

## ABSTRACT

### Faith, Work, and Praxis: A Process Model of Integration for Christian Student Affairs Administrators

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The purpose of this study is to better understand the faith integration process of Christian student affairs administrators. The concept of faith integration has prompted scholars to study this phenomenon for institutions as whole as well as for faculty members. However, the research surrounding student affairs administrators and how their faith shapes their work is insufficient. The findings of this study provide a model that illustrates the process student affairs administrators employ to connect their faith to their work. The findings suggest that the model is not confined to specific Christian denominations, but it can be implemented by various Christian identities. The model may help student affairs administrators consider how they express their faith in their work, and help them continue to engage in this practice in meaningful ways.

Faith, Work, and Praxis: A Process Model of Integration  
for Christian Student Affairs Administrators

by

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A Thesis

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	viii
DEDICATION .....	ix
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
<i>Introduction</i> .....	1
Positioning Religion and Spirituality in Student Affairs Administration.....	2
Christian Higher Education.....	5
Faith Integration.....	9
Models of Reflective Practice .....	13
Statement of the Problem .....	15
Significance .....	16
Definitions.....	17
CHAPTER TWO .....	18
<i>Literature Review</i> .....	18
Faith Integration and Christian Colleges.....	19
Faith Integration and Faculty.....	20
Faith Integration and Students.....	23
Faith Integration and Upper-Level Administration .....	25
Faith Integration and Student Affairs Administrators.....	26
Reflective Models .....	30
CHAPTER THREE .....	34
<i>Methodology</i> .....	34
The Conceptual Framework .....	34
Methodology.....	38
CHAPTER 4 .....	44
<i>Findings: Religious Identity and Faith Integration Sense Making</i> .....	44
Religious Identity .....	45
Sources of Religious Belief .....	51
Modifiers.....	57
Participant’s Understanding of Faith Integration.....	67
Theory.....	71
Components of Theory.....	71
CHAPTER FIVE .....	73
<i>Findings: The Elements of the Conceptual Framework</i> .....	73
Anticipatory Reflective Action.....	73
Active Reflection.....	79
Post Reflective Action.....	87
Change to the Individual .....	92

Unknown Change to Individuals.....	101
Change to the Group.....	101
CHAPTER SIX.....	105
<i>Discussion</i> .....	105
Praxis Model: The Relationship Between the Elements.....	106
Changes to the Model.....	115
The Nature of Perceived Student and Group Change.....	117
Results of Praxis.....	118
The Power Element of Praxis.....	119
The Universality of the Model.....	121
Variations of Praxis.....	122
Unintentional Intentionality: Intentional Expressions of Faith.....	124
The Relationship Between Practice and Praxis.....	126
Limitations.....	130
Implications.....	132
APPENDIX A.....	138
<i>Positionality Statement</i> .....	138
<i>Interview Questions</i> .....	140
REFERENCES.....	142

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Operationalization of Praxis .....	35
Figure 2. Components of Theory Model.....	72
Figure 3. Operationalization of Praxis.....	74
Figure 4. Praxis Model.....	106
Figure 5. Theory Relationship Model.....	108
Figure 6. The Position of Telos in Theory.....	131

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Affiliations and Demographics .....	40
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## DEDICATION

To my friend and mentor Monica,  
You taught me to ask tough questions,  
Pursue truth, and to enjoy the process

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Mid-level administrators “are the unsung professionals of the academy,” and their work often goes unrecognized (Rosser, 2000, p. 5). Their days are frequently filled with back-to-back meetings and schedules that require them to be on campus beyond the regular workday. Despite their busy schedules, Christian institutions suggest through their institutional mission and values that administrators should incorporate elements of the Christian faith within their work. Staff meetings and retreats are often consumed by the important tasks of visioning and planning processes. The pressure to perform and push to plow through one’s job “creates a treadmill effect that works against reflective questioning and covenantal relationships” (Allen & Kellom, 2001, p. 50). Student affairs administrators do essential work that is deadline driven, and yet Christian colleges also expect them to be thinking in meaningful ways about the way their faith impacts the work they do. Student affairs administrators’ worklife is pressured and pragmatic. Within this professional environment it is difficult to ascertain how these individuals are going about integrating faith into their worklife. Despite the emphasis upon faith integration, it is unclear if and how faith integration is occurring. We have lacked metrics to meaningfully explore and explain the ways in which it is occurring already, and perhaps, ways which it is not. This study focuses on the Christian faith of student affairs administrators and its role in shaping their professional worklives. In order to understand the process through which student affairs administrators’ faith shapes their work, it is important to understand

the role of student affairs administrators, the distinct mission of Christian colleges and universities, and the current state of faith integration.

*Positioning Religion and Spirituality in Student Affairs Administration*

From its beginning, higher education in America sought to develop students morally; the founders of Harvard, “understood college, first and foremost, as a place to shape students’ souls and characters in order to form their vision of the good life” (Glanzer & Ream, 2009). Within the Christian tradition, these early colleges promoted moral development through required theological ethics courses, chapel, prayer, and rules (Glanzer & Ream, 2009). Through the mid 1800s colleges and university’s natural theology and capstone moral philosophy courses, along with other Christian practices, resulted in an education that was primarily devoted to moral formation (Glanzer & Ream, 2009). The rise of the moral philosophy courses gradually resulted in institutions and faculty that adhered to an Enlightenment or Democratic tradition more than the Christian tradition (Glanzer & Ream, 2009).

In the late 1800s, educated Americans attacked the classic liberal arts curriculum, claiming that students were not taking enough practical courses (Reuben, 1996). As a result, education reformers looked towards science as the lens through which to study religion. By the early 1900s they were increasingly assumed to be incomparable, and the study of value-free science emerged (Reuben 1996). Consequently, scholars in the humanities argued that colleges were not providing adequate moral guidance and took up the cause. In the 1910s and 1920s, Reuben (1996) suggests that university administrators began to shift the role of moral development outside of the curriculum (Reuben, 1996).

At this juncture, colleges began to hire administrators and what are now known as student affairs staff to take on the role of character development in students. Through advising, orientation programs, and the establishment of residence halls, moral education, and character development of students was passed from the curricular to the co-curricular (Reuben, 1996).

To help define the role of the growing number of administrators on campus, the American Council on Education created a committee in 1936 to form an official document that outlined the work of student personnel on college campuses (American Council on Education [ACE], 1937). The nature of the document suggests that student affairs administrators have made it their goal to develop students holistically even before it became a profession (ACE, 1937). The Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) called upon student affairs administrators to assist in students' "progression in religious, emotional, social development, and other non-academic personal and group relationships" (ACE, 1937, p. 3). In addition, the SPPV claimed that an effective education program in student personnel services includes, "supervising, evaluating, and developing the religious life and interest of students" (ACE, 1937, p. 4). As Glanzer and Ream (2009) note, the American Council on Education revised the SPPV in 1949 and placed the Democratic tradition as the narrative through which moral development is understood.

Though the SPPV called professionals to focus on students' religious and spiritual growth, Reuben (1996) argues that the administrators' work to develop morals through a cohesive moral community and school spirit "easily slipped from being a means to moral influence to being ends in themselves" (p. 264). Consequently, the concept of spirituality

and religion had been left out of the discussions regarding the roles of student affairs professionals in secular colleges and universities in order to emphasize morality through democratic ideals.

In the past thirty years, secular campuses have begun to re-engage conversations regarding the need for student affairs administrators to facilitate students' spiritual development (Love, 2001). Scholars such as Fowler (1976) and Parks (1986) have aided in this endeavor by creating faith development models for administrators to use in their work with students. The rise of the spiritual development conversation is due in part to Astin, Astin, and Lindholm's (2011) foundational study on college students' spirituality, in which they suggest that spiritual matters are deeply important to college students. The growing emphasis on students' spiritual development during their college years suggests that student affairs administrators must have an understanding of their own spirituality (Allen & Kellom, 2001; Love, 2001) or sense of life purpose (Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009) in order to help their students develop fully. As a result, Allen and Kellom (2001) argue that student affairs divisions on higher education campuses should be working towards helping their administrators develop their own sense of spirituality and purpose.

Curtis and Moran (2004) suggest that student affairs administrators at both religious and non-religious institutions desire religio-spirituality within their workplace. Nash (2001) coined the term religio-spirituality out of the idea that religion and spirituality are often part of the same experience. Curtis and Moran (2004) found that student affairs administrators' work is influenced by their religio-spirituality in the way that they treat their colleagues as well as some of their leadership strategies, such as exhibiting patience and mimicking the mannerisms of pastors. Despite the desire for

religio-spirituality in the workplace, administrators are reluctant to express elements of their religio-spirituality because of fear, the controversial nature of the topic, and previous thwarted attempts when they had tried to vocalize their religio-spirituality in their work (Curtis & Moran, 2004). Student affairs administrators are often cognizant of their religio-spirituality, but in the broader context of higher education in America, as Curtis and Moran (2004) suggest, they are afraid and unable to express their perspectives thoroughly. Though student affairs administrators at secular institutions have increasingly been encouraged to incorporate spirituality in their work in recent years, (Curtis & Moran, 2004; Allen & Kellom, 2001) faculty and staff at Christian institutions are usually expected to make faith integration a part of their professional lives.

### *Christian Higher Education*

In contrast to secular higher education, the mission of the institution to develop students' faith has always been present in Christian colleges and universities. Many of the institutions that are committed to the Christian faith and its pervasiveness on campus are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU). The CCCCU is an international association of Christian colleges and universities that provides support and resources to help the institutions fulfill their Christian mission. In order to be a member of the CCCCU, an institution must meet these five requirements:

- 1) It is a nonprofit, North American institution with non-probationary regional accreditation (or the Canadian equivalent) that offers comprehensive undergraduate curricula rooted in the arts and sciences;
- 2) It has a Christian mission statement and integrates Biblical faith into its educational programs;
- 3) It has an institutional policy and practice to hire only persons who profess faith in Jesus Christ as full-time faculty members and administrators;
- 4) It is committed to advancing the cause of Christian higher education and is supportive of other Christian colleges and universities; and
- 5) It operates under the standards of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. (CCCCU Members, 2014)

According to the requirements, in order to be hired at a CCCU school, student affairs administrators must profess faith in Jesus-Christ and, once hired, work within the mission of the institution to integrate faith into educational programs. Consequently, the need to think about how administrators' faith relates to their work is not a suggestion, but it is an essential function of their job. These factors suggest that student affairs administrators are expected to be integrating faith in their work as a result of the institutional mission of the CCCU schools and the hiring requirements.

Individuals that work in committed Christian institutions must approach their work from a perspective of Christ-centeredness both in the curricular and the co-curricular (Reed, 2012). Benne's typology of church related colleges and universities places colleges on a continuum between those that are fully committed to the Christian mission along one side and institutions that have completely secularized on the other (Benne, 2001). The four types are Orthodox, Critical Mass, Intentionally Pluralistic, and Accidentally Pluralistic. The typology provides a useful delineation between those that place the Christian narrative as the central vision of the institution, (Orthodox and Critical Mass), and those that operate through secular or pluralistic narratives as the central vision (Intentionally Pluralist and Accidentally Pluralist). Orthodox and Critical Mass schools "are convinced that the Christian religious account of life and reality is comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central" (Benne, 2001, p. 51). The typology offers characteristics of the institutional life to identify where the institutions are on the continuum including: public relevance of Christian vision, public rhetoric, membership requirements, religion/theology department, required religion courses, chapel, ethos, church support, and governance. CCCU institutions would fall into Benne's Orthodox or Critical Mass

categories, in which the Christian mission is central to all areas of campus life.

Consequently, the typology helps provide clarity to the areas that the Christian mission is emphasized within, and the unique role that a student affairs administrator would have to play in emphasizing the Christian tradition of the institution within his or her worklife.

CCCU schools are important to this study because these institutions place an expectation upon their faculty and administration to fulfill the Christian mission of the school.

Because their institutions are members of the CCCU, student affairs administrators at these campuses should be thinking about how their faith relates to their worklives.

### *Student Affairs Professionals at Christian Colleges*

Student affairs administrators that work at religiously affiliated institutions have different requirements than student affairs administrators that work in the same position but at a different type of institution, such as a community colleges, historically black colleges or universities, and so on (Hirt, 2006). In order for student affairs administrators to be successful in Christian higher education, they must know and understand student development theory as well as have an understanding of the Christian faith at the institution where they serve (De Jong, 1997; Hirt, 2006). Most important, Hirt (2006) argues, is that Student Affairs Administrators must “interpret their own personal faith into the work they perform on campus” (p. 193). Christians in the student affairs profession not only promote citizenship and values, but they also ideally “strive to inculcate distinct Christian virtues revealed in scripture in their leadership training programs” (Thornbury, 2002). In consideration of Benne’s typology, schools that implement distinct Christian virtues that are pervasive in all aspects of campus life would belong to the Orthodox and Critically Mass types.

All aspects of a Christian college campus, faculty, staff, and administration, are called to help facilitate a culture of faith and spiritual formation on campus (Smith, 2012). Despite the mandate through the mission statements of the university and the CCCU, Guthrie (1997) and his colleagues noted that many Christian educators at Christian colleges and universities do not discuss with their colleagues how their Christian worldview shapes their work and lives. Furthermore, Guthrie (1997) and his colleagues observe that Christian student affairs administrators often do not critically reflect upon and complete their work through the lens of their faith. But, in order to be a Christian leader, it is imperative that administrator's consider how faith impacts actions (Thornbury, 2002). Thomas and Guthrie (1997) suggest that "[...] a Christian view of higher education in general and student affairs in particular is not only possible but is a natural outworking of basic allegiances; what Christians believe as true is appropriated in what they do" (p. 4). All aspects of student affairs administrators' work lives, such meetings, planning, and programming, are opportunities in which Christian service can be performed (Thomas & Guthrie, 1997). Because of their role on Christian campuses, student affairs administrators:

Must consider as their unique task exploring and uncovering goals and practices of work—for residence life initiatives, disciplinary procedures, orientation programs, personal and career counseling, and so on—that reflect their allegiance to a Christian view of reality. (Guthrie, 1997, p. 70)

The role of Christian student affairs administrators is not limited to creating programs that are only spiritual in nature, but they are to provide extensive co-curricular opportunities for students that are implemented and planned through a Christian worldview (Guthrie, 1997). Despite the need for student affairs administrators to incorporate faith in their work, some institutions and student affairs professionals “pay

scant attention to connecting beliefs and practices” (Guthrie, 1997, p. 73). If the role of Christian student affairs professionals resides within the context of student learning (Guthrie, 1997), their commitment to integrating their Christian faith into their programs should be present to help promote student learning at the deepest levels.

### *Faith Integration*

Since the 1970s, faith integration has become a prominent topic in Christian higher education, and is often considered the vehicle through which one’s personal faith shapes their worklife (Badley, 1994). Beers and Beers (2008) argue that the integration of faith and learning “is the foundational distinctive of a Christian college education” (p. 51). The conversations on this topic range from that of faith integration to that of the Christian worldview (Badley, 1994). Arthur Holmes (1987) offers four institutional approaches to faith integration: The Attitudinal Approach, The Ethical Approach, The Foundational Approach, and The Worldview Approach. According to Holmes:

Integration should be seen not as an achievement or a position but as an intellectual activity that goes on as long as we keep learning anything at all. Not only as an intellectual activity, however, for integrated learning will contribute to the integration of faith into every dimension of a person’s life and character. (1987, p. 46).

To Holmes, faith integration is not merely pulling the sacred and the secular together in the mind, but it is an intellectual activity that results in the way one behaves in the world.

Moreover, William Hasker (1991) offers four dimensions of faith integration for faculty: *theory applied to practice, ethics and values, attitudes, and contributions to the Kingdom of God*. The four dimensions are different methods and areas where faith can be integrated into faculty life. More recently, Moroney (2014) sought to remap the terrain of faith integration that Hasker (1991) provided. Moroney offered three different approaches

scholars currently use in regards to faith and learning: *Faith-Learning Integration Approaches*, *Christian Worldview Approaches*, and *Practice and Formation Approaches*. Moroney's work suggests that scholars disagree about how different faculty members approach the faith integration task in their professional work. Ream, Beaty, and Lion (2004) found that faculty at religious research universities expressed differing views on the role of faith in the classroom in eight categories, from Pattern I, faith and learning are separate and independent, to Pattern VIII, complete integration.

Other than Holmes, who is institutionally focused, applications of faith integration focus on the classroom and do not pose frameworks for student affairs administrators on college campuses. Beers and Beers (2008) suggest that faith integration can occur in the classroom through reflective action, by helping students ask What? So What? and Now What?, and then by asking the integrative question that draws upon biblical and theological understanding to merge the content with the discipline. They suggest that this model could be appropriated for student affairs professionals in helping them think about their departments and work (Beers & Beers, 2008).

In recent years, scholarship regarding faith integration and administrative work on college campuses has begun to turn toward senior-level administrators, such as presidents, provosts, and vice presidents of universities (Heie & Sargent, 2012; Longman, 2012, Robinson, 2012). Heie and Sargent's (2012) book, *Soul Care*, is comprised of upper-level administrators' reflections on how their faith affects the way that they approach their positions at the university. The chapters bridge concepts, practices, and mandates in the Christian faith with the daily tasks that administrators must tackle (Heie & Sargent, 2012). The literature has begun to address the paucity of scholarship

regarding administrators in Christian higher education, but a gap still remains for Mid-level college administrators.

Beers and Beers (2008) suggest that faith integration must occur for administrators on college campuses similarly as it does with the faculty. Even though many co-curricular activities look similar to those on non-religious campuses, “the integrative faith and learning distinctive is facilitated by embedding a Christian worldview within the program’s specific purpose” (Beers & Beers, 2008, p. 71). Student affairs administrators have the opportunity to encounter unique and real-life experiences with students as a result of their role on campus, because of this, they must know how to live out their Christian worldview in various situations with students (Beers & Beers, 2008). Beers and Beers (2008) propose that student affairs administrators will find frequent opportunities for faith integration during teachable moments with students. Beers and Beers (2008) further suggest that faith integration can occur similarly to faculty in the classroom by asking What?, So What?, and Now What?. Despite this framework, few resources exist for helping student affairs professionals consider how to best incorporate their faith in their worklives.

### *Faith Integration Resources*

Many Christian institutions, such as Azusa Pacific University, Baylor University, and Union University house faculty development centers that assist faculty in merging their Christian faith with their scholarship and classroom teaching. These centers often include extensive resources and training for the faculty. For example, Azusa Pacific University provides a faith integration handbook to the faculty. The guidebook suggests, “The instructor’s work is ‘faith integration;’ and the intended outcome is the ‘wholistic

spiritual formation’ of the learners” (APU, 2012, p. 4). The guidebook details the nuances and types of faith integration, discusses the individual and departmental role in faith integration, as well as a list of faith integration competencies. The book then shifts to practical applications of faith integration in incorporating faith in the classroom setting as well as in scholarship. Lastly, the guidebook reveals the required faith integration evaluation processes for faculty and provides supplementary resources including development and literature to further aid in the faith integration endeavor. The APU guidebook extensively helps define and assist faculty in incorporating their faith within their work and offers little mention of the administrative task beyond their role as community partners (APU, 2012).

In addition, the CCCU provides resources and professional development for faculty that include a Faith and Learning Integration Channel, where faculty can watch peer-reviewed online videos that model faith integration practices in many different disciplines (CCCU Prof, 2014). The organization also offers faith integration online courses as well as an extensive resource library that details faith integration for faculty. Despite the directive for administrators to also profess a personal faith in Christ, the CCCU provides few resources for administrators seeking to bring their faith and work into conversation with one another.

The primary professional resource regarding how Christian faith intersects with student affairs administrator’s work is through the Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD). The mission of the ACSD is to “equip and challenge members to infuse their Christian faith into student development practice and scholarship” (ACSD, 2014). The organization provides resources through the *Growth* journal as well as a

yearly conference and retreats. The journal has begun to emerge as the leader in conversations regarding faith integration and student affairs administrators. The journal is topical, but it is typically not conceptual. It documents societal issues, changes, and phenomena that are shaping Christian higher education, but it is not tangible in the sense of advancing frameworks that administrators can use in considering how their faith shapes their professional work.

### *Models of Reflective Practice*

The ACSD exists to help student affairs administrators combine their faith and their work lives, and the organization's journal provides beneficial articles that engage salient issues in Christian higher education. However, articulating reflective models or frameworks for understanding the methods through which faith integration occurs in student affairs administrators' work is seldom a part of the journal's content. Reflective models can be used to conceptualize how the Christian faith invigorates student affairs administrators' worklives. Rogers (2001) suggests that "The intent of reflection is to integrate the understanding gained into one's experience in order to enable better choices or actions in the future as well as to enhance one's overall effectiveness" (p. 41). The ultimate purpose for reflection that Rogers (2001) poses could be similar to what occurs when administrators consider their faith in relation to their work. As Rogers (2001) notes, as one reflects upon their past and future experiences, insight is obtained that enables changes in effectiveness. In the case of the Christian student affairs administrator this change in effectiveness could be equated with the change that results from incorporating faith in one's work.

Kolb's (1984) *Theory of Experiential Learning* proposes how the reflective process can manifest itself in learning. The model helps educators understand how students approach learning through various learning styles, and how the process of learning shapes understanding through the cyclical process of *concrete experience*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation* (Kolb, 1984). In order to learn effectively, Kolb argues that an individual must move through all of the steps.

Another reflective model that is not as complex as Kolb's (1984) model is Schon's (1983) model. Rather than focusing on a process, Schon (1983) suggests two different types of reflection to help an individual make sense of an event. Schon (1983) suggests that reflection can either occur during action or after action to aid an individual in understanding a situation. This model does not shape behavior; instead, the model transforms understanding.

Another way to think about the reflective process is through the term *praxis*. Over the past few centuries, the meaning of the term *praxis* has shifted. Building upon the foundations of Marx, in South America, Freire (1993) latched onto the term *praxis* as a way to understand and encourage social change. He suggests that *praxis* involves both reflection and action to bring about change in society (Freire, 2000). Consequently, the process of *praxis* encourages change in both the individual and the community. This study will define *praxis* as *the process of active reflection and reflective action to bring about change to the individual or the group*. This is a framework that can be used to help us make sense of how student affairs administrators might bring their faith and worklives into conversation with one another.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Despite the wealth of research and resources for faculty and upper-level administrators in the academy, there is little written that seeks to understand how student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work. The CCCU requires that member institutions hire administrators that ascribe to the Christian faith as well as have a mission to incorporate the Christian faith into all aspects of the university. Guthrie (1997) suggests,

Because student learning takes shape around the ultimate beliefs of individuals and institutions, it is incumbent upon student affairs professionals at Christian colleges not only to view and enact their work as contributing to student learning but also to do so in ways consistent with Christian beliefs. (p. 71)

Furthermore, Beers and Beers suggest, "When we take seriously the holistic nature of our institution's educational missions, the student development staff and their programs become a unique and primary tool for integration" (Beers & Beers, 2008). Student affairs professionals need to incorporate their spiritual or religious lives within the confines of their work, but few have discussed how this is done, or the way administrators are thinking about it. Despite the unique role that student affairs administrators play on college campuses in helping to fulfill the Christian mission of the institution through the co-curricular, there is little research revealing how the Christian faith of student affairs administrators shapes their professional worklives. This qualitative, exploratory study addresses this gap in the literature by asking the following question: *What is the process through which student affairs administrators' Christian faith shapes their professional work?* This question was further refined by the following sub-questions:

- How do student affairs administrators articulate their Christian faith and its expression in their work?

- What does the concept of praxis illuminate about the way that Christian student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work?
- What experiences have influenced how administrators think their faith should shape their work processes?

### *Significance*

This exploratory study will contribute to a growing body of literature around the faith integration of administrators, more specifically student affairs professionals. The study will not only provide information about which factors influence student affairs practitioner's personal formation that is incorporated within their work, but also the different arenas within their worklives that SAPs perceive are shaped by their Christian faith. This study will also seek to identify the processes through which student affairs professionals are incorporating their faith within their work. The findings of this study could impact the way in which student affairs administrators at CCCU schools reflect upon the relationship between their personal faith and their professional work, helping them fulfill the mission of the institution.

Most importantly, this study will provide important information for student affairs administrators at Christian institutions, contributing to an area that needs significant exploration, especially in the area of how student affairs administrators can begin thinking about how their faith can shape their professional lives. This outcome could be useful for both graduate students and programs that are preparing students to seek student affairs positions at Christian institutions or administrators already working within the institutions, providing a resource to help them conceptualize how their own personal faith shapes their professional worklives, enabling them to work more intentionally.

### *Definitions*

Christian faith: In this study, Christian faith will be defined as *a belief and commitment to God that shapes an individual's vision of reality and purpose* (Cobb, 1999). The participants in the study will define their understanding of their Christian faith as part of the interview process.

Praxis: Based upon the historical development of the term and its incorporation of the reflective process, in this study, praxis will be defined as *a process of active reflection and reflective action that brings about change to the individual or the group*.

Mid-level Student Affairs Administrators: In this study, student affairs administrators are defined as *administrators that are working under the Division of Student Life, or the equivalent at their CCCU institutions, that hold supervisory or directorial roles but are also supervised* (Rosser, 2000; Rosser, 2004).

Worklife: For the purposes of this study, I define worklife as including *the essential job functions, experiences, and behavior that an individual is involved in within their professional role* (Johnsrud, 2002; Rosser, 2004).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

The current faith integration literature contains several key areas of emphasis: institutional perspectives on faith integration (Holmes, 1987), students' faith and spiritual development (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Badley, 1996; Holmes, 1987; Moroney, 2014; Ream & Glanzer, 2009), the faith integration of faculty (Hasker, 1992; Moroney, 2014) and upper-level administrators' faith integration (Heie & Sargent, 2012; Longman, 2012; Tippens, 2012). In this study, I consider an area of the faith integration discussion that has not extensively been explored: the way in which student affairs administrators' Christian faith transforms their professional work. Though the literature on the subject is growing, very few authors discuss how faith relates to student affairs administrators' worklives. The nature of faculty work implicitly contains a concern for ideas. For Christian scholars, reflecting on the relationship between faith and professional work at Christian institutions is often an expected endeavor. On the other hand, administrative work is schedule driven, leaving little time for imaginative work. Furthermore, faculty members are expected to teach students, produce scholarship, and serve the university. Administrative roles are highly task oriented and filled with meetings and program planning. The contrast between faculty and administrative work, suggests their approaches to and sense making about faith integration might be different. A small group of authors have ventured into the realm of discussing student affairs administrators' Christian faith, and their role to integrate their faith in their work (see Guthrie, 1997; Beers & Beers, 2008; Reed, 2012; Hirt, 2006). Although their work is valuable, the

current scholarship either laments the lack of critical thinking regarding faith integration in student affairs and seeks to reconsider student affairs through a Christian worldview (Guthrie, 1997), or simply assumes that Christian administrators' faith should and is currently changing the work they do (Beers & Beers, 2008; Reed, 2012). This explains the importance of faith integration thinking, laying the foundation for its practice. However, no empirical data exists that supports claims about how the Christian faith actually invigorates and shapes student affairs administrators' worklives.

### *Faith Integration and Christian Colleges*

The landscape of faith integration literature focuses primarily upon the institution at large, the students, the faculty, and the upper-level administrators. Arthur Holmes (1987) argues that the Christian college is distinctive in that it does not compartmentalize religion. The Christian college “retains a unifying Christian worldview and brings it to bear in understanding and participating in the various arts and sciences, as well as nonacademic aspects of campus life” (Holmes, 1987, p. 9). Thus, Holmes (1987) asserts that Christian worldview must shape both the curricular and the co-curricular, extending to all aspects of campus life. He perceives integration as an intellectual activity that can further the life and character of an individual. Holmes (1987) argues that the Christian college is dedicated to integrating faith and learning and offers four approaches to faith integration as a result: the attitude through which one approaches work and study, ethical decision-making, Christian theological foundation, and a Christian worldview that is a systematic understanding of the world through a Christian perspective. Though Holmes (1987) argues for a general approach to faith integration, he places a greater emphasis on teaching and learning. Nevertheless, he argues for a campus-wide approach to faith

integration, but he does not offer practical approaches or examples of how administrators incorporate these four approaches in their work, which would be beneficial.

### *Faith Integration and Faculty*

#### *Scholarship*

Although faith integration is, at some colleges, an institution-wide priority, others define faith integration narrowly within the domain of the faculty. William Hasker (1992) sought to create a map of the landscape of faith integration in the early 1990's. Hasker (1992) defines faith integration as "*a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and to develop integral relationships which exist between the Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines*" (p. 234).

Hasker asserts that the integration project is embedded within the scholarship of Christian faculty. His model builds upon Ronald Nelson's (1987) strategies to understand the relationship between specific disciplines and the Christian faith: *compatibilist*, *transformationalist*, and *reconstructionist*. Hasker then offers four dimensions of faith integration within the within the theoretical disciplines to help faculty consider how they might approach the task: *worldview foundations*, *disciplinary foundations*, *disciplinary practice*, and *worldview contributions*. He further offers four dimensions of faith integration applied to the disciplines: *theory applied to practice*, *ethics and values*, *attitudes*, and *contributions to the Kingdom of God*. Hasker takes into account the differences between theoretical and applied disciplines and suggests faith integration approaches for each, but he does not define nor recognize the role of faith integration in the co-curricular. Hasker's definition of faith integration emphasizes the scholarship of

faculty working across campus. His framework might be able to be expanded to administrators, but his focus in this work is on the activities of the faculty.

In response to the changing nature of higher education, Stephen Moroney (2014) worked to “re-map the current state of how Christian scholars approach the intersection of faith and learning” (p. 140). Moroney details three prominent categories detailing how faith intersects with scholarship, and he suggests that individuals can operate in one category exclusively or blend them to fit their needs. Moroney’s first category is the *faith-integration approach* that seeks to re-integrate faith into a discipline that may have been separated as a faculty member pursued graduate education at a non-Christian university. This approach to faith-integration emphasizes the role of the faculty member to bring the subject matter and faith into conversation with one another. Moroney’s second category is the *Christian worldview approach*. In this approach scholars and students are expected to think about academic content from a Christian perspective, which “shapes how they integrate their faith selectively within their college disciplines” (Moroney, 2014, p. 149). The third category that Moroney details is the *practice and formation approach*. The practice and formation approach pursues “student formation via a wide variety of classroom practices and course-related activities” (Moroney, 2014, p. 151). Moroney’s work seeks to update the map of the approaches used in the intersection of faith and learning, but he, like Hasker (1992) points his attention to the faculty. It is possible that administrators approach their faith interacting with their work in similar ways, but the current conversation surrounding faith integration continues to build upon past models of faith integration in scholarship and teaching and seldom extends these frameworks into the co-curricular.

### *Practices/Teaching*

The last of Moroney's (2014) approaches identifies an emerging body of literature in Christian higher education that considers the Christian practices within the professor's pedagogical methods rather than within scholarship. Dykstra (2005) claims, "the idea of 'practices' provides a helpful way in which to organize the work of education, both conceptually and practically" (p. 74). David I. Smith and James K. A. Smith (2011) offer one of the leading works detailing the narratives of different faculty members' use of practice and faith integration within the classroom. Smith and Smith (2011) suggest the practices of the Christian tradition hold "a kind of pedagogical wisdom on which we can draw for Christian teaching more broadly" (p. 17). Incorporating practices in one's work requires more complex pedagogical strategies than teaching students about Christian ideas and encourages the faculty and the student to engage in meaningful Christian practices alongside one another to shape behavior (Smith, 2011). At the end of the book, Smith (2011) argues that practices are not only something that faculty members engage in with students, but practices "are also something that we do with other teachers and members of our institutions, a journey best sustained amid a community of colleagues actively attending to their communal formation as practitioners of Christian learning" (p. 222). Amidst the call to engage Christian practices across the institution, the book does not detail what it might look like for student affairs administrators and faculty to engage in Christian practices with one another. The work focuses on the role of Christian practices within the classroom. Though this is a worthy aim, Christian practices can also serve as inspiration for the worklives of student affairs professionals and administrators across the institution.

### *Faith Integration and Students*

In addition to focusing upon the faith integration approaches of the institution as a whole and the faculty, students are often viewed as the locus of many of the conversations regarding faith and Christian higher education (Badley, 1996). Under the comprehensive approach to faith integration, Holmes (1987) includes the student in his understanding of faith integration. The student is expected to approach education with the proper attitude, keeping in mind that the role of “student” is a calling (Holmes, 1987). In addition, Moroney (2014) discusses the call upon students to employ a Christian worldview as they engage course materials and eventually life beyond college. Furthermore, Moroney (2014) argues that when a faculty member asks students to engage in Christian practices within their coursework, “they do not merely do something, but something is done to them because practices have a formative power” (p. 152). Though the process moves the student from the cerebral to the behavioral and from the behavioral to the cerebral, the emphasis on the students’ action still lies within the classroom setting for both Holmes (1987) and Moroney (2014).

Sherr, Huff, and Curran (2008) studied the perceptions of how students perceive successful faith integration in the classroom. The authors found that student perceptions’ of the integration of faith and learning within the classroom resulted from the faculty member’s commitment to embody their Christian faith as a result of their relationship with God (Sherr, Huff, & Curran, 2007). Students suggested that one of the results of faith integration in the classroom was faculty commitment to foster relationships and express concern for students in their physical, emotional, and spiritual lives (Sherr, Huff, & Curran, 2007). Lastly, Sherr, Huff, and Curran (2007) found that students perceived

faith integration occurring when faculty expressed competence with the integration of faith and learning in the classroom, in which discussing faith and the curriculum seemed natural. The authors create a Christian vocation model that can be used to help faculty develop their effectiveness in faith integration, as well as a framework to measure student outcomes and students' ability to pursue their Christian vocation as a result of their education (Sherr, Huff, & Curran, 2007). Sherr, Huff, and Curran's study emphasizes student perceptions of faith integration in the classroom, and it does not extend to student perceptions of faith integration in the co-curricular.

Within the realm of the co-curricular, Christian colleges and universities have been encouraging spiritual development in students as a part of their institutional mission for a long time (Dalton, 2001), but until recently they did not begin to articulate how this should be happening. In mainstream colleges and universities, the conversation regarding students' inner lives re-emerged recently in part due to Astin, Astin, and Lindholm's (2011) foundational study on college students' spirituality. Within the student affairs profession's emphasis on holistic development of students, "to ignore the spiritual side of students' and faculty's lives is to encourage a kind of fragmentation and a lack of authenticity" (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011, p. 7). As a result of the growing emphasis on spiritual development, research that emphasizes and examines spirituality in the lives of college students is flourishing (Seifert & Harmon, 2009).

On the other hand, Christian institutions began thinking about holistic formation through concepts such as human flourishing that point the student towards a specific *telos* or end goal (Glanzer & Ream, 2009). Glanzer and Ream argue that a better term for faith integration might be the *redemptive development of humans and human creations*. The

concept of redemptive development of humans and human creations, Glanzer and Ream argue, focuses more upon the student than a traditional understanding of faith integration that primarily focuses upon faculty's actions in their teaching and scholarship. Glanzer and Ream offer a vision of what it might look like for administrators and faculty to approach their work with a redemptive purpose in mind that fits within the larger metanarrative of the Christian story. Though the vision is beneficial in drawing inspiration, the book does not detail how the administrator's faith shapes their work, specifically. The emphasis on spirituality in both mainstream and Christian institutions focuses upon the lives and development of the students and in the case of Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011), the faculty as well. Glanzer and Ream's (2009) vision of education includes both the curricular and the co-curricular, but the focus is upon student outcomes and moral development and not upon the ways that student affairs administrators' work is informed and invigorated by their Christian faith.

#### *Faith Integration and Upper-Level Administration*

In addition to faculty and students, researchers have recently begun to focus on the role of upper-level administrators and the essential nature of their work at Christian colleges. *Thriving in Leadership* chronicles the stories of 17 upper administrators and college presidents that are leaders in CCCU institutions (Longman, 2012). This compilation of narratives aims to help prepare future college leaders for positions in Christian higher education (Longman, 2012). The book is written in three parts outlining the interior life of a leader, the social intelligence needed to lead effectively, and how leaders can shape a thriving organizational culture. The chapters focusing on the interior life of leaders detail the necessary role of the Christian faith in administrative work. For

example, Morse (2012) asserts, “We are *Christian* administrators and leaders. We have a holy calling. We are engaged in a holy vocation. We lead from the center of Christ in us” (p. 74). For the Christian administrator, “leadership is more than following Jesus’ teachings. It is a life lived out of an inner conviction of the indwelling presence of Christ” (Morse, 2012, p. 74). Though the book’s main theme is not the role of the Christian faith in the life of the leader, the work suggests that the Christian faith should shape the work of upper-level Christian administrators.

Similarly, Harold Heie and Mark Sargent (2012) also detail how 16 academic leaders’ Christian faith shapes their approach to upper level academic administration. Similarly to Longman’s (2012) work, the first third of the volume recants underlying Christian virtues and values in academic leadership. For example, Darryl Tippens (2012) suggests that Christian administrators should incorporate spiritual practices such as Sabbath rest, hospitality, listening, confession, care, and self-care in their work and lives. These practices, Tippens (2012) argues, will enhance administrative effectiveness and aid the administrator in flourishing. Both Longman (2012) and Heie and Sargent (2012) emphasize the necessity of incorporating faith as presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents, offering valuable suggestions for upper-level administrators, but it is not yet known if these practices manifest themselves in the same way in the professional work of student affairs administrators.

#### *Faith Integration and Student Affairs Administrators*

Though researchers have focused upon faith in relation to faculty and growing literature on faith in relation to upper-level administrators has begun to emerge, the rest of the employees in higher education are often neglected (Reed, 2012). The literature that

exists on Christian student affairs administrators primarily suggests that those working to facilitate the co-curricular should be incorporating the Christian faith in their work. If the distinctive of Christian colleges and universities is the role of faith within the institution (Beers & Beers, 2008), both the faculty and administrative staff must be committed to this campus-wide vision, though, in application, the faith-integration outcomes might reflect the differences between administrative and faculty roles. Reed argues that in order “for students to gain a holistic, comprehensive education at CCCU schools, it is imperative that curricular and co-curricular departments be equally committed to the institution’s mission” (Reed, 2012, p. 102). Though the faculty’s integration of Christian faith is critical, “the rest of the university staff plays equally important roles in the lives of students, and so care should be exercised in hiring and programming these areas as well” (Reed, 2012, p. 102). As Reed (2012) asserts spiritual life departments should not be the default for fostering college students’ spiritual development on Christian campuses but “other co-curricular staff must model an integrative life” (p. 103). It is imperative to the mission of the institution for student affairs administrators to embody and act upon their Christian faith within their work (Reed, 2012). Reed’s assertion and work states the need for the incorporation of faith within both the curricular and the co-curricular, but it does not provide a framework, approaches, or analysis of the administrators’ actions. My study, however, seeks to understand exactly how student affairs administrators understand and incorporate their Christian faith within their work.

Similarly, Beers and Beers (2008) advocate that faith integration must exist in the curriculum as well as the co-curricular. If Christian colleges and universities “take seriously the holistic nature of our institutions’ educational missions, the student

development staff and their programs become a unique and primary tool for integration” (Beers & Beers, 2008, p. 70). Beers and Beers (2008) further argue that the key ingredients in infusing the Christian mission in the co-curricular realm are student affairs administrators that are intentional about the integrative process. In their work, they note that student affairs administrators interact with students in formal, informal, and serendipitous experiences, allowing many different methods and modes for faith integration. Beers and Beers (2008) offer a three-question process that administrators can use to think about how their faith shapes their work. The process involves asking reflective questions in the order: “What?”, “So What?”, and “Now What?” (Beers & Beers, 2008). Beers and Beers also argue that the integration of faith and learning in student affairs programming should highlight a Christian worldview and that the administrators “must have a baseline understanding of how to live out biblical truth in real life situations” (2008, p. 71). Furthermore, because student affairs administrators encounter one-on-one opportunities with students, Beers and Beers (2008) suggest that this relationship offers rich opportunities for faith integration. Though the framework that Beers and Beers proposes is beneficial for student affairs administrators in thinking about how they might incorporate faith within their worklife, the work does not include insights drawn from empirical data detailing how this is actually happening; they are simply stating the need and offering a possible tool for how to go about it.

In the forward to *Student Affairs Reconsidered: A Christian View of the Profession and its Contexts*, Ronald Wells (1997) notes that up until that book’s publication, few works had been written regarding the Christian perspective and student life. Guthrie (1997) recalled that in a meeting he and his colleagues “expressed

disappointment regarding the seemingly uncritical ways in which many Christian student affairs professionals understand and enact their work” (Guthrie, 1997, ix). Out of this reflection and conversation, the group worked together to reconsider the student affairs profession in light of a Christian worldview. Guthrie (1997) claims that student affairs administrators should “wrestle with how their Christian faith comes to bear in day-to-day practice” (p. 69). Furthermore, he asserts that the “Christian student affairs practitioner must consider as their unique task exploring and uncovering goals and practice of work[...] that reflect their allegiance to the Christian view of reality” (p. 70). Guthrie argues that the role of student affairs professionals is rooted in wisdom-focused student learning (1997). Because educators never approach their work neutrally, programs or learning opportunities must reflect the religious commitment of the student affairs practitioner (Guthrie, 1997). Guthrie and his colleagues note the necessity of committed Christians working within the student affairs profession that critically examine and consider how their faith shapes their work, but they also express the concern that student affairs practitioners are not engaging in these activities despite the stated need. As a result, their work offers a point of encouragement for Christian student affairs professionals to reconsider their work in light of their Christian faith and calls the field to encourage deliberate development in this area. The book mourns the lack of critical faith integration in the profession while also offering inspiration for administrators to consider this in their future worklives. Though this work is foundational for considering the role of Christian student affairs administrators, its authors are not primarily focused on understanding *how* administrators do or do not make sense of their faith within their work.

### *Reflective Models*

One approach to understanding how student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work is through reflective models. The aim of reflection is to fuse an experience and a theory or perspective in order to facilitate changes in future behavior as well as effectiveness (Rogers, 2001). Various authors have created reflective models to aid individuals in processing events (see Kolb, 1984; Schon, 1983).

Rogers (2001) studied seven different theoretical approaches to reflection in search of commonalities among them. He found that reflection is both a cognitive and an affective process that includes: (1) Identifying the problem and choosing to seek a solution, (2) Collecting additional information or think about the problem, (3) Planning a solution and decide to act, and (4) Taking committed action (Rogers, 2001). Though many of the models identified by Rogers (2001) differed in scope and length, he found they all included similar elements in which the reflective process brought about learning or increased personal or professional performance.

Kolb's (1984) *Theory of Experiential Learning* details a model of learning that consists of reflective process. Kolb (1984) proposed that learning is a four-stage cyclical process that entails *concrete experience* (CE), *reflective observation* (RE), *abstract conceptualization* (AC), and *active experimentation* (AE). To be an effective learner, Kolb (1984) suggests that an individual must engage in each of the components. Kolb (1984) further suggested that individual's personal learning styles shape the way they approach a learning situation. These learning styles include: *accommodating*, *diverging*, *converging*, and *assimilating* (Kolb, 1999). Consequently, each individual approaches the cycle of learning differently, but must engage the entire process that leads the student

through an experience, to contemplation of the experience, idea formulation, and incorporation of the ideas in actions (Evans et al., 2010). Lastly, Kolb (1984) argues that learning is a lifelong task through which individuals develop over time. His developmental process includes three stages: *acquisition*, *specialization*, and *integration*. In these three stages, an individual transitions from the basic levels of cognitive abilities to a more nuanced skillset in which individuals are able to express their non-dominant learning styles effectively (Evans et al., 2010). Kolb's model helps educators understand how students move through the learning process embedded in experiences as well as how the students prefer to approach the situation. The model is useful in understanding learning, but it emphasizes reflection that occurs after an event, and not before or during.

Donald Schon (1983) provides a framework for reflection that has implications for when and how one thinks about actions. His model consists of two processes, *reflection in action* and *reflection on action*. In order to seek understanding, Schon (1983) argues that during reflection in action the individuals are processing the event as it is happening; they “think about what they are doing while they are doing it” (Schon, 1983, p. 275). On the other hand, reflection on action is the process of thinking about the event after it has occurred and considering new information and perspectives (Schon, 1983). Both types of reflection do not seek to shape behavior, but as Schon notes, the two frameworks only seek to understand and think through the event.

Another reflective model that is rooted within the philosophical tradition is the concept of *praxis*. Freire developed the term praxis, and began writing about the concept within the realm of education. His ideas emerged out of Marxist understanding of the term. Freire (1993) suggests that praxis is both action and reflection. Freire (2000)

defines praxis as “reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed” (p. 126). Freire brings the theoretical and the behavioral together underneath the concept of praxis, involving active reflection and reflective action (Taylor, 1993). His understanding of praxis is not simply individualistic, but it also takes into account how praxis can shape the community (Kress & Lake, 2013). Effective praxis results in the transformation of both self and societies.

The concept of praxis offers a more nuanced understanding of the influence of reflection in producing change than Kolb (1984) and Schon (1983). Schon’s (1983) reflective model does not contain an element for change but the reflective process is a means for understanding a situation more fully. In order to understand how the Christian faith shapes a student affairs administrator’s worklife, the ability to harness reflection for change needs to be present. Kolb’s (1984) reflective model is much more complex in that it takes into account individual learning styles as well as allows individuals to enter the process where they feel most comfortable. Despite these complexities, no matter where an individual enters in the cycle, the model only allows for individual change and not systemic or group-level change. Praxis, however, allows for the fusion of theory and practice, which is necessary to understand how the Christian faith informs administrative actions. In addition, praxis makes room for changed perceptions before changed action results, in which one’s cognitive understanding of people, situations, and structures is shaped through the reflective process.

Previous authors have explained the necessity of student affairs administrators to incorporate faith in their work on Christian college campuses. However, the lack of empirical research that identifies how this is occurring points to the need for this study.

Although the existing literature makes a strong case for the importance of faith integration in the co-curriculum, research has not revealed how this process occurs. Knowing *how* is an important step that would help administrators better understand their own faith integration behaviors and perspectives, and help institutions improve faith integration professional development opportunities. Yet, despite the wealth of information and resources for faculty and upper-level administrators in the academy, the landscape of Christian scholarship regarding mid-level student affairs professionals and practical suggestions for incorporation of their personal faith within their work is lacking.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### *The Conceptual Framework*

This study utilized a conceptual framework to frame the research process. Conceptual frameworks are important for qualitative studies because they clarify the research topic and enable the reader to understand what the researcher is working to achieve and how it will be accomplished (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). A conceptual framework was beneficial for this study because researchers have yet to understand the process through which student affairs administrators integrate faith. The conceptual framework provided a lens through which this process can be studied, both highlighting important elements identified in the existing literature and providing a structure for the investigation of faith integration behavior and sense making.

The praxis model (Figure 1, below) is based upon the definition of praxis as *the process of active reflection and reflective action to bring about change to the individual or the group*. Freire suggests that praxis involves a mutual relationship between theory and practice that occurs through the process of reflection, in which practice informs theory and theory informs practice (Taylor, 1993). I have applied this philosophically based praxis definition to student affairs administrators by proposing it as a lens through which we can better understand how they integrate faith in their professional work.

Based upon an understanding of praxis as a concept that unites theory and practice, and upon Rogers' (2001) articulation of the value of reflective models, the model of praxis outlined here offers conceptual lens through which the faith integration

process of Christian student affairs administrators at CCCU institutions can be better understood (Figure 1). Praxis is a process that includes the fusion of theory and action through both active reflection and reflective action. During the reflection stage, an individual thinks about an event or experience through the lens of a theory either reflecting upon a past event, anticipating a future event, or during the event itself.

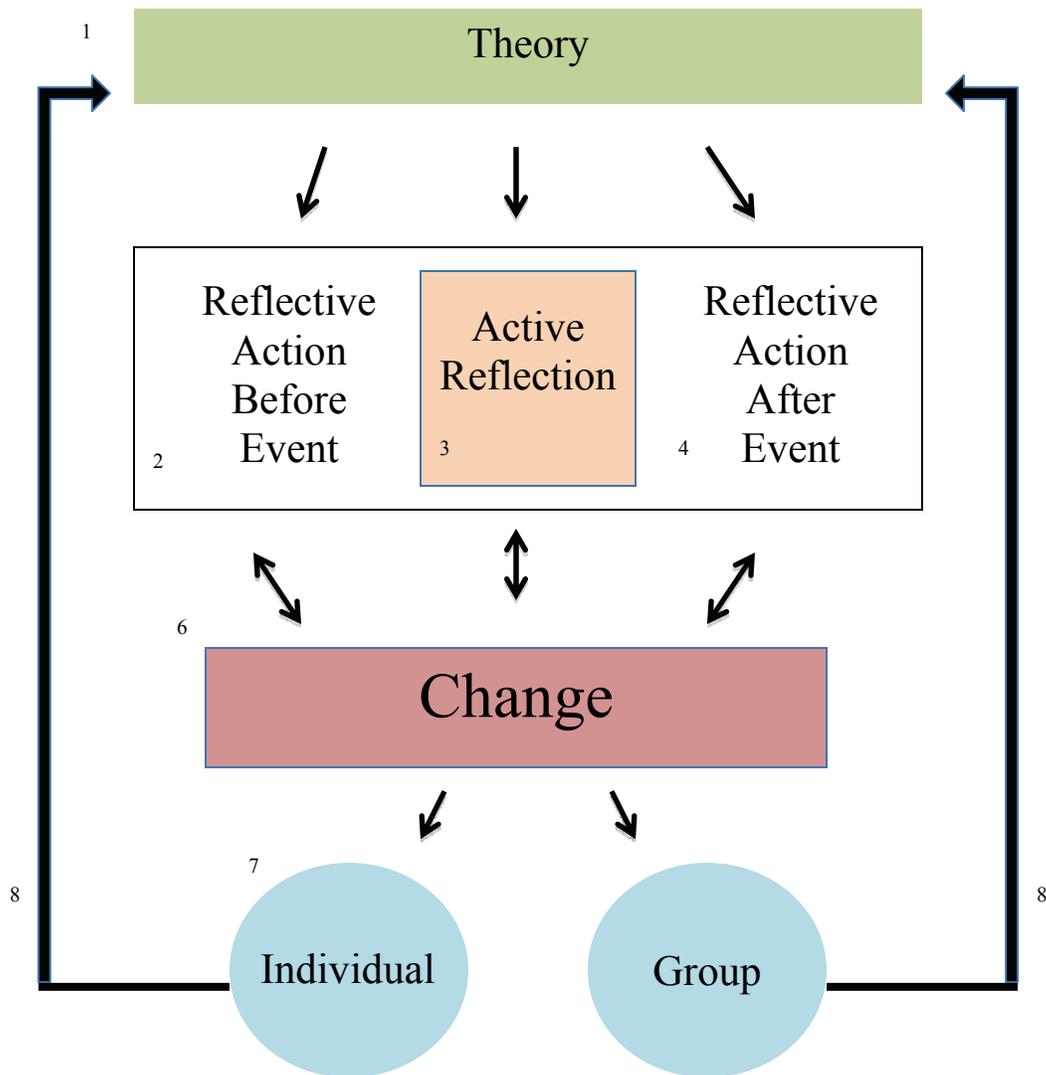


Figure 1: Operationalization of Praxis

Theory can be thought of as a set of assumptions that aid individuals in processing or viewing an event or practice. In this model, Christian faith is the theory that student affairs administrators will be using to interpret events (Figure 1, Part 1). As Part 2 of the model shows, as student affairs administrators engage in reflective action before an event, they might consider how their Christian faith will shape their future behavior.

The next step in the process is *active reflection* (Figure 1, Part 3). During active reflection the individual brings the theory into conversation with the action as the event is occurring. Active Reflection, which Rogers (2001) refers to as reflection-in-action, is contemporaneous reflection, in which the individual reflects during the action. Rogers (2001) suggests that reflection in the moment “requires awareness of a dynamic process” that necessitates “one to think yet be aware of one’s thinking at the same time and to experience and yet be aware of how and what one is experiencing at the same time” (p. 54). In this study, active reflection occurs when the individual considers the event that is occurring through the lens of the Christian faith. For example, this might occur as an administrator is sitting in a meeting discussing policy changes and in the moment begins to think about how the decisions being made do or do not align with his or her Christian worldview. In student affairs administrators’ roles, *active reflection* can emerge at any point in their day as they become both aware of their experiences and as they process those events in light of their Christian commitments. The act of reflection brings the theory, which in this case is Christian faith, into conversation with the experience.

The next step in the praxis process is *reflective action* after the event or action has occurred (Figure 1: Step 2 & Step 4). *Reflective action* is the process of thinking about an event either before or after it has occurred. As Rogers (2001) suggests, humans tend to

reflect after the moment rather than in the moment. During reflective action individuals make meaning of how they approached an even in the past or how they hope to approach an event in the future in light of the theory (Rogers, 2001). In the case of this study, the Christian narrative might guide the reflective action of the individual and act as a lens through which the individual interprets or anticipates the event. Administrators can engage in reflective action when they consider the forthcoming events of their day and how they might act within them in congruence with their Christian faith. Reflective action also occurs as administrators think back upon events of their day, considering how that event unfolded, affected them, and how they might respond or engage a similar event in the future.

As the model shows, the process of active reflection and reflective action leads to change (Figure 1, Step 6). The change aspect of the model can be considered as either change for the individual or for the group, as Steps 6 and 7 identify. The resulting action that arises out of the role of praxis can either change the individual personally, or it can have ramifications for a larger group, such as the department, a student group, or the institution as a whole. This change could come to fruition if the individual is in an advisory role and the change is manifested within the community or the workforce.

It is also possible that the change could result in a modified perception of the community, which could manifest itself as a latent effect, though hopefully the new understanding would be acted upon purposefully at some point in the future. Consequently, individuals can begin to develop an altered vision or understanding of the community or themselves. Furthermore, the change may occur in how an individual

conceives of the theory (Step 8) as well as how both reflective and future behavior is changed as a result of the reflective process (Step 7 & Step 2).

In addition, as the arrows between reflection and change show (Figure 1, Steps 6 and 7), influence is bi-directional: on the one hand the process of reflection results in a change in behavior, and on the other hand the changes in behavior then affect the reflective process (Steps 2, 3, & 4). Reflection, action, and change are an intricately connected and mutually influencing process. Lastly, change (Figure 1, Step 6) can also affect the way in which the theory is understood (Step 8 & Step 1). The reflective process can result in a change in the way that the administrator thinks about the Christian faith, and their narrative that guides the way that they engage their worklife.

This study utilized the concept of praxis as a way to understand how student affairs administrators might incorporate faith within their work. The model identifies the process whereby administrations may bring together theory (Christian faith) and action (administrative worklife behavior) through the process of reflection to produce a change in behavior and perspective.

### *Methodology*

This study used a qualitative approach to understand how the Christian faith of student affairs administrators shapes their professional work. Specifically, this study employed an interpretive approach that assumes, “meaning does not exist independent of the human interpretive process” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 17). As a result, the researcher should “value experience and perspectives as important sources of knowledge” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 17). This study depended upon the expertise and interpretation of the student affairs professional as the “knower” to provide an

understanding for how the Christian faith interacts with their worklife. Consequently, I sought to understand student affairs administrators' construction of reality as experts on their experience through the interpretive framework of praxis. A component of interpretivism is that it can include the use of preexisting theories or frameworks in order to make sense of the lived experiences of individuals (Schwandt, 1994). Conceptual frameworks help construct meaning-making processes, which is essential to qualitative research (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). It is the lens through which I interpreted the lived experiences of the participants. The conceptual framework aided in identifying and understanding the elements that go into faith integration for student affairs administrators in the workplace, which shaped my understanding of the participant's sense making.

#### *Data Collection*

I collected data for this study from mid-level administrators at CCCU institutions in the United States. CCCU membership provided common expectations for the participants in the study, and the variety of institutions increased the richness and value of the data set over a single case analysis. I located participants through criterion based purposeful sampling, meaning that participants were chosen "because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2013). The participants in this study were eleven mid-level student affairs administrators working at CCCU institutions who were identified by their peers or supervisors for their commitment and pursuit of faith integration in the workplace (see Table 1). Therefore, the participants in the study were invited based upon the recommendation of senior-level administrators who could knowledgably recommend exceptional participant candidates.

Table 1

*Participant Affiliations and Demographics*

Participant	Self Identified Religious Affiliation	Gender	Faith Based Educational Background	Department
Amanda	Christian, Nondenominational	Female	Yes	Service Learning
Brett	Born again, Orthodox, Protestant Christian	Male	Yes	Student Involvement
Cory	Nondenominational, contemplative	Male	Yes	Residence life
Courtney	Multi-denominational	Female	Yes	Student Success
Daniel	Christian	Male	Yes	Residence Life
Dylan	Baptist	Male	Yes	Student Success
Jeremy	Multi-denominational	Male	Yes	Student Life
John	Protestant, Evangelical, Christian	Male	No	Multicultural Affairs
Susan	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Female	Yes	Career Services
Taylor	Christian Missionary Alliance	Female	Yes	Multicultural Affairs
Tim	Christian Missionary Alliance	Male	Yes	Spiritual Life

The participants included seven males and four females from various self identified religious affiliations. The participants represented eight different departments within student affairs.

I collected data from the participants through in-depth, semi-structured open-ended interviews to gain an insight into how the administrators' Christian faith shapes their worklives. I conducted interviews through telephone calls because geographical location prevented in-person interviews. I sent two to three questions to my participants before the interview asking them to consider a time when they had integrated faith in

their work in order to discuss elements that are a part of the conceptual framework in more detail during the interview process. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. I also piloted my interview protocol with an administrator in positions parallel to study participants in order to ensure the effectiveness of the interview questions before the actual study.

### *Data Analysis*

The data analysis consisted of a two-cycle coding process. In the first cycle, I used an Initial Coding process to code the data. This method was appropriate for this study because the Christian faith of student affairs administrators has not yet been empirically studied, and this coding process allows the researcher to remain open to the nuances of the data (Saldaña, 2013). The second cycle of coding that I used is Pattern Coding. This approach is a type of second cycle coding that often follows Initial Coding (Saldaña, 2013). Pattern codes infer or explain “an emergent theme, configuration or explanation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). Through the pattern coding process, the researcher begins to organize the data “into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). Pattern coding was useful in seeing commonalities across the data.

### *Protection of Human Subjects*

Qualitative research relies on the self-revelation of participants about experiences, thoughts, and ideas that are personal in nature and make them vulnerable to mis-use or exploitation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). I took steps to ensure participants’ anonymity and confidentiality. I asked each participant to sign an informed consent form in order to

participate in the study. The informed consent form detailed the purpose of the study and notified the participants of their right decline to answer any questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. The form also described my process for maintaining the individuals' anonymity throughout the entirety of the study. To maintain anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was used in any written material or conversations regarding the research project. As the researcher, I was the only one that had access to the participants' actual names as well as their responses. My committee did not gain access to the responses until a pseudonym has been assigned for each individual. In addition, I generalized descriptions of people, places, and events that were mentioned in the interviews, and I withheld or created a pseudonym for the name of the institution in which the individual works to maintain confidentiality. I also reminded each participant on the day of the interview that their anonymity would be maintained and that they have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point.

### *Trustworthiness*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest there are four elements of trustworthiness used to express validity and reliability in a qualitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to establish *credibility*, or to ensure that the study measures what I intend to measure, I underwent peer scrutiny (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study underwent peer scrutiny from my thesis chair, thesis committee, and colleagues to ensure that the interpretations regarding emerging data were appropriate.

In order to establish *transferability*, or the ability to extend or apply the information found in the study to a larger set of groups and individuals, I provided thick descriptions of all processes and elements involved. Providing this information allows

others to determine whether or not the findings are suitable for their context. Through openness about the process (participant selection, interview protocol, data analysis, and coding process), institutions and administrators can discern whether or not the findings are relevant to the particular campus or context. I worked to accomplish *dependability*, or ensuring that research findings are consistent and repeatable, by providing all relevant details about the research design and implementation, the collection of data, and the analysis of the data in order for it to be replicated at another institution or within a similar context.

The last element of trustworthiness is *confirmability*, which is the researcher's concern for and dedicated pursuit of objectivity. To work to establish confirmability, I included a positionality statement in order to reveal my biases and interests regarding the research topic. Consequently, I maintained an awareness of my personal experiences and attitudes while drawing conclusions from the participants' experiences. In addition, using triangulation and member checking assisted in pursuing confirmability because it ensured that my analysis, interpretations, and conclusions remain neutral.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Findings: Religious Identity and Faith Integration Sense Making

In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912/1995), Durkheim suggests that there are two types of time in a religious community, sacred time and profane time. Sacred time represents the activities that are good for the larger group in which rituals and practices are set apart. Profane time occurs when individuals are engaging in ordinary activities that do not have concern for the larger group (Durkheim, 1912/1995). Durkheim argues “religious and the profane life cannot coexist in the same space” (p. 312) Because the sacred and the profane have such different objectives, in order to approach the Divine, one must suspend private life. Durkheim, contends that the distinct nature of these activities the two cannot coexist. Because work “has no other apparent end than meeting the secular needs of life,” he argues that work is inherently profane (Durkheim, 1912/1995, p. 311). This argument is antithetical to the understanding of faith integration. The primary task of integration is for the sacred and the profane to not only coexist, but to be synthesized. In the process of praxis sacred activities not only infuse profane activities, but the participants embody their religious commitments in various aspects of their worklife through the reflective process.

The goal of this research was to better understand the process Christian student affairs administrators go through to incorporate their faith in their work. The following questions guided the data collection process, analysis, and interpretation:

- (1) How do student affairs administrators articulate their Christian faith and its expression in their work?

- (2) What does the concept of praxis illuminate about the way that Christian student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work?
- (3) What experiences have influenced how administrators think their faith should shape their work processes?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings that answered the sub questions and help us understand how student affairs administrators' make sense of their faith integration processes. I will discuss the participants' religious identity and faith commitments and how they believe it should be expressed in their work. This chapter will answer sub questions one and three by detailing how the participants understand their Christian faith, how they believe it should shape their work process, and the experiences that have shaped the participants' understanding of this process. The chapter concludes by considering the elements that comprise theory within the praxis model. In Chapter 5, I will continue to discuss findings by detailing how the elements of the conceptual framework were present in the participants' faith integration processes.

### *Religious Identity*

“Religious affiliation” is the first element that shapes participants' understanding of their religious identity and how it is expressed in their work. In the study, participants self-identified their religious affiliations and discussed the various practices that they use to maintain their faith commitments. Consequently, religious affiliations, faith maintenance, and Christian beliefs, principles, and practices are subsets of how the participants make sense of their “religious identity.”

### *Religious Affiliations*

All of the participants in the study described themselves as Christian, but only four of them identified with a denominational affiliation. Denominations identified were Baptist, Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran Church of American, and Christian Missionary Alliance. Those that did not claim a denominational affiliation expressed that they were Christian or “followers of Christ” and resisted making further explanations. A few participants mentioned that instead of identifying with a specific denomination, they were attracted to traditions that were more contemplative or liturgical. For example, Amanda claimed, “I would say that I identify as being a Christian, and I would more recently say of a liturgical bent.” Though she did not identify with a denomination, Amanda did note a worship style that was more attractive to her. Similarly, Cory noted, “I am more in the contemplative tradition, but there is not a specific denomination that holds my religious belief.” Cory’s statement suggests that he had beliefs that span across denominational boundaries, and he preferred to identify with a tradition rather than a specific denomination. Instead of noting denominational commitments, participants were more apt to discuss the practices or elements of their personal faith that they found most important in addition to their claim to being a Christian.

### *Faith Maintenance*

Participants’ commitment to maintaining their personal faith had a direct impact on their religious identity and faith integration process. Almost all of the participants noted that the process of maintaining their personal faith shapes their faith integration. Participants maintained a close relationship with God by ensuring their personal relationship with God was growing, and by practicing spiritual disciplines, attending

church, or seeking a spiritual mentor. Participants linked these spiritual disciplines to their preparedness to do faith integration. The participants expressed that when their focus is upon God their motivations are right, resulting in expressions of their faith in their work. For example, Dylan argued that in order to truly serve others and be others focused, “it goes back to making sure that your own personal relationship with Christ is strong, and it is hard to focus on others and care for them when you are not being fed by the source, if you will.” The participants revealed that when they do not personally maintain their faith it is harder to serve, love, and offer truth. Similarly, Taylor expressed that her position “requires me to stay grounded in the Word of God and prayer.” Faith maintenance was integral to participants’ completing their work functions because it ensured that their work was rooted in their faith, and it served as a reminder, as Courtney claimed, that they are serving God not “man.”

#### *Christian Beliefs, Principles, and Practices*

Participants were more likely to discuss the beliefs, principles, and practices that they found important rather than discussing a particular denominational affiliation. This suggests that the beliefs, principles, and practices comprise a significant aspect of their faith identity. These elements both influenced and emerged out of the participants’ religious commitments that they incorporated in their work through their understanding of faith integration. These include: theological concepts, Christian commitments, Christian virtues, and Christian practices.

*Theological concepts.* Most of the participants referenced particular theological concepts that resonated in their lives, which they aimed to integrate into their work.

These theological concepts included: a covenantal understanding of work, creation, freedom found in Christ, the incarnation, the Kingdom of God, reconciliation, and the Sacrament. For example, about half of the participants expressed that their understanding of creation directly impacts their work. Susan noted that she believes:

God creates us in God's image and calls us to lives that allow us to use our gifts for the sake of the world. Because I believe that, that changes how I talk to students and alumni about career choices. Not even the vocational piece, but it is the actual career piece.

Susan's understanding of the Imago Dei helped her to construct conversations that drew upon her theological commitments in her work. Not only did her theology shape the way that she viewed her specific work, but it transformed the way in which she approached her work. The participants integrated faith in ways that reflect the particularities of their beliefs. The specific theological elements that participants incorporated into their work emerged from their unique commitments to or understanding of the concept, further motivating them to incorporate it in their lives.

*Christian commitments.* Many participants were drawn to incorporating certain Christian commitments in their lives as a result of their past experiences. The participants' commitments were not necessarily specific practices, but they were concepts that the participants have found influential in their personal faith journey and are dedicated to incorporating in their work. These commitments did not have many patterns to them, but almost every participant claimed they expressed a unique Christian commitment in their work. These included: a commitment to being present, fostering community, maintaining an eternal perspective, encouraging students to examine their faith, being properly motivated, and sharing the gospel. A few participants discussed their

commitment to ensuring that their motivation behind their actions stemmed from their faith. Dylan noted, because higher education can be so political at times, he believed that being a person of faith in student affairs “comes back to motives and again just doing things for the sake of Christ and for the sake of stirring others, especially our students.” Dylan kept returning to the understanding of motivation and being committed to making decisions that emerge out of his faith and have the best interest for the student. Other participants expressed similar sentiments.

Another example of a Christian commitment that a few participants deliberately wove into their work is the commitment to fostering community. These participants were dedicated to the idea that community facilitates growth. Cory’s commitment to community emerged out of his faith development in his undergraduate experience. Cory believed that there is power “in community, in the communal journey together. The community of faith.” He has seen “the power in those relationships and communities has again and again been more influential to change than programmatic efforts.” Because of his commitment to and belief in the role of the community to develop and shape students’ faith, he incorporated this commitment in his work. As Cory continued to notice benefits of incorporating community in his work, his notion was reaffirmed, and he continued to build community as a result. A few of the other participants also worked to create community in their positions in order to foster student faith development.

These Christian commitments, though they differ by individual, emerged out of their own faith development or religious identity, and because of its importance in their life, were incorporated into their work.

*Christian virtues.* In addition to theological concepts and Christian commitments, most of the participants revealed that their understanding of their religious identity resulted in the expression of Christian virtues in their work. These Christian virtues emerged out of their theological assumptions about the role of the virtues in shaping lives and extending God to those they were encountering. Some of these virtues included: care, faithfulness, grace, honesty, honor, love, obedience, patience, trust, and vulnerability. All of these virtues were conveyed in an encounter with other individuals as a manifestation of their personal faith, either, for example, extending grace to a student or caring for a student in a time of need. A few participants mentioned a desire to extend the virtue of love towards students. Courtney discussed that in her office she has a unique opportunity to extend love towards students with disabilities. She is guided by the notion: “regardless of the law, what does it look like to love?.” Like Courtney, other participants wanted to make sure that regardless of the situation they were extending love to their students. Similarly, a few of the participants discussed how the virtue of care shaped their work. Amanda suggested that she takes her job seriously in regards to student care. In a sexual harassment situation with two students, Daniel felt “a real call to walk alongside and care for both the victim and the perpetrator.” He felt like many would have “written off” the perpetrator, but he wanted to extend care and remind the student that his actions do not define his identity. The expression of Christian virtues in their work emerged out of their religious identity and their understanding of the Christian faith.

### *Christian Practices*

Lastly, the participants gave examples of Christian practices that were not only influential in their personal faith but also in their work at the institution. These practices

included: contemplation, discipleship, liturgy, modeling, obedience, spiritual disciplines with students, prayer, service, surrendering, testifying. Like the Christian virtues, the practices are dependent upon the individual's personal faith commitments, but almost all of the participants noted incorporating multiple Christian practices in their work. Tim found the Christian practice of prayer influential. He believed that men and women of faith should be integrating "prayer even in our office work, even in our dailyness." Consequently, he has sought opportunities to incorporate prayer with his students that plan chapel. He wanted his students to begin adopting the practice of prayer as well, and as a result began incorporating it in his work.

Multiple participants discussed the importance of practicing liturgies in their personal lives. Because liturgical practices have been transformational in Brett's life, he hosted an advent liturgy in his home on campus for any students and friends that wanted to attend. For the participants that incorporated practices in their work, they were intentional about the practice and how it had shaped their life. Their theology, religious identity, and experiences had formed their understanding of the benefit of these practices in their life, resulting in their desire to then incorporate it in their work.

### *Sources of Religious Belief*

Participants noted that their understanding of their religious identity drew upon various sources that helped to inform their religious beliefs. These sources included: scripture, books, Jesus, formal education, and people. These sources helped to provide a foundation for how the participants became acquainted with and understood different theological concepts or practices. Sources are what the participants identified as foundational frameworks that provided meaning for their faith and its expression in their

work. Sources were the origin for the participants' understanding of Christian principles, practices, or theological concepts. Participants drew upon these elements in order to make sense of the foundations of their faith identity.

### *Scripture*

All of the participants mentioned that scripture shapes how they understand their theological beliefs and that it provided the framework for the practices, virtues, and commitments that they incorporate in their work. Amanda claimed, "My integrity and my character stem out of the scriptural teaching I would say." Cory argued that he finds "meaning from scripture." Courtney discussed the biblical command to love God and love others which as she expressed is:

Probably first and foremost what guides my walk and what gives me, gives me the strength I need to continue to love people even when it is difficult at times or to find ways to love students who won't even accept it or don't know how to accept it.

Courtney's commitment to the virtue of love came out of her interpretation of scripture. The Bible not only guided her actions, but the principles found in scripture also provided her with perseverance through difficult conversations. Like Courtney, all of the participants' faith commitments were rooted in scripture. They drew upon scripture as the authority for how they should act. In addition, scripture connected them to the Divine so that they could carry out God's plan. Participants' said that they drew upon teachings in the Bible to inspire and root their actions within their faith commitments, and they also looked to scripture as a source of support through difficult times in their career.

### *Books*

Biblical teachings were often the foundation of the individuals' understanding of their faith, but their faith was also shaped by other sources, such as books. Some participants noted that various sources of media act as a source of insight within their spiritual lives as they drew upon books, music, or literature that helped them make sense of an element of their faith. For example, several of the participants referenced Jamie Smith's book *Desiring the Kingdom* as a book that acted as their inspiration for and understanding of the practice of liturgies. Brett claimed that it is one of the most influential books that "has impacted my practice at least in this particular way in terms of faith integration." The book transformed his understanding that students remember and are formed more by what people do with them rather than say to them. In addition, after reading the book, Amanda noted that she and her husband incorporated a daily liturgy of eating breakfast and praying together in the mornings. She also stated that she has begun incorporating liturgies in her meetings with students. Reading the book not only changed the way Amanda interacts with her husband and her students, but it also provided her with a theological understanding of the concept of liturgical practices, defining them through Smith's work.

Similarly, Cory noted that a book titled *Everday Apocalypse* was a source of insight for how he understands "how our faith is illuminated through different forms of art." This is a concept that Cory uses frequently in his work with students. He stated that this book was "substantial" in helping him understand "the importance of having dialogue with film and having like good and listening to like well, music that was well done and thinking about it was substantial for me." The book was the primary source for how he understands art's relationship to faith. Consequently, Cory listened to music or

watched film with students in order to facilitate dialogues that incorporated media and faith. In these scenarios, books were not only helping participants have a more nuanced understanding of a value or principle, but media also acted as the origin of understanding or basis by which they defined or comprehended specific elements of their faith, making it a source of their religious identity.

### *Jesus*

In addition to scripture and film, the biblical figure of Jesus was an important source of inspiration for the participants' faith and its expression in their work. According to Tim, Christ was the model for how he does ministry. Taylor disclosed, "If anything, I know that Christ is in me, so he is the ladder from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth." Taylor's faith was reliant upon the Lord's guidance in her life. Taylor tried to stay mentally and spiritually connected to the Lord throughout her day through Christ. Her belief that Christ is in her shaped the way that she thought about the work that she was doing because she believes that when she interacted with individuals that they were seeing Christ and not her. She integrated this understanding into her work by submitting to the Lord daily as she entered work so that others could see Christ in her. On the other hand, Brett viewed his work as a continuation of "Jesus Christ and his, the bringing of his Kingdom on earth through his incarnation, death, and resurrection." Brett believed that his role was to continue to bring Christ's Kingdom on earth. One of the theological concepts that had significantly impacted the way that Brett expressed his faith in his work is the incarnation. Brett shaped his work through an understanding of the incarnation, in which he believed that the most impactful things for students was what he does with them not what he says to them. Brett tried to embody his faith, mimicking Christ's incarnation.

In these ways, the life of Jesus has shaped the participants' understanding of their work on campus.

### *Formal Education*

Formal education also played a crucial role in the formation of participant's perception of what integration should look like. Jeremy argued that his graduate program "has been phenomenal at helping me integrate my faith in my work, just fantastic." He noted that the ability to talk about struggles at work in a faith context had shaped his understanding of how to better approach his work as a Christian professional. The only participants that mentioned the value of education in shaping their faith integration process were those that had attended faith-based undergraduate institutions or graduate institutions. For example, Daniel revealed that he "had a class specifically on faith development in college students and faith was brought in throughout the program." He then mentioned that this allowed him to enter his career "with a lot of good thoughts, perspectives, philosophies behind student development that were integrated with my faith." For Daniel and other participants, attending a faith-based institution educated them in how to integrate faith in their work and offered a Christian perspective on student development. Participants' graduate programs prepared them to see student development theory through a Christian lens. Furthermore, their professors modeled examples of faith integration practices in the classroom. Christian education played a significant role in shaping some participants' understanding of faith integration because the process was modeled for them, and Christian faith was incorporated in their coursework, helping them to see theoretical knowledge through a Christian lens.

## *People*

Many participants mentioned the important role that people, such as student affairs professionals and professors played in helping them understand their faith and its expression in their worklife.

*Student affairs professionals.* A few of the participants expressed that the care that they had received from student affairs professionals when they were students impacted their understanding of what their role should look like. Brett claimed that his experience at a faith based institution and the student affairs professionals that held faith commitments and invested in his life laid “the ground work” for how he understands his role. He claimed that this is the first thing that impacted how he understood faith integration at work. The prior influences of student affairs professionals acted as models for the participants’ future careers.

*Professors.* A few participants also mentioned that professors had been influential in how they go about incorporating their faith in their work. Amanda noted that one of her professors modeled and discussed how to “take a conversation just about anything and eventually guiding that conversation to where is your heart at.” Amanda adopted this method as she attempted “to get to know where the students are in their faith, and then being able to encourage, or speak truth, or share wisdom or my own experiences.” She claimed that this is a piece that has helped guide her integration. Amanda and others took the practices that their former faculty used and to help shape how they approach their work with students.

*Lord.* One participant claimed that the Lord was the most influential person in shaping her understanding of faith in relation to her work. Taylor said her “greatest influence has been the living God.” She explained that the Holy Spirit guided her through reading and interactions with students and that the Lord was “the most influential person.” In thinking about influences, Taylor noted that she viewed the Lord as a person and that the Holy Spirit guided her understanding of how to act on a daily basis.

These people offered the participants critical insights into elements of their faith and principles of faith integration that they draw upon daily. As Brett noted, these individuals helped lay the theological and practical groundwork for their assumptions about their positions.

### *Modifiers*

Participants mentioned many forces that have informed their understanding of how their faith should interact with their work. All of the participants have been impacted by experiences with people who have helped shape their faith and its incorporation into their work processes. “Modifiers” are different from “sources” in that *sources* help provide the foundational understanding of how a participant makes sense of faith elements. By contrast, *modifiers* helped the individual understand a concept differently or better than they did before. Influences did not provide the guiding assumptions about a topic, but they helped modify and influence the participants’ understanding of an area of their faith. Modifiers included: various factors at the institution, prior education, people, and media.

### *Institution*

The institution and its aims were a large factor in helping the participants make sense of how their faith should be incorporated in their work. Institutions played a significant role in influencing participants' understanding of faith integration processes because they helped provide the individual with context and frameworks for faith integration. The institutions' influenced the faith integration process through the faith tradition of the institution, departmental objectives that helped guide the participants' behavior, and professional development opportunities that shaped their understanding of how their faith relates to certain aspects of their work.

The faith tradition of the institution has helped form how participants either planned programs or worked within the systems at the institution. About half of the participants noted that the faith tradition of their particular institution was influential in shaping their sense making and actions at work. For multiple participants, their institution's commitment to restorative justice as opposed to penal punishment shaped their approach to working with students that are moving through the judicial process. Cory explained that he found that this process, "is a manifestation of faith more than we, like any of our processes that are not just we are blatantly preaching at you our something." These types of initiatives in which the institution has programs that are embedded into their systems and processes shaped how the participants thought about their faith relating to their work. In the situations in which the participants adopted the practice of the institution, they referenced them through ownership language stating "our practice is" or "we do this" or "we believe this," as opposed to "the institution believes this." These expressions reveal that the participants, even if not of the same faith tradition

as the institution, have incorporated some of the practices and commitments of the faith tradition of the institution in which they are working as part of their own practices. In some cases, institutional faith expressions may also have served as “sources” as participants encountered practices or concepts that had not previously been a part of their personal practices.

Two participants disclosed that some of the commitments of the institution’s faith tradition did not necessarily align with their faith commitments, and they had to wrestle with how to remain faithful to their beliefs while also completing their duties at the institution. Susan had to examine her own commitment to the just war tradition and what it meant to work at an institution that is rooted in pacifism. She had to negotiate her role as “guest.” Similarly, at Cory’s institution, the resident assistants (RA) did not have to be a Christian to work as an RA on campus. This practice was very different than previous institutions that he has worked at, and he was working through his stance on whether or he should work to change this policy on campus because of his commitment for students to experience faith development and faith conversations in the residence halls. Although these two instances do not hinder the participants’ work at the institution, the participants had to reconcile how their faith would shape their work process as a result of policies at their institutions and their personal faith commitments.

*Departmental objectives.* More than half of the participants discussed how departmental or institutional objectives or outcomes directly affected their work. Each of the participants that identified that their institutional aims shaped their work discussed a faith element as part or all of the objectives or outcomes. Amanda stated that one of the main student learning outcomes for the institution is spiritual formation, and, “all of our

departments are tasked to make sure we are engaging students at a very spiritual level and that our programming and reflection and initiatives are tied to faith formation and so that is constantly in progress.” The outcome of spiritual formation shaped the way in which Amanda conducted her programming and initiatives, and then she assessed these for effectiveness. Though the outcome was not prescriptive in telling her how her faith shapes her work, it was imperative that it was incorporated into her work on some level. As a result, she indicated that the outcomes “guide everything we do.” Though the outcomes do not dictate how Amanda and the other participants went about their work, they did shape the overall aims and objectives, which in turn shaped how they think about their actions and programs meeting those needs. Consequently, objectives were modifiers that helped inform how the participants target their integration process.

Two participants mentioned that because of their recent transition into their positions that they were still evaluating how to assess the current institutional objectives and how their departments could incorporate them in their work. Courtney explained that because of the newness of her position at the institution she was still in the process of assessing the objectives and how they might change as a result of the new vision of the department, which included a faith component. Even though the institutional objectives were not currently informing how Courtney and Susan incorporated their faith in their work, participants recognized that institutional objectives should and do provide direction and form to integration efforts, both individually and collectively. Eventually, participants expect that the objectives will be a factor that shapes how they make sense of their faith integration.

*Professional development.* Another element at the institution that influenced how participants understood their faith and its relationship to their work is professional development. About three quarters of the participants discussed how the professional development opportunities that they were given through the institution helped shape their understanding of how their faith related to their work. Jeremy and Tim revealed that their institutions had assisted them either financially or through time off in their pursuit of graduate degrees at Christian institutions. Both participants spoke highly of how their education helped them understand how their faith relates to their work.

A few participants mentioned that attending conferences through the CCCU or ACSD have been beneficial in understanding how their faith related to their work in their particular areas, but most participants mentioned that the professional development offered through the institution itself was most formative in understanding how their faith related to their specific role on campus. Amanda explained that her institution formed a book club and read through James K.A. Smith's *Desiring the Kingdom*. The institution also brought him to campus, and they spent the afternoon "brainstorming how to involve more ideas of liturgy in our practice." In addition, Daniel explained that his institution does not have a particular professional development opportunity specifically pertaining to faith development or application, but that faith is infused into all of the professional development opportunities: "faith always grounds us or is brought in in different ways." The professional development opportunities offered through the institutions allowed the participants to engage with fellow staff members from their own institutions and consider how their faith could be incorporated in their work. Even if the professional development opportunities were not faith specific, there was still an expectation that their faith would

ground and enter the conversation. These professional development opportunities helped the participants understand how to incorporate their faith in their specific roles at the institutions.

A few participants expressed that due to newness to the position, lack of funding, or the placement of the department in the organizational structure of the campus, they did not feel as though their professional development opportunities through the institution helped shape their professional development; instead, they sought out their own opportunities to engage in this work. Though not formative for all of the participants, many of them found that the professional development opportunities that they had access to shaped how they think about their faith and its relationship to their specific role at the institution.

### *Education*

A few of the participants also mentioned that one of the factors that influenced their understanding of how their faith related to their work is their prior formal education. Education can be the foundational understanding of a faith commitment or the “source” for the individual (as previously discussed), or it can also be a “modifier” in which it does not provide the framework for the individual’s understanding of a concept, but it helps to create a more nuanced understanding. Participants reflected that their experience in undergraduate education shaped how they wanted to help grow students’ faith as a result of their faith development during that time. Cory in particular discussed how influential his undergraduate education was in forming his beliefs about the importance of community, which he tried to incorporate in residence life as a professional. The

participant's educational experiences offered models and knowledge regarding how their faith should be integrated in their work.

### *People*

All of the participants revealed that other people had played a distinct role in their understanding of how to incorporate faith into their work. Previously, I noted that people are a "source," but they can also serve as modifiers. Instead of providing the provenance of an individual's comprehension of a concept or practice, the "modifiers" shaped or provided nuance to that understanding. People that are modifiers encouraged participants in their faith and offered further insights into faith integration processes. These types of people included: colleagues, former student affairs professionals, mentors, professors, student expectations, and theologians. The words or actions of these people helped the participants gain models or wisdom on how faith and work interact with one another.

*Student Affairs Professionals.* Many of the participants noted that student affairs professionals changed the way they understand faith integration. Some of the student affairs professionals are categorized under sources because their role in the individual's life was so influential that it provided the basis for their understanding of how to integrate faith in their work. In addition to sources, student affairs professionals were also modifiers. Multiple participants claimed that they desired to support students as they had been supported through their collegiate career. For example, Dylan noted that what made the difference in his college experience were people that made a "direct impact on students lives." This inspired him to never want to get away from the idea that administrators are on college campuses to serve the students. Though, this was influential

and he harkened back to the concept often, it was not foundational in his understanding of faith integration. Wanting to affect students' lives helped influence the way he approached his work, as well as how he understood his position. In addition, Amanda went through a difficult experience in college, and student affairs administrators offered her support during that time; so, her hope is "to be that person for other people." Her experience as an undergraduate student with student affairs professionals shaped her desire to model their efforts in her life.

*Colleagues.* Half of the participants mentioned that colleagues were influential in their work processes. For example, Dylan's former supervisor modeled what it meant to love and serve his supervisees and students. Dylan claimed, "Servant leadership is a buzz word, but he just lived it;" consequently, he revealed that he often recalls his previous experiences and claimed that, "I keep trying to model that for myself, that type of leadership and that type of heart towards everybody." Dylan's former supervisor embodied how Dylan tried to incorporate faith in his work. The participants that expressed how colleagues had shaped their work were very similar to Dylan's experience in that their behavior was modeled for them or they were able to discuss experiences through communicating with one another and speaking wisdom into each other's lives. These colleagues offered models that participants could look back upon or mimic within their work.

In addition, Daniel had a colleague that he met with weekly to discuss faith and work together. He explained that this relationship was essential in "really staying focused with that and really integrating faith into my life and into my work." Colleagues acted both as a source of accountability in both the individuals' personal faith commitments,

but also how it was being expressed in their worklives. The people that the participants discussed acted as both models and sources of wisdom in their lives. All of the participants noted that people were influential in modeling how they understand how their faith should shape their work lives.

### *Media*

More than half of the participants claimed that books, film and music had influenced how they think about their faith in relation to their work. Though media was noted earlier as a source, books, film, and music also served a different purpose as modifiers that helped the individual understand a concept differently, rather than providing the foundation for the individual's understanding. Most of the participants mentioned that books had been beneficial, whether they were Bible studies, literature, social science books, and Christian authors. The books mentioned most often that directly shaped the participant's work were books by Christian authors such as Parker Palmer, Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen, Wendell Berry, and Donald Miller. Many participants found that Parker Palmer was influential in their work. Susan said, "Parker Palmer is a very influential person in...my understanding of vocation." Parker Palmer had helped shape her beliefs regarding vocation, which directly tied into her work. Consequently, the books pertaining to the Christian faith and practices have shaped the participants understanding of their personal faith and how it can be incorporated in their worklives. These books were not the foundation for the participants' understanding of a concept, practice or theological principles; instead, they helped inform and modify the participants' already established understanding.

Not all of the books that were influential were “Christian” books. Some participants mentioned Social Science books that had shaped their professional lives. John noted that books like Beverly Tatum’s, *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* and Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* were essential in helping him think about issues of race and identity. These books paired with other books about Christian identity have helped influence John’s understanding of race, ethnicity, and faith, which he worked to incorporate in his work at the institution.

Cory and Brett mentioned that literature, film, and music that are not explicitly Christian helped them find a deeper or more nuanced understanding of their faith and beauty. Brett claimed:

Truth shows up in unexpected and unlikely places and if reading the New Testament tells me anything it tells me that Jesus comes to us in ways that we least expect and often reject because we didn’t expect them to be that way.

These sources of film, literature, and music are incorporated into their understanding of their faith, and then expressed in their worklife.

The role that these forms of media play in the lives of the participants are that they shaped or modified the participant’s faith commitments, which then were expressed in their work. The books offered deeper insights into theological issues, practices, and identity, which then shaped how the individuals approached their work. The film, literature, and music worked the same way in helping to inform participants’ understanding of how they understand faith and lived it out in their lives.

## *Participant's Understanding of Faith Integration*

### *Faith Integration Definitions*

Most participants gave a definition of faith integration, or they talked about faith integration as what it is not. Each participant had a different definition regarding what faith integration should look like. For example, Brett claimed that faith integration is not just praying before a class, but is also having a dialogue about faith areas “where we need to be challenged,” considering “how do we treat each other,” and engaging in testifying or “sharing your own story.” Brett’s understanding of faith integration was incarnational, his faith integration practices were not removed from people, but they were lived out in community through dialogue and actions. On the other hand, Dylan expressed that faith integration is “just kind of being who I need to be, and making everyday decisions that kind of drives [sic] these [faith integration] types of events.” Dylan’s understanding of faith integration was more situational in that he saw himself as the integrator of faith based on the aspects of his faith that needed to emerge in a given situation. Brett expressed that faith integration as an administrator means “that I kind of have the practice of showing the faith.” To Brett, faith integration was modeling his faith commitments to his staff and students. All three of these definitions involved a relational component or they were situations in which their faith needed to or should be expressed. Each participant had a different understanding of what faith integration was because of his or her personal beliefs and past experiences.

Some of the participants were aware that their definition of faith integration was different than others. For example, Tim noticed this difference between his definition of faith integration compared to other administrators on campus:

We are a Christian university, and yet, of course we don't always have the same interpretation of scripture, and so many times, when I talk about integrating faith in maybe a course of action we are going to proceed with. Well, it is based on what my interpretation of what scripture has, or maybe a few of us, but the student or maybe there has even been other faculty who have disagreed with our interpretation of scripture, and so I am trying to integrate faith, and they're integrating their faith as well and their understanding.

According to Tim, because of differences in interpretation of scripture an act of integration for one person looked different than an act of integration for others. As Tim experienced, participants' perspectives of faith integration were varied because of institutional commitments, personal faith commitments, and religious affiliations. Each of their understandings of faith integration emerged out of their personal understanding of their own religious identity.

Though the participants' definitions of faith integration primarily lacked commonalities, three of the participants discussed that challenging students through shared experiences and dialogue to consider what they believe is faith integration. Brett noted:

We are actually trying to talk about what is it that we do collectively believe and where are things that, where are places that we might have blind spots where we need to be challenged for example. That to me is faith integration. That's faith integration.

Brett believed that faith integration is asking students and staff to think about their faith and how it relates to others, and in what areas of their faith do they need to experience challenge. Brett was incorporating "meta-faith integration" in his work, in which he asked students to think deliberately about their faith. Consequently, he and other participants expressed their faith in their work by creating environments and relationships in order for this dialogue to occur and develop the individuals' personal faiths.

Susan's response represented another instance in which a participant understood that his or her definition of faith integration was probably different than other people's definitions. Susan revealed that she did not see faith integration as creating a religious moment for the student or as evangelism: "The largest contribution of my faith to the work that I do is the stuff that people can't see." Her faith related to her work in the motivation for why she chose to use specific programs or how she understood vocation and calling and its expression in her work with students. She claimed:

So both my background and my kind of contemplative spirit mean that ... my faith life can be really important to me and still be sort of humming along in the background. But I am aware that not everyone would feel comfortable with faith in that position. You know, and for some folks, I think the idea that it changes how I plan my day is not enough of a way of integrating faith.

Susan believed that her faith is expressed in all of the decisions that she makes at work and was the foundation for how she structured her day. However, she also sensed that there was some dissonance between her perception of faith integration and how she thought others define it. Susan noted that her contemplative nature and her faith affiliation provided the framework for how she approached her faith in her work.

Like Susan, all of the participants suggested their faith influenced their work in ways reflective of their faith affiliations and religious commitments. The actions and belief that are ultimately expressed throughout their day came from elements of the faith that have resonated with them, or they felt prompted to incorporate by God.

### *Natural Nature of Faith Integration*

More than half of the participants explained that their faith was just a natural expression of who they are. This understanding of faith integration suggests that it is spontaneous and is not deliberately planned. Many participants were dismissive of the

idea that their incorporation of faith within their work was intentional. For example, Jeremy expressed:

I feel like asking specific instances of faith integration is like asking me about specific instances of when I breathed. Just because it is so ubiquitous, I mean, faith integration is everything I do. It is like breathing and so similarly.

Jeremy felt as though thinking about specific instances of when he incorporated his faith in his work was difficult because he saw his life *as* faith integration. Many participants explicitly noted that their incorporation of faith in their work was an automatic expression of their faith commitments. These participants discussed the impulsive nature of their faith integration in two ways: as an organic expression that emerged naturally or as a holistic faith that impacted all that they do.

*Holistic.* Participants that expressed that their faith was holistic noted that their faith did not just shape their work, but it is expressed in all of life. Brett claimed, “The Christian faith has something to say about every sphere of life so it is kind of hard for me to think of an area where not this, this is kind of harder to do.” Brett believed that there is no bifurcation between his faith and any aspect of his life. Similarly, Daniel expressed, “A relationship with Jesus is meant to impact every facet of our lives. It is not meant to be compartmentalized.” As a result, Daniel suggested that his faith impacted everything that he did, not just work. About half of the participants felt that their faith was a holistic expression that touched every corner of their life and not just their work.

*Organic.* A few of the participants also expressed that incorporating faith in their work was an organic expression, not necessarily thought out. For example, Amanda noted, “Personality wise, I think it comes out of who I am. It is more spontaneous, kind

of integrated organic.” Amanda noted that she will be interacting with a student and, “I am a little more like, Oh, that came up, we should probably talk about that.” She saw her faith emerging in conversations and not as an intentional effort to ensure that her faith impacts her work. A few of the other participants felt similarly to Amanda in that their faith integration processes were organic and natural expressions of their faith identity.

Despite participants noting that their faith was a natural expression of their religious identity and that it impacted all facets of life, every participant implied that their faith expression at work was intentional. Many of their examples illustrated how they intentionally incorporate their faith in their work, especially with students.

### *Theory*

The concepts discussed in this chapter combine to form the *theory* aspect of the conceptual framework that was proposed in Chapter 3. Theory is the bedrock of beliefs and assumptions that undergird participant’s theology. The elements within theory are the pieces upon which or from which they incorporated their faith in their work. Theory can be understood as the elements that work together to form an individual’s understanding of their personal faith commitments and its expression in their work. This is evidenced in Figure 2.

### *Components of Theory*

Consequently theory includes the sub-category of *religious identity*, which includes the participant’s self identified religious affiliations, faith maintenance, and Christian principles, beliefs, and practices. The second sub-category, *sources*, includes elements that individuals draw upon to understand their faith commitments including:

scripture, media, Jesus, education, and people. Theory includes the sub-category of *modifiers*, such as institution, education, people, and media that alters participants' faith identity and its expression in their worklife. *Participant's understanding of faith integration* is the fourth sub-category. Not only were the participants' religious identities important, but also how they conceptualized of and defined faith integration is also important. Together, these categories represent an individual's understanding of their religious identity and how it should be expressed in his or her worklife.

### Components of Theory Model

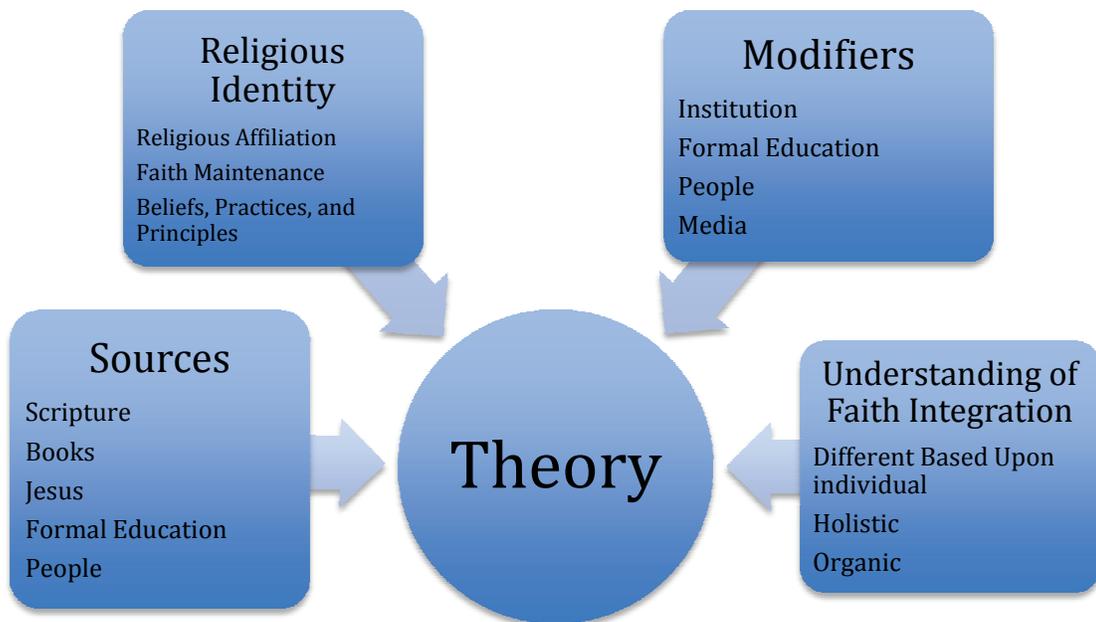


Figure 2, Components of Theory Model

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Findings: The Elements of the Conceptual Framework

One of the sub-questions used to help answer my overall research question is: What does the concept of praxis illuminate about the way that Christian student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work? In chapter 3, I introduced a conceptual framework of praxis that guided my research questions and analysis (Figure 3). In the previous chapter I noted the elements that comprise a person's theory, which include sources, religious identity, influencers, the participants understanding of faith integration, and beliefs and practices that the individual finds influential in their personal spiritual life and their work. (see Figure 3, Part 1). In this chapter, I will show that the elements in the model: *reflection before an event*, *active reflection*, *reflection after an event*, *change to the individual*, and *change to the group*, are present in the faith integration process of student affairs administrators. I will discuss the variations within each part of the model, and I will then explain how the system works together in the conclusions chapter.

#### *Anticipatory Reflective Action*

Following theory, the second component of praxis after theory is *reflective action* that occurs before the event (see Figure 3, Part 2), in which an individual prepares for an event by thinking about how their faith can interact with a future event. I have renamed this component *anticipatory reflective action* (ARA), to better capture what occurs when

participants are in this phase. Anticipatory reflective action can occur while an individual is alone or in a group.

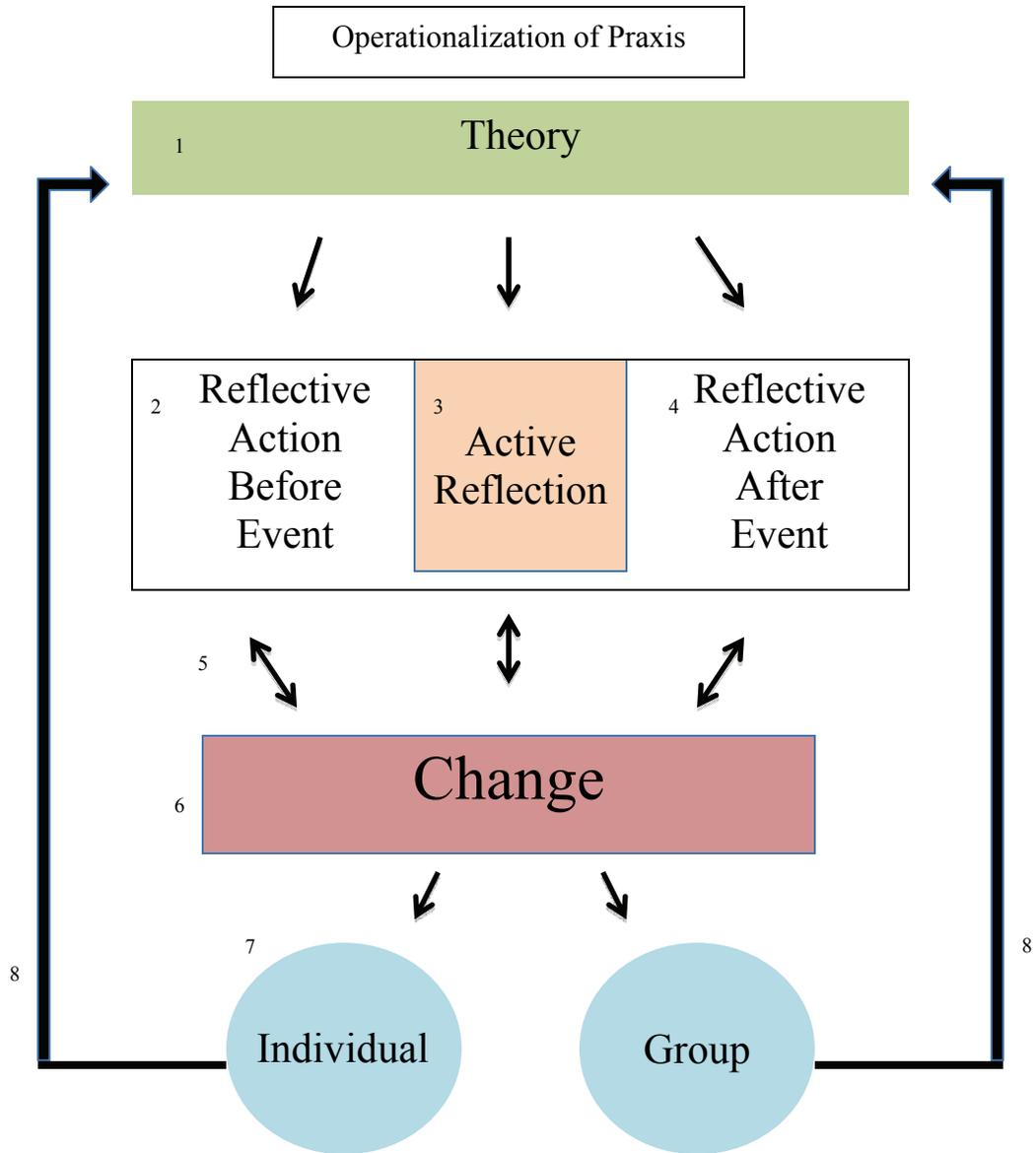


Figure 3, Operationalization of Praxis

### *Individual-level Anticipatory Reflective Action*

Anticipatory reflective action occurred most often on the individual level. All eleven participants in the study engaged in reflective action before some events. ARA occurred in several modes and contexts: preparation through planning, personal preparation, intentionality, and research. Preparation through planning occurred as individuals considered how their faith could be incorporated in planning programs, planning to create environments, planning staff training, and planning a course. Almost every participant discussed how he or she incorporated their faith in planning events on their own. In planning a change in how the service-learning department helps students reflect on their service experiences, Amanda claimed:

It got me thinking about two main things, student learning and their faith formation. How are they making sense of their experiences in relationship to God and in relationship to themselves? So those were my two guiding questions. What are they learning, and how are they making sense of this speaking to their faith, are really what have been driving me to evaluate how we do our programs as well as really wanting more quality reflection after these experiences.

Amanda was driven by her faith identity and understanding of faith integration to consider how students' faith can be changed through adapting or planning a new method of doing reflection within her department. In this frame of mind, Amanda considered how faith could be incorporated into a program in her department because she "really really wants that for students in a similar way that I experienced it."

Another ARA approach that nearly all of the participants participated in is deliberate preparation. For many of the participants this personal preparation occurred by engaging in spiritual practices as they prepared to meet with students. For Taylor, this spiritual preparation occurred the moment she woke up and continued throughout the day:

When I start my day at home, I start by saying good morning Holy Spirit, thank you Father for loving me. Thank you that this ministry is yours and I surrender at home. And then I drive to work surrendered, and then I enter campus, and sometimes I have driven right into the parking lot, and I hear Him say something about someone that day, a staff member, a student. Or, ‘hey, be aware of this today, pray for this today, pause before you do this today.’ I hear those instructions from Him. When I enter into the office, I enter in sensitive to whatever He has to say and whatever is going on.

Taylor’s surrender to God was an intentional effort before she began her day and throughout her day to be attentive to where God would lead her. This was an act of preparation not by thinking about how her faith could be incorporated in an event, as in some of the other examples, but it emerged from an understanding that she must be conscious of her faith commitment throughout the day in order to integrate her faith well in the moment. In order for her faith commitment to have the intended effect on her professional life, she was conscious in advance, so that she could be conscious in the moment of active reflection. As a result, the spiritual preparation that the participants engaged in was an intentional approach to be attentive to what the Lord asked them to do in *Active Reflection* (Figure 3, Part 3). This spiritual preparation allowed her to continue to incorporate her faith in her actions throughout the day.

Amanda intentionally prepared herself for meetings with students. She stated:

Oftentimes I would pray before our meeting. I actually scheduled it in my calendar for an hour fifteen minutes. I actually scheduled it fifteen minutes early just to have time to pray and reflect on our last time together. I think a lot of preparation too was just in my own faith walk [...] And I would always ask the Lord to show up in those conversations and really always asking God to be present in those conversations.

Amanda prepared for her meetings with the students not only through maintaining her personal faith, but also by scheduling time before her meetings with the student in order to reflect and pray about their past meeting and the meeting that they were about to have.

Amanda found it a necessity to prepare herself for conversations in order to be able to incorporate her faith in the moment. In addition, Amanda's preparation was not limited to the fifteen minutes before her meeting, but it extended to maintaining her personal faith outside of school hours because "she kept me on my toes." In addition to maintaining her spiritual faith, Amanda felt that inviting God to be present in the situation would better enable her to know how to incorporate her faith during active reflection. This allowed her to spiritually prepare to work with the student and put her in the frame of mind to be attentive to the Lord during the conversation.

Another vehicle for anticipatory reflective action was intentionality. Some participants noted that intentionality was an important element of their work. Cory asserted, "Intentionality is something that is very important to me, to almost an obsessive level. I want everything to be very intentional, and it takes a lot of reflection and assessment to be able to do things very intentionally." The act of committing to intentionality was a process of anticipatory reflective action. Dylan expressed:

As far as being intentional with other people about my faith, I think what it looks like is just being intentional about my relationships with others whether students, whether with faculty, or other staff members and not just making sure I authentically am aware of how they're doing and care about how they're doing and really ask.

Dylan noted that his commitment to intentionality was an expression of his faith identity. Intentionality is anticipatory reflective action because it consists of committing to a virtue, practice, or action that will later be incorporated during active reflection. Intentionality was an aspect of Dylan's theory that he valued and has committed to incorporating it in his work.

### *Group-Level Anticipatory Reflective Action*

About half of the participants revealed that they engaged in reflective action with others in either planning or processing. Processing entailed thinking through future events with others to consider different approaches, perspectives, or solutions. Tim suggests that he reflected with colleagues to determine how to approach difficult situations: “I would talk to my supervisor, my coworkers, other directors, and we can kind of think through a solution together before I act.” His reflection before acting occurred with others at the institution in order to gain wise council before responding to an event or student. In addition, some of the participants stated that they engage in reflective action at the institutional level. Dylan claimed that his institution was working to improving faith integration across the first-year experience, especially within the first year seminar course (FYS).

What that looks like for campus is basically we get people who are a representation from all departments across campus to meet as committees throughout the year, and then we talk about what does faith look like in that [FYS] classroom?

Dylan and his colleagues met in groups across campus to plan how their faith could be incorporated into the programs of the institution. Consequently, anticipatory reflective action is varied and can take multiple forms. It can occur at a micro level in considering how to meet one-on-one with students, or it can occur at a macro level in planning large-scale programs for the institution. In addition, participants engaged in active reflection alone, or as individuals alongside other people.

### *Intended Outcomes of Anticipatory Reflection*

When participants engaged in reflective action, their hopes of incorporating their work focused upon outcomes for supervisees and personal outcomes, in the form of planning professional development for themselves and their staff, as well as a focus upon student outcomes. All of the participants focused upon student outcomes as the basis for their planning, preparation, intentionality, and research. Only a few mentioned incorporating faith in order to help develop their professional staff or themselves, and only one participant mentioned thinking about how their work could shape the broader community. In addition, no participants expressed that they incorporate faith with their supervisors. The preparation for faith integration was always lateral or down the hierarchical structure. All of the participants hoped to incorporate faith with students, but only a few mentioned planning to integrate faith with colleagues. Jeremy confessed:

It is not easy to integrate faith with upper administration and maybe my colleagues. And that's unfortunate, and I think there's maybe a couple reasons for that. I think probably my own hesitancy, which is not good, with upper admin and colleagues, you. You. Umm. How do I say this? Things can be perceived as too childlike or elementary which it should be as Christ said, and so you want to be seen as professional, and so I think there is some concern there at times, that if we bring something up in that regard, will I not be taken seriously?

For the participants it was much easier to integrate faith when they were in the position of power or equal with their colleagues rather than when they were working with those further up the hierarchical structure.

### *Active Reflection*

*Active reflection* occurred while a person was in the midst of an interaction (see Figure 3, part 3). This comes after anticipatory reflective action. For participants this included interactions with students as well as interactions with colleagues. Only two

participants noted expressing their faith in their work outside of a structured context, such as meetings and programs. This included: a desire to express an authentic faith in all aspects of life and trying to seek wisdom from the Lord in difficult experiences. All other active reflection experiences were noted as occurring with colleagues or students.

### *Context or Nature of the Interaction with Students*

Participants expressed three main contexts in which their active reflection occurred with students: conversations, modeling or discipleship, advocacy, and serendipitous situations. Many of the participants discussed the ease of integrating their faith through conversations with others through being present or listening and taking initiative to schedule meetings with these students. Tim explained that after a student aired grievances about a program on social media:

I remember calling kind of the ringleader, the gentlemen, and saying let's meet face to face and talk together. And we did, and that meeting was so, it was so much better; fists weren't in the air you know, like they were ready to fight. It was, we had a relationship together. I got to ask him like you know, tell me more about your concerns, and we got to have a really good conversation. We met a few times. Come to find that you know he had some good advice, not advice, but inputs and insights. On the other hand, he kind of softened as well. I tried to encourage him in a healthy way of going about his concerns at [the university] that will actually bring unity and not division and how do we go about that.

Tim explained that conversations were an opportune context for incorporating his faith in his work. It facilitated an environment where both individuals desired to hear each other's perspectives, but it also allowed Tim to offer the student guidance. The face-to-face interactions and conversations provided an effective context for active reflection for the participants.

In addition, many participants claimed that active reflection often occurred when they were mentoring or discipling students. Many of the participants described how these

relationships provided substantial opportunities for them to incorporate their faith. For example, Brett explained:

I have had a student come to me and say I really want to do this, I really want you to mentor me on this specific topic that I am, you know whatever, or it'll be I have to meet with you because I am supervising you and, oh man, all of a sudden you realize you are sharing some things with me and guess what? We are in a sort of discipleship mentoring relationship and you didn't expect that but you know, you are coming back for more.

For Brett, mentoring and discipleship roles were natural avenues for him to incorporate his faith in his work. Sharing how God was working in his life and encouraging the student to do the same resulted in a discipleship or mentoring relationship that allowed him to incorporate his faith.

Lastly, most of the participants disclosed that active reflection occurred serendipitously. Participant's described this as a belief that manifested situationally in a number of ways: it naturally emerged within a conversation, it occurred when God speaks through the individual, it arose from being in humble submission to God, it occurred when the Lord used the individual, it transpired when the Lord worked, and it resulted when an individual relied on faith. Courtney offered:

I think those moments, where you are in the midst of a pretty unexpected crises with different students, I think those are moments where I see God show up in very big ways, and I see the Lord speaking through me in ways that maybe I didn't know I could speak. So, you are immediately like, okay, that wasn't me, that was definitely God taking control.

In a moment of crisis in which she was caught off guard, Courtney saw God taking control and working through her. This integration still occurred as a result of her theory (prior religious and theological commitments), but it was less planned. Cory said that "in something like a conversation, that is something that my assumption or belief, is, that is something that will come out while I am having that conversation." The spontaneous

incorporation of the participants' faith and their reliance upon God made some of their active reflection experiences more serendipitous, because as Brett claims "I have a living and active faith" which allowed his faith to interact in the moment. Despite the unplanned nature of these events, the participants still engaged in anticipatory reflective action as they prepared themselves spiritually to encounter these moments, which enabled them to incorporate their faith in the moment through active reflection.

### *Active Reflection with Colleagues*

Many of the participants' experiences in incorporating their faith in their work occurred through active reflection while they were working alongside colleagues. One participant mentioned that when a member of his staff was an irritant, his faith acted as a reminder of the individual's value in the body of Christ. Two participants, Brett and Dylan, mentioned that they try to model reconciliation with their staffs as a method of incorporating their faith in their work. Four of the participants discussed framing their conversations with their staff members in Christian values. Brett stated, "If I have a problem with a student or a staff member, I need to go to them directly. I need to do that, and show my students that's what I do. Show my staff that's what I do and not just tell them." Brett's commitment to reconciliation resulted in his incorporation of the principle in his daily work through modeling so that he could model to his students and staff the Christian principle of reconciliation. Brett actively brought his faith into difficult moments through reconciliation in order to model it for his staff and students. Dylan claimed that he tried to be intentional with colleagues by showing them care: "just asking my colleagues you know just how are they doing, how are they dealing with their walk, how are they doing with their families, and how I can be praying for them." Dylan was

committed to being intentional during anticipatory reflective action, but he followed through and is deliberate in the care he expressed for his colleagues when he met with them, integrating this faith element into his work.

Four of the participants used Christian virtues to frame conversations with their colleagues. When pitching a new program for seniors to various departments on campus, Courtney incorporated Christian virtues as her basis for the necessity of the program, stating, “I think the angle I approached it with most often was what does it look like to care for our students and love them and to invest in them so that they are equipped to leave spiritually.” In the Christian context of the institution, Courtney drew upon the Christian virtues of love and care to demonstrate to colleagues the necessity of the new program. Courtney mentioned that she could have implemented other language that is also pertinent to higher education by suggesting, “Hey, if we want these students to not just like retain ‘til graduation, but also give back when they leave and look back on it as a valuable experience, you know, we should probably do this,” but instead chose to approach the conversation through Christian principles, actively incorporating her faith in her conversations with colleagues. Active reflection with colleagues did not occur with supervisors unless the individual was doing it with the aim of assisting students, as in Courtney’s case.

### *Students*

All of the participants engaged in active reflection with students. They participated in this through asking reflective questions, incorporating Christian virtues, Christian practices, and modeling Christ-like behavior for the students. Almost all of the individuals in the study participated in active reflection with students by asking reflective

questions. In asking questions the participants prompted students to examine their spiritual identity. Various topics and contexts facilitated these interactions, such as race and ethnicity conversations, one-on-one meetings, and in discussions about pop culture. Almost all of the participants asked their students to reflect upon their spiritual identity.

For example, John explained:

So, part of our course, we really look at how does our racial and ethnic identity intersect with our faith. Whether that is 'how does our faith inform our narrative and our identity ethnically and racially,' so getting people to write and reflect upon the significance of their personal faith identity as it pertains to their ethnic identity.

A significant aspect of John's faith development was learning to incorporate his faith with his ethnic and racial identity. Consequently, in his courses he encouraged students to make this connection as well. This aspect of his faith was incorporated in his work with students in asking them to reflect upon how their faith interacts with their identity. In addition, Daniel discussed an instance in which he dealt with students involved in a sexual harassment situation at his institution:

And really, for both the victim and the perpetrator really trying to bring God's grace into the situation and to remind them of their identity in Christ and that what happened in both of their perspectives didn't change that, and kind of break down any of the same that was happening and instead of having like a shame-based identity with everything and really having an identity in Christ and remembering what and how God thinks of them and how God views them, and who they are.

Daniel worked to incorporate grace in the situation by prompting the students to consider that their identity extended beyond their actions and can be found in Christ. Extending grace as well as prompting them to consider their own identity emerged out of an understanding of his faith, and the desire to incorporate it with students in order to help them develop.

### *Christian Virtues*

I have established that active reflection occurs in various contexts and with specific people groups such as colleagues and students; within these interactions, the substance of the aspect of their faith that was being incorporated includes Christian virtues, Christian practices, and modeling. More than half of participants incorporated Christian virtues in their work through active reflection. These virtues included care, empathy, grace, mercy, patience, honesty, trusting God, and encouraging unity. In working through a judicial affairs situation, Jeremy noted how he approached a situation with a student by discussing grace and mercy rather than reviewing rules.

But I really tried to focus on the mercy because you could tell from her body language and I could tell from hearing stories about her from before she came to my office that she really needed mercy from me, I think, and grace as opposed to hearing more about rules and wisdom.

Because it was a judicial situation, Jeremy could have explained the rules to her and why the student's actions were wrong; instead, Jeremy sought to show the student grace and mercy through incorporating those virtues in his conversation with the student. The participants incorporated Christian virtues in actual moments with students.

### *Christian Practices*

In addition to incorporating Christian virtues in their work, almost all of the participants incorporated Christian practices including prayer, spiritual disciplines, confession, scripture, testimony, confession, and liturgy, and unity. Most of the participants incorporated prayer during their work. Amanda asserted that she found ways to keep her spiritual focus even during meetings through the Christian practice of prayer. "Praying silently through our meetings, particularly when something really hard would

come up, and I knew I had to say something that was going to be honest.” During the meeting, she prayed silently, connecting her faith with her work in that her belief in prayer and her commitment to pray assisted her in her work with the student, in helping her to be honest and meet the student’s needs. On the other hand, Dylan incorporated prayer by praying with students. He recounted that, “we just spent a lot of time just praying for each other and praying for the campus.” To Dylan, this was an opportunity to “express my faith.” In these sessions with students, Dylan’s faith was actively manifested through prayer. His commitment to fostering his faith in reflective action before the event, allowed him to express his faith freely during the event.

Multiple participants discussed incorporating liturgical practices into their meetings with students such as prayers, practices, and following the church calendar. These liturgical actions were planned and implemented as repeated actions in their worklives. Amanda discussed incorporating liturgies in her personal life and was committed to incorporating them in her work with students. “I constantly practice liturgies, so before every meeting we open with coffee, we open every meeting with prayer, and then we have a prayer of Saint Francis that we end every meeting with. And so developing these rituals that really call us into the Lord deeper and deeper.” Amanda took the liturgical practices that are influential in her spiritual life and directly incorporated them in her work.

### *Modeling*

A few of the participants discussed the role of modeling with students as a faith integration practice. Taylor told a story about a time when God prepared the campus for a murder that was going to occur. She claimed that God told them to prepare to model

forgiveness: “When it happened it shook our campus. It shook us all, but we knew His instructions for us was ‘you must walk forgiveness, you will teach forgiveness. You will model forgiveness’.” Because of her anticipatory reflective action, Taylor was prepared to model forgiveness to the campus and to the perpetrator as opposed to condemnation. The decision to model forgiveness arose out of her commitment to her faith and her understanding of forgiveness. This allowed her to display forgiveness in the moment, even though it was a difficult time. In this situation, her faith played a unique role in shaping her actions during the event.

Through active reflection, the participants incorporated elements of their theory that they felt led by God to incorporate, felt like a student or colleague needed, or the spiritual guidance they needed through prayer in their interactions with others. These elements emerged through their understanding of theory and were expressed through their actions in the moment, whether it was deliberate or unplanned.

### *Post Reflective Action*

Participants also engaged in *reflective action* after an event (Figure 3, Part 4). To distinguish it from reflective action that takes place prior to an event, I will refer to it as post reflective action (PRA). In PRA participants would reflect upon or discuss an occurrence at work or their personal faith. This occurred at both the individual and the group level.

### *Individual*

All of the participants engaged in reflection at the individual level through prayer, processing, self-reflection, or reflection upon the institution. Two participants prayed

about their work in order to help them process or to give over their work to God.

Courtney suggested, “When I have a hard conversation with students, I am going to think about it and lift it up in prayer.” Through prayer, Courtney processed her day and then tried to release difficult situations to God. Taylor’s faith integration process relied upon her submission to God as she began her day, her obedience to what the Lord wanted her to do throughout the day, and she reflected upon this process through prayer.

It’s either during the day when I am here, or when I get home, I ask the Lord to show me any area where I need to seek forgiveness, where I need to repent, where I need to change my ways.

This process results in her continued transformation. Reflective action to Taylor includes reflecting on her personal spiritual faith and changes she needs to make in her life as a result. For Taylor and Courtney, prayer was the avenue for reflection.

#### *Reflection on Events.*

At the individual level, post reflective action occurs in the form of reflecting upon events or reflecting on oneself. Almost all of the participants discussed reflecting upon events, programs, or relationships at the institution through processing and planning. One way that reflection occurs is through processing. Daniel suggested that he understood the importance of personal reflection and spiritual disciplines for his own life through processing relationships in light of his faith. Consequently, he suggested:

I try to really, even at work have some boundary in my work day to be able to reflect on where I am at in certain supervisory relationships that I have, things that I may feel God is leaning on in terms of conversations to just bring up or things to challenge or encourage to really having time to reflect on that.

Daniel carved out time in his day to process the state of various relationships. Daniel used reflection to think about the status of his relationships and how God is calling him to

develop them. Post reflective action included processing through his relationships and how his faith could work in them. It was essential to Daniel that he created space in his work in order to reflect upon his relationships and consider both past and future actions.

Amanda processed events by reflecting on how the institution could further show love to an individual:

So, sometimes on the follow up side of things, that is kind where my mind immediately goes, so how do we show this person that they are loved, not just by us but by God and sometimes that is just through little things that I will do.

Not only does Amanda reflect on a prior event, her commitment to her students also arose in post reflective action as her reflection focused upon how she could further show them Christian virtues. In this moment, Amanda was both processing the event and planning actions for the future. Amanda was processing in light of her Christian story or vision rather than processing it in self-oriented ways.

John exhibited this two-fold process and planning mode of reflective action after conducting assessment. He articulated:

We have been working on focus groups lately, and I want to be able to process what the students say. I don't want to just do a focus group and take the data and not do anything with it. I need to look at the data and really kind of look at it and think what does this mean? What can we do differently to serve our students? How can we help them? How can we serve them?

Tim processed the information and the focus groups by asking questions of the data and considering what it was saying about their current programming. In addition, Tim expressed the desire to do more with the data than to think about it; he wanted to use the information to shape the ways in which the data could help them better serve students, which arose out of his faith commitments.

### *Self-Reflection*

In addition to reflecting about programs, events, and relationships, all of the participants expressed that they conducted self-reflection, that is, they reflected on their actions and their identity, often in silence. In one instance, Tim, mentioned a situation where he yelled at a faculty member at the institution. Tim reflected upon the event and claimed that “it was buzzing in my mind, I did not act well. I was not Godly in that manner.” After continued reflection upon the event, Tim could not let his actions go, and he eventually sought reconciliation. Tim attributed the desire to make things right to the Holy Spirit.

Many of the participants noted that they engage in silent reflection. Brett claimed that his reflective process is “sort of informal in my head.” He did not necessarily create purposeful time for reflection, but informally thought about his work at the institution. Cory explained that when he is walking across campus that he is intentional about not listening to music in order to “tak[e] in what is around me, and tak[e] time for myself to think and process.” Cory ensured that he had time for reflection in his day by reflecting as he walks across campus. This reflection occurred silently in his head and was stimulated by nature. Similarly, Tim equated his silent reflective process with meditation. He found reflection beneficial because it was how individuals learn from experiences. Consequently, for Tim, reflection “is creating that space to think through what has happened and to think through it with the Lord in his presence.” The process of silent reflection for Tim merged with his faith as he thought through events and invited God into that reflective process. Individual-level PRA gave participants the opportunity to pray, plan or process events, or to silently reflect upon their actions and faith identity.

### *Group-Level Post Reflective Action*

Almost all of the participants engaged in PRA at the group level with their colleagues. This occurred as participants kept one another accountable in the faith, assessed programs, discussed events with colleagues, and talked through ideas colleagues.

A few of the participants stated that their colleagues at the institution help keep them accountable in their faith and in their commitment to incorporate faith in their work. Daniel explained that he met with a close friend at the institution weekly to discuss their work and their faith:

We on a weekly basis get together for breakfast on a Tuesday morning and really connect around faith and how we are doing and accountability and processing work and kind of all of that, so that plays a critical part in me really staying focused with that and really integrating faith into my life and into my work.

Meeting weekly with another member at the institution allowed Daniel to process the work he was doing at the institution and how his faith played a role in that work, giving him time to both reflect upon his past week and consider the week before him.

In addition, assessment was also a process participants used to reflect on events. A few of the participants discussed the role of assessment in understanding how programs went and whether their outcomes were met. For Brett, assessment emerged out of his commitment to intentionality. He offered:

One of the reasons why I like assessment so much is because I like to understand how things went not just in like a 'that went well kind of,' but have a tangible understanding because intentionality is something that is very important to me.

Assessment allows Brett to purposefully reflect upon programs for students, faculty, and staff. Assessment gives the individuals the opportunity to understand how an event

transpired, and if their goals were met. For instance, Amanda claimed that they are “constantly assessing how we are doing and trying to figure out how could we do this better, and how could we reevaluate and improve.” For Amanda, this process of reevaluation was focused upon students’ service experiences and how it shaped their faith. Amanda’s desire to assist students in developing their faith through service projects led to a reevaluation and assessment regarding her department. This assessment process included evaluating old programs and thinking about ways that they could do things differently in the future.

One participant, Jeremy, processed events or programs with his staff. He expressed that he often reflected about things internally, but more often, he processed better externally:

What I find myself doing with my boss and my direct reports, I do a lot of processing and reflecting with them. Like you know, the other day I turned to my assistant and I was talking about something, and I just qualified her and said hey, I am just processing out loud right now.

Jeremy thought through events by talking with others. Not only did he reflect and process things with others, he also talked out what he was thinking to his assistant. Jeremy’s reflection was more external, where other participants were more prone to internal reflection on an individual basis.

### *Change to the Individual*

The next part of the model is change to the individual as a result of the reflective process. This is illustrated on the left side of the model (Figure 3, part 6). The change to the individuals resulted in both spiritual changes and personal changes regarding work and their faith. Despite the fact that only one participant mentioned that one of her aims

in ARA was change to oneself (in that case, through professional development), all of the participants experienced change as a result of their integration. All of the participants expressed that they experienced faith development as a result of their experiences at work. Three participants noted a deeper understanding of and commitment to social justice and reconciliation, and two participants explained that they gained a new understanding of their work as a result of their faith commitments interacting with their work.

### *Faith Development*

All participants experienced faith development through their experiences at work. Particular points of emphasis included developing a deeper faith, developing Christian virtues and commitments, remembering where identity is found, cultivating a richer understanding of the world, and wrestling with faith. Almost all of the participants revealed that their work challenged them to think about their faith and grow in their faith. Brett mentioned that he had led a book study on campus and the experience was very formative for both himself and the students. He offered:

I think confession is a good word for what happened in that group. So that was one, and again the reason I thought of it is because it really affected me personally and it was effective because people were sharing and were integrating their, telling their stories, being vulnerable.

Testifying and confession were important practices to Brett. Engaging in these practices through a book study with his students was very formative in his personal faith development. He claimed, “I still go back to that, the things the students taught me in that group and that was years ago now, but that has always stood out to me as this impacted me personally so much.” Brett’s intentionality to incorporate the Christian practices in his

work, spurred students to engage in those practices, helping them shape one another's faith identity. Many of the participants declared similar sentiments to Brett, such as Amanda, speaking about a mentor relationship with a student, "I learned a lot from her. I think it went both ways. I think I was challenged then to also go deeper in my own faith." As the participants engaged the Christian faith with their students, an unintentional consequence was their own personal faith development and commitments were shaped as well.

A few of the participants mentioned that challenging events at work caused them to wrestle with their understanding of their personal faith. This occurred when the participant's faith tradition came in conflict with the faith tradition of the institution, or when they had to support students facing traumatic experiences. For example, Susan is a member of a just war faith tradition and the institution that she is working comes from a peace church tradition. During the beginning of the year during intruder trainings, the institution discussed what would occur if an intruder came on campus. Rooted in a peace church tradition, the campus did not condone taking any deadly action to stop a potential intruder. This conflicted directly with Susan's background. For most of the semester she wrestled with how she should respond if that were to occur, since her faith tradition would allow her to use force, but the authority she is placing herself under would not. She explained that she has wrestled with "what does it mean to be a guest" because there Bible does not tell us how to fight, "but there is a lot in the Bible though about showing hospitality and receiving it." This process made her really consider how to bring her faith into conversation with the faith tradition of the institution and what it means to be an

employee there. Consequently, Susan was challenged to a deeper understanding of her faith and her faith commitments as she wrestled with her circumstances.

All of the participants experienced faith development in some manner as a result of their attempt to incorporate their faith in their work. Many of the participants were shaped by their interactions with students, while others were shaped by their institutions.

### *Commitment to Social Justice and Reconciliation*

Three of the participants asserted that they had developed a new commitment to reconciliation and social justice as a result of their professional work. All three of these participants attributed their commitment to social justice to a series of events that they encountered in which they were confronted with the reality of racism, sexism, classism, and the role of the gospel in these areas. Their experiences in these areas resulted in a commitment to seek out social justice in their work in order to achieve reconciliation.

Jeremy mentioned that he had a conversation with some Black students at work and the students were forthright with him that the conduct system was oppressive towards them.

Jeremy confessed:

I just never know. I just didn't even know, I just couldn't even imagine that it was, and I remember how hard that hit me. And my boss and I had this meeting when I realized that I was part of a system that was oppressing them, and it was very unintentional, but it was indeed.

This experience at work, shaped Jeremy's understanding of his role at work, and fostered a commitment in him towards reconciliation. When the students disclosed their concerns, Jeremy's understanding changed, causing a change in his commitments, which resulted in action. Jeremy mentioned that after this event, he began to advocate for African American students on campus.

The other two participants experienced similar situations, which resulted in a commitment to social justice and biblical reconciliation through their actions that did not exist before the trigger events occurred.

### *New Understanding of Work*

Three participants noted that their experiences at work shaped the way in which they understood their jobs or implemented events on campus. Taylor felt as though “diversity in Christian higher education means a lot more than what the average textbooks I had been reading said it did.” Because of her experiences at work interacting with students that were struggling with their racial identity, she conducted a lot of research surrounding this topic, which resulted in a new understanding of racial and social justice theologies. She concluded, “The only theology that’s the true theology is one that frees you. It frees you. You are no longer consumed with earthly identities.” The experience of noticing something was amiss (ARA) in her students’ lives resulted in her conducting research (AR) and considering how this research interacted with the developmental theories (RA), which resulted in her changed understanding of how to help students that were struggling with their racial identity. Once her theology was transformed, she was able to then help students in a new way.

In addition, Tim, through conversations with students about their chapel concerns, changed the way that he thought about chapel. Meeting with students that were concerned about the music, teaching, or overall message of chapel helped Tim to reconsider how he conducts chapel. “And so, that has helped me, even in further years, think through our content and who we are inviting to speak in chapel.” This was not a change in faith development necessarily, but a new understanding of how to approach his job in order to

help meet the needs of all students on campus. Tim believed individuals working in student development should be gearing all programs towards focusing on student needs, and this change in understanding helped him to approach his work in a way that matched his espoused theory. These three participants were able to see their work differently as a result of their interactions with students. This resulted in a change in their understanding as well as a change in their future actions moving forward in their positions.

#### *Change to Other Individuals*

In addition to the change that occurred to participants, many noted that they saw how their faith integration process impacted singular individuals such as students, colleagues, and community members. This follows the same path in the model as change to the individual (Figure 3, part 7).

*Change to an Individual in the Community.* Three of the participants noted changes or hopeful changes that will occur in the larger community as a result of their faith integration. John was asked by the campus pastor to speak in chapel. He prayed to gain understanding of what God wanted the institution to hear. After he spoke, the video was posted on the institution's YouTube channel. Tim explained, "There was a woman in the community that emailed me afterward that was really struggling in her faith, and it was a cool opportunity to just follow up and make that connection." As a result of sharing his message in chapel, Tim was given the opportunity to meet with a woman in the community to talk and encourage her in her faith. Unintentionally, John's message reached beyond the institution to help shape and transform the life of a member of the larger community where the institution is located. Other participants had similar

experiences where one met with a student's parents and God transformed the mother's life through that conversation, and another participant planned to use a training that she acquired through the institution to benefit the larger community. Other than these three instances, most changes occurred to the institution or the students.

*Change to a Colleague.* Another change to an individual was the professional development of a staff member. Jeremy discussed a moment in which he had to "speak truth" to one of his employees about her performance at the institution. He claims:

I really believe that the Lord used that moment as well as other moments in her life to develop her into the type of person who could truly be the vice president of an office ... We were able to bring things to light, and I think it helped sharpen her and inform her into a better professional.

Tim attributes the change in his supervisee to the conversation that he had with her, as well as other experiences in her life. The result of his faith integration process was a positive change for the person that he had directed the reflective process towards. He also attributes the change to the Lord using the moment to shape the individual. Two other participants attribute institutional change to God as the change agent. For example, Taylor claimed, "And when I do that [surrender], Jesus Christ comes forth and he is able to minister to students and their families and to staff." Here change is occurring to the students, families, and staff, but it is the result of Jesus ministering to them through Taylor's submission.

*Change to Individual Students.* All of the participants but one noted that they had seen changes in students as a result of their actions or God's movement in the students' lives. The noticed change in students was a change in their spiritual development and

affirmation through their experiences. About half of the participants attributed the change to God moving in the students' lives.

*Spiritual development.* Almost all of the participants mentioned that they noticed students develop spiritually as an outcome of their faith integration efforts. Daniel revealed that he most often noticed students develop spiritually through mentor relationships. It was in the ongoing consistent relationships that he had with students:

...in which that student has really taken the next step, has really recommitted their life to Christ, or has really gotten to that next level of maturