (1997) in *Transcending the Talented Tenth* expressed concerns for the decline of the great Black intellectual and the diverse split between its conservative and liberal constituencies. The author believed the current debates on the worthiness of Black intellectualism are becoming entertainment for Whites through the mainstream press. However, James did point out that the eventual rejection by Du Bois and other Black scholars of the Black elite leadership as reliable leaders for oppressed people led to the following conception:

Without a notion of uplift embedded in bourgeois ideals (and illusions) that ignore structural, racialized economic oppression, earlier writings by Black intellectuals followed in the steps of the mature Du Bois; constructing agency and leadership as a mass rather than an elite phenomenon. (James, 1997, p. 29)

James appeared to advocate radicalizing Black leadership, while West described the forms of paralysis among Blacks: Black bourgeois preoccupation with White peer approval and Black Nationalist obsession with White racism (Williams, 1999). Instead of having a small group of Black elites who live in surreal worlds untouched by the “real” problems of the masses and who squabble for position at the top, the push should be for an all-inclusive democratic leadership where Black people are better represented through the action and vision of their leaders (Gordon J, 2000; Vandenberg, 1997; Williams, 1999). However, to pull Black elites closer to Black people in order to advocate for social justice for the benefit of all is no easy task. For this reason, West recommended creating locally based collective models of Black leadership, shunning the notion of one

Black national leader. He concluded that we need “serious strategic and tactical thinking about how to create new models of leadership and form the kind of persons to actualize these models” (West, 1994, p. 69).

Dyson (1996) built upon West’s idea and suggested that such leaders, instead of being described as “race-transcending,” should instead be depicted as “race-transforming leaders.” For Dyson (1996) a race-transforming Black leadership is able to accomplish at least three things: Black leadership should accent the persistence of White supremacy, it should challenge Black orthodoxies about racial struggles on the left and the right, and it should link the antiracist struggle to other forms of political resistance, including class, gender, and sexuality struggles. By forming linkages with other people and groups who are oppressed, besieged, undervalued, attacked, and marginalized, race-transforming leaders are uniquely positioned to affect their attitudes and behavior insofar as social, economic, and political goals and methods are concerned (Dyson, 1996). In other words, race-transforming leaders tap into the motives and values of persons for the purposes of attaining desired change, manifested in the uplifting, liberating, and actualizing of mutually desired goals.

Transformational Leadership

Walters (1999) also affirmed that the concept of Black leadership, considering the socio-economic status of the community it reflects, must by definition be change-oriented, because Black leaders must secure the resources and the necessities that regulate the achievement of the vision of ultimate inclusion. The nature of Black leadership, oriented as it has been toward changing the status of Blacks in America, would appear to conform to the description of transformational leadership offered by

James MacGregor Burns. In his work Burns (1978) attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. In particular, Burns characterized leaders as persons who tap the motives of followers in order to better reach the goals of both leaders and followers (p. 18).

Burns also distinguished between two kinds of leadership: namely, transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership, Burns asserted, focuses on exchanges that occur between leaders and followers. For example, employers who offer compensation or a promotion to their employees are demonstrating transactional leadership. Conversely, transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates connections that elevates the level of morality and motivation in both leader and led (Burns, 1978). According to Bass (1985), this elevating power that Burns describes results in followers reaching their fullest potential.

The position of Burns on the elevating power of transformational leadership, however, has not been without its critics. Some authors have argued that transformational leadership suffers from a “heroic leadership” bias. For example, Yukl (1999) pointed out that transformational leadership stresses that it is the *leader* who moves *followers* to do exceptional things. By focusing primarily on the leader, Yukl believed that Burns failed to give proper attention to shared leadership or reciprocal influence. Still further, Rost (1991) maintained that transformational leadership does not explore what he calls transformation of active people. For Rost, leadership and followership when defined as the activity of only active people engenders transformation in organizations: “Passive people are rarely transformed by ordinary human processes”

(in Dantley 2003, p. 4). In this sense, leadership for transformation takes place only when people engage energetically; otherwise it is manipulation, as Rost observed:

Transformation is about influence relationships based on persuasion, not coercion.

A definition that states that leadership is a multidirectional influence relationship of people who use persuasion to make an impact is a paradigm that articulates what transformation is all about. People, groups, and organizations that are persuaded to change may be transformed; those that are coerced to change are rarely transformed. (in Dantley, 2003, p. 4)

Another criticism some authors have levied against transformational leadership is that it is elitist and antidemocratic (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990). According to Avolio (1999), some have said Burns' description of transformational leadership establishes the leader playing a direct role in creating changes, establishing a vision, and advocating new directions. This creates the strong impression that the leaders are acting apart from followers or putting themselves above the needs of followers. This criticism has been refuted by Bass and Avolio (1990), who contended that transformational leaders can be directive and participative, as well as democratic and authoritarian. Nevertheless, Dantley (2003) argued that the substance of this criticism still raises questions about transformational leadership. For example, how do transformational leaders determine whether or not they are meeting the needs of followers? Moreover, if the values of the transformational leader do not match the followers, how are followers empowered to challenge these values?

For this reason, Dantley (2003) argued that there are structural ingredients that are missing from the framework of transformational leadership discourse. One of the

principal ingredients is spirituality. For Dantley, spirituality undergirds transformational leadership, and creates a context where meaningful dialogue between leader and follower can take place. But what is spirituality, and what elements of spirituality make such a scenario possible? These questions are examined next.

Spirituality

Dantley (2003) defined spirituality as the component of our total selves and communities from which we make meaning and understanding of our world. The sense of meaning and identity is a common theme throughout literature pertaining to the subject to spirituality (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Still further, some writers define spirituality in humanistic terms: it has the capability - generally ascribed to the inner person or being, soul or spirit - to enable people to transcend their normal selves or to give expression to the multiplicity of selves within (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004). This approach draws upon various traditions that speak about the soul, from which one can draw important lessons from being and doing (Briskin, 1996; Hawley, 1993; Hillman 1996). Other writers, such as Banks and Ledbetter (2004), described spirituality in more cosmic or interreligious terms, as the presence of some form of higher power or divinity that permeates all life and nature and into which people can tap to find resources and values for living. Such values, according to Block (1993) and Cashman (1998), often reflect a desire to make a difference and create a meaningful world. Because one person's values may differ from another, though, this presents challenges in accurately assigning or locating an overarching and agreed upon definition of spirituality in the literature (Fairholm, 1997; Gockel, 2004; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Likewise, this truth also holds in concretizing an explicit definition for spirituality as it pertains to Black

Americans in general and Black males in particular. This intangible nature of spirituality led Dantley to refer to spirituality as the nexus of inspiration, motivation, and meaning making in the lives of Black Americans (Dantley, 2003). Dantley seemed to infer that though he could not necessarily define spirituality as it pertains to Blacks, he could identify it by examining their actions. Such reasoning was also shared by other Black scholars in their attempts to describe Black spirituality. For example, Wilmore (1998) argued that the major focus of Black spirituality was neither an escapist pie-in-the-sky heaven nor a political paradise on earth. Rather, the emphasis was on marshaling and garnering resources from fellowship, community, and personal strength (meditation, prayer) to cope with overwhelmingly limited options dictated by institutional and personal evil (Stewart, 1999; Wilmore, 1998). In short, Black spirituality “affirms a sustaining eschatology (that is, a heaven-orientation) and a moral critique of pervasive societal injustices-but its emphasis was on survival and struggle in the face of an alternative of absurdity and insanity” (West, 1999, p. 428).

For West (1999) the spiritual resources that dominated Black American Christianity and provided the overwhelming spiritual expression of choice for Black Americans were threefold. First, a *kinetic orality* permeated sermons and songs, black prayers, and hymns. A sense of community was constituted and reinforced by an invigorated rhetoric, rhythmic freedom and antiphonal forms of interactions (p. 428). Fluid, protean and flexible oral stylizations of language gave Black church life a distinctively African American stamp - a stamp that flowed from Black cultural agency in a society that tried to deny and downplay any form of Black agency and Black creativity (Baldwin, 1994; Bridges, 2001; Dantley, 2003, Franklin, 1997). Second, a *passionate*

physicality accented Black control and power over the only social space permitted to them in American society - that is, their bodies (Cross & Strauss, 1998, Dantley, 2003). Self-assertion of “somebodiness” enacted by bodily participation in stylized forms of spiritual response in Black church liturgy signified a sense of home for an exilic people (West, 1999). Finally, a *combative spirituality* promoted and promulgated by spiritual leaders put a premium on prospective moral practice and forward-looking ethical struggle for Black Christian parishioners. This sense of struggle paradoxically cultivated a historical patience and subversive joy, a sober survival ethic, and an openness to seize credible liberation opportunities (West, 1999, p. 429). The combined forces of kinetic orality, passionate physicality, and combative spirituality allow many Black Americans to perceive their situationality in its unpolished context, the “as is,” while transcending their political and social realities to project a different and in fact better “not yet” (West, 1999). In this sense, the struggle for social justice and fair inclusion is propelled by an unseen force that empowers Black Americans to construct and create alternative realities that reflect what they believe is destined to become.

Dantley (2003) agreed with West’s philosophy of combative spirituality, adding that spirituality is the essence of human experience and that this unseen force connects Black Americans to a greater power than themselves. He did not label this superpower “God” or as any other religious being. He did, however, propose that this connection with a greater power encouraged people to coexist with others in harmony and live with a strong sense of fairness and justice (McClellan, 2006). In this sense, when spirituality is applied to leadership, leaders work with followers to deconstruct asymmetrical relations

of power and to create systems based on equality for all (Dantley, 2003). In other words, spiritual leaders become transformational leaders when they advocate for social change.

Spirituality, Leadership, and Social Justice

As noted above, spirituality is an elusive, ambiguous term and there is no universal definition. Nevertheless, there is an increasing interest among scholars regarding spirituality and its connection to behavioral manifestations among individuals. Ciulla (1998) argued that the study of behavioral manifestations, or ethics, is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or society finds desirable or appropriate. That is, ethics is concerned with the virtuousness of individuals and their motives (Ciulla, 1998).

With regard to leadership, Fluker (2007) suggested that ethics and spirituality are related to who leaders are and what leaders do. Their ethics have been shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of their particular tradition and their spirituality is the intangible dimension that guides them in their interactions with society (p.4). Still further, hooks (2000) maintained that spirituality is about commitment to a way of thinking and behaving that honors principles of inter-being and interconnectedness. Franklin (1990) opined that leaders who successfully negotiate their inner being with their outward behavior are ethical leaders. Within the field of ethical leadership, Northouse (2007) discussed some of the work of prominent leadership scholars who have addressed issues related to leadership, ethics, and social justice. Among them are James MacGregor Burns and Robert Greenleaf.

Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership places a strong emphasis on followers' needs, values, and morals. Transformational leadership involves attempts by

leaders to elevate followers to higher standards of moral responsibility (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Graham (1998) argued that the elevating power Burns described is also manifested in servant-leadership. Servant leadership, Greenleaf (1977) said, is leadership bestowed on a person who is by nature a servant. In his sense, a servant leader focuses on the needs of followers and helps them to become more knowledgeable, more liberated, more autonomous, and more like servants themselves (Greenleaf, 1970). Consequently, both leaders and followers enrich each other's presence and are both elevated to the higher levels of morality that Burns described (Graham, 1998). A common theme running through the perspectives of Burns and Greenleaf is that the leader-follower relationship is critical to the leadership process. Both authors emphasized that it is vital for leaders to pay close attention to the unique needs of followers.

The relationship between spirituality, leadership, and social justice is complex, in part owing to the highly contested nature of the term "social justice." Three of the major positions are liberal individualism, communitarianism, and pedagogical transformation.

Rawls (1971), a liberal individualist, theorized that self-interested rational persons, operating behind a "veil of ignorance," would choose two general principles of justice to structure society. First, they would choose a principle of equal liberty. In this scenario, each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, where the basic rights and liberties are attached to office and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality and opportunity (Rawls, 1971). Second, they would also subscribe to a "difference principle." Here, any social or economic inequalities perceived by society are arranged to promote the greatest benefit to the least advantaged (Rawls, 1971).

Communitarian theorists have sought to deflate the universal pretensions of the theory developed by Rawls by arguing that standards of justice must be found in forms of life and traditions of specific societies, and hence can vary from context to context (Etzioni, 1998; Taylor, 1989). Walzer (1983) developed an additional argument that theories of social justice should derive from and resonate with the customs, traditions, and habits of actual persons living in particular moments of time and space. According to Walzer (1983), even if there was nothing problematic about a formal or universal theory of social justice meant to yield a determinate set of human goods and values, “any such set would have to be considered in terms so abstract that they would be of little use in thinking about particular distributions” (p. 8). From this perspective, Rawls’ theory and other liberalist attempts to develop a generalized theory for social justice are doomed to philosophical incoherence and political irrelevance.

Rawls has since attempted to expel the universalist presuppositions from his theory. In *Political Liberalism* Rawls (1993) reasoned in a communitarian vein that the notion of the individual as an impartial citizen proffers the best account of liberal-democratic political culture, and that his political aim was merely to put together the rules for consensus in political communities where people are willing to try to reach a consensus. Still further, in the *Law of People* Rawls (1999) explicitly acknowledged the possibility that liberalism may not be transferable to all contexts, sketching a vision of a decent, well-ordered society that liberal societies must allow for in the international realm. Such a society, he maintained, need not be democratic, but should be non-aggressive toward other communities. Moreover, internally it should have a common

good conception of justice, a reasonable consultation hierarchy, and it should ensure basic human rights.

In the interest of preserving human rights, Freire grounded his conception of social justice in pedagogical transformation. Proponents of pedagogical transformation argue that leaders and followers engaging in strategic practices of resistance over and against hegemonic, asymmetrical relations of power in a given culture actualize social justice. According to Freire (1998), such praxis is necessary to instigate structural and societal transformation that reflect the shared perceptions of leaders and followers regarding fair and just practices. Yasuno (2008) affirmed Freire's (1998) assertion in her study of leadership and social justice in Eastern cultures, and further suggested that leaders who are concerned with issues of fairness and justice should feel a responsibility to treat followers in an equal manner. This sense of responsibility, Yasuno conjectured, emanates from ethical or spiritual cores that result in people taking action for peace and social justice (p. 4).

Examples of leaders who internalized the inner sense of responsibility to others as a form of social justice with their spiritual core abound. Dorn (2002) cited studies of Gandhi, Du Bois, King, and many other peace activists and discussed how inner cultivation of personal spirituality can lead to leadership for social change. For example, Gandhi led India to independence as a spiritual tenant of non-violence (*ahinsa*) and through truth's insistent call (*satyagraha*) (Dorn, 2002). Du Bois committed his life to peace and the emancipation of Black Americans, women, the poor, and the people of developing nations because he felt a sacred obligation toward humanity (Dorn, 2002; Hopkins, 2006; Yasuno, 2008). King led the American civil rights movement of the

1950s and 1960s, fueled by his spiritual conception of the “Beloved Community” (Radhakrishan, 2002).

King’s Beloved Community was a global vision, in which all people could share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community poverty, hunger, and homelessness would not be tolerated because international standards of human decency would not allow such negative situations to remain unaddressed (Carson, 1992). An all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood would replace racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice. In King’s mind, such a community would be the ideal corporate expression of his spirituality. The Beloved Community, however, was not a lofty utopian goal to be confused with the rapturous image of the Peaceable Kingdom, in which lions and lambs coexist in idyllic harmony. Rather, the Beloved Community was for King a realistic, achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people who committed and trained to integrate spirituality with their leadership and social justice practices (Carson, 1992).

In spite of these studies on commendable world figures, research regarding local activists who integrate spirituality, leadership, and social justice appeared scant, at best. For this reason, scholars like Fluker (2008) and Franklin (2007) have called for continued studies on the interdisciplinarity of these elements. In fact, Fluker (2008) suggested that studies on these subjects are vital because leaders in many public venues are increasingly turning to approaches that emphasize some form of spirituality as an authoritative source in making decisions that impact the lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors of many people; especially in education, government, health, science, and business. Often, these appeals to spirituality fail to address the larger ethical questions of justice, equity, and truth-

telling that are raised in public life (p. 3). This suggests there is a need for more research on the role spirituality plays in the leadership practices of others who are interested in social change.

Summary

This literature review established the basis for this study on the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black males. The literature included: (a) social/historical overview of the research on Black males; (b) Black leadership; (c) Black leadership and social justice; (d) transformational leadership; (e) spirituality; and (f) spirituality, leadership and social justice.

The literature revealed that the majority of studies on Black men are steeped in a deficit model. The deficit model places the plight of the Black community at the feet of the Black male, and blames him in many cases for its egregious condition. Conversely, there is a paucity of studies that portray Black men in a positive light, thus neglecting to examine Black men who are striving to make a difference in the community.

The literature also revealed that some Black scholars (Du Bois, 1903, Dyson, 1996; Franklin, 2007; James, 1997; West, 1993) have suggested that there is a crisis in Black leadership. These scholars have argued that the crisis is manifested in a Black middle class, consisting of Black intellectual and political leaders who have conspicuously divested themselves of traditional values indigenous to the Black community. Among these values are spirituality and social justice. Still further, the literature suggested that the crisis in Black leadership has also contributed to scholars (Dantley, 2003; Dyson, 1996; James, 1997; West, 1994) advocating for alternative models of leadership. One of the models considered is transformational leadership.

Though transformational leadership was considered groundbreaking (Burns, 1978; Bass 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993), literature showed that others criticized its over-emphasis on the leader, and began to develop additional literature to further explore the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers (Dantley, 2003; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 1999). This literature sparked discussion regarding the interdisciplinarity between spirituality, leadership, and social justice (bell hooks, 2000; Dantley, 2003; Fluker, 2007; Franklin, 1990, Yasuno, 2008).

Though several scholars (Dorn, 2002; Franklin, 2007; Fluker, 2008; Hopkins, 2006; Yasuno, 2008) have begun to draw connections between world figures who integrate spirituality, leadership, and social justice, relatively few studies appear to focus on local activists who employ these elements. Consequently, some scholars (Fluker, 2008; Yasuno, 2008) have encouraged additional research that investigates the role of spirituality in the leadership practices of persons involved in social change.

Overall, this review of literature demonstrated that only limited research - specific to the positive portrayals of Black men, and the interdisciplinarity of spirituality, leadership, and social justice - has been conducted. Considering these gaps in literature, this study employed narrative inquiry to investigate the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men. This research included the voices of five Black male leaders who reside in Central Ohio. Chapter III, Methodology, outlines and describes the research design that was used to consider and explore their experiences.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

In this research study I used narrative inquiry methodology to investigate the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Questions

RQ1 : How do the stories of selected Black men reflect their understanding of leadership?

RQ2: How does spirituality influence their leadership behavior or decision making?

RQ3: What role does social justice play in their leadership and how is this influenced by their spirituality?

Chapter III begins with a description of the research design and methodology that are the foundations of this study. This chapter then delves into a description of the sample population, data collection and analysis procedures, assumptions and limitations, and methods used to validate the findings of this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of my role as the researcher in the study.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, which has its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Creswell, 1998). It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of study (Creswell, 1998). Krathwohl and Smith (2005) suggest that this entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study; the researcher enters the informants' (or participants') worlds and through

ongoing interaction, seeks the participants' perspectives and meanings. Scholars contend that qualitative research can be distinguished from quantitative methodology by numerous unique characteristics that are inherent in the design. The following is a synthesis of commonly articulated assumptions regarding characteristics presented by various researchers.

1. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behavior and events occur (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2000; Wiersma, 2000; Yow, 2005).
2. Qualitative research is based on assumptions that are very different from quantitative designs. Theory or hypotheses are not established as a priori (Yow, 2005).
3. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection rather than some inanimate mechanism (Yow, 2005).
4. The data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive. That is, data are reported in words (primarily the participant's words) or pictures, rather than in numbers (Wiersma, 2000).
5. The focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 1998).
6. Qualitative research focuses on the process that is occurring as well as the product or outcome. Researchers are particularly interested in understanding how things occur (Creswell, 2009).
7. Qualitative research is an emergent design in its negotiated outcomes. Meanings and interpretations are negotiated with human data sources because it is the participants' realities that the researcher attempts to reconstruct (Creswell, 2009).

This research tradition relies on the utilization of tacit knowledge (intuitive or felt knowledge) because often the nuances of the multiple realities can be appreciated most in this way (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, data are not quantifiable in the traditional sense of the word.

Objectivity and truthfulness are critical to both research traditions. However, the criteria for judging a qualitative study differ from those used in quantitative research. First and foremost, the researcher seeks believability based on coherence, insight, and instrumental utility and trustworthiness through a process of verification rather than through traditional validity and reliability measures (Creswell, 2009).

Research Method

In this study, I used narrative inquiry as the primary research methodology. Narrative inquiry is a methodological approach of understanding people's representation of the world, and their actions in it, through the stories they tell (Gomez, 1997). The use of narrative inquiry among researchers has become increasingly popular over the last decade (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For example, Gardner (1996) observed that the analyses of leaders' stories present a fresh perspective on the nature of leadership (p. xi). In other words, when researchers consider a leader's stories, they observe a powerful way of conceptualizing the work of leading. This is because leaders chiefly achieve their effectiveness through the stories they relate (Gardner, 1996). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the main claim for the use of narrative research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world.

With this in mind, narrative inquiry was chosen because it provided the means by which participants in this study could tell their richly lived stories. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001), “the narrative [should be] presented as quotations of participants’ language...The level of detail makes the narrative seem ‘real’ and ‘alive’ carrying the reader directly into the world of the people.” (p.488) In this sense, the comments of the participants should reflect the construction of their worlds and how they interpret social situations and experiences as evidenced in their stories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Historically, storytelling has been very important to Black Americans, and the method of establishing their own sense of identity amidst the dominant culture (Franklin, 2007). Because of this, it is not unusual to hear traditional storytellers of Black history tell their narratives in relationship to stories recited (or in some cases written) by their ancestors or from ancient texts considered sacred by the community (Franklin, 1997). This oral tradition for many Black Americans has great value and helps to create a context of comfortability and familiarity when sharing their stories (Wimberly, 1997).

In qualitative research, Yow (2005) stresses the importance of researchers establishing rapport and a climate of trust with their participants. Both help to facilitate ease in the interview and can increase the likelihood of the participant being more forthcoming with useful information to be analyzed. The power of narrative inquiry as a methodological tool rests in focusing on building relationships between the researcher and participants. Creswell (2007) suggested that appropriate relationship building is developed when several procedures are followed: (1) select a research question that best fits narrative research; (2) select one or more individuals who have stories or life

experiences to tell, and spend considerable time with them gathering their stories through multiple types of information; (3) collect information about the context of these stories; (4) analyze the participants' stories and then "re-story" them into a framework that makes sense; and (5) collaborate with participants by actively involving them in the research. Each of these steps, along with their feasibility for this study, is outlined in the following section.

Selecting a Research Question

First, Creswell (2007) suggested that the research question must be appropriate for narrative inquiry. Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals. The research questions in this study are designed to analyze the stories of five Black male leaders. Because I am extracting data from the stories of a small sample population, employing narrative inquiry is appropriate.

Select one or more individuals and gather their stories

Second, Creswell (2007) referred to stories as "field texts." In this sense research participants can record their stories in a journal or diary, or the researcher can observe individuals and record field notes (p. 55). In this study, I used the latter method and also collected demographic information, memos, and official correspondence from participants' meetings. These meetings consisted of administrative staff meetings, church-related events, conference calls, and other areas where participants exercise their role as leaders. Examining these multiple forms of data helped me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' leadership styles and their relationship to followers in their respective organizations.

Collect information about the context of these stories

Next, context must be considered. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) urged narrative researchers to situate individual stories within participants' personal experiences. In this study, I situated individual stories within participants' personal experiences (such as their jobs and their homes), their ethnicity, their gender, and their historical contexts (time and place) (Creswell, 2007). Hence, this guideline was met.

Analyze the participants' stories

Additionally, narrative inquiry requires that the participants' stories be analyzed and possibly re-storied. "Restorying" is the process of reorganizing the stories of participants into some general type of framework (Creswell, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued that oftentimes individuals do not tell their stories in a chronological sequence. Because of this, it is not uncommon for researchers to reframe the stories for analysis. Though each interview in this study was semi-structured to capture some sense of chronology and order, it was also necessary to reframe or re-story them to find appropriate themes. Narrative inquiry provided the flexibility to engage in this process.

Collaborate with participants

Finally, as researchers collect stories, they negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide methods useful to the participants (Creswell, 2007). For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), a key theme in narrative research is a turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties learn and change in the encounter. In this study, participants were provided with a copy of the

transcriptions of their respective interviews and had an opportunity to help negotiate the meaning of their stories. This process helped to validate the analyses.

In sum, narrative inquiry allowed me to tell the story of the participants, unfolded in a chronology of their experiences, and set these experiences within their respective contexts. I also included important themes drawn from their lived experiences. For these reasons, using narrative inquiry as a methodological tool was appropriate for this research study.

Sample Population

I interviewed five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. The selections of these participants were based on gender, ethnicity, availability, willingness to participate, and diversity of profession. The pool of participants was determined by the magazine *Who's Who in Black Columbus*, published by C. Sunny Martin, Briscoe Media Group, LLC. The editors of *Who's Who in Black Columbus* annually consult from a variety of lists and endeavor to make every effort to reach all individuals within the Central Ohio community whose stature and civic activities merit their inclusion. This effort includes highlighting individuals whose positions or accomplishments in their chosen fields are significant and whose contributions to community affairs, whether citywide or on the neighborhood level, have improved the quality of life for those within their respective spheres of influence.

An invitation to participate in the publication is extended at the discretion of the publisher, and individuals are invited to contribute personal and professional data, and the volume only includes information freely submitted by invitees. I reviewed the biographies to determine potential participants for this study. In particular, biographies

were probed for evidence of engagement in activities associated with spirituality, religion, and community involvement. Criteria for candidates included but were not limited to religious affiliation, diversity of profession, and community/civic involvement.

From the chosen subset, I initiated contact via phone calls and email and extended an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix A). The initial contact included information regarding the purpose of the study, the volunteer nature of the participation, the interview process, rights to confidentiality, and the use of the data after the interview. The Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) was included in this initial contact. Seven men were invited to participate in the study. From these seven potential candidates, five men agreed to participate. Participants were given an opportunity to choose pseudonyms for the study. One provided a name to the researcher. Another declined the use of a pseudonym and asked me to use his real name. The remaining three participants asked me to assign pseudonyms to represent them in the study. The unique demographics of the participants are provided in Chapter IV.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected via semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, and participant observations. Each method is described in detail below.

Interviews

Participants engaged in two semi-structured interviews. Multiple interviews were necessary in order to establish a good rapport, comfort, and trust between the participants and researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell 2009). Two interviews also allowed me to gain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon being studied and to follow up on ideas or concepts that occurred during the initial interview (Yow, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews contain a mixture of more or less structured questions. Highly structured or essential questions were used to obtain specific information (Creswell, 1998). These questions were generated from the three dimensions of the theoretical framework: transformational leadership, critical race theory, and Black-American prophetic spirituality. The interview was also guided by less-structured questions whose wording and order sometimes changed due to unexpected circumstances or particular responses (Creswell, 1998).

I designed the protocol questions (Appendix C) based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) belief that in narrative inquiry, experiences should be studied through three dimensions: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (place). The three-dimensional view facilitates the emergence of more comprehensive stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, 2000). I also asked open-ended questions in order to encourage participants to give in-depth responses in the form of stories (Yow, 2005). Predetermined and spontaneous probes were used to elicit additional information based on a participant's answer to a leading question (Yow, 2005). I returned to the predetermined questions when the interview needed to be refocused. Semi-structured interviews were ideal because of the flexibility it allowed during the interview. I was able to rearrange interview questions and interject probes based on a participant's responses and experiences (Yow, 2005). Such flexibility allowed me to be specific and purposeful in the questions that I asked each participant.

Each interview was scheduled for 60 minutes during the day in either the participants' place of employment or his home. All interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the participant. One participant preferred to meet in my home and I

consented. I took limited notes during the interviews. Primarily, I took notes on my thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the participant, the participants' nonverbal cues, and other information that could not be ascertained via audiotape. These observer comments were helpful when recalling specifics from the interviews. Secondly, these notes were available to assist me in the event of equipment failure (Creswell, 2003). At the end of the day of interviews, I wrote in a reflexive journal (described later in this chapter) to record my reactions to the interviews.

I began each interview by welcoming and thanking the participant for his participation. I took a few minutes to engage in a casual conversation (i.e., how their day was going, current events) prior to commencing with the study logistics. I then reminded the participants of the measures that would be taken to assist in preserving their confidentiality. Moreover, I explained that their identity as well as the identity of their respective places of employment and others mentioned during their interviews would be masked by the use of pseudonyms in all reports and presentations. Participants were told that a transcriptionist and I would be the only persons to hear their recorded interviews. A copy of the transcriptionist confidentiality agreement (Appendix D) was provided. I then asked the participants to sign their informed consent form (Appendix B) so I could officially begin the interview.

I created an interview protocol (Appendix C) that guided each participant's first interview. In addition to asking participants the questions as they appeared on the interview protocol, I also asked probing questions when necessary. Initial interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. At the end of the first interview, participants were given the opportunity to select a pseudonym that they wanted to be referred to in written

and oral representations of this research in order to help maintain the participants' confidentiality. Finally, I confirmed the participants' time, date, and location for their second interview.

Typically, second interviews were conducted one week after the initial interview and lasted on average 45 minutes. The first half of each participant's second interview consisted of a member check. I orally presented each participant with tentative conclusions I had arrived at based on the first interview. Participants were asked to evaluate the accuracy of my statements and were given the opportunity to correct or add to my comments. The last half of the interview was dedicated to asking questions that were not addressed during the first interview and to seek clarification on issues that arose as I transcribed recordings, analyzed the transcripts from the first interview, and reviewed my journal entries.

I conducted a pilot to test the interview protocol (Yow, 2005). Testing the questions prior to the actual interviews highlighted confusing and unnecessary items. The pilot interview was conducted with a Black male administrator who has worked with the State of Ohio for five years. He met the criteria guidelines for this study. The pilot study took place in his home. I solicited feedback on my interviewing style to ensure that I was effective, nonjudgmental, and respectful (Yow, 2005).

The pilot interview helped me to prepare for participants who gave brief responses to questions that were asked. Consequently, I added probing questions to the interview protocol in order to give participants guidance as they told stories related to my research topic. Based on the pilot interview, questions were added, some were deleted,

and the wording and sequence of the interview questions (Appendix C) were modified for enhanced effectiveness.

Participant Observations

Participant observations were used for the purposes of gaining a greater understanding of the participants' roles as leaders in their respective contexts of leadership. In this study, contexts of leadership included their experiences in administrative meetings, church-related events, conference calls, and other areas where they exercise their role as leaders. The theoretical framework of transformational leadership, critical race theory, and Black-American spirituality were used as guides through the observations. In particular, I observed the participants' interaction with staff, examined agendas, and wrote my observations in a journal. These observations provided insight into the intricacies of their leadership and gave me an opportunity to evaluate my theoretical framework (McClellan, 2006).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process by which conclusions are drawn from the collected information. In qualitative research, data analysis consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e. text data in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2009). Though there is no particular method by which narratives should be analyzed (Creswell, 1998), several scholars (Creswell 1998, Riessman, 2002, Wiersma, 2000) recommended that data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously. Both processes occur together in order to construct a comprehensive and coherent interpretation of the data. This allows

the researcher to be guided by initial concepts and developing understandings, and, as necessary, shift or modify these conceptualizations while collecting and analyzing the data (Creswell, 2009). In this study, I employed the data analysis spiral method developed by Creswell (2007). In this method, the analysis spiral conforms to a particular contour, which is best represented in a spiral image, a data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2007).

As shown in Figure 2, to analyze qualitative data, the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach. One enters with data of text and exits with an account or a narrative. In between, the researcher touches several facets of analysis and circles around and around (Creswell, 2007).

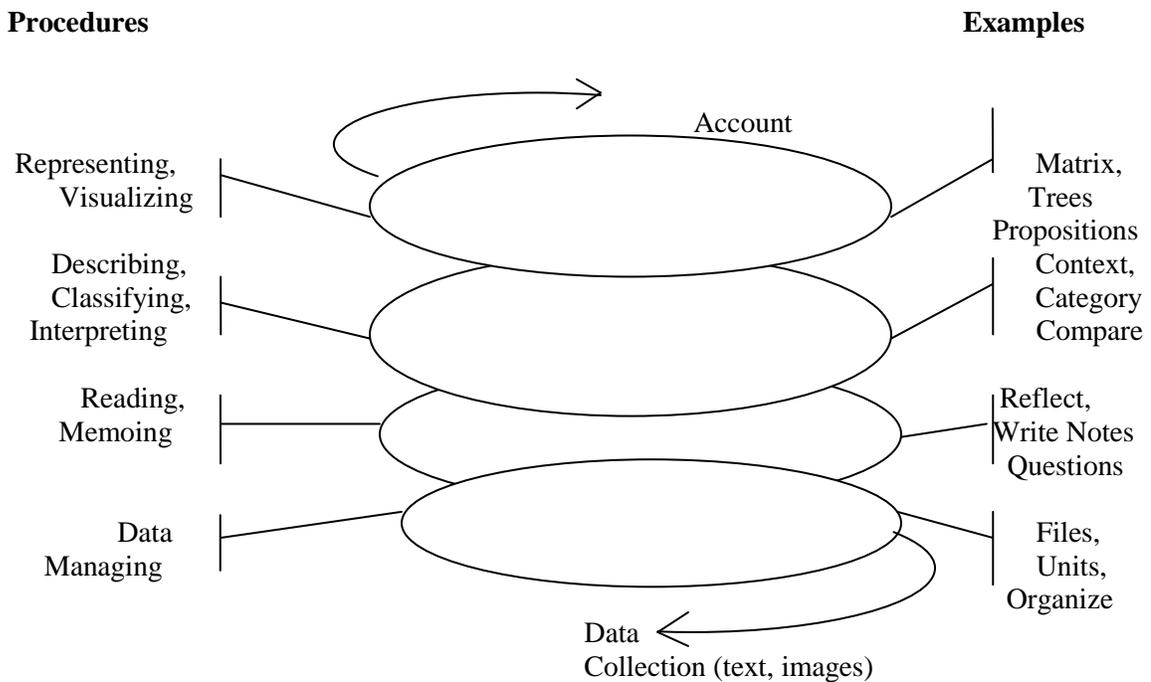


Figure 2. Data Analysis Spiral (Creswell, 2007).

To assist with data management, the first loop in the spiral, I hired a transcriptionist. Typically, I received transcriptions within 48 hours of my interviews with the participants. Receiving the transcripts fairly quickly significantly aided me in recalling details about the interview that needed to be considered during data analysis. I directly entered my field data, including interview data, observations, and research memos into HyperRESEARCH, a qualitative data analysis computer program. HyperRESEARCH then generated special stacks designated to hold and organize the data.

Following the organization of the data, I read through the transcripts several times (Riessman, 2002), made memos in the margins, and formed initial codes. The memos were short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occurred to me as I read the transcripts in their entirety. Coding is the process of defining what the data mean (Creswell, 2009) and is the means by which aspects of the data are assigned shorthand designations that allow for easy retrieval of data (Creswell, 1998). Coding includes chunking and making meaning of data (Wiersma, 2000), and is the critical step that leads the researcher to the conceptualization of data (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), it is prudent to label codes with terms based in the actual language of the participant. As such, I scanned all of my databases to identify major organizing ideas. Looking over my field notes from observations, interview data, and journal entries, I disregarded predetermined questions so I could “hear” what the interviewees said (Creswell, 2007). I reflected on the larger thoughts presented in the data and formed initial categories. The categories were few in number (10) and I looked for multiple forms of evidence to support each grouping. Moreover, I found evidence that portrayed multiple perspectives about each

category (Creswell, 2007). The initial categories were beneficial for later stages of data analysis and contributed to the participants' second interview by highlighting aspects of their stories that needed to be further developed.

I sent copies of transcripts and my initial categories via email to the participants for review and verification. This practice provided a context for them to consider prior to the second interview. Additionally, it allowed me time to further reflect upon each transcript and generate relevant, follow-up questions for the participants.

During the second round of interviews, I asked each participant, as a member check, to critique my initial categories. In most cases, this yielded additional details that allowed me to further develop their respective stories. To help describe, classify, and interpret stories, I followed Creswell's (2007) recommendation of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space approach. Using this approach helped me to analyze the data for three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller's places) (Creswell, 2007). As a result, I was able to place the participants' stories in chronological order, locate epiphanies, and develop emerging themes.

These processes guided me through the retelling and interpretation of the participants' stories in order to create their individual narratives. These are presented in Chapter IV and the thematic connections across narratives are presented in Chapter V.

Trustworthiness

According to Creswell and Miller (2000), qualitative researchers must provide readers with information that supports the trustworthiness of the research study. Creswell (2009) defined trustworthiness as the measurement of how much confidence can be

placed in whether or not the findings of the study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. Creswell (2009) proposed “trustworthiness is a better assessment measure of constructivist research than validity which is found in quantitative research” (p. 191). Additionally, Lincoln & Guba (2000) suggested that trustworthiness is a better assessment because it is established through an assessment of the credibility of portrayals of constructed realities. In other words, what people believe to be true about their stories is the truth for them. People are constructed by what they believed happened in their lives as well as by what did really happen.

To establish trustworthiness for this study, I relied on multiple methods from Creswell’s (2009) identified strategies for trustworthiness. Creswell (2009) recommended that at least two of these strategies be utilized in qualitative research. In this study, I employed four; namely, member-checking, peer-debriefing, employing an external auditor, and writing rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings.

For the purposes of satisfying Creswell’s (2009) recommendation of member checking, upon completion of my analysis of their respective narratives, I extended an opportunity for each participant to critique the researcher’s constructions for accuracy. The participants were given an opportunity to review their own narratives and to offer suggestions, clarifications, and critical reflections. This was done to affirm that the researcher honestly reported the information that was provided during the data collection and data analysis stages of the study.

Peer debriefing was performed in order to enhance the accuracy of the researcher’s account (Creswell, 2009). The peer reviewer provided an external check of the researcher’s procedures by critically examining the work and asking questions. One

person was used as a peer reviewer for my research. I used a recent doctoral graduate of Duke University who currently serves as an associate professor in the Black Studies Department at The Ohio State University. This person is knowledgeable about narrative research and posed challenging questions that kept me focused on using the procedures and methods to conduct a qualitative study involving narrative inquiry.

I also asked an external auditor to review my entire research study (Creswell, 2009). The auditor, who serves as a professor at Wright State University, looked over many aspects of the study (such as the accuracy of transcription, relationship between the research questions and the data, and the level of data analysis from the raw data through interpretation) and provided an objective assessment. The auditor's recommendations to the researcher added to the trustworthiness of the study.

Finally, I used thick, rich descriptions to convey the findings. The highly detailed descriptions of the narratives of the participants and their respective analyses were written to help transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences (Creswell, 2009). In this sense, the readers of the study would be able to determine whether or not the information provided was transferrable to other contexts and to other individuals.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the most experienced researchers are also part of a reality that cannot stand outside the research. With this in mind, as the researcher I recognized that I have been shaped by my gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, in this study, I served as a gatekeeper of my own conscious and unconscious biases. To minimize bias, I kept a journal during the data collection stage of this study. As such, I resisted the urge to allow

my biases to bleed over into the data. In the instances when personal biases manifested themselves, I purposefully remained silent so that the participants could tell their stories.

Human Subjects Consideration

Participating in the study was voluntary and posed limited risk or harm to the subjects due to a loss of anonymity. Through the purposeful sampling technique, I selected participants based on criteria that were relevant to the study's research questions. The participants involved in this study signed an informed consent form and an audio release form. I also described in detail the study methodology to all subjects before they agreed to participate. Additionally, I informed the participants of the efforts that would be taken to ensure their confidentiality. I contacted the participants via email and phone to set up times for interviews throughout the study. The names of their respective work-sites and staff were not reported in the research document. Throughout the data collection process, I gave the participants opportunities to address issues that concerned them. Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection process. No member dropped out of the study.

After the data collection and data analysis stages, there was no need to conduct more interviews with the participants. However, as the analysis of the narratives unfolded, there was a need to make a telephone call to one participant for additional data.

For each of the participants, I will maintain a locked, organizational file containing field notes and observation forms from the interviews and meetings for a minimum of three years. Transcriptions of audiotape interviews with the participants will be placed in a locked box in the locked file for each participant, along with a summary of each transcribed interview.

A human subjects review for this study was submitted and approved by the Union Institute and University's Human Research Internal Review Board.

Assumptions of the Study

The following research assumptions were implicit in this study:

1. The required research was obtainable.
2. The participants were knowledgeable about themselves, their experiences, and their leadership.
3. The participants were engaged in activities normally associated with spirituality and religion.
4. The participants were actively engaged in advocacy activities as evidenced by their community involvement.
5. The participants were capable of conveying knowledge to me.
6. The participants provided honest answers to interview questions.

Limitations of the Study

The following were limitations of this study:

1. This study was limited to a small number of Black men and is therefore not generalizable to all Black men who serve in various leadership capacities.
2. Because the participants are located in one Midwestern state, some of their experiences may be specific to their particular state or region.
3. Participants may have potentially withheld intimate details that may have been relevant to the study.
4. My own ethnicity and gender (Black and male) may have limited the outcome of the research based on my own biases

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 1998). Subsequently, it is imperative that researchers are aware of how their background and experiences could affect the researcher and final product (Creswell, 1998).

My academic training is in theology, Black church studies, and Christian education. The majority of my professional experience has been spent serving as a minister on the staff of Black churches ranging from 500 to 5000 members. Additionally, I graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta Georgia, a historically Black college (HBCU) dedicated to educating men and developing them into ethical leaders. Walter Fluker, Dean of the Leadership and Resource Center at Morehouse, defined ethical leadership as the critical appropriation and embodiment of moral traditions that have historically shaped the character and shared meanings of a people (Fluker, 2008). In other words, ethical leadership does not emerge from a historical vacuum, but arises from the experiences and connections one has with particular traditions and institutions. As a Black man with experiences and connections with the Black church and Morehouse College, I acknowledge that both have been incubators for my own spirituality and they have also harnessed my formational views about leadership and social justice.

As the research study began, I carried with me the belief that the relationships among leadership, spirituality, and social justice were critical for persons who have been historically marginalized. Moreover, my experiences as a minister have afforded me the opportunity to counsel those who have battled against a nihilistic threat to their very existence. A conspicuous number of these persons have been Black men who, in the

words of James Baldwin, possessed “silent tears” because their hope unborn had died (in Franklin, 1990). The collapse of meaning and the death of hope can have far-reaching negative consequences for the least of these, those whom Thurman (1976) shared “stand at a moment in human history with their backs against the wall...the poor, the disinherited, the dispossessed” (p.11). Who are the leaders that are combating the nihilistic threat in the 21st century? If such leaders exist, how are they leading? Who will go on behalf of the marginalized, and whom shall we send? What are relevant models of leadership that need to be studied? These questions have influenced the formation of this study. Admittedly, my own hope had been that the participants possessed prescriptive answers. At the same time, as the researcher, I recognized the importance of minimizing my own researcher bias in order to obtain authentic data and credible findings. In this sense, my role was to remain as objective as possible.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that the role of researchers is to set aside their own views, attitudes, and ways of thinking about inquiry so that the participants’ stories can be told. In particular, the authors described these attitudes, views, and ways of thinking as “tensions at the boundaries” (p.46). When these “tensions at the boundaries” manifest themselves, the researcher should control them. Hence, in my role as researcher, I controlled my views, attitudes, and personal thoughts so that I was not leading the participants. My ultimate role was to be the storyteller for these participants. My job was to share their stories with those who are interested in knowing the role spirituality plays in their leadership and social justice practices. My responsibility was to allow the voices of these Black men to be heard.

Summary

I employed narrative inquiry as a methodology to explore the research questions for this qualitative study. Narrative inquiry enabled me to hear participants tell stories regarding the role of spirituality in their leadership and social justice practices. Data were collected via interviews and participant observations. Although no one specific data analysis procedure accompanies narrative inquiry, I utilized Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral and Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space approach to establish categories and subcategories by analyzing data within and across sources. I used several techniques to establish the trustworthiness of this research. These processes guided me through the restorying and interpretation of the participants' stories in order to create their individual narratives that are presented in Chapter IV, as well as to develop the thematic connections across narratives that are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV: The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to tell the stories of Black male leaders in Central Ohio who reflected upon the role of spirituality in their leadership and social justice practices. Each individual narrative focuses principally on the content of the participants' responses to semi-structured interview questions. Interview protocols were based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) "three dimensional narrative inquiry space approach" (hereafter, three-dimensional). The three-dimensional approach helped me to rewrite the participants' stories in a chronological sequence, and incorporate the setting or place of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, I do not present the narratives as interview summaries, but instead as compilations of the stories told by the participants.

As a narrative inquirer, I am obligated to write about people's experiences as becoming rather than being in nature. While all five participants showed evidence of spirituality intersecting with their leadership and social justice practices, each was in a different stage of the process. The three narratives I have chosen to present represent those participants whose experiences most clearly reflect this intersection. Elements from the experiences of the other two participants will be included in Chapter V, which is dedicated to thematic analysis. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posited that narrative inquirers should be autobiographically conscious of their own reactions to the stories that are told. As such, one should strive to maintain balance, as one expresses one's own voice, in the midst of inquiries designed to tell the participants' storied experiences (p. 147). In an effort to maintain this balance, I have chosen to intersperse my own reactions to the participants' stories throughout the narratives. These reactions are compilations of

my journal entries kept in the field, as demonstrated in my introduction of each participant. The introductions are followed by a chronology of the participants' experiences, and they conclude with an epilogue chronicling one of their spiritual epiphanies.

Table 1 shows the unique demographics of the men in my study. Two of the participants selected are local entrepreneurs in Central Ohio. Dre is the proprietor of a beauty salon and operates a clothing apparel company. He is active in his church, runs a men's Bible study in his shop after business hours, and publishes a grass-roots magazine promoting empowerment to his surrounding community. Paul is the owner of a multi-million dollar software company. He is a power broker in his city and is the recipient of many community awards. Phillip is an ordained Baptist minister and serves as a manager in a Fortune 500 company, handling domestic and international accounts. He is also active in his church and currently sits on a board of a non-profit organization that targets young Black males. Eric serves as a Director for the State of Ohio and has over 10 years of experience in marketing for international conglomerates. He is a motivational speaker who relishes in equipping urban youths with life skills. Eugene directs locally based community organizing initiatives, supervises more than 300 people, and oversees urban development projects for the city in which he resides. The heterogeneity of the participants' leadership and professional expertise add credibility to the data as their experiences are unique and varied (McClellan, 2006). The ages of the men in this study ranged from early 40s to mid-50s.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Name	Professional Position	Education	# Yrs in Current Position	Age Range
Dre	Proprietor, Beauty/Barber Salon	High School Diploma	20	40 --- 45
Paul	Owner, Software Development Company	B.S., M.B.A. Finance	18	50 -- 55
Phillip	Account Manager	Associate, Computer Science, 2 Bachelors in Theology	24	40 -- 45
Eric	State Director	B.S. Marketing M.S. Sports Marketing	1	40 -- 45
Eugene	Urban Developer	B.S. Marketing	5	50 -- 55

Intro: Dre: A Diamond In The Rough

It is Tuesday morning, April 28, and I feel anxious. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have warned me, as an interviewer, that it is natural to have tension prior to interviews. Typically, this tension occurs because narrative inquirers are never disembodied recorders of someone else's experience. They too are having an experience, and become a part of the experience being studied (p. 81). My experience is now beginning. Part of my tension is because this is the first interview. Additionally, it is the only one I have scheduled to conduct in my home. Yet, even this scenario bespeaks of the engaging person I will soon come to know as, "Brother" Dre, the owner of MR Barbershop (pseudonym).

On any given day, except Sundays, it is not uncommon to walk into MR Barbershop and see Dre actively engaging with clientele, his community, and even occasionally his biological family. The amazing thing to witness, though, is his affable, gregarious personality that effortlessly makes everyone who enters the door feel like family. His clientele consists of men and women alike, from all walks of life. Some clients frequent the circles of the socially elite, while others frequently do not know where their next meal is coming from. Regardless of their socio-economic status, condition, or circumstance - in one subtly, sacred moment within Dre's barbershop - they all stand on common ground.

Dre is highly respected in his community and, in my estimation, essential for this study. He appears to be intensely spiritual. He is a man with Muslim roots, Christian faith, and an active member of a local Masonic lodge. Daily in his establishment

powerful, pulsating sounds of gospel music pump through the loudspeakers. They seem to tap-dance on the eardrums of listeners who rhythmically move to the musical cadence, considering the spiritual message as the music melodically seeps into their consciences. Dre is an indigenous member of this community, a small, dilapidated section of town desperately in need of commercial and residential development. Dre tries to do his part by self-publishing a magazine in hopes of attracting business to the Black community and helping to circulate dollars within it. He also cuts hair for area youth at a discounted rate, one day a week, and imparts words of wisdom and encouragement. Dre unselfishly invests his time, talents, and treasure simply because he has a natural proclivity to help others. As such, when I shared with him the subject of my study, he wanted to help. Dre even offered to drive to my home across town in the interest of helping us both have the most conducive environment to communicate. His enthusiasm affirmed that I had serendipitously stumbled upon someone special: a diamond in the rough of sorts, whose story I am privileged to share.

Continuity-Past: The Diamond is Harnessed

Dre is a native of Columbus, Ohio. He was reared on the East side of town in various public housing units and is quick to mention that there was not much stability:

Dre: I am a native of Columbus, Ohio. I grew up all over Ohio um because growing up as a young man, my wife, I mean my, my mother um she um we lived public housing units. So we lived in Sullivan Gardens, we moved from Sullivan Gardens to Agler Green. From Agler Green to grandma's house, we moved from grandma's house to Pointdexter Village. So we have lived on the east of town, the east side of Columbus. So um you know um my um final destination was on the Eastside on 1457 Hawthorne where I lived with my Grandfather until um he passed away when I was about 21, and um I am an East High School graduate, went to Champion, went to Cassidy. Like I said we was all over the place.

Recalling his childhood, Dre grimaces as he appears to be visiting a place of pain that he rarely goes. He confides in me that his mother had and still suffers from a mental

illness. Moreover, he intimates that his father did not share as much responsibility as he could have in raising Dre and his siblings. Fortunately, though he and his family spent considerable time moving around in public housing developments, Dre found his most tangible example of stability in his grandparents. His expression changes as he fondly remembers his grandmother:

Dre...my grandmother was a strong the strong the really strong one to help raise the rest of the kids. Um you know while dealing with my mother's mental illness, so....

Along with stability, Dre's time with his grandparents also was the training ground where he learned about responsibility and developed a passion to help others:

Dre:...first of all I was the first child born, the first grandchild born and I am the oldest so um of course my role was very important because I was the only, the first male. Um from all the siblings that was born so um I had taken on the responsibility at a early age I believe when I was ten year ten years old I was um pretty much living with um my um brother and my sister by our self because our mom worked um you know she probably about in her twenties and she worked so for eight hours a day you think a ten year old having the responsibility of cooking um cleaning um changing diapers so I was I was forced to become um the man of the house at an early age and ,and with that um it took on a lot of responsibility you know I really never really had a child -childhood you know because I always been the person that kind of helped provide for the other kids that were in the house, so...

His role as co-provider in the household where he grew up helped Dre to learn how to be assertive and become comfortable with being in charge. Consequently, though having what some may consider being a rough childhood, Dre believes his early-childhood experiences harnessed his leadership skills, and helped him to be recognized among his peers as a leader. When asked about his first recollection of being a leader, an unmistakable sparkle appears in his eye:

Dre: Being a captain of uh the uh YMCA basketball team was my first example of leadership. Um not understanding really what my responsibility was, just because I was just the most aggressive person. You just getting out there go get it and uh but you know it made aware of my aggressiveness. It poured over or

spilled into the rest of the team. So, you know we were able to win ball games, you know just ,just leading by example on that end. And then as um as young man in my early twenties um my leadership style was able to help my other friends, you know as far the direction they're going in now, cause it's like okay, you know Dre got married, I got married, you know you have those type of influence over people uh and uh you know people look for you to answer stuff when they got issues they call on you and you've been able to give good advice um is also a good a good example of a good leader.

In particular, Dre began to recognize that although he had few role models as a young man, he could become an adult role model to others. Though he was devoid of an inordinate amount of stability in his childhood, he possessed an innate ability to provide stability and even encouragement to others. His abilities were cultivated through unique experiences. These experiences were instrumental in catapulting him to a leadership position. In this position, Dre was determined to be an example for others.

Continuity-Present: The Diamond Emerges

Being an example, for Dre, is synonymous with leadership. His posture shifts and his voice grew more confident in his attempt to drive home this very significant point:

Dre: I am a more hands on you know lead by example type person you know, okay, I am going show you and then I,am going to help you, you know if you have problems just follow the example I am going to show how to do it. Then I am going to help you a long then I am going to say okay its time to walk....

At first, I was tempted to ask Dre whether his penchant to lead by example was connected to his profession. I had reasoned that perhaps he was speaking about showing someone how to cut hair. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), however, cautioned researchers to resist interjecting personal thoughts into the interview process, so that the participant's story can be heard. In this instance, I was grateful to heed to their advice, for I may have missed Dre methodically revealing his approach to leadership: listening, identifying a need, providing or helping with a resource, and following up. While the

process initially seemed simple, hearing him unfold the process through his stories was quite profound. For example, Dre takes a genuine interest in listening to and helping others:

Dre:...one of the most in joyous things that I really love about my job is just really listening to uh my client's stories and being able to give them some encouragement, hey it will get better, things do change and to celebrate with them.....

Dre's approach to leadership is clearly demonstrated in a story he shares of one of his most recent interactions with a client:

Dre:...lately I have been able to um encourage people with Romans 8:28 as far as leadership because I deal with a lot clients and one story I was sharing with a friend of mine is that um this guy came in he has to manage property uh for this organization. He was really worried about it was really down and confused. Um, he kept looking at my hat. Cause I brought a hat and put the scripture on it. And uh he kept looking and kept looking and uh he's a Christian but everybody doesn't remember scripture all the time and he was like what does that mean? I explain it to him what it means, I say look bro, I said think about this, if you love God and you believe who he say he is all things work together. So whatever you dealing with it's all going to work out for His good. So, I know you struggling with your management and the different things you, are going through it will work out. So, um you know and it gave him some, some hope. It gave him a lot of hope and it gave him some inspiration because I saw him two weeks later and he was like, "you know you were right and I am glad I came in that day. That's exactly what I needed..."

Dre mentions to me that he evaluates his effectiveness as a leader based on how close others in his sphere of influence follow his example. The manager he helped is but one example of a daily routine that consists of listening and engaging with clients while he provides his service. Dre's service, however, is not limited to exterior aesthetics, but rather linked to his interior aspiration. In other words, Dre likes to feel that his clients leave his chair transformed. The transformation not only occurs on the outside (the haircut), but Dre is hopeful that his clients, and those within his sphere of influence, are

transformed internally as well. Dre looks for transformation, evidenced by seeing the values and practices he strives to impart emulated in others.

He beams with pride in sharing:

Dre: You know uh, I've been blessed to have at least may be ten barbers or beauticians come through there come through the business and all of them that have left and went on to other shops they, they just bounced around. They didn't have no stability and when they were with were with the shop that I currently manage they had stability.

Dre: So now you're unstable so now you're just out there. But you chose to do that not to follow the basic rules. And then uh some of them just do something else they just get out the profession. So uh you know, so later on, uh they uh, a couple of them own they own business and they carry some of the same principles that they saw me do, as far as they run their business. It's always a blessing to see someone who has gone on, own their own shop, and be able to carry on some of those same values of being a shop owner and some of the biblical principles uh that they watch me demonstrate and go on to carry into their shop or even into their households. And then there... it's always good to hear you know once stylist and barbers go on and make it.....

In this sense, Dre relishes in the reality that some of his values – namely, stability and Biblical principles - are transferred to others to whom he has been an example.

Conversely, he is equally disappointed as a leader when others fail to emulate his example:

Dre: Recently uh I had to deal with a young man who was uh in front of the shop that worked for me, that showed disrespect. And I had to ask him, he did something that was disrespectful. And I just quietly you know pulled him off to the side and said hey you know um; um do you respect this business? He said yes, then why would you do something like that cause what you do reflects the business. So, one of the things I always do is tell my clients, no tell my barbers, is that you know whatever you do outside here still reflects the shop and reflects my leadership. So, you know if you're out in the neighborhood and people know you work at my shop, uh it reflects our character. You know I like to think I have good character, caring heart not to say they don't but, you know peaceful respectful person you know spill off into my uh barbers and beauticians.

For Dre, transferring his character, or more appropriately his value system, is undoubtedly critical. He pauses for a moment to gather himself together. I could tell in

our time together that we were at a breakthrough moment. A crack emerged within Dre's voice, and bated breaths seemed to bully themselves to the fore of his consideration. Internally, I stood on tiptoes of anticipation as I witnessed the transformation of this tough man on the brink of revealing a tender side. What I was about to hear was sacred. In one, solitary moment we were about to be transported beyond the veil of casual conversation, and into the inner theater of Dre's life. This was an inner world where I would be privileged to witness Dre grapple with and determine the great issues of his life. In short, Dre was fusing his past and present with his future - one that is inextricably linked to both his legacy and his significance.

Continuity-Future: The Diamond Shines

When asked about the future, Dre pauses to eloquently articulate his love for his wife. He desperately desires to continue evolving into the man whom she deserves. This is important to Dre because ultimately he wants to set an example for his children.

Dre: I want to set the example with my children, and that's and that's what it's all about. Okay I want to leave them something, some solid foundation; you know my dad wasn't there as much for me.....People ain't gonna look at them for what they did they, re look at okay who was the person um who is the man or who is their father, you know you look at a lot of these kids now these days that we deal with uh the ones, you have some that are great kids that a good role model the father may not be there. Then you have those that are just out there just wild and out and you look back and well look at where is their dad? Dad in jail or he may be dead. But um they reflect their father you know, you know just the DNA piece and uh you get an opportunity to look at them and the dad was crazy, you know you hate to put press it on the kid or something and then they crazy.

Still further, recognizing that his children are a reflection of him, Dre goes on to expound upon the solid foundation he aims to leave for his sons:

Dre: I want to make sure their... their given a lot of love and attention their um also um their you know their being taught responsibilities as far as you have to clean your room, do your homework, um you have to do these certain things as young men learn how to take care of stuff and also um by me being um in the

position that I am in they see me doing a lot of community involvement which entails um lets them know that they got to reach out to others because you know I do basketball camps I do um ministry I do um you know just coaching and stuff like that and I bring I allow my kids to all get involved in that so when they get older they'll know, and they know now that you know daddy didn't only take care of us but he reached out to other people and other young people that didn't have fathers and that didn't have mothers.

Reaching out to others, hence, is Dre's passion, yet it also is his legacy as well.

Moreover, Dre realizes that his ultimate test in leadership will not just be how many persons he helped, but if his example is transferred to his sons:

Dre: My hopes one day for um each and every one of them that of course um they go to college, they go on to be very successful and, and just from watching my example as a father they go they continue to go out and reach and help other people bring, help other people up the ladder... um because I work in a community where there is a lot of poverty there is a lot of there is a lot of different things that goes on in the neighborhood and it is my passion to help as many people as I can; and um to be able to just encourage to um support and, and to help up lift um other people because somebody did it for me.. So I am teaching them to always to be able to help other people.

Several organizations are now beginning to recognize Dre's significance to his community. Among them, a local Greek fraternity honored Dre with their yearly "Jewel Award" for his community efforts. However, the jewel that Dre has become is perhaps best articulated in his own words:

Dre: It was a good award and then I think that the fraternity wanted to recognize those people that are not out there in the papers all the time. Because you know you always say, "There, is always a diamond in the rough." There was a diamond in the community that nobody really knew about. With all the things going on around the community now someone decided to say, hey we need to recognize this diamond and pull him out and brush him on off and let people see that diamond. Because people are looking for people that are diamonds in the community that want to help and improve the community; that are just doing it as we say, under the table, or low key, one of those. But now, now you are on the table when people actually get to see you; and then you are on display. So you have to walk with a lot more integrity too. So now you are open to the community to see and now what happens is people come and they share things; they want to be a part of whatever you are doing because they know it's positive;

they know it's going to impact other people's lives. So that's just extra-added help.

Indeed, Dre's desire to lead by example and his passion to help others signify that his legacy is still being written. In fact, this is what Dre is doing to ensure that, like a diamond, he continues to shine:

Dre: I want to continue to cut hair and serve people. I really I really love my children. I really love the kids that I'm in contact with and I just want to really show love to our young people and meet them right there where they are because everybody -we all are struggling with something. But just being able to be there, to listen and to show support for other young people coming up, that's what I want to continue to do.

Epilogue: Spiritual Epiphany

According to Dantley (2003), spirituality is the nexus of inspiration, motivation, and meaning making in our lives. As such, it did not take long for me to be introduced to the meaning and significance of spirituality in Dre's life. Prior to the interview, Dre took my hand and initiated a prayer. This action made me feel as though Dre was both mature and fully developed in his spirituality. Moreover, it piqued my curiosity regarding Dre's spiritual journey. Dre shared with me that his first spiritual experience occurred as a young adult. At that point of Dre's life, his limited spiritual foundation was loosely based upon his exposure to a Muslim lifestyle during his formative years:

Dre: Um, it could mean well I can let you know as far as um the beginning of my background. Um, my mom was a Muslim, and we grew up with Muslim principles as kids. And of course everything back in the 70s and the 80s were you know you know you got your Malcolm X no not Malcolm X, you had Farrakhan on the rise Warf B. Mohammad were the two major icons in that era and uh and uh for course the Honorable Elijah Mohammad, I think he was still living then, but needless to say you were taught uh about empowerment. You know everything was empowerment black people we have to do this as Black people we have to do that, we have to our own we have to have our own, you know everything was empowerment. And then uh I kind of just left way from um the spiritual piece and just kind of uh floated around you know on my own and experience.

At this point in his life, Dre was not only devoid of an authentic spiritual experience, but he was also in search of meaning. The principles of his mother's faith and its accompanying lifestyle were difficult for Dre to understand:

Dre: And you know and uh through my experience you know like I said we, we, we um grew up as Muslims and I never really understood at a kid we was always forced to do stuff. And it's like a rejection like when you get when you get of age I remember my mom used to make me eat beets and liver all the time and onions all this stuff when I got old enough I got a chance to make a choice so um I believe I made a right choice.

The choice Dre speaks of is a spiritual one. He recalls a moment, as a soldier in the Persian Gulf, where he surrendered his conscious will to something he perceived to be greater than himself:

Dre: Um, once I dropped out college and uh I went to the military and uh I am a uh-Persian Gulf veteran. So um I really started thinking about my career um I think I was about twenty-three, twenty-four maybe. And I was sitting in the desert, waiting to go to battle and uh you know I was thinking, sitting there thinking like man this could be it! You know I didn't, I didn't do everything I wanted to do, didn't have a family, you know I always wanted to least have a boy, uh I did not feel complete you know while I was sitting out there, so I said well Lord if I make it through all this, in six months I will be home, you know and uh you know hopefully get a job and then those things, you know. I was sitting out there and I'll never forget it was um, probably like three or four in the morning, and you know out in the desert it's all flat you can see the moon come up, I watched the moon come up off the earth and just watched it raise up and I fell asleep.

Nevertheless, when Dre arose he was a changed man. Like Moses he left his desert experience with a sense of new meaning, inspiration, and purpose. Life as he knew it had a new smell, and Dre became open to new possibilities in his life:

Dre: But um, needless to say I did a lot of thinking then, and once I got home uh I met my wife and of course we started dating and all those things like that and um, and then I met her family. And I seen in her family, I mean I seen in her first of all, the family background because her family gets together they have family reunions they do everything my family didn't. And it something I seen in there, I said I like to raise my kids to at least know who your family is.

Raising his children not only became a priority for Dre, but also catapulted his spirituality to a new level. Dre understood he now had a responsibility to set an example:

Dre: ...and of course I met my wife and uh and you know uh one of the things I wanted to do was have a better relationship with God. Um to set the example with my children, and that's and that's where it all came from. Okay I want to leave them something, some solid foundation; you know my dad wasn't there as much for me. So, and uh I begin to start seeking have relationship with Him and uh, it kind of mess me up because I didn't know a lot of stuff and I can't make excuses for that stuff for when I do something you know if I do something wrong, I curse somebody out if I if I you know take something that ain't mine, if I if I lie about something you know my relationship totally start to change. So, uh in the beginning it broke me in a lot of different places. You know uh I was like "well, alright, is this what I want?" So, uh I continue to seek, uh seek to get to want know Him better, and it's been a great ride since then.

The spiritual ascension Dre has been on continues to take him to higher heights, reaching its apotheosis in a weekly men's Bible study group that Dre holds in MR Barbershop after business hours. Again, exhibiting his proclivity to be helpful, Dre invites me, as a researcher, to observe his interaction with these men. The Bible study takes place on the men's side of the barbershop, which is impeccably clean and adorned with a magnificent mural on the wall that depicts scenery from the rich and fertile history of the community. While attending, I observe at least three distinct qualities from this gathering of men; first, the diversity of attendees is unique. Dre would later reflect:

Dre: You have people from different varied backgrounds. You have pastors. You have marketing people. You know you have electricians. You have plumbers. You have finance people. This group is made up of various types of individuals from around the neighborhood and outside the neighborhood that come together just to fellowship and worship God and continue to grow spiritually. I would say that most of the people that attend are people that I have touched; whether it be a haircut, talking to them like they were going through a difficult time in their lives and I said, "Hey man you should come to the Men of Destiny Bible study (a pseudonym) and deepen your relationship with God." You know and that way that can help you propel to get beyond your circumstances and also to be with other men to be able to share their stories too. Because sometimes when we look at our stuff, somebody else's stuff is a little bit bigger than ours so

we don't have no...we don't.....we can cry about it but you know we look at their situation and like, "Wow, I,am glad I ain't in that situation." But the makeup is men from like I said, police officers, plumbers, electricians, finance, pastors, marketing people; from middle class to a lower class. You know people off the street sometimes come in and that---they just want prayer. You got addicts that are right there on the corner. You know, one thing they do know when they see all the cars out there, they can come in get prayer or even there's a time when we go to the shelter and feed them. And most of those people that walk by the shop are the people there so they actually see us serve in another capacity other than men just getting together. We get out and do things too to help other men.

In other words, these men consist of Dre's community; men who are within his sphere of influence. In my observation, I find myself reflecting upon the words of Fluker (2008), who shared that the greatest challenge for ethical leaders in this post-modern generation will be looking diversity in the face, while still creating authentic communities. Before my eyes, Dre has constructed an authentic community. This is a community where truth moves at levels undisguised and uninhibited by religious formulae; so diverse, yet so prepared for the Sound, like a mighty rushing wind, to fill the room so that every man could hear in his own language the unique voice of hope designed just for him.

Second, I am able to detect in the conversation many of the values and personal characteristics Dre has articulated to me during our initial interview. Among them are encouragement, Biblical principles, and helping others. They appear to be manifest and lived out among these men. Dre would later affirm my observation:

Dre: They get a lot of encouragement. We deal with a lot of men that are having family issues, health issues, you know kids issues and when they walk away, they walk away with something. They come wanting to hear answers from God or hear something that says, "Hey you know that I can be able to get through my situation." And also they meet other men there that are in the different professions that they can you... you have all these different backgrounds; you know if I need my sink fixed, if I need some electricity; I don't have to go outside my circle. And it's kind of like a small community of people with all kind of backgrounds that can help one another; and then also help other people.

The Men of Destiny Bible study, then, reflects Dre's personality and serves as an indelible imprint of his leadership style.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention Dre's personal touch. As researcher, I am not permitted to participate in this Bible study. I am only an observer. Yet, as this sacred time closes, I am invited to the prayer circle. In this prayer circle, the men link arms with one another and do a round robin of prayer requests and concerns. Again, I have arranged with Dre not to say anything. Despite this, Dre shares with the men why I am here. Amazingly, my name is mentioned in the closing prayer. I emerge feeling refreshed, sensing I have witnessed a divine moment, and that something or Someone outside of myself is ordering my own steps throughout this study.

Introduction: Paul: A Pyramid of Transcendence

Traffic is backed up near the airport and I am on the verge of running late. Tension has crept into my psyche, and I sense my blood pressure rising as I attempt to wait patiently for the friendly police officer to signal me through the construction. The congested intersection is the only obstacle between me and the building that Paul, the owner of Transcendence Systems (a pseudonym), occupies. Transcendence Systems (hereafter, Transcendence) is a successful software firm, boasting annual revenues of nearly 20 million dollars, even in the midst of this recessionary economy. This alone bespeaks of exceptional leadership. Paul, the owner, has a reputation that precedes him. He sits on several boards in the city, has been featured in leading local and national magazines, and has established several foundations to support Christian outreach and needy children throughout the community. What's more, he is a multiple award-winning businessman, has served on a council for the Governor, and has even taught leadership

courses at a few universities. I have previously met Paul only once. At the time, Paul was receiving grooming services in Dre's chair. I knew immediately from the versatility of his conversation that he was exceptional. Fortunately, Dre had made a call on my behalf to get me an audience with Paul. This meeting was a privilege, and I was thankful to be on time.

An administrative assistant greets me, and the employee offers me a beverage and politely asks me to wait until Paul finishes up an appointment. The atmosphere permeates professionalism as I observe the admin interface with several engineers, prepare memos, and handle incoming calls. Lining the walls are a variety of commendations, accolades, and letters of support from previous clients of Transcendence. "This gentlemen is too good to be true," I think, as a kind, baritone voice interrupts my thought process and Paul enthusiastically invites me back into his office. Paul is dressed in a crisp white shirt, and he has a warm spirit and an infectious smile. The office door closes as I position myself to capture and communicate Paul's story. His narrative I am also honored to share in this study.

Continuity-Past: Laying a Foundation

Paul grew up in Springfield, Ohio. His parents divorced when he was six years old. His dad was not overly involved in his life. Paul is exceptionally close to his mother and provides a sterling testimony about her:

Paul: I'm a mama's boy....my mother worked her butt off and she raised four kids on her own. To this day, I talk to my mother everyday. She is a tremendous influence on me. She is a strong Christian woman, which helped me.

One of the primary ways Paul credits his mother for helping is by laying a strong foundation:

Paul: My mama used to do Bible study. And I think that's the greatest thing a parent can do - and it's an obligation- to expose their child to religion and to the Lord. Now it's got to be a personal decision whether or not....you can lead someone to water, you can't make them drink.

Yet Paul drank deeply of the metaphorical waters, and his spiritual foundation was being laid. Moreover, his sense of identity as a young Black man was being developed as well.

With a cryptic smile, Paul posits a story that signifies him coming into his own:

Paul: My mother moved to a little subdivision outside Springfield, called Northridge. I graduated high school in 1974 one year early because I would have probably just gotten in trouble. I was a rabble-rouser in high school. But here's the interesting thing. When mom moved outside of Springfield, we went to a county school called Chaney High School (a pseudonym).

Paul: In the high school there were about 600 people and I was the only African American in that high school. It was a bunch of farmers. It was interesting back then because some of the people there that had lived out in the country had never interfaced with an African American. It was a unique experience. I went there in the 10th and 11th grade, played sports and did reasonably well grade wise. I made it through. I remember being so disappointed. I don't think mom knew she had moved to this district. And I said to mom, "All my friends are from Springfield." I remember saying the first day in school, "I think I know how to fix any issues that might arise." I said, "The first person that says nigger, I'm going to jump all over them and that will bring about respect." That happened about the first day and that was the last time.

Paul had indeed earned respect among his peers. Additionally, he began to change a few perceptions, or so he thought:

Paul: You know- I have friends to this day that I went to high school with. It was interesting watching it back then. Some of the kids I went to high school with we lived racism. I did because of where I lived. I remember the kids saying, "When we grow up we're going to be different than our parents. We know you as a person. You're alright. You're not like our parents said African American people are."

Paul's words are penetrating, and charged with persuasive insightfulness. He pauses to pensively reflect, seemingly in awe of the magnitude of his revelatory moment. I sense

that a myriad of thoughts are racing through his mind; conscious streams of contemplation of what to say next. Paul then continues:

Paul: I am a proud American. I love America. And I love being an African American. I raised three stepsons with a former wife. I'm married now to the most marvelous woman in the world. You can quote me on that! But it's interesting; when my previous wife and I were married we raised her three sons, my stepsons. One of my stepsons dated a Caucasian young lady in high school, as did one of his friends who was also an African American young man. They both dated Caucasian girls and they used to come by the house. And I used to tell my former wife "I'm fine with that. We're all created equally." But I said, "As long as their parents don't have an issue with it." I tell you that story to say that when my son, who is now 33 years old, when he was 17 or 18, he and his best buddy had these two girlfriends. When the buddy's girlfriend's father found out she was dating a black person, he got so furious he beat up the daughter. The young man got so upset he tried to commit suicide. And I sat on the porch on New Year's Eve with my almost grown son as he cried and said, "I don't understand what your generation is doing to race relations." That's been 15 years ago. Then for me it was 15 years before that.

Paul: I know we talk about leadership and African Americans. Really, has the culture become more conducive to inclusion of letting us be a part of this very changing American dream?

Paul's words are seasoned with experience. Clearly, he has juxtaposed his high school experiences with racism with those of his son. Moreover, both experiences have formed a platform for Paul to express his concern about race-relations in the future.

My mind races to the admonishment of Du Bois to America, which is that the greatest challenge the country would face in the 20th century would be the color line (Du Bois, 1903). Yet here Paul has suggested that the line has extended across the centuries, carrying with it the same challenge to this post-modern generation.

Resonant in Paul's statement, however, is something else. Paul has been in the process of pursuing the proverbial American dream for years. He has gone to college and earned both his Bachelor's and M.B.A degrees. He also has worked for a number of

years in corporate America, building his career portfolio. Paul now possesses the triumvirate titles of owner, president, and chief executive officer of a multi-million dollar software company. He has even amassed considerable wealth. Nevertheless, this Black man, successful by many standards, questions whether he is really a part of the American dream. The thought baffled me and I was anxious to explore more of Paul's story to understand the reasons for his assertion.

Continuity Present---The Pyramid Takes Shape

According to Paul, Transcendence has generated over \$20 million in revenue during the past year. His current plans project the firm to grow to annual revenues of \$50 million in the next few years. This is an ambitious goal. Yet Paul's optimism is coupled with his unique leadership style as well as the team he has built around him:

Paul: People say weird things, "You're your own boss." That is ludicrous Charles. Everybody that works here is my boss.

Noticing my quizzical look, Paul proceeds with a story:

Paul: We've been in business 19 years, and I'm very comfortable telling this story. We made money for 18 years. One year we lost money. We lost a bowl of money. At that time I was sole owner. I was sole owner until last April. Last year was a busy year for us. But that year we dropped in financials. So it's no guesswork. It sinks right out. We lost \$715000. Here I am the sole owner so my net worth has dropped just like that (snapped fingers). Now the other thing that happened when we were bleeding cash that quickly is that we borrowed \$2.1 million on a \$3 million line of credit. When you borrow that kind of money and you lose that much money then you blow the covenant on your line of credit. The bank calls you and says, "Excuse me, what are you doing?" They couldn't shut us down. That has been 10 years ago.

During that time I never told people. The only people that knew we were losing money was our CFO and me. And that's been years ago and she's still here. That was Jane that just walked by. We would sit there and I would say, "Jane." It would be 8:00 o'clock at night, and we'd be getting ready to close the books on the previous month and I would say, "Jane what does it look like?" and she would say, "We've hit the line again to make payroll." "Great" So, a year and a half later, we've turned it around and making money again. We had an all hands on

meeting, and I get up and I talk to the team and I said, “You know, two years ago we lost a boat load of money.” And people are going, “Holy smokes, you’re kidding.” And I said, “Everyone here in this room that deserved a raise, got a raise. But I took a pay cut because that’s what leader’s do. I’m not complaining. It was the right thing to do. I’d do it again. But I will also tell you I made an error. How many people would want to know that we were losing money, when we were losing money? Charles, every single hand in the room went up - every hand! They cared and wanted to know! I said, “Well, I made a mistake. There were two reasons I didn’t tell you. One is that I grew up at IBM. IBM shared information on a need-to-know basis. I just didn’t think you needed to know-shame on me for that arrogance. Secondly, I’ve always looked at this company as an extension of my family. I’m the parent, you’re the children. Parents protect their children. I thought I was protecting you. I will never do that again.” And one of the guys; that’s been nine years ago, who is still with us today, came up to me afterwards and he said, “Hey boss, if we ever go through it again, I’ll take a pay cut too.”

Paul goes on to share how going through such tough situations has shaped him in at least three ways. First, in how he views leadership:

Paul: ...for me leadership is about caring. It’s about compassion. It is about consistency. It’s about going through the tough times together. It’s about celebrating the good times. It’s about remembering who you are and not straying, trading in or selling off your values. You know you can’t put a price on values. You can’t put a price on trust.

Second, these ordeals encouraged him to reconstruct his company by empowering employees. Paul grins from ear to ear as he shares in grand style how this change was accomplished:

Paul: It was down in South Park (a pseudonym). It was heavily catered and all that stuff. And so I told that story and I said, “And by the way that fellow is Chase Rogers (a pseudonym) and he’s sitting right here.” And Chase smiled and everyone clapped. And I said, “Chase I want to tell you that I’m not here to tell you to take a pay cut today.” And he said, “Whew.” I said, “What I can tell you is we get offers. I get offers to sell SSI on a regular basis.” And now you see people panicking. And I said, “In fact, we got an offer earlier this year and we turned it down.” I said, “I’ll tell you my wife and I got another offer and we accepted it. So we have some new ownership effective today. Some of the new owners are here and I’d like to introduce you to them.” I started naming people and they are obviously employees of the company. I went 5 or six deep and I said, “Chase, John (a pseudonym). The net is that we did an ESOP and effective next Monday, every one of you owns part of this company. And the employees now own 40% of the company. And the employees now earn a lot, which is cool.

And my wife and I own 60%. But one of the reasons I did it, is because people here behaving like owners. I like that.

Finally, it engendered within Paul the importance of diversifying:

Paul: Business owners tend to put all their assets and net worth in their businesses. It goes up. It goes down. It goes up. It goes down. My net worth as it relates to my stock in SSI is probably 20-25% of my total net worth.....I've got it spread out into other kinds of things. And so I kind of do that: inside and outside, inside and outside. I think that that's important to me.

I probe Paul as to why diversification is so important. Paul seems intrigued by the question. Then, like an older brother providing advice, Paul confides that as a Black man in his town, one must be careful how he handles his wealth. He offers the following stories to illustrate his point:

Paul: I mentioned I love America; there is racism here in America. In our great country... and there is some jealousy and envy in the Caucasian community. I know people will tell you. I have a lot of friends that are Caucasian. They would say to you, but not directly, "I'm uncomfortable with a Black man having too much." People still feel that way. If you look at the large, successful African American businessmen in this town and we're all friends. Where are we going to do most of their business? Not in this city!

Douglass and Sons (a pseudonym); Douglass and I are great friends. Where does Douglass and Sons do most of their business? Not in this city. Jeff Owens (a pseudonym); Owens's Incorporated- is like a brother to me. Where does he do most of his business? Not in this city. This city is as much as I love it is a small town. It's run by a couple of people...There is no sharing of the wealth. And that's a part of it. So I tell my friends, if I had known 15 years ago what I know today, I'd spend all my time outside the city.

I remember. I'll tell you a couple of stories that reinforce that. I used to sell for IBM and was very fortunate and did well there. And I was 23-24 years old and I did a big, big deal for a local client. Now back then in the early '80s, everyone I called on was a white male, 45-60 years old. That's just the way it was. So, I'm sitting there with the VP of Marketing, Finance. All the top guys sitting there having lunch at this big, big company. So one of the companies said to me, "Well Paul you did well on this!" "When you going to buy a Mercedes?" That was 20-30 years ago. Another guy said to me just like I'm looking at you, he said, "Let me tell you something, if you buy one of those don't you ever drive it out here." Did you hear me? He said, "What's next on the agenda?"

And I always tell people... He was a nice guy. I always tell people, if I had been a 23-year-old white male, with an MBA, they would have said, "What are you doing tonight for dinner? My daughter is your age? Why don't you come by my house?"

And you can say, "Yeah, Paul but that's old school. That's a long time ago. My youngest stepson is 25. When he was 17 he played basketball, starting point guard at Cherry Valley (a pseudonym) - seven or eight years ago. I'm with a client. Big company again and we're chatting. It's Friday afternoon and I say, "I've got to go. My kid's got a ball game." The guy says, "Is he any good?" I say, "Yeah, he's starting. He can play. He can play." The client says, "So what school does he play for?" I know I'm screwed and I say, "Cherry Valley." That client looks at me and says, "You live in Cherry Valley? We must be paying you too much money."

So, back about that time I created a grid, four ABCD inside and outside of the city, inside and outside of technology. So, if the city stayed small-minded it doesn't impact my ability to create wealth and do things. If the technology sector of the geographic region tanks, I must be able to play outside of the city, outside of technology, outside of the city, inside of technology and all four of those possibilities. So that's how I structure my efforts. That's how I structure my net worth.

Thus far, Paul's game plan seems to have shaped up well. Yet this man of humble beginnings manages to keep his successes in perspective. One way he handles this is by acknowledging his spiritual foundation:

Paul: I ain't smart enough to do all this. It's the Lord's hand and good people....

Continuity- Future: The Apex is Formed

Paul, the owner of Transcendence, has managed to transcend himself. As Cornel West (1994) posited, when people achieve transcendence they are aware of their particularity but not confined by it. As such, Paul is not limited by his existential circumstance. He refers to himself as a proud African-American. In the same breath he also shares that he is proud to be an American as well. The distinction is subtle but profound. Paul is rooted and grounded in his ethnic heritage. He is also acutely aware of his American heritage as well. In the words of Du Bois (1903), Paul has a double-

consciousness. This double-consciousness is the source of Paul's transcendence and the lens through which he views the future.

Nowhere is this more evident than his thoughts on President Barak Obama. Paul is an admirer of President Obama and applauds many of his policies. Yet while many pundits pay attention to President Obama's actions in the here and now, Paul concentrates on how the President's actions will affect the future:

Paul: President Obama is on a worldwide stage. You know what he did at the G20 with economic....The rebuilding of America's credibility in the world has soared. It couldn't have got done by anyone else.

Now here's the issue. Our credibility is rebuilt [snapping fingers]. Our capabilities are not. Our ability to be....I've never thought of this until this moment...Our ability to be competitive. Yeah, I know Barack thinks when GM comes back they're going to be competitive with Honda, Toyotamaybe I don't know. But the net is first you have to build credibility. The beauty will be...and this is what Barack wants to do: Can he build the credibility of the country and the capability of the country and put us back on the world stage with India, China and the others. Can we do that? Can we become the innovators and can we own advanced energy and all those other things?

He said the other night in his speech, If the Japanese can build a car that will do A, B, and C....He said I think we can do here in America too. So his ability to rebuild credibility will outrun capability- because we'll have to build new companies, new industries. He is putting governments around industries so that we don't do stupid things and take shortcuts. And there are still people who are benefiting. They don't look like you and I.

For this reason, Paul is an advocate for Black Americans to benefit by being active participants in new industries of the future:

Paul: The African American community....I'm speaking from business and personal... we must, even on an individual basis, we must play in the new economy: alternative energy. I want some Black people, scientists, to be generating fuel cells and building companies that do that- and building factories that employ people of color to do those kinds of things. And we have to play in the economies of the future and not get suckered in to the economies in the past.

Paul does not say this rhetorically, but as a leader he is demonstrating this as well. In interviewing him, I am made aware that he has just returned from purchasing a business in India. He is trying to build a presence there, while maintaining his business in America. But unlike other businesses such as GM or IBM, Paul does not want to damage the quality of life for his workers here in America. In fact, he shuns the very idea:

Paul: That's not the answer. We're not going to lay off people and grow there, but we hope to grow on both sides of the ocean. We also have multiple lines of business, so as some lines of business become commoditized we move to other high value type businesses.

The high value type businesses Paul speaks about remain to be seen. Somehow, however, I believe there is a high probability that he will be successful. This is because he has a strong foundation, has formed a solid business, and has developed sharp eyes that look to the future.

Epilogue: Spiritual Epiphany

Paul, by his own admission, is an intensely spiritual person. Spirituality is the foundation of his values and ethics. His mother helped him to lay that foundation. As Paul grew older, he discovered that spirituality also connected to his very existence. As such, when considering his purpose for life, it was natural for Paul to draw upon his own spirituality for direction:

Paul: And this is what my mother gave to me it came from the Bible, but it is really true, "To whom much is given, much is required." I've been praying for a long time and I've always asked the Lord, "What would You have me do?" And it's kind of like in the Bible when the Lord says go left and you go right and you fight, fight, fight and you won't get anywhere. I'm 51 and I think about 30 years ago I said, "Is it racism?" "Is it politics?" "What shall I do?" And clear as a bell, as you and I are sitting here the Lord has always said, "Help my children. Help my children." You know all these things: fellowship with Christian athletes, their counsel, Big Brother, Big Sisters. That's it! I remember I used to pray, "Should I

focus on the young African American children?" Because our children have all the issues that all children have, and then some others that are unfair- the word has always come to me, "They're all my children. Help children and help entrepreneurs."

That's it! I can't fix the world. I can't solve all the world's problems. I'm not supposed to. The Lord will take care of that. But I know my calling is pretty singularly focused: kids and entrepreneurs! And I wake up everyday and think at the beginning of the day, and at the end of the day, "Did I do something to help kids somewhere, somehow -and to support entrepreneurship?" And really it all lumps together.

The moment this revelation came to Paul, he began to restructure his life in that direction.

He shares:

Paul: So you ask me why do I do what I do and work and do these business transactions and all that - it really does come back to "I want to help kids."

To this end, Paul's community service hours have always coalesced around helping entrepreneurs and helping children. To these goals he is wholeheartedly committed. But the greatest epiphany that changed Paul's life came when he visited Africa.

Paul: I went to Africa last May for the first time in my life and I got to tell you. There were 15 people in the tour. My wife did not go with me. They were all from America and they were all Caucasians. It was really interesting being in Africa. People said, "You'll fall out and kiss the ground." I didn't do all that but I'll tell you what, when the people would greet those on the tour group they would say, "Hi John, Hi Susie, Hi Sallie, Come here my brother hug me." See, they hugged me. And it's amazing. We were in Tanzania which borders Kenya and everybody wanted to talk about Barack. They follow Americans and American politics. They love Bill Clinton and can't stand George Bush. And we had enlightened conversations. But one day, we were on safari to see the animals and all that stuff.

But the thing that really changed my life was we went to this little old village and they had this run down school house, I mean no electricity, no water, an outhouse a quarter of a mile down the road that was terrible. It was just a hole in the ground and a wooden building that was falling down and looked worse than what my grandparents had on their farm in South Charleston.

But the kids were all dressed in their uniforms and they wanted to show you their homework, and wanted to talk about America. So we come in and the Americans were standing in the front and the principal said, "The children would like to

practice their singing, may they?" And we said, "Well of course." They all stood up. Those African kids were beautiful; they look like you and I. They said, "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." (clap, clap). I started crying. I still get overwhelmed by that. "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." It was tears of joy.

Paul was joyful because his spiritual revelation now had a tangible manifestation. His experiences tutored his sense of transcendence to such an extent that he knew he had been blessed to help others. Paul could not contain himself. He tells the story of exuberantly sharing his epiphany with his wife when he returned home:

Paul: When I left Tanzania, I flew of Arousha to Amsterdam, to Detroit, to Chicago. My wife and I were commuting back and forth to Chicago so we had a place in Chicago. I caught the train downtown and called my wife and said, "I'm back in the country." I wanted to take a shower. I had lost a couple of pounds. I had a scrubby beard- a kind of Harrison Ford Lost of the Ark thing- So we were going to meet at our favorite restaurant, but I don't shave or anything. I come around the corner to go into the restaurant and there's my wife. She doesn't see me. She's walking in front of me. I walk up behind her and throw my arms around her and she says, "You look like a stranger, kind of scrubby." We sat there at dinner and she said Paul you're so excited. Please tell me you didn't say we're going to move to Africa. I don't want to move to Africa." We had a glass of wine. I said, "I didn't do that but I really want to talk to you about building a classroom. I really want to do that." By the time we finished dinner she said, "Do the deal." I will tell you it's \$25000 and I would like to do one a year at a minimum.

Through his spirituality Paul has found a zeal for life. Each day he rises, trying to connect his daily routine with his eternal purpose. There are three books Paul has on his credenza in his bedroom; a "trinity" of sorts that forms a basis for how Paul tries to fuse his activities together. The first is the Bible, a book of spiritual truths once carried by his grandmother. These spiritual truths are consistent with the foundation provided to him by his mother as well. The second text is *Banker for the Poor*, a book about economic development and entrepreneurship. This book fuels Paul's desire to help lift communities, particularly children in global communities, by equipping them for

entrepreneurship. The final book is entitled *Three Cups of Tea*. Though Paul did not write it, it provides an appropriate summary of the remarkable man of whom I write.

Paul summarizes the book this way:

Paul: It's about a guy who was trying to climb K2 in Pakistan. He almost made it but he didn't. And he almost died and the local people nursed him back to health. He was there for a long time. He fell in love with the children in the villages there and started to believe that educating children in the way to get a friendlier adult than living in poverty and all these other things and hating Americans and people from the West. So he started building schools there. This book was just fairly widespread selling wise. It's called, "Three Cups of Tea." The first cup were associates. The second cups were friends. The third cups were family. So they had tea together.

Paul's story invites me to be a guest at his table. The wisdom he pours makes my cup runneth over.

Introduction: Phillip: A Footprint in the Sand

There is a familiar Chinese proverb that says "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." I do not have to travel quite one thousand miles to see Phillip, but the journey itself is rather extensive. Phillip lives a county over, in the fastest growing and most affluent region in the State of Ohio. Phillip is a strategic account manager for Mercury Packaging, Inc. (a pseudonym). In his position, Phillip negotiates multi-million dollar deals that enable global commerce. During the day, Phillip spends most of his time on conference calls from around the world, coordinating logistics, managing accounts, and interfacing with customers. It is not uncommon for him to be on the phone late in the evening or very early in the morning speaking with clients across several time zones. I am grateful, with such major responsibilities, that Phillip has managed to squeeze me into his hectic schedule. Still further, he is my only interviewee who has invited me into his home.

Phillip has a warm and inviting home. His wife, who is a stay-at-home mom, has a flair for interior decorating. The grass in the sprawling back yard lies down like carpet. It is a modern-day Garden of Eden, with a mini-playground for his three princesses who affectionately call him “Daddy.” In short, Phillip is a man who pays attention to detail. Additionally, Phillip is an ordained minister of the Baptist faith. I have heard him on several occasions speak in various capacities. His speeches and sermons are always performed with precision and excellence, reflecting countless hours of meticulous preparation.

I enter Phillip’s office and I am struck by how it is organized. The bookcases are lined with leadership books and spiritual resource materials neatly categorized for easy location. On one side, the walls boast a variety of corporate and community awards. On the other there is a conspicuous portrait of his father with a special message below I cannot quite make out from the chair in which I sit. Above his desk, there is a picture of wolves traversing in the snow, simply entitled, “Leadership.” Needless to say, his home and office tell a story before Phillip even utters a word. I simply hope I can do justice in telling the story of this gentle giant of a man; one who is determined to leave footprints in the sand.

Continuity - Past: Following Footsteps

Phillip grew up in Louisiana. He is originally from St. John Parish. He has a sister, five years older than him. Both of Phillip’s parents were educators. His father taught biology and chemistry, while his mother taught elementary education. His parents were also active in church, teaching Sunday school and also singing in the choir. Still, Phillip was not privileged to grow up knowing his father. He passed away just six weeks

after Phillip was born of a massive heart attack. Though Phillip has no specific memories of his father, both his mother and the community shared with Phillip the legacy his father left him:

Phillip: You know but because of his involvement with people and the lives that he impacted then and the lives that my mother continues to impact now – his absence still was a presence for me because the footprint was still there. And I can tell you that over the years I still meet people that remember my father and the impact that he had on their lives. Because when he passed away – because he was originally from New Orleans – they had a funeral service in New Orleans but what they did in Reserve, Louisiana they shut the whole school system down. And because of his impact on the lives of everyone at the school they shut the whole school system down and the whole community came out. So that was something of course that I don't remember but I was told the stories of what happened.

Though Phillip did not remember his father, the stories of his father made an indelible impression. For this reason, Phillip grew up trying to be the man of the house. He sensed it was important to try to fill the void his father left. Their nearest family members were miles away. Yet in spite of Phillip's determination, his father's shoes were too large for him to fill. As such, Phillip realized he still had some growing to do. Phillip credits his community for helping to facilitate his growth:

Phillip: Now that doesn't say that God never put anybody else in my life that had an impact because growing up there were other men in the community who took interest to help you know guide me in the right way. Because I could have been out there just like any other young brother you know growing up. And as a result of God placing those persons in my life and of course the strong influence that my mother and other relatives had and the people who cared about me in the community-- that helped to guide and shape my life.

Many of these men were in a local church. They made Phillip a Junior Deacon. The Junior Deacons were boys in the church who men selected to mentor. As a result of this mentoring, Phillip grew stronger, was a good student, and developed a stellar reputation in the community:

Phillip: In St. John's Parish where I grew up – my mother taught in St. James Parish – so really I went to school in a... I guess for this case and for this state – in another county outside the county. As a result of that, that brought its own challenges because you know you live in our city but you don't play ball in our city. So I represented the rival so to speak. And it kind of helped me blend a little bit better because I didn't have any issues when it came out to county situations where this particular parish has this parish because I knew boys from both sides.

But Phillip never forgot about his father. He carried the stories about his father in his bosom, close to his heart. Phillip recalls:

Phillip: ...just the type of person that he (his father) was made me want to emulate those qualities and characteristics in which I received from other people.

Following his father's footsteps led Phillip to the hallowed halls of Southern University. His father majored in the sciences. Likewise, Phillip had a proclivity for the sciences as well. He majored in mechanical engineering. Phillip was a part of a number of honor societies and was selected to *Who's Who among Colleges and Universities*.

Phillip was also following a long legacy established by his family:

Phillip: Now my mother graduated from Southern. My father graduated from Southern. My sister graduated from Southern. My aunt graduated from Southern. So can you imagine the pressure I was under?

The pressure that Phillip was feeling inside was unlike any he had felt before. For years he had patterned his life after his father, doing his best to follow in his footsteps. But now Phillip was coming to the realization that those footsteps only led so far. He would have to chart his own path. Consequently, Phillip performed a self-inventory:

Phillip: get to my junior year at Southern University and didn't like it. I hated what I was doing. I hated it. So at that point – I think my last math class that I had taken was... I think it was either statistics or differential equations or something... some high level math. I'm like, "You know what? I don't even like this." And at that point in my life there was time for a change.

Phillip left Southern University and earned an Associate's degree from another college. He also got involved with Mercury, Inc. and completed two additional degrees in theology. The theology degrees were reflective of his upbringing in the church community, and also of his growing thirst for God. Phillip sensed that his steps were being ordered, but there were no footprints to follow. The steps Phillip was now taking were led by a voice from within. Phillip was now entering new territory, and in a sense, he was charting his own course.

Continuity-Present: Charting the Course

As a strategic account manager at Mercury Packaging, Inc. (hereafter "Mercury"), Phillip occupies a position held by few people of color. Mercury has employed Phillip for over 24 years. The journey has had its challenges, but for the most part has proven fruitful. Sitting in his office chair, Phillip briefly reflects upon his time thus far at Mercury:

Phillip: ...in '85 I applied for a job in Customer Service within Mercury. My mentality back then was a little different in terms of my spiritual growth. So in '85 I took the test with Mercury and I was about 20 years old and we didn't even have computers to process orders; everything was handwritten and of course I guess I should have been a doctor by my handwriting at times – if I don't take my time. But what happened is they hired me and pretty much I was a young 20 year old in a phone center with about 100 women in the phone center. So I didn't care what they asked me to do, I was like, "You know what 100 women around, I'm the third male that's in there, so there's only three males in there." [laughter] And from that standpoint it was a very short period of time on the job that I saw people that had a lot of integrity that was there, but I also saw some people that had been in their positions for 10-15 years. And my number one goal was, "You know what I'm not going to be sitting here on this phone 10-15 years down the road." Progression and development is possible so I began again to pray and also continued a positive work ethic. And you know win different awards and things of that nature. But put myself in position to really more or less excel. And I've held various capacities of positions within Mercury while there from being a supervisor to – as far as manager in terms of the phone center to having a staff of 36 people report to me – being the right hand person to the director of sales – going on special assignment you know across the US – working out of the

corporate office in Atlanta – working on special assignment in Tampa, Florida – working on special assignment in Utah – and then of course a relocation here to Ohio.

Phillip’s work ethic is evident, even as I observe him. For the next few hours he interfaces with fellow managers, customers, and clients on the phone, pausing briefly to explain to me the contexts of the calls. The first involves working with other account managers to secure a \$1 million deal for Mercury. The second is a follow-up call with his immediate supervisor regarding logistics within Phillip’s region. The final involves Phillip negotiating a six-figure billing dispute between Mercury clients on opposite coasts of the country. Through it all, Phillip remains calm, only interjecting in conversations to facilitate communication and draw bottom line results. Phillip’s demeanor is amazing to me because his earning potential is directly connected to these deals I have been privy to witness. Phillip turns to me with a tinge of frustration and exclaims that “if people will pick up the phone sometimes, rather than always relying on email, things wouldn’t be this difficult.” I am appreciative of Phillip allowing me to witness what he does in his weekly routine. On the other hand, Phillip is quick to share me what I have witnessed is not the full extent of his leadership.

Referencing John Maxwell, Phillip considers himself a 360-degree leader, one who leads up, who leads across, and who leads down. When leading up, Phillip tries to do the following:

Phillip: If it’s a leading up principle to my boss I try to look for that person’s weaknesses and see how can I use my assets to be their strength. Because everybody has them you know. But how can I become more than an ally for this particular person? And then it’s also asking direct questions: “Where do you think you can most improve that? And then how can I help you in those particular areas?”

I pause for a second, recognizing that these are some of the questions Phillip was asking his boss earlier. Phillip smiles at me, sensing I am making a connection.

He continues:

Phillip: If it's leading across with your peers it's more or less a coaching role at that point because sometimes your peers will come to you because they recognize certain areas of strength or in their particular case certain areas of inefficiencies in which they are coming to you for advice and you want to coach them on how they can be effective. And you know either be at the same level you are or even go above and beyond that. And sometimes – I'll give you a perfect example – I got a buddy of mine, we'll call his name "Pete" for all intensive purposes. Pete is not very great. He and I are on the same level but his skills with the computer is nowhere near where mine is you know. The guy has a Master's degree the whole nine yards. Skill set is different when it comes to computers; however, his skill set on the golf course is far greater than mine. And his focus is more on the golf course in certain areas than it is in regards to relate to computers. So when we're out there interacting I may use that lesson the golf course with him as the metaphor in terms of what I'm trying to train him in regards to something with computers. And I'll tell him I'll say, "Man you remember what you showed me the other day and you coached me and told me you know if I continue to practice and do this man you can do it." I said, "It's the same with you with this computer. You can do this. What I've learned you can actually do." He sits there like, "Man I don't know how you... you know how you be able to whiz through this and to go through all this kind of stuff." I said, "Man you can do the same thing. There's nothing hard about it." I don't find it that hard but to that little person it's hard so I have to use those metaphors in life examples to make things easier for them.

When leading down, Phillip shares the following:

Phillip: If it's in a leading down situation with folks you know this is a different role because they still look up to you as "Well, I report to you" that kind of thing. But you really have to get beyond to "Hey let's remove the titles we're all one team here.

Phillip, then, offers this example:

Phillip: The people that do the custodial work at our building are African American. There's one African American guy, two guys and the rest Hispanic crew. So I tell them you know I know a little bit of Spanish but you know teach me more of your language. And so now they don't look

at me like, “Okay well he’s the big boss and stuff like. And you know he’s just like above us cleaning crew. No, it’s... hey we’re all people; let’s learn a little bit. So I may pick up a Spanish word here or there and get to know a little bit about them.

With this in mind, I could not help but think that Phillip prided himself in being a well-rounded leader. His approach to leadership and his positive work ethic have been assets to his longevity and job security at Mercury for over 24 years. Still further, like his father, Phillip has had a positive impact on people. He has been able to retain his father’s penchant for influencing others, yet simultaneously chart his own course.

An additional way Phillip has demonstrated this dynamic is in advocating for more people of color in management positions at Mercury. Phillip is both meticulous and methodical in his approach. Consequently, prior to instigating things Phillip does two things. First, he researches:

Phillip: I remember in It might have been 1998... 1998, 99 that Newsweek began to report what they anticipated the job market would look like for the next ten years or so. And in that article it had a graph. The graph showed leading the forefront the White male, followed behind the White male was the White female; followed behind the White female was the African American male... no, I mean the African American female, then African American male in descending order. And I can say even though I’ve been blessed by God to work with a great company that’s listed as one of the top places for African Americans to work, I still see that trend. Even though we have a diverse mix in our company, as the further you go up the corporate ladder the less you see of us.

Secondly, he prays:

Phillip: let me preface this and say that I pray before I decided to interject. And I said, “God give me a sign that this is - you know the right timing for this.” And I said, “If in some cases you know, ask me a specific questions then I know this is directly from you.” And when that question came you know in regards to that I said, “You’ve opened up the door and I’ve got to go on through.”

After researching and praying, Phillip engages decision makers at Mercury about policies and proceeds to advocates for change. He shares with me a recent case as an example:

Phillip: I challenged them on this aspect because in my particular zone there are about a hundred and... a hundred or so... hundred and fifty maybe those actually to this job across one quarter of the United States. And then when we get into a meet with all the zone managers there's less than 10% that look like me. So I challenged the Vice President. I even stood up in meetings to even say that there's a problem with diversity and not so much in regards as how the world may define diversity because we like to change those rules to say that diversity is you know really looking at "Well I have male and female." And they want to lump the African American female and the White female together and so typically if you go back to the statement I made about that graph you know, they want to say I have diversity because I have a White female in it. No, I'm talking about a diversity in terms of my ethnicity and so I have define that and reshape the definition. And so when I began to challenge the corporation in those areas and not let them forget about that the acknowledgement was, "We do recognize that there is a problem and that they are taking steps to address it." And my question was, "If not now when? If not you, who?", I said because basically talking to you – the gentleman I'm talking to in your position – You only have four or five years left, "What are you going to do to make the change within this particular area?" A new female Vice President that's there now I asked her the same question. I've asked the same question you know amongst my peers and see them turn bloody red you know in regards to it.

Phillip admits that the anger he engenders by his confrontational style may at times threaten his job security. This underscores its significance, because Phillip has plans to work at Mercury for at least 10 more years. Nevertheless, Phillip remains firm in his convictions. When asked the source of his courage, Phillip sits up in his chair and looks me in the eye with a peculiar fire, and says:

Phillip: I have a responsibility that's been born and bred within me. I think coming from my mother and my father and others who have helped shape my life and that is to be able to help and change other's lives. If it wasn't for the grace of God and those who took time with me, I wouldn't be where I am. And I feel a responsibility to help those who are looking to be developed, or to crack that corporate barrier, or to just develop

themselves to get to a next level to be able to share the experiences that I've had to help them you know. Now as a parachute is only good if it's open so as a result I've met some that are closed minded you know; not looking to do anything, go anywhere, etc.-others that are. And I'll look and think I have a responsibility to be able to help pull someone up and help more or less take the – I guess you can say the “crack” that was left for me to make it a “crevice” to make it you know a “ditch” to make it a “road” to make it a “super highway.” And that's the way. And so courage yes, I think it's the fortitude that God has given me my own right that God has given to everyone of us and I think that we should leave whatever we touch in a better situation that what we found it. And you know that's what I look at whether it's professionally or whether it's in church or even in my home you know to do that.

For Phillip, it is important to be consistent. In this sense, the same vigor and vitality he works with on the job mirrors his activities at home. Interestingly enough, to Phillip's mother these traits look chillingly familiar:

Phillip: My mother is somewhat scared because at some point in time my mother cautioned me about working so much and so much time that I spent – not only at work when I was a single person or even married and also at UPS she still cautions me today. She said, “Because you're just like your father and he was constantly always working doing something.”

Phillip is indeed doing something: he is charting his own course, but he is leaving a legacy as well, a legacy crystallized in his footprints in the sands of life.

Continuity Future-Leaving Footprints in the Sand

When asked about the future, Phillip is positively optimistic. He is clear about his professional and personal aspirations. Professionally, it is Phillip's full intent to end his career at Mercury:

Phillip: The next level for me is Vice President. That's my last level in which I really want to reach.....

Phillip, who has been fairly even-keel to this point, then proceeds to reveal to me his heart. I realize that his job as a Vice President is not merely a professional goal, but a goal directly connected to what he really desires to do:

Phillip: And the reason being is not only for the economic benefits; you know not so much for myself but for my family. One of the things that I recognized very early and one of the reasons why I wanted to go into management is you know my mother's a retired school teacher, my oldest sister she teaches at Catholic school and other special projects. But teachers don't make a whole lot and their retirement is not the best. Biblically speaking, it's my responsibility to be able to take care of the family and I know if my father was around this is the thing that he would emphasize and do. So not only on my side of the family but I have to also put myself into position to be able to if I have to take care of my wife's family. Now even though she may have – she does have other sisters and brothers we've got to make sure we do our part. So looking at the next level is something that would afford that particular opportunity for it. Also, I have to look at providing for college funding for three kids – them being seventeen months apart – that means they will all be in college at the same time. And at today's rate in economy inflation by the time they hit college I'm going to need to have – if you want to pay for everything – at least about \$300,000. You know I'm praying and believing God for scholarships but if not I want to make sure they're in a better position than what I was in; having to pay back student loans; my wife as well for ten years. So that's just being fiscally sound I also want to be able to as the Bible says, "A wise man or a good man will leave an inheritance to his children's children." So my goal is also to change things generationally. You know whereas that once you know great, great, great, great-granddaddy you know Papa Phillip has long gone off the scene in heaven – that my lineage after me is a lot better because of the decisions and sacrifices I've had to make today.

Phillip's end goal is to care for his family, as his father would emphasize for him to do.

Yet in charting his own course, here too Phillip's strategy mirrors his leadership style at work. In other words, he approaches his goal like a 360-degree leader. Above him, he wants to take care of his mother. Across, he wants to also be a resource for his wife's family. Below him, he is mindful of leaving a legacy to his children and their children as well. Yet the legacy Phillip desires transcends material things. It is something more meaningful. When asked about his children, Phillip excuses himself from the room. He goes out to his car and comes back with a briefcase. In the briefcase there is a laptop where he has recorded a poem that captures the essence of the legacy he wants to leave to his daughters. Phillip is adamant that I hear it. It is a poem, he says, entitled, "A Father's One Wish."

Phillip: ...it says, “If I were asked by an unseen voice to name that one quality that I would like to pass down to my children; If I were told of all the things which the sons and daughters of men could inherit mine would be entitled to one. I would say, “Help them Lord to take whatever life brings. For this more than any other quality of life is the one which counts and by which men are finally counted. Help them to stand up under the stress and storm and the lone cover of night. Secure in their faith in You and be firm in their resolve. Help them to hold their head up and to keep it high when the storms blow and the lightning strikes and help them above all to take criticism with the same evenness they accept praise and adoration. Help them to aspire to heights while their feet are on the ground where common men walk and teach them to climb again after the falls which must come to all who seek to climb. Help them Lord to suffer betrayal and disappointment, regret and remorse but teach them to know Your promises and that they things are as much a part of life as is warm sunshine and soft summer rain. And having taught them this, teach them to stand humbly with their head bowed in the presence of anyone who has not be thus endowed and teach them to say at that time say, ‘There except for the grace of God go I.’”

I recognize now why Phillip wants me to hear it. He wants me to hear his heartbeat. He wants me to understand his motivation for living. Phillip has not merely recited a poem to me; he has attempted to show me something else. I see them. They are Phillip’s footprints in the sand.

Epilogue: Spiritual Epiphany:

Phillip is unique. He is unusually grounded. My encounter with him is unusual as well. As noted above, he is the only participant who has invited me to his home. The setting for his interview is more intimate. Sitting at his kitchen table, the place where he eats with his family, Phillip makes me feel like family. He has rolled out the plush red carpet of southern hospitality, offering me a meal and even a beverage to refresh myself after my long journey to his house. When I look into his face, I am reminded of Levinas (1990), who shared that “the face of a man is the medium through which the invisible in him becomes visible and enters into commerce with us” (p. 140). Unlike others, Phillip has allowed me to see his complete life: the length, the depth, and

the height. However, what separates him from all those I interview can be found in this one observation: Phillip has allowed me to see his pain as well.

Phillip's greatest spiritual epiphany is also his greatest source of pain. In 1991 Phillip married Elise (a pseudonym), his southern belle and Louisiana sweetheart. Both desired to have children and for seven years they tried to conceive. Finally, in 1998 Phillip Jr. was granted an appointment to move from eternity to time. The appointment, however, did not happen as scheduled. Phillip recalls:

Phillip: My mother's born July 12th. My mother's anniversary and our anniversary is July 13th. Our first child was born six and a half months premature on July 14th and died on July 18th. So as a result of that experience I can't really even begin to put into words what everything you go through; at least what I went through as a man. Going through that whole experience and even as a believer because the enemy was right there you know, wanting to list every sin that you've ever committed before you that this is why, and that's why or whatever...And there's a different depth of pain than losing a relative or a loved one like a mother, a sibling, an uncle vs. when it's your own child. And so as a result, even after that period where Phillip was born in '98 God blessed us with Chana in '99, Cimberly in 2001 and Charlene in 2003 (all pseudonyms). So you know here it is we have back-to-back children about seventeen months apart and the beauty of all is that we already have a son in heaven. So you know we look forward like David said when he was going through his ordeal. You know "my child can no longer come to me but you know one day I can go to him." So that that's pretty much when I have my tough days and things you know I see a child that's about the same age as my son you know I kind of look at that as well and go, "Okay he'd probably be about this size, this age."

Phillip pauses to collect himself. I, myself, momentarily wonder how Phillip has managed to process such a senseless tragedy. Phillip again looks at me and goes on to share:

Phillip: But you know you have to rely in the true character of God and His love for you and you know through that experience it gave a greater avenue of ministry for my wife and I to be able to minister to those who have lost children.

Phillip has not only managed to process his pain, but has parlayed it, along with his wife, into an opportunity to help others. As an ordained minister in the marketplace, it is not

uncommon for Phillip to share his personal experiences and connect with persons that traditional, pulpit-ministers normally do not have the opportunity to reach.

Phillip: So as certain things came up in our lives it was very evident what God wanted us to do. I've had visions in regards to my having to travel and gain some experiences and go different place; because in each and every phase I've gone through allowed me to touch other lives that's there.

When I say other lives, I've been able to touch lives of people who are millionaires within the company and that don't know Christ. People that are millionaires within the company that are having issues relative to marriage; or people that I actually reported to that may have gone through a miscarriage or even divorce or having problems with spousal situations. So it really allowed me to plant seeds, or water seeds that had been planted into different areas and not having to hold back or have to fit into a political correctness. You know; if you will.

Phillip also mentions that the primary reason he gains an audience with influential persons is because of his spirituality. He believes it sets him apart and significantly affects people in his sphere of influence:

Phillip: From what people have shared with me is that they recognize that there is a difference. Even people that I encounter for the first time they just say, "Well I knew there was different about you didn't know exactly what it was." And a lot of times, particularly when I travel, If I'm getting into a conversation with someone on the plane and you know being very careful how to answer into that conversation you know the person will say, "You're a Christian aren't you? I can tell!" [laughter] And it's just that it affects every area because in today's world when there's so many people doing so many things to be politically correct and not really having their heart in it, it's good to know when you're genuine in terms of what you're doing. I think people sense that and that has an influence upon them. It also creates a I guess in some aspects a magnetic affect. Because when you go through the same things that another person goes through and you're not there pulling your hair out, cussing and the whole nine yards and they wonder, "Why isn't this person like this?" That makes them curious. And I've been on golf courses with different guys. You know different cultures, different ethnicities and you know sometimes quote unquote, "Some boys will be boys", but when the other group looking at "Well how come he's... I haven't heard him say a cuss word. I haven't heard him do this...", and then one person will come back and say, "Hey man how come you're different in this aspect?" That's your opportunity to plant the seed. You know right there.

Hence, along his journey, Phillip is not only leaving footprints, but he is planting seeds as well. It engenders within him a sense of purpose, it is the signature on his significance, and it also points to his hope.

Phillip's hope is embedded in his spirituality. He hopes that his journey leads him to a place where he, as a father, can step foot on common ground with his son:

Phillip: So you know we look forward like David said when he was going through his ordeal. You know "my child can no longer come to me but you know one day I can go to him."

Somehow, I think his father will be there, watching too; admiring his beloved son, in whom he is well pleased.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from data collected through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, and participant observations. The preceding narratives have been presented to describe the role spirituality plays in the leadership and social justice practices of these five Black male leaders. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space approach was used to organize data provided by the participants. As such, stories were rewritten into a chronological sequence, incorporating the setting or place of a spiritual epiphany experienced by each participant. In the following chapter, I identify and explore themes that were reflected in the participants' stories.

CHAPTER V: Findings - Presentation of Themes

The purpose of this chapter is to present the themes determined through content analysis from the individual narratives. I identify, describe, and examine themes that cut across the experiences of all five participants. The themes that emerged from the analysis were spirituality, critical race theory, and transformational leadership. As I examine each theme, I reference content in the literature to support each theme appropriately. In order to avoid redundancy, I may refer to one particular participant in each theme without repeating all five voices, although their experiences are similar (McClellan, 2006). By presenting these themes, I focus the participants' stories as they expound upon the role of spirituality in their leadership and social justice practices.

Spirituality

According to Dantley (2003), spirituality involves the platonic nature of humankind that imbues life and animation in our existence. It is that intangible dimension of ourselves that connects us with something greater than ourselves. The spirit is that part of humankind that compels us into community with others; it establishes and prods our sense of justice and fairness and it constructs for us our notions of calling mission and purpose (Dantley, 2003). The spirituality of the Black male leaders in this study is manifested in at least three areas; namely, through spiritual stewardship, spiritual epiphanies, and prophetic spirituality. Each of these elements I examine below.

Spiritual Stewardship

Banks and Ledbetter (2004) suggested that spirituality presupposes the presence of some form of higher power or divinity that permeates all life and nature. It is to this higher power that persons can tap into in order to find resources and values for living.

The Black men interviewed for this study conceptualize a higher power, manifested in the Judeo-Christian God (hereafter, God). God is considered a supreme being to whom they submit their businesses, resources, and very lives. In this sense, God is the owner, and they consider themselves stewards who manage the resources that God provides. Eugene encapsulated this concept in sharing:

Eugene: I have a title as Director, but I'm not caught up in any title because I know who's in charge. I know who I report to. I know who holds me accountable. Don't get me wrong, I'm not above anyone, but ultimately, I'm accountable to God. He heads my life, my job, my career, and I just want to be a good steward to what He's placed me over...

Block (1993) defined stewardship as “the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us.” Stated simply, it is “accountability without control or compliance” (p. xx). Although these Black men come from a variety of backgrounds, all believe that they serve a God to whom they are ultimately accountable. It is God who has ultimate control and who is the source of the resources they are allotted. With this in mind, they are serving God by properly managing God's resources. This job of resource management, for them, is the epitome of stewardship.

Additionally, for some, stewardship is inextricably linked to their success. For example, Dre intimated that his business has blossomed because he has learned to yield control to God. Phillip, an account manager of millions of dollars, has a similar mindset. His income is proportionate to the amount of dollars he brings into the Mercury Corporation. Nevertheless, Phillip attributed all of the resources he manages to God. Because he does not own the resources, Phillip considers managing them as a privilege. Consequently, any income he brings in is a reflection of his stewardship. Paul's

sensitivity to God provides an awareness of using his resources to help children and entrepreneurs. Accordingly, he distributes resources to projects targeting both populations in his community and around the world.

Finally, stewardship to God engenders within these Black male leaders a sense of fulfillment. As they operate in their respective leadership positions, there is an inner joy they feel that connects them with a larger purpose outside of themselves. Dantley (2003) intimated that this inner joy results in a real transcendence from the daily tasks of leadership as people contextualize their leadership efforts in a broader sense of the greater good. The fulfillment these men feel is grounded in a personal satisfaction that they are contributing to something or Someone higher than themselves. They are in relationship with this Higher Power whom they consider the greater good. As such, the nature of this relationship has both redirected their lives and impacted their leadership. I explore the affects of this relationship upon the participants' leadership in Chapter VI. The genesis of this relationship with God, the greater good, is examined next.

Spiritual Epiphanies

Dre, Paul, Phillip, Eugene, and Eric all report having a religious upbringing. Dre's upbringing consisted of the Muslim faith, while the others were exposed to Christianity. Interestingly enough, though all credit their respective religions as their introduction to spirituality, some make a distinction between their spirituality and their religious faith. Eric, for example, recalls moments in his life where he had to resolve the difference between spirituality and his religious upbringing for himself.

Eric: God has really challenged me in so many different ways and I grew up in a traditional Christian family. And as I became of age, when I went off to college, I didn't go to church. It was funny because when Sunday rolled around I kind of had this feeling like, "Am I suppose to get up and go?" You know, and I was in

bed at that time. And so my spirituality went through a change of, if I understand the church is not so much an edifice, the church is in me. And I've got to that point in my walk that it wasn't so much I was in college, it was like "Well what does this really mean?" As I even became older as a professional that I started to look at my spirituality beliefs and my values in the work environment. The moral and ethical aspects started to kick in.

Here Eric makes a clear distinction between religion and church and between spirituality and ethics. For Eric, religion is a codified set of rules, customs, and habits associated with his childhood. However, Eric's spirituality is connected to meaning. In this sense, Eric is in accordance with Dantley's (2003) assertion that spirituality involves people making meaning out of their lives. Still further, Eric connects his spirituality with his ethics and values. This action is supported by Fluker (2008) who maintained that ethics is a combination of who one is and what one does.

Yet Fluker (2008) also argued that spirituality and ethics can be shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of one's particular tradition. For this reason, it is also acceptable to understand other participants' determination to connect spirituality and their religious faiths. For example, Phillip and Paul clearly associate their spirituality with their relationship with the historical Jesus. For these men, Jesus is divine and his teachings serve as a guide in their leadership decisions as well as their interactions in society.

Still, while these men may perceive the nuances between spirituality and religion differently, what they do have in common are life-changing moments where their relationships with the Divine became authentic to them. For these men, the creative encounter with the Divine was the defining moments of their spirituality. Wilmore (1998) suggested that, for Blacks, this defining moment is pivotal. It is the point of

frequent returns, a source where resources are marshaled from a world outside of oneself to withstand the trials and tribulations that inevitably life brings to bear. In a sense, it is the complement of West's (1999) prophetic spirituality. Whereas West's (1999) contribution to Black spirituality encouraged Blacks to look forward, Wilmore (1998) reminded Blacks that they can look back as well, remembering that the same God who delivered them before can deliver them in the present. These points of view add richness and depth to Black spirituality. Moreover, they equip these men with an innate sense to place their spiritual stakes in a grounded experience, manifested in their creative encounter with the Divine. More than once, these Black male leaders referenced their creative encounters when talking about their spirituality. Some considered it as a one-time experience. Others suggested that the creative encounter was a daily occurrence. All, however, shared that the creative encounter transpired in a sacred place in their souls where they find meaning and ultimate purpose (Dantley, 2003). This encounter is the source through which they find values for living (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004).

In listening to these men, I discovered that living for them involves transcending their existential circumstances and moving toward visions they believe that the Divine has ordained for their lives. For some, the vision is more clairvoyant than others. But what is certain is that all see themselves in as unfinished products, and they believe that their spirituality will lead them toward what they are destined to become (West, 1999).

Prophetic Spirituality

As discussed in the literature review, West's (1999) notion of prophetic spirituality is a nuanced construction that blends the idea of critically perceiving one's situationality in its unpolished context, that is the "as is," while at the same time transcending the

political realities that construct that situationality to project a different and in fact better “not yet” (Dantley, 2003). In other words, when people apply prophetic spirituality, they are able to be fully cognizant of the present, but somehow foresee the present as only a temporary condition. For Black Americans, this dynamic is undergirded by what West (1999) termed a deep-seated moralism, a profound pessimism, and an inescapable opportunism. The Black male leaders in this study rely on all three resources to inform their spirituality.

For example, deep-seated moralism refers to the strict coding by Blacks of what is right and wrong (West, 1999). It is through this coding that they judge the practices of persons and institutions in society. West argued that Black prophetic practices “assume that after the most intense scrutiny-some ultimate sense of a morally grounded sense of justice ought to prevail in personal and societal affairs” (p. 41).

This notion of deep-seated moralism was demonstrated by Phillip, who confronted executives and decision makers at his company over the lack of minorities in management positions. When I asked Phillip about the reasoning for his decision, he acknowledged that he had a responsibility as a Black manager to fight for justice in his company. Phillip, like other participants in this study, had committed to what Dantley (2003) termed “a deconstruction of the systemic realities of his company in order to discover the structures that endorse and perpetuate asymmetrical relations of power” (p. 10). For Phillip, this action was not crystallized in one conversation, but would take place in several strategic dialogues he would seek to initiate over the next several years. I sensed Phillip’s conviction to transform company practices. His conviction was rooted in a strict coding instilled during his childhood and buttressed by his creative encounter with

the Divine. In hearing his words, I wondered if his strategy was similar to bell hooks' (2000) notion of revolution. According to hooks (2000), new social orders or revolutions are established gradually, and hooks inferred that the weakness of revolutions in post-modern America is citizen expectations for change to happen quickly. In this sense, I secretly applauded Phillip's commitment to long-term goals. He recognized that some of the changes for which he was advocating may not come to fruition during his tenure at Mercury. Nevertheless, Phillip's deep-seated moralism compelled him to do something else that hooks (2000) maintained. He sounded the alarm that the situation at Mercury had become intolerable. Still further, he recognized that although he had begun to rebel, such resistance it had its limitations. Like hooks (2000), Phillip understands that a rebellion may disrupt a society (or a system), but it does not provide what is necessary to establish a new social order. For this reason, Phillip is involved in mentoring programs to help to train Blacks for management.

The second plank in West's prophetic spirituality is profound pessimism. The participants who subscribe to West's profound pessimism are comfortable existing in dualities. They are fully cognizant of the present, but somehow foresee the present as only a temporary condition (Dantley, 2003; West, 1999). The ability to exist in dualities is mitigated by what West termed "subversive joy," which is the ability to transform tears into laughter, a laughter that allows one to acknowledge how difficult the journey is, but also to acknowledge one's sense of humanity and folly and humor in the midst of this very serious struggle (West, 1999). It is a joy that "allows a space, a distance from the absurd, but also empowers one to engage in the struggle again when the time is necessary" (p. 299).

I witnessed subversive joy in action while observing Dre in the field. A client had stopped by MR Barbershop and began to lament about a business crisis he was facing. After listening to the lament, Dre uttered with conviction: “Bro, you got to remember, as a child of God that all things work for your good.” The conversation continued, resulting in the client leaving encouraged and persevering through the crisis. Dre later shared with me that his words of encouragement echoed a scripture from the Hebrew Bible, which he believes is filled with the promises of God. I then realized that Dre believed he had helped the client to reframe his circumstance in lieu of an eternal truth. In short, Dre had injected hope in a seemingly hopeless situation.

Other participants shared similar stories regarding this duality of profound pessimism and hope. I marveled at this duality, this seemingly antonymous relationship between pessimism and hope through which these Black male leaders located the faith to fight, even when the odds suggested they should despair. This bore to mind West’s (1999) assertion:

Despair and hope are inseparable. One can never understand what hope is really about unless one wrestles with despair. The same is true with faith. There has to be some serious doubt, otherwise faith becomes a dogmatic formula, an orthodoxy, a way of evading the complexity of life, rather than a way of engaging honestly with life. (p. 554)

These Black men were not evading complexities, but rather wrestling with them; they were trying to synthesize them in order to create meaning in their worlds as well as those within their spheres of influence. Here laid their spirituality, stripped bare – the substance of what made their dealings with pessimism so profound.

The final plank of prophetic spirituality is what West (1999) described as “inescapable opportunism.” This idea of inescapable opportunism exposes the inequalities and abridgements to access that are inherent in the capitalist economic system (Dantley, 2003). Nearly all of the participants in this study expressed concerns regarding the American economy. Dre, for example, commented on the stimulus package. He expressed concern as to whether the bailout he witnessed the government provide to larger corporations would even have an effect on his community. Dre went on to outline various community ills and specific needs of people in his community. He offered these thoughts on the economy:

Dre: the news talks about helping folks who are losing their home, but what about folk who been living on the street, trying to get a home for years? People on TV crying because they got to cut back, some people don't know where there next meal is coming from.....so when you think about it, you tell me, who really needs a bail out...

Dre and members of his Bible study group not only talk about issues in his community, but they also dedicate once a month to serving the community. According to Dre, though most of the men who attend the Bible study live considerable distances away from his barbershop, it is not uncommon for others in the neighborhood to join them for their weekly gathering. In these cases, the men provide prayer, furnish meals, and offer encouraging words. In essence, these men form what West (1999) called a community of hope. Communities of hope consist of persons coalescing to critically reflect upon societal inequities and work together to construct agendas for change (Dantley, 2003). As a leader, Dre helps to raise others' awareness of inequities, and galvanizes his team to address them.

Other participants use their leadership positions to create communities of hope as well. Eugene frequently shows his team demographics of the city, and educates others where to channel resources. Paul helps to fund and personally help community organizational initiatives designed to help children and entrepreneurs. Phillip spends weekends mentoring young Black males with a non-profit organization he helped to create.

The men in this study work to create communities of hope because they believe it is their moral obligation. They understand inequities that exist in the socio-economic and cultural systems. Consequently, they use their leadership positions to facilitate learning experiences in their community that lead others in learning how to recognize systemic inequities, as well as to design agendas to advance social change. West's inescapable opportunism, therefore, is a strategy for these men to correct wrongs they perceive, and it serves as a vehicle to help bring about justice and fairness in the system.

Critical Race Theory

According to Parker (2002), Critical Race Theory (CRT) involves the focus of attention on race and how racism is deeply entrenched within the framework of American society. The three main goals of CRT proponents are to present stories of people of color about discrimination, argue for the eradication of racial subjugation, and address differences of inequity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In analyzing the stories of the five Black male leaders in this study, three sub-themes related to CRT emerge. I term them as critical consciousness, critical critiques, and critical constructionism. Each term is treated below.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness refers to moments in these men's stories where they describe personally encountering racial discrimination. Because CRT's aims are to focus attention on race and to present stories of discrimination from the perspective of people of color, critical consciousness is an appropriate starting point for analysis. All of the participants vividly recalled their first experience with racism. For most, their initial experience with racism occurred when they moved from familiar, insulated environments to milieus where they were quickly made aware of their minority status. As Eric recalls:

Eric: Wow! I have to think about my earliest experience with racism, I think and you know I probably, when I played high school basketball because pretty much in my early stages I grew up pretty much in a very comfortable neighborhood where the majority of the people I enacted with were Black so it really wasn't in my childhood so much. But once I ventured out of that--because I didn't remember the riots, and my parents tell me about you know when we rode in the 60s they had to go in the back and we were in the car and of course I was too young to even realize that and understand what was going on. I think once I got in high school and I started to play teams that were majority White basketball teams; and the climate that you walk in and you heard certain racist comments that were made toward you or you were called "the N word" or you just didn't feel comfortable. There were certain looks that you got that it was like, "Man what's really going on? I haven't said anything to anybody. I haven't done anything. I'm just here to play a sport ... That's when it really started to kick in for me in terms of understanding there was something different that I needed to be more in tuned with.

Eric's account embodied a common stream of thought shared with me by the participants; namely, that their first discriminatory experience was hurtful, yet revealing. In particular, their individual encounters revealed to them what Delgado and Stefancic (2001) described as a reality for people of color – that racism is a part of the social fabric of American society.

Some participants, however, suggested that their initial experience was not solely because of the color of their skin. For example, Phillip recalled moving into a multi-

cultural neighborhood that included several Black families, yet still having to substantiate his presence by revealing his occupation to inquiring neighbors. Phillip's experience is consistent with Parker's (2002) claim that racism is not confined to biology, but is also a social construct. This notion is also buttressed by Eugene's conceptualization of racism:

Eugene: I define racism as a majority of folks using economic means and other means to keep a person down. Not saying, discrimination is saying, "I don't like you because of your color, your skin" That's different to me than racism. I experienced discrimination when I was little. Racism though happens all the time...

Eugene is what Delgado and Stefancic (2001) referred to as a realist. Realists hold that though attitudes and words are important, racism is much more than having an unfavorable impression of members of other groups. For realists racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status. Because of this, Eugene inferred that even in his daily routine - both inside and outside the workplace - he experiences racism. For Eugene and Phillip, economics and resources are the structural ingredients of racism. Hence, beyond other participants' initial experiences, Eugene employs an alternative lens. This lens informs his view of racism as he critiques it in American society.

Critical Critiques

Critical critiques refer to the men's ability to assess systemic racism embedded within American society. This sub-theme I related to Bell's signature CRT term, revisionist history (in Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Revisionist history reexamines America's historical record, replacing traditional majoritarian interpretations of events with histories that square more accurately with minorities' experiences (in Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Eugene, for example, has defined racism from an economic point of view. Consequently, when Eugene looks at American society, he thinks of it in terms of

haves and have-nots. Because of this, when Eugene has an opportunity to influence decisions regarding the distribution of resources in his city, he advocates for these resources to be allocated in areas where he believes they are most needed. Eugene's action illustrates Rawls '(1971) difference principle, which supports the re-scheming or redistribution of resources to benefit the least advantaged members of society.

Still further, the revisionist philosophy is evident in several participants' interpretation of a particularly historic American event, the election of President Barack Obama. All of the participants expressed overwhelming pride and admiration for President Obama, America's first Black president. However, several lamented that there are others who believe that Obama's election represents the end of racism in America. For these Black men, though President Obama's election is to be celebrated, racism still exists like never before. In fact, a few participants opined that racism is even embedded within the Black community.

Metaphorically, nearly all participants related racism among Blacks to "crabs in a bucket." Just like crabs hold each other back from getting ahead, these Black men discern this selfish dynamic within their own communities. When I asked Eric about the crab theory, he provided this explanation:

Eric: I think it kind of goes all the way back to slavery. When you look at how Massa really psychologically told Kunta to really go get the other Black slave. That still exists today. You know you have the offspring of that type of thinking of the ancestry. So that's ingrained in me that I can't let this other Black male be better than me because he's just not going to be better than me. Rather than how do I elevate him- so that's an ancestry issue, you know, I'm free but I'm still shackled in a lot of ways. I'm shackled mentally and shackled culturally. You know so many times people don't understand that...they don't know what to do unless somebody who is present that's White. That's just part of their makeup they're like what can't the meeting start? It's ingrained in them that somebody outside their race has to give them approval, has to give them a sense of validation because of their...uh... slave mentality and I think Black men struggle with that

majorly more so than Black women I think; because we really did a lot of that lack of communication with other because we were from a different tribe that wasn't called quest if you will. So the slave master purposely put us on different ships from different tribes to you couldn't communicate.

For Eric and others, the crab mentality has had implications for the Black community in the 21st century. Most notably, it has crystallized into a stratified classism that resists community cohesiveness. As I considered the comments of these men, my mind reflected upon Du Bois' perception of the "Talented Tenth." Specifically, I thought about Du Bois' disappointment in Blacks who ascended to certain educational or even economic levels, yet who also managed to lose touch with people in their own communities. Eric's critique seemed to be a post-modern description of Du Bois' observation. I also mused upon West's (1993) claim that this disconnection among Blacks has contributed to a crisis in Black leadership. Consequently, a conspicuous number of Black Americans are more vulnerable to the threat of nihilism.

Other participants offered critical critiques in simple, yet profound ways. For example, Paul acknowledged that it was important for Black Americans to be loyal followers, but more important for us to learn how to be leaders. Eugene agreed, and added that we also have to learn how to look more to each other.

What Paul and others seemed to be suggesting is that there is a need for a new type of leadership in the Black community—a leadership that has critical consciousness, provides critical critique, but one that also engages in critical construction.

Critical Construction

The goal of critical construction is to rebuild community within and beyond the Black community. In other words, critical construction contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand social inequities but also to change them; it sets out not only

to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). For example, Eugene and Eric's efforts exemplify those shared by nearly all of these Black male leaders:

Eugene: ...when I look at doing business they're going to look at doing business with White folks; that's who they're comfortable with. I try to say, let's spread out the pot. You know I've got some names over here; invite them to the meeting. Open it up and then when they comment "Oh they they're not-they're pretty good people." "Yeah", I say, "we don't bite." We cut that tail off back in 1952!" You know that's what I do. That's what I think is very important for me in this position. I try to spread the pot...

Eric: I work with policyholders and sitting down with state representatives and senators and others throughout the states and the communities. I basically hold them accountable for what they say they will produce. They talk about equality. Well what is equality and what does that mean for me and for the people I represent? What I mean about equality is equity has to be a part of that. They go hand in hand. We have to have the proper resources--not only in dollars- but sweat equity that is going make sure that if every person that applies to go into a particular profession or career or education is granted the proper resources to make that happen. So if I know right now the majority of students living in an urban climate and urban school district may be challenged more so than any other district, I have to make sure that the proper resources are given to that particular group of students. Not special treatment but to make sure that they are given the same access and resources that their counterparts are given. And so I'm very vocal on that. I hold them accountable.

Overall, the Black male leaders in this study speak from their respective platforms trying to make change. Some speak from a corporate point of view. For example, to Eugene it is important that his White colleagues be exposed to minority talent outside of their traditional circles. Like Delgado and Stefancic (2001), Eugene understands that without allies who advocate and expose the majority culture to more diversified and qualified talent, minority communities will fall further behind. On the other hand, Eric speaks from political and educational platforms. West (1993) suggested that too many leaders in political and educational arenas pander for community support, but lack programmatic follow through. Hence Eric, as a critical constructionist, positions himself

to hold these leaders accountable. Still other participants speak from a global platform. For example, Paul, like some critical race theorists, believes that the situations of domestic minorities and peer workers in developing countries are linked and must be addressed together (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Consequently, his efforts are channeled toward empowering others in the interest of uplifting the entire African Diaspora.

I sit in awe, reflecting upon these local activists operating in their respective domains. I cannot help thinking of the possibilities if all of these leaders were made intimately aware of one another's activities. West (1994) suggested that local activists might be the starting point for building new, effective models of Black leadership. Still further, Dyson (1996) and Franklin (2007) opined that resonant in local, unknown leaders may be untapped strategies for leadership that can be applied to broader communities. CRT allows the stories of those traditionally not heard to be brought to the forefront. The stories of these Black men suggest they all have something to offer. They all possess salient material to critically construct a transformed world.

Transformational Leadership

As discussed in the literature review, transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality of both the leader and the follower (Burns, 1978). This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990). People who exhibit transformational leadership often have strong sets of internal values and ideals, and they are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather

than their own self interests (Kuhnert, 1994). Building upon Burns' definition, Bass (1985) identified four factors to help measure the efficacy of one's transformational leadership: Ideal Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. Bass' model is taken into consideration when examining transformational leadership in the stories of these Black male leaders.

Idealized Influence.

Idealized influence describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers; followers identify with these leaders and desire very much to emulate them (Bass, 1985). Conger (1999) also described this effect as charismatic leadership. Weber (1947) provided the most well-known definition of charisma as a special personality characteristic that gives a person superhuman or exceptional powers and is reserved for a few, is of divine origin, and results in the person being treated as a leader. Despite Weber's emphasis on charisma as a personality characteristic, he also recognized the important role played by followers in validating charisma in these leaders (Conger, 1999)

I observed this notion of charismatic leadership, most notably in my field experience with Eric. When asked to describe his leadership style, Eric conveyed the following:

Eric: A lot of times I go one-on-one to invite people to be a part of something. And then I'll open up to the group. So then everyone has a clear understanding of what the expectations are and I think that's real key when it comes to leadership is on the front end let people know, "Here's what's expected." And then people can kind of come to their own conclusions like, "Wow this guy has a mission and he wants this wrapped up in the next thirty days and if I can't get it done that's okay but you can serve in a different capacity." So my leadership is about giving clear direction and clear expectations...

At first I did not see how Eric's method, in theory, was transformational. To listen to it, I really thought it was more akin to transactional leadership. Transactional leadership, according to Burns (1978), focuses on exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. In other words, transactional leaders are only influential because it is in the best interest of followers to do what the leader wants (Kuhnert, 1994). That is, they do not individualize the needs of follower or focus on personal development.

However, after observing Eric conduct a meeting with decision-makers for state education, I had an alternative point of view. Eric's demeanor exuded self-confidence. He had a strong presence about himself that commanded attention of onlookers and he spoke with a keen exactitude. Moving throughout the room like a seasoned, trial lawyer giving a closing argument, Eric stated his case. Specifically, he appealed to his peers to endorse several youth initiatives. One by one I witnessed persons who came into the meeting looking lethargic and uninterested become enthusiastically engaged. Many asked questions regarding how their respective offices could be of more support to Eric's agenda. In short, the atmosphere had been transformed. Moreover, Eric had been exhibiting the charismatic qualities that Bass (1985) and Conger (1999) have written about. Though other attendees of the meeting were leaders in their own right, clearly Eric was the leader in this moment. In this sense, Eric's charismatic leadership had been affirmed by the effects that he had on others (Bass & Avolio, 1999).

My other observations did not yield explicit charismatic illustrations. Nevertheless, implicit within my conversations with other participants were examples of idealized influence. Paul articulated a desire for his employees to subscribe to company values. According to Paul, the values of Transcendence mirrored his own. Burns (1978)

maintained that values are those inner drives and commitments that shape us or enable us to act in certain ways or toward certain end states. They serve as goals and standards, modes of behavior, and are “a formidable arsenal for any leader who can command them” (p. 75). Paul’s humility would not allow him to admit that he commanded much of anything at Transcendence. Even so, the scores of recommendations and awards that span the lobby of the firm indicate that his employees emulate Paul’s humility, integrity, and commitment to excellence. Still further, Bass suggested that idealized influence works because it ties followers and their self-concepts to the organizational identity. Paul forged this link by emphasizing the intrinsic rewards of work and de-emphasizing the extrinsic awards (e.g. pay raises, promotions). Consequently, even though Paul and his employees recently had to take cuts in pay, the values of the organization were not compromised. This is because Paul has influenced his followers to view their work at Transcendence as an expression of themselves (Conger, 1999). In this sense, though Paul is not as charismatic as Eric, he is the consummate, idealized influencer.

Similarly, other participants exhibited idealized influencing qualities, sharing their satisfaction in seeing their values emulated in others. This substantiates Bass’ (1985) claim that the efficacy of an idealized influencer is always measured by the response of followers.

Inspirational Motivation

The second factor Bass (1985) described is called *inspiration* or *inspirational motivation*. This factor is descriptive of leaders who inspire followers to become committed to and a part of the shared vision in the organization. The participants offered sundry ways that they inspire followers to become part of their respective organizations.

For example, some participants asserted that their most effective way to inspire others is through one on one meeting. In the dialogue, these Black male leaders seek to discover the motives and goals of a person. Subsequently they adapt their leadership styles.

Still others took this strategy one step further, and employed an alternative approach. For example, Paul shared the following:

Paul: If I really wanted to get you on my side, I ought to come to you and say, "Charles, I've studied your organization and your industry or even your habits and here are the things that ought to be keeping you awake at night if they are not. And you should say, "You've read my mind." Right? And now that that's the case, let me tell you what I think we can do to work with you. To help you sleep better at night...

In other words, Paul suggests that working on the front side to know of his follower's needs is advantageous in motivating in them. In spite of different approaches employed to motivate others, all participants understood one of the principal tenants of transformational leadership; namely, that leadership is inseparable from the needs of the follower (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Conger, 1999; Dantley, 2003).

But these Black male leaders were also cognizant that leadership includes being vocal regarding their own needs as well. Several participants spoke about the need to be transparent, so that followers could discern their motives and values in the leadership context. For them, this was critical to authentic relationship building. Hearing this caused me to reflect upon Fairholm's (2001) definition of leadership, that leadership is a relationship of power for a specific purpose that is consistent, or eventually consistent, with the motives, needs, and values of both the leader and led. When these are in alignment, individuals are elevated to a higher sense of performance, fulfillment, and purpose. For these Black male leaders, the key to motivation is the mutual discerning of

motives and values. This not only inspires others to achieve more than they would in their own self-interest, but facilitates positive and effective team spirit.

Intellectual Stimulation

This factor includes leadership that stimulates follower to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization (Bass, 1985). Nearly all of the participants considered themselves to be leader who is open to the input of others. Three participants spoke about the importance of creating “safe space” where team members can feel free to creatively collaborate, yet also offer constructive criticism. As a result, he surrounds himself with a diverse group of people to provoke and provide fresh ideas. He admits, at times, that the varieties of opinions cause intense conversations. Still and all, Paul values his team’s diversity. In fact, Paul believes this is the key to his company remaining competitive:

Paul: I do believe that you’ve got to hire the very best, absolutely the very best. Because you win or lose with the team you build. I think-I truly believe that diversity creates strife. If you get eight people in a room and they all walk, talk, feel the same. If we’ve all had similar experiences our view is very limited. So, I like the fact that we have diversity. Because what that does, that creates balance. And if it creates balance in thought processes and dialog, then all we need is balance and respect. It doesn’t help to have diversity and then great balance of opinion if you have a dictatorial style. In fact, it becomes a de-motivator because it’s like Barack and Barack has always said, “I want to people with diverse opinions around me. I’m going to ask them to challenge me.” And then I must listen...I don’t want everyone here to walk, talk, feel, think and behave exactly like me. That would be a competitive disadvantage.

During my site visit, I witnessed Paul leverage the talent on his team to fiercely compete for a business opportunity. Paul called an emergency meeting and challenged his team to create a win-win opportunity for the company and a potential client. They had just received new information from the media and needed to position themselves quickly.

Though Mercury only had an hour to complete the proposal, the team worked efficiently.

Members challenged one another politely, yet firmly, but in the end produced what they believed to be a competitive proposal. Paul then reviewed the proposal, asked for clarification on a few key points, and eventually gave his approval. In this case, Paul married his leadership theory with practice. He had intellectually stimulated his team to the end that a time-sensitive matter was resolved.

Similarly, other participants supported climates that encourage their team members to be resourceful and inventive. Of notable interest was one participant who began his secular, administrative staff meeting with prayer. In my follow up interview, the participant shared that the economic recession had sparked several requests to have staff prayer. As a result, each staff meeting commences and closes with a short, ecumenical prayer. Additionally, to promote team spirit, the staff rotates the responsibility of prayer on a weekly basis. I was struck by this revelation and immediately thought about Dantley's (2003) assertion that spirituality can enhance transformational leadership. In particular, Dantley argued that the infusion of spirituality with transformational leadership helps to create a context where authority and responsibility is equalized for each person engaged in the leadership process. The staff prayer illustrated this principle. During the prayer, I sensed that titles were unimportant, and roles and responsibilities were forgotten, as each staff member held the hand of their neighbor as the closing prayer was spoken. I wondered, however, if the motivation of all engaged in the prayer was genuine. The recession had seemingly generated agreement among the staff to acknowledge a higher power than them. Had some discerned their job was in jeopardy and agreed to this as a last resort? Had others merely acquiesced in the interest of team spirit? In essence, I wondered what staff prayer really meant to each

individual. Dantley (2003) shared that making meaning demands a real transcendence from the daily routine into a broader sense of a greater good. This occurs only as one embraces the need to make meaning or to work within a context of knowing that what she or he does is actually providing fulfillment or a sense of personal satisfaction or contribution to something higher than her or him. (Dantley, 2003) In this sense, each staff member's definition of "greater good" more than likely determined whether staff prayer was actually stimulating or not. Still and all, the idea was presented and accepted in safe space, and was one illustration of the participants' commitment to intellectual stimulation.

Individualized Consideration

This factor is representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of the followers. Here, leaders act as coaches and advisors while trying to assist followers to become fully actualized (Bass, 1985). This notion was demonstrated by all of the participants, but best illustrated in my observation of Eugene.

In order to provide a supportive climate, Eugene tries to be accessible and approachable:

Eugene: It gives people the sense that you know, either they know you're Director, they know your responsibilities, but then they start saying, "He's not that bad of a fellow. If I have an issue that is very important to the operations, I feel very comfortable coming to him and I will get an audience."

The first week of my observation of Eugene, the veracity of the supportive climate was tested. It was rumored that one of his staff members had contracted a virus. Because Eugene's office is fairly visible in the marketplace, the rumor had the potential to induce panic. Several times our conversations were interrupted due to staff being pressed by the

media. Eugene listened to the concerns of his staff, and then alleviated the concerns by displaying a nurturing, caring side. He gently provided affirming caring words like “We’ll handle it”, or “This too shall pass, you’ll see”. I was surprised to observe that men in the office, with tough exteriors remove their masks and become vulnerable before my eyes. What’s more, when Eugene called the staff person, the staff person was in the process of going through a battery of tests for the virus. Fortunately, the tests were negative and the crisis was abated.

In Eugene’s staff meeting, he commended the team for remaining calm amidst the crisis. He also reiterated that they were a team and shared as a leader “I got your back”. The team, consisting of 12 women and 9 men, all appeared to graciously receive these words. One by one, Eugene gave them an opportunity to respond. The responses affirmed Eugene as a Director, and several persons thanked him for creating an environment of care. It was then I ascertained that Eugene was not just a caring or considerate leader, but in the words of Northouse (2007), a social architect. He not only was adept in developing buildings, he was skillful in developing people too.

Phillip, Dre, and Paul also placed a premium on developing others. Phillip considered himself a marketplace coach, who often coaches others in areas where they need development. Dre and Paul subscribed to this notion, and also took pride in helping to launch others into their own businesses. Their method of empowerment mirrors Conger’s (1999) litmus test for transformational leadership. Conger maintained that transformational leaders set out to empower followers and nurture them in change. Both men spoke with pride when sharing about protégés they mentored who went out to form their own practice. Dre and Paul also enjoy strong relationships with them, as their

protégé's still consult them for effective business practices and even use them as clients. My conversation with these men affirmed they were practicing transformational leadership. This is because their leadership not only resulted in the development of followers, but in they, as leaders, feeling better about themselves and their contributions to the greater good (Dantley, 2003).

Whether as boss, co-worker, or mentor, each of the five men I interviewed had one thing in common- they all were committed to assisting followers to become actualized. In most cases, their followers responded in extraordinary ways, oft-times performing incredibly well when prompted to rise to a challenge. Still others were encouraged and empowered to start their own businesses. In these cases, the follower maintained strong relationships with the leader, and still sought out the leader for counsel. In all cases, these Black male leaders expressed pride in assisting followers to reach their maximum potential. Hence, both leader and led were transformed.

Summary

This chapter presented the themes that emerged from the narratives that were shared in Chapter IV. The narratives highlight the unique experience of each participant in relation to spirituality, critical race theory, and transformational leadership. These themes will be expounded upon in Chapter VI, which discusses the findings relative to the research questions and theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER VI: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. In this chapter, I present an overview of the study, and draw conclusions relative to the three research questions presented in Chapter I. Next, I discuss the findings from the perspective of the theoretical framework that guided the study. Finally, I consider limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

Recent discussions about the plight of Black Americans - especially those at the bottom of the social ladder - have turned toward a call for strategies and solutions to ward off the nihilistic threat to their very existence. Two of the more significant reasons why the threat of nihilism is more powerful now than ever before are the saturation of market forces and market moralities in life and the crisis in Black leadership. Some scholars have argued that the crisis in Black leadership emanates from a Black middle class that has been conditioned to seek self-pleasure rather than serving and leading others (Du Bois, 1903; Dyson, 1996, West, 1994).

The failure of the Black middle class to provide relief to the socially and economically disadvantaged within their community contributes to a gradual eroding of communal values and a cynicism (among many Blacks and non-Blacks alike) that encourages the idea that Blacks are bereft of quality leadership capable of making a significant difference in changing their society (West, 1993). Moreover, this cynicism is buttressed by a conspicuous amount of studies on Black men that are rooted in a deficit model. The deficit model places the pernicious plight of the Black community at the feet

of the Black male and blames him, in many cases, for its egregious condition (Cones & White, 1999; McClellan 2006).

Conversely, there is a paucity of studies that portray Black men in a positive light, especially those who are striving to make a difference in the Black community. This study has helped to fill this void by investigating the role that spirituality plays in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders residing in Central Ohio. In particular, the study has served as one answer to the call for the investigation and subsequent creation of new models of leadership in the Black community. Such models endeavor to courageously combat the nihilistic threat, and assiduously advocate for social justice for all Americans.

Chapter II presented a review of the literature to provide a theoretical foundation for the study. The six major branches of research included: (a) social/historical overview of the research on Black males; (b) Black leadership; (c) Black leadership and social justice; (d) transformational leadership; (e) spirituality; and (f) spirituality, leadership and social justice. Considered together, these elements provide the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study.

This study employed narrative inquiry methodology to investigate the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of five Black male leaders who reside in Central Ohio. An outline of the research design along with data collection and analysis procedures are described in Chapter III.

Chapter IV portrayed the narratives of the participants, influenced by Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional space approach. Each individual narrative was

presented chronologically and focused on the content of the participants' responses to semi-structured interview questions.

Chapter V identified, described, and examined themes that cut across the individual narratives of the participants. The themes that emerged from the analyses were spirituality, critical race theory, and transformational leadership. I examined each theme and referenced content in the literature to support each theme appropriately. By presenting these themes, I focused the participants' stories as they expounded upon the role of spirituality in their leadership and social justice practices.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Research Questions

Each of the research questions is addressed with discussion. Three questions guided this study: (1) How do the stories of Black men reflect their understanding of leadership? (2) How does spirituality influence their leadership behavior and decision-making? (3) What role does social justice play in their leadership and how is this influenced by their spirituality?

1. How do the stories of Black men reflect their understanding of leadership?

When I queried the participants about leadership, all of them framed it in the context of relationships. This understanding is consistent with the literature on leadership, and many researchers noted that leadership is a process that involves engaging others in relationships to achieve mutually desired goals (Burns, 1978; Dantley, 2003; Fairholm, 1991; Walters & Smith, 1999). However, the manner in which participants self-identified as leaders revealed a great deal of variance. These variances were rooted in specific elements of their stories which animated how they self-identified as leaders.

For example, Eugene initially shared that he did not consider himself a leader. However, when probed about his understanding of leadership, Eugene recognized that many of his actions were consistent with his nascent beliefs about leadership. In particular, observing his mother and father in leadership positions in their church, and in the community helped Eugene to understand that leadership is personal and involves connecting with others. Eugene then realized that his intentionality in forming individual and collective relationships with his staff was reflective of his impressions of leadership as a child. Consequently, Eugene recanted his earlier comment and declared himself to be a leader.

Similarly, Eric's self-perception as a leader was also informed by his experiences. Specifically, Eric maintained that his charisma significantly contributed to his success as a leader. To buttress his argument, Eric shared personal stories of becoming transparent in order to invite others to see his motives and values, connect with him, and share in achieving mutually desired goals. These goals are not limited to the accomplishment of tasks, but are manifested by the increase of his followers' sense of competence and their willingness to follow the vision that he puts forward. For Eric, followers who do this affirm his charismatic leadership.

For Dre, Paul, and Phillip, their understandings of leadership were animated by their stewardship to God. Consequently, their stories were replete with examples citing their responsible handling of resources and the subsequent benefits. One of these benefits was being elevated to leadership positions. For these three men, performing responsibly as leaders by helping others to actualize their potential is vital to their stewardship, and

inextricably linked to their successes. Hence, their identities as leaders are driven by the quality of their relationships to God as well as followers in the leadership process.

The stories of these Black male leaders, then, suggest that all of them understand leadership to be relational, and their respective experiences animate their unique self-perceptions of being leaders.

2. How does spirituality influence their leadership behavior and decision-making?

Participants in this study defined their spirituality in relationship to a higher power, manifested in the Judeo-Christian God (hereafter, God). Three participants associated their relationships with their religious faith. Two participants further identified their relationships as being one with the historical Jesus, whom they considered to be divine. Their conception of God is in accordance with Banks and Ledbetter's (2004) notion that spirituality presupposes the presence of some form of higher power or divinity that permeates all life. Additionally, all participants referenced a spiritual epiphany when they experienced a creative encounter with God, resulting in a sense of renewal and purpose. This experience is consistent with Dantley's (2001) definition of spirituality as the nexus of inspiration, motivation, and meaning making in our lives.

Still further, all participants inferred that their creative encounter engendered a sense of accountability to God, who has ultimate control and is the source of all resources they are allotted. Consequently, participants viewed themselves as stewards who are managing God's resources.

The metaphor of stewardship was consistently referenced among participants when describing their leadership styles. For participants, stewardship was understood as

service to God and helping others. Consequently, participants characterized their leadership styles as ones that create a capacity for others to achieve their maximum potential. This conception of leadership is in alignment with both servant and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985 Burns 1978, Greenleaf, 1977).

Additionally, all participants articulated that spirituality influences how they make decisions. Four participants shared that their leadership decisions are based on prayer and personal interpretations of the Protestant Christian Bible. Of the four men, two participants specifically identified the historical Jesus as their ethical model. As such, their decisions are filtered through his teachings. The remaining participant shared that most of his decisions are Spirit-led. The spiritual resources the participants rely upon support Fluker's (2007) claim that person's ethical decisions are shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of their particular traditions. For all of the participants, spirituality influences their leadership behavior and decision-making through spiritual practices.

3. *What role does social justice play in their leadership and how is this influenced by their spirituality?*

The participants in this study had nuanced perspectives regarding social justice that informed their leadership. Moreover, these perspectives manifested themselves in unique experiences associated with their professional vocations. For example, as an educator Eric prided himself in advancing the causes and articulating the concerns of students, teachers, and principals to state legislators and policy makers. Consequently, it was not uncommon for Eric to invite members of his constituency to travel with him to political forums or educational policy meetings. In these settings, Eric presented cases on behalf of his constituents and typically encouraged one of his guests to speak as well. In

this sense, Eric worked alongside his constituency while lobbying for fair and just practices to be extended to their community. Such action demonstrated Freire's (1998) pedagogical transformation. Moreover, as a transformational leader, Eric's motives and values were fused with those of his followers as they helped one another to actualize mutual educational goals.

For Eugene, the goal of social justice was manifested in his advocacy for distributing resources into underdeveloped communities. Still, like Etzioni (1998) and other communitarians, Eugene recognized that making decisions regarding communal distribution of resources is a complex process. This is because Eugene constantly balanced the competing priorities of parties determined to position themselves for the lion's share of limited resources. In an effort to be fair and just, Eugene subscribed to Walzer's (1993) distributive principle of need. Applying this principle involved Eugene critically assessing what areas of the city possessed the greatest need for resources. Accordingly, Eugene advocated for development in these communities. Dre's barbershop is in one of these selected communities. Consequently, Eugene encouraged Dre to become involved with the neighborhood council, which was established to help Eugene's office determine the needs of the community.

Like Eugene, Dre understood that needs could vary; however, Dre also recognized that there were common needs within his community. Among the needs were jobs, housing, and access to adequate health care. This lack of access led Dre and members of his Bible study to encourage Eugene's office to incentivize and attract businesses that would provide appropriate services and help meet the needs of Dre's community. Dre and Eugene's advocacy for the fulfillment of common, universal needs

in this community coincide with Rawls' (1971) difference principle. In this sense, they used their leadership positions to support the rearranging of societal inequities for the benefit of the disadvantaged.

Phillip employed Rawls' (1971) principle of equal opportunity in his professional context as well. As a strategic account manager, Phillip was cognizant of the paucity of people of color who had attained his status at Mercury Incorporated. Unlike many middle class, Black leaders whom West (1993) criticized, Phillip openly critiqued systemic inequities within and beyond his organization. What's more, Phillip relied upon his spirituality for courage to confront others in strategic positions regarding their insensitivity to diversity (Yasuno, 2008). This behavior demonstrated West's notion of prophetic spirituality (Dantley, 2003; West, 1999), where one is able to perceive a situation in its unpolished context, yet still works toward the construction of an envisioned reality.

For Paul, this envisioned reality was akin to King's beloved community. Like King, Paul believed such a community would be a reality if people were committed to and trained to develop it. Consequently, Paul channeled resources from his company to help develop African-American entrepreneurs as well as children in developing countries. In Paul's mind, African-American entrepreneurs who are equipped educationally and empowered financially are essential to eradicating social injustices. Moreover, providing assistance to children in developing countries fulfills his spiritual calling to help children and serves as his contribution to the construction of the beloved community.

For the five Black men in this study, social justice is vitally connected to their leadership; they use their leadership to influence social justice concerns. For two of these

five participants, spirituality influences their leadership and their spiritually integrated leadership shapes their commitment to social justice.

Discussion of Findings from the Perspective of the Guiding Theoretical Framework.

The theoretical framework used in this study was Critical Transformative Leadership (CTL), which is an amalgamation of transformational leadership, critical theory, and Black American prophetic spirituality. CTL may be a potential model to help identify race-transcending prophets. This would address the clarion call issued by West (1994) and other scholars (Dyson, 1996; Franklin, 2007) for new models of leadership to help combat the nihilistic threat in the Black community, as well as for persons to actualize such models. This study uses CTL in the context of narrative inquiry. The purpose of narrative inquiry, however, is not to evaluate theoretical models but rather to focus on participants' experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Because of this, authenticating CTL as a model to identify and develop race-transcending prophets is beyond the scope of this study, but findings do show much promise for additional studies on CTL that employ alternative methodological approaches. I discuss these methods in my recommendations for future research.

In this study, CTL was used as a guide to probe the stories of participants for elements of social justice, blended with a prophetic spirituality, that seek to bring about transformational change. West (1994) maintained that leaders who successfully integrate prophetic spirituality with their leadership and social justice practices might potentially be race-transcending prophets. Race-transcending prophets are leaders who are uniquely positioned to critique socio-political elites and who can put forth visions of fundamental social change for all who suffer from socially induced misery (West, 1994). As discussed

in Chapter I, leaders who effectively apply critical transformative leadership to their respective contexts emulate race-transcending prophetic behavior.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that narrative inquirers convey the stories of participants as becoming rather than being. This is because participants and their stories should always be considered as works in process. As such, the findings suggest that participants are at different stages of applying CTL to their respective contexts. As Black male leaders, all participants expressed a responsibility to promote social justice, particularly in their communities. A variety of influences, however, animated these responsibilities. For some, this responsibility was grounded in Critical Race Theory. As critically conscious leaders, they were able to identify and critique systemic racism in their contexts, and used their leadership positions to address societal inequities. Two leaders grounded their social justice advocacy in their spirituality. They embraced the need to make meaning or to work within a context of knowing that what they do as leaders is connected to Someone or Something greater than themselves. In this sense, their leadership was located within an agenda to bring radical change, equity and democracy to the lives of those with whom they are engaged. There was a mission to deconstruct asymmetrical relations of power that militate against justice as fairness (Rawls, 1971), and help transform the lived realities of all within their spheres of influence (Dantley, 2003). In other words, these two participants successfully applied critical transformative leadership to their contexts, hence emulating race-transcending prophetic behavior.

For this researcher, CTL has striking similarities with race-transcending prophetic behavior. As noted in Chapter I, race-transcending prophets are leaders who are aware of

their particularity, but refuse to be confined by it (West, 1994). As such, they are uniquely positioned to critique the powers that be, and put forth a vision of fundamental social change for all who suffer from socially induced misery. The four common characteristics of race-transcending prophets (hereafter RTPs) are contrasted with CTL in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Race Transcending Prophets with Critical Transformative Leadership

Race- Transcending Prophets (RTP) (West, 1994)	Critical Transformative Leaders (CTL) (Dantley, 2003)
Grounded in Communal Values	Promotes Prophetic Spirituality
Committed to Social Justice	Champions Critical Race Theory
Locally- based	Operates in their respective spheres of influence
Multi-Gendered	Black Men (in this study)

Race-Transcending Prophets are grounded in communal values. For CTLs, communal values are resonant in their commitment to prophetic spirituality, a custom indigenous to African-American Christianity. Second, RTPs are committed to social justices. CTLs demonstrate social justice in championing critical race theory, which is dedicated to the eradication of discrimination and injustice of groups based off of areas of difference, such as race, gender, class, or any social inequities experienced by individuals (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Next, RTPs, typically, are locally based, and CTLs primarily operate within their sphere of influence. Finally, RTPs are multi-gendered, and the focus of this

study is on Black male leaders, a genre of leadership that is conspicuously absent in literature. Still and all, while the attributes of RTPs and CTLs have similarities, the relevance of CTL to the crisis in Black leadership still remains in question.

The question of relevance of CTL to the crisis in Black leadership cannot be overstated. This is because the crisis of Black leadership is inseparable from the nihilistic threat (West, 1994). According to West (1994), nihilism can be remedied by RTPs; however, this generation has yet to put forth such a figure. Consequently, new models of leadership must be formed to forge and identify RTPs in this post-modern generation. The linkage of CTL to RTPs poses the following question: What specifically qualifies the critical transformative leaders in this study to be characterized as race-transcending prophets who are capable of combating the nihilistic threat?

Before we can answer this question, it must be borne in mind that like alcoholism and drug addiction, nihilism is a disease of the soul (West, 1994, p. 29). It can never be completely cured, and there is always a possibility of relapse. But there is always a chance for conversion – a chance for people to believe that there is hope for the future and a meaning to struggle. As such, nihilism is not overcome by arguments or analyses; it is tamed by love and care. Any disease of the soul must be conquered by a turning of one's soul (West, 1994). This turning is done through one's own affirmation of one's worth and an affirmation fueled by the concern for others. In other words, a love ethic must be at the center of any attempt to convert a disease of the soul.

According to West (1994), a love ethic has nothing to do with sentimental feelings or tribal connections. Rather it is a last attempt at generating a sense of urgency among a downtrodden people. The best exemplar of this love ethic is depicted on a

number of levels in the narratives of Phillip and Paul. Self love and love of others are both modes toward increasing self-valuation and encouraging political resistance within one's community. For my purposes here, the narratives of Phillip and Paul can be construed as bringing together these modes of valuation, which ultimately are actualized by the creation of communities of hope. As noted above, communities of hope consist of persons coalescing to critically reflect upon social inequities, and working together to construct agendas for change (Dantley, 2003). These communities of hope engender self-affirming sanity, in contexts where the nihilistic threat seemed insurmountable. In other words, race-transcending prophets create communities of hope (Dyson, 1991; Franklin, 2007; West, 1994).

Fundamental to the real exercise of creating communities of hope is a belief that transformation can occur. In order for this to happen, all participants must engage in dialogue intended to produce change that reflects the consensus of beliefs of justice and hope. Such an exercise is critical because the respective notions of justice and hope may mean different things to different people (within the community). This is because communities of hope consist of people whose understanding of justice and hope is shaped by the wisdom, habits, and practices of their particular tradition, as well as their own existential circumstances (Fluker, 2007). Hence as Etzioni (1998) and other communitarian theorists argued, standards of justice are found in forms of life and traditions of specific societies and can vary from context to context (Taylor, 1989; Walzer, 1983). Though not a communitarian, Rawls (1993) too recognized this reality, and inferred that communities, who consist of persons with divergent views, should have rules in consensus building (for a fuller discussion of Rawls' response to

communitarianism please see pp. 30 – 31). Dantley (2003) argued that such rules involve discourse that pays careful attention to self-articulation and democratic commitment. The absence of such discourse and consensus building can potentially lead to even further feelings of powerlessness, and the threat of nihilism may abound. For this reason, communities of hope are constructed on the idea of lowering authoritarianism while raising authority and responsibility for each person engaged in the community (Dantley, 2003). In this sense, traditionally marginalized voices are provided with an equal opportunity to be heard. Empowering these voices increases the chances for a shared understanding of justice and hope to be actualized and for the nihilistic threat to be abated. According to West (1999), creating these shared understandings is difficult work and requires special kinds of leaders- those who not only have a vision for communities of hope but also possess a strong sense of self-love and love for others.

Successful realization of communities of hope involve self-love and love for others synergistically working together to provide uplift and hope to both leaders and followers. Paul and Phillip demonstrate this synergy of self-love and love for others in their respective leadership context. For example, when *Transcendence* was losing money, rather than solely protecting his own self-interests, Paul restructured his organization and galvanized his team by making them all co-owners of the company. With this action, the entire film collectively worked together to form strategies that made them evaluate their internal and external systems, resulting in their uplift out of potential economic collapse. Similarly, Phillip, when noticing the conspicuous gap between minorities in management and service-oriented positions, invoked a 360-degree leadership strategy where he engaged persons on multi-levels of the organization

regarding the imbalance. By doing this, he forthrightly engaged the existence of race, class, and gender inequities present in the company as an agenda for organizational change. This resulted in diversity training for management, management training programs for minorities, and the formation of strategic hiring goals that were monitored by both Phillip and the Board of Trustees for *Mercury Inc.* In both cases, Paul and Phillip engendered transformation by lowering authoritarianism while raising authority and responsibility for each person engaged in their respective organizations. Consequently, the values of self love and love of others became values of the organization, raising the level of performance and reward for all. Such action builds on Burns' notion of transformational leadership in these communities of hope. Moreover, these communities of hope allowed persons to critically reflect upon asymmetrical relations of power, and determine how their organizations could function more optimally by actualizing democratic praxis.

The challenge lies in extrapolating such practices on a national scale to the degree that significant societal transformation takes place and the nihilistic threat is abated. Admittedly, abating the nihilistic threat is an ambitious agenda. Still and all, as a Black male scholar who is committed to transformational leadership in my community, I believe I have a moral obligation to answer the call for new models of Black leadership by bringing examples like Paul and Phillip to the forefront. In this sense, my study serves as one answer to this call and suggests that Critical Transformative Leadership is a model that should be considered to identify race-transcending prophets.

Critique and Limitations of the Study

The results of this study should be measured in relation to one critique and several limitations of the research design. The extent to which a narrator's story consists of facts or fiction is a common critique of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). There are divergent views on how investigators should consider and use narrators' stories that may or may not be historically accurate (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My views are consistent with Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Riesman (2002), who maintained that the actual facts or historical accuracy of a narrator's story are not the most important issues, and that qualitative researchers conduct interviews to obtain interpretations and understand the narrator's meaning making. Narratives are neither exact descriptions of reality nor complete fiction. Stories are most often centered around a "core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of these 'remembered facts'" (Lieblich et al, p. 8).

As a result, those engaged in narrative inquiry should not be as concerned with "the truth" of a story and more concerned with the "truths" and with the degree of trustworthiness and credibility that are resonant in the findings (Riesman, 2002). In simple terms, a narrator's story is simply one moment of that story that should not be viewed as the literal truth, since stories can change and evolve over time (Lieblich et. al, 1998). The narrator's understanding of past events changes as it is affected by successive life events as well as the conditions under which the story is shared (e.g. relationship between narrator and the researcher, the objective of the interview, mood of narrator) (Lieblich et. al, 1998; Riesman, 2002). Moreover, there are shifts in the meaning that

narrators share of their pasts that is evidenced in shifts in the stories (Riesman, 2002). Nevertheless, stories create and convey meaning about the narrator and the cultural or social contexts in which the narrator lives (Lieblich et. al, 1998).

The purposeful sampling used in this research limits the degree to which the findings can be generalized to a broader population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The participants in this study represented five different experiences within one local community in one state. Still further, neither Blacks nor Black males are a monolithic group. For example, although Dre met the criteria for the study, his religious upbringing differed from the other participants in the study. Similarly, Phillip was raised in Louisiana, unlike the other participants who were indigenous to the State of Ohio. The heterogeneity of the participants was also evidenced in family structures, socio-economic statuses, and occupations. Consequently, it would not be appropriate to generalize the findings of this study to the experiences of all Black males even though others in similar settings and circumstances may relate to the results.

Another limitation of this study was the potential of participants withholding intimate details regarding their story. For example, in my follow-up interview with one participant, he asked me to mask certain details in his transcript, to which I consented. This led me to question whether or not the participant was as forthcoming with specific details during our second interview as he had been with our first. Another participant seemed rather cavalier in his responses to my interview questions. Though he expressed excitement to provide content to my research, the participant often spoke in generalities, speaking of the plight of the Black male in third person. As a result, several times during the interview, I had to redirect my questions in an effort to obtain information about the

participants' personal experiences. This led me to believe that the participant, at times, was sharing with me what he thought I wanted to hear, as opposed to providing pertinent information about his own experiences and thoughts.

Next, my participants' understanding of spirituality may have been a limitation as well. The participants viewed their spirituality in the context of a relationship with a Higher Power, manifested in the Judeo-Christian God. This understanding of spirituality as an aspect of religion should not be considered as generalizable to other populations and research studies. Moreover, because of the variety of definitions of spirituality in the literature, the researcher acknowledges the tension involved in distinguishing spirituality from religion as well as relating spirituality to religious practices.

Finally, my own gender and ethnicity may have been limitations as well. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted that the narrative researcher's experience is always a dual one; the inquirer is always experiencing the experience and also being a part of the experience itself. As a Black man listening to the experiences of other Black men, I was an "insider-outsider" who related to quite a few of their stories. Moreover, while engaging in inquiry, I recognized some things in my own experiential history. Consequently during the process I had to negotiate the warm intimacy and rapport between the participants and myself with cool, objective observation. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) held that composing and reading field texts helps the researcher to facilitate this process. Though I followed this recommendation, at times I still experienced tensions regarding relational distance throughout the inquiry. For this reason, I must allow for the potential of researcher bias in my findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study underscores the importance of continuing research on the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men. Future research should consider alternative methodologies, theoretical perspectives, participant criteria, and research design elements, and should also build on the findings of this research.

Future research should explore the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men from a variety of methodological approaches, including but not limited to cooperative inquiry, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study.

Cooperative inquiry is an action-oriented approach in which all involved parties act as both co-researchers and co-subjects who inquire together into burning issues of their practice, thus exploring their experiences from the inside-out (Goethals & Sorenson, 2006). In this scenario, the men in this study would take a more active role in the research process. This process could potentially offer a greater exploration of spirituality, leadership, and social justice as a relational, emergent, and contextual reality.

Grounded theory would provide a theory regarding the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice for Black males. Accordingly, grounded theory would either build upon or construct alternative theoretical models to be employed for future studies on Black men. To this end, grounded theory would involve additional interviews to produce a theory that would include a central phenomenon, express causality, and contain context as well as strategies (Creswell, 2007).

Ethnography of the Black male leadership culture, or persons within the culture inside and outside of the Midwest, would yield invaluable information. Data from these studies would provide insightful information across cultural groups. In these studies,

factors such as behaviors, beliefs, values, and social conditions could be used as baselines for comparison across cultural groups (Creswell, 2007).

Finally, a case study should be conducted to identify, examine, and reveal what religious institutions - such as churches, mosques, and synagogues - do to encourage or discourage Black men to integrate spirituality, leadership, and social justice.

Critical Transformational Leadership was used as a theoretical framework from which to discuss the findings in my study. Critical Transformational Leadership is inspired by Dantley's (2003) notion of critical spirituality, which applies critical theory and prophetic spirituality to transformational leadership. Critical spirituality can also be applied to other models of leadership. For example, McClellan (2006) applied critical spirituality to servant leadership in her study of Black male leaders. Northouse (2007) argued that servant and transformational leadership are subsets of ethical leadership. Additionally, Northouse's (2007) model of ethical leadership incorporates social justice. I recommend that future research build on my exploration of spirituality, leadership, and social justice by analyzing findings from the perspective of Critical Ethical Leadership (CEL). The use of CEL may manifest itself in protocol questions being more reflective of the intersectionality of spirituality, leadership, and social justice. Specifically, if CEL is used to investigate Black men, findings of the research may reveal to a greater degree the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black men.

Additionally, research should be considered with regard to spirituality as it relates to leadership as well as social justice not affiliated with organized religion. This would include exploring alternative definitions of spirituality, and how these dimensions of spirituality influence leadership and social justice.

This study also employed critical race theory as a means to illuminate the stories of Black men. As shared in the literature review, a goal of critical race theory is to address other areas of difference such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals. For this reason, future studies should be conducted on the role of spirituality in the leadership and social justice practices of Black women. Additionally, most of the men in my study considered themselves middle class. As Dyson (2005) observed, not all Black leaders self-identify with the middle class. Consequently, a study could be conducted with Black male leaders who identify with an alternative socio-economic class. Still further, studies that consider sexual orientation and other ethnicities (e.g. Latino, Asian) could also yield very interesting results.

Next, studies that feature alternative research designs could also be considered. For example, Bass and Avolio (1990) are among several researchers who have developed instruments designed to empirically measure the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Similarly, religious and spiritually based models (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Hill & Hood, 1999) have been designed to produce empirical results as well. These instruments may or may not be useful for researchers who desire to conduct similar studies using a quantitative approach.

In addition, some scholars have raised questions regarding the self-referential nature of transformational leadership. These questions pertain as to whether or not transformational leadership properly takes into account the role of stewardship or servant-hood in actualizing followers to achieve their maximum potentials. This is a criticism of transformational leadership. Although other scholars - those who contend that transformational leaders can be good stewards and serve followers in mutually

beneficial relationships - refute this criticism, the substance of this criticism raises valid concerns about transformational leadership. For this reason, further research comparing transformational leadership with servant leadership is recommended.

Finally, a longitudinal study would be valuable in building upon this research. It would be insightful to learn the degree to which participants will integrate spirituality into their leadership and social justice practices beyond the researcher's field experience. As this study has shown, participants are at different stages of their leadership development. They are in the process of becoming and not being (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Nearly all of the participants commented that their interview was thought provoking and would make them reflect upon future leadership decisions. Fluker (2008) and Yasuno (2008) suggested that leaders in many public venues are increasingly turning to approaches that emphasize spirituality as an authoritative source in their leadership decisions. All of these Black men are in strategic leadership positions within their communities. As such, the decisions that they make will affect the lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors of many people in Central Ohio and beyond. Researching the effects of these decisions and their connection to the participants' integration of spirituality, leadership, and social justice will finalize this research. In particular, it will shed light on whether or not their leadership practices address larger ethical questions of justice, equity, and truth-telling that can be raised in their spheres of influence.

Conclusion

This study sought to answer the call of leadership scholars for new models of Black leadership that courageously combat against the threat of cultural nihilism, which is quite pervasive in the Black community. Additionally, this study sought to add to the

limited body of research regarding Black men and their roles in leadership. To accomplish this, I explored the stories of five Black male leaders, and investigated the role of spirituality in their leadership and social justice practices.

From this work, I discovered that while all of these Black male leaders felt a responsibility to address societal inequities within their community, only two grounded this responsibility in their spirituality. This melding of Black spirituality with leadership and social justice is consistent with Dantley's (2003) Critical Transformative Leadership (CTL). This study argued that Black male leaders, who effectively apply CTL to their respective leadership contexts, emulate race-transcending prophetic behavior.

According to West (1994), race-transcending prophets actualize the new models of leadership the Black community needs; at the same time, he asserted that such leaders have yet to be produced by this post-modern generation. The findings of this study suggest that West's assertions may need to be modified. Moreover, perhaps West was led to make this assertion due to the lack of adequate models to identify and evaluate race-transcending prophets. With this in mind, the researcher suggested that CTL shows great promise to not only identify race-transcending prophets, but also to answer the clarion call for new models of Black leadership.

To authenticate CTL as an appropriate model, however, is beyond the scope of this study. This is because this study employed narrative inquiry as a methodology. The purpose of narrative inquiry is not to evaluate theoretical models, but to analyze and report on participants' experiences. For this reason, the researcher has suggested that future studies employ alternative methodologies to explore CTL as a model for identifying and forging race-transcending prophets. For example, a case study would

allow researchers to draw more concrete conclusions about the efficacy of CTL in select cases and scenarios. Furthermore, a study using grounded theory could not only investigate CTL, but also yield alternative models for Black leadership that address the needs for such models in the Black community.

Moreover, though my study focused on Black men, I would be remiss if I did not mention Black women. Race-transcending prophets can be found in persons of all genders; hence, any researcher looking to develop new models of Black leadership should be inclusive of Black female perspectives as well.

Finally, race-transcending prophets synthesize spirituality with leadership and social justice. This interdisciplinarity has relevance beyond the Black community. This is why future studies should also explore the intersection of spirituality, leadership, and social justice from the perspectives of other populations who have historically fought against societal inequities due to the uniqueness of their genders, classes, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or belief systems.

When this research process began, the United States was on the brink of electing Barack Obama, a former community organizer, as the first Black president of the United States of America. There are some people who believe that President Obama may be the first globally recognized race-transcending prophet of this post-modern generation. Whether this is actualized remains to be seen. Nevertheless, his election generated optimism within this researcher.

For this researcher, selecting this topic emanated from a desire to explore leadership models designed to courageously combat the nihilistic threat and assiduously advocate for social justice for all Americans. I wondered if these leadership models

existed and whether or not there were leaders who actualize such models. Consequently, I asked the questions “Who shall we send?” and “Who will go for us?” Throughout this research process, my curiosity evolved, and I recognized that these questions were not only posed outwardly but they pointed inwardly as well. Many of the questions I asked of the participants were also my own. Just as I could not ignore them, neither should leaders who read this research. In the words of the mystic Howard Thurman, “each of us has a private life; there is a world within where for us the great issues of our lives are determined” (Thurman, 1954, p. 19). I challenge leaders to grapple with these questions, to take the words in this study and transform them into working papers for real life. Perhaps the next race-transcending prophet lies within you.

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Appendix A

Letter of Invitation

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Title]

[Organization Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear**[Recipient Name]**:

As a graduate student of The Union Institute & University, I am inviting you to participate in a research study on The Role of Spirituality in the Leadership and Social Justice Practices of Black Men.

You are being asked to participate in this research inquiry, which is designed to solicit the stories of professional Black men sharing their spiritual, leadership, and social justice experiences. This research study will be conducted as part of my doctoral degree program. I will ask you to participate in a one hour, audio-recorded interview. An additional interview, lasting approximately one hour, may be needed to review the transcript of the first interview, follow-up questions, and clarification. Additionally, you are asked to permit me (the researcher) to attend a staff meeting at your organization. Combined with the interviews, your total time commitment for this study will be approximately three hours.

There are minimal risks associated with this study. The benefits for the individual may be the opportunity to understand their experiences as they reflect upon their own spirituality and how it informs their leadership and/or social justice practices. In addition, research gleaned from elements in your story may reveal leadership practices that are transferable to a multiplicity of contexts that transcend issues germane to the Black Community, and be applicable for leaders committed to championing social justice practices for all Americans. You will not receive any financial contribution for your participation, nor will you incur any costs as a result of your participation in this research. Your identity in this study will be confidential. You are free to choose whether to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, after the study is completed, a summary of the results will be sent to you. If you request an interview to discuss the results of the study, you will have that opportunity.

If you agree to participate in this study, please contact me by E-mail, phone, or letter by (date). I will forward a copy of the consent form, which you may review and which will need to be signed by you before we may begin the formal research.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you, soon!

Sincerely

Charles A. Montgomery, Jr.
Candidate, Cohort Ph.D. Program
Union Institute & University
Cincinnati, Ohio

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Directions

Please read this consent form carefully and ask any questions before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Project Title: The Role of Spirituality in the Leadership Practices of Black Men	
Principal Investigator: Charles A. Montgomery	Organization: Union Institute & University Cincinnati, Ohio
Location of Study: Columbus, Ohio Metropolitan Area	Telephone #: 614.206.9865

Purpose of this Research Study:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the following research questions: (1) how do the stories of selected Black men reflect their understanding of leadership and (2) does this understanding influence their expression of social justice?

Procedures:

You will be asked to participate in a one hour, audio-recorded interview. An additional interview, lasting approximately one hour, may be needed to review the transcript of the first interview, follow-up questions, and clarification. The setting for these interviews will be at a place convenient for you, such as your office or your home. Additionally, you are asked to permit the researcher to attend a staff meeting at your organization. Combined with the interviews, your total time commitment for this study will be approximately three hours.

Possible Risks:

The primary risk to participants, although minimal, is a loss of confidentiality if your interview responses were to be made public and be associated with your name. To prevent such a loss, your real name will not be used in the data analysis or my dissertation. Your affiliated organization of which you are a member will have a pseudonym as well. You have the right to decide whether your pseudonym name and any direct quotations from your interviews may be included in my dissertation, future journals, or future professional presentations. You may indicate your preference on the last page of this form.

Possible Benefits:

The possible benefits for you may be the opportunity to have a greater understanding of the role spirituality plays in your own leadership and social justice practices. Moreover, sharing your experiences will help to amplify the voices of Black male leaders endeavoring to make positive changes in their communities. This may help quell cynical voices that purport that the Black Community is devoid of quality leadership that is capable of making a credible difference. Additionally, your participation will add to the limited body of research regarding Black men and their role in leadership. As such, information that emerges from this research may possibly be used to push for a new perception of Black men and their ability to be leaders in society. Finally, the stories you share may reveal leadership practices that are transferable to a multiplicity of contexts that transcend issues germane to the Black Community, and be applicable for leaders committed to championing social justice practices for all Americans.

Financial Considerations:

You will not receive any financial compensation for your participation in this research.

Confidentiality:

Your identity in this study will be treated as confidential. Results of this study, including all collected data, may be published in my dissertation and in possible future journal articles and professional presentations, but your name or any identifiable references to you will not be included. However, any records or data obtained as a result of your participation in this study may be inspected by the persons conducting this study and/or Union Institute & University's Institutional Review Board, provided that such inspectors are legally obligated to protect any identifiable information from public disclosure, except where disclosure is otherwise required by law or a court of competent jurisdiction. These records will be kept private in so far as permitted by law.

All steps will be taken to protect confidentiality by using pseudonyms for each local organizing committee as well as a pseudonym for the names of each participant. The records will be secured in my home office and I will be the only one who will have access to them. Study records and data will be destroyed a minimum of three years after completion of the study. I will destroy the records as principle researcher.

Termination of Study:

You are free to choose whether to participate in this study. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any time. You will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or choose to withdraw. You will be provided with any significant new findings developed during the course of this study that may relate to or influence your willingness to continue participation. In the event you decide to discontinue your participation in the study, please notify Charles Montgomery, 614.555.5555, Charles.montgomery@email.myunion.edu, of your decision so that your participation can be terminated in an orderly fashion. The investigator may terminate your participation in the study without your consent under the following circumstances: failure to appear for a scheduled interview, failure to schedule an interview after two attempts, the research is terminated, or the sample population must be changed.

Additionally, Charles Montgomery may need to terminate the study without prior notice to, or consent of, the participants in the event of illness or other reasons. In the event this happens, all data collected on, about, or by the participant will be destroyed and not used in the data analysis or writing of the findings if the participant withdraws. The types of data collection instruments include interview responses, e-mail messages, transcriptions from phone conversations, and observational notes from meetings.

After the study is completed:

After completion of the study, a summary of the results will be provided via e-mail upon request. Additionally, if you request a conversation about the findings, you will be offered the opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss the findings further.

Resources: *Any questions you have about the study will be answered by*

Researcher: Charles Montgomery, 555 Street, Central, OH 43555, 614.555.5555
charles.montgomery@email.myunion.edu and:

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bernice Ledbetter, 555.555.5555, bernice.ledbetter@myunion.edu

Any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject will be answered by the IRB Coordinator, Union Institute & University, 1.800.486.3116, ext. 1153, irb@tui.edu

In case of the research related emergency call:

Researcher: Charles Montgomery, 614.555.5555,
charles.montgomery@email.myunion.edu and:

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bernice Ledbetter, 555.555.5555, bernice.ledbetter@myunion.edu

Subject and Researcher Authorization:

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, State, or local laws.

Signatures

Participant Name (printed):

Participant Signature:

Date:

Principal Researcher's name (printed):

Principal Researcher's Signature:

Date:

_____ Yes, you may use my pseudonym name and direct quotations from my interviews in the dissertation and in any future publications.

_____ No, you may NOT use my pseudonym name or direct quotations from my interviews in the dissertation or in any future publications.

_____ Yes, you may attend a staff meeting at my organization.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Before beginning the actual interview, I will follow the steps listed below:

1. Explain the nature of the research to the participant.
2. Ask if the participant is willing to sign the consent form, granting permissions for data from the study to appear in publications.
3. Ask if the participant is willing to have the interview taped. Assure the participant no one but I and a transcriptionist will not review the recording and that confidentiality will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms (If there are confidentiality concerns, I will elaborate further that no one will receive any information that would allow for the identification of an individual. I am far more likely to report general trends than individual interviews.)
4. Ask if the participant has any questions before I begin.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your professional work history.
2. What does spirituality mean to you?
3. How have your spiritual beliefs evolved over time?
4. What are some ways you practice your spirituality?
5. In what ways does your spirituality influence your professional work?
6. Probe: Give me a specific example.
7. In what ways does your spirituality influence your decision-making?
8. Probe: Give me a specific example, today or this week.
9. To what extent do you make your spirituality visible as a boss?

10. What are the obstacles that get in the way of bringing spirituality into your leadership?
11. How has your race affected your leadership?
12. What are your goals for your organization this year?
13. How do you define social justice?
14. What role does social justice play in your leadership?
15. How does your spiritual leadership influence your employees' achievement? How does it play out in your spheres of influence?
16. Is there a connection between your spirituality and social justice?
17. Is there anything else you want to tell me about how spirituality influences your leadership?
18. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D

Transcription Confidentiality Form

Confidentiality Agreement

Transcription Services

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Charles Montgomery related to his doctoral study on The Role of Spirituality in the Leadership and Social Justice Practices of Black Men. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Charles Montgomery;
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Charles Montgomery in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____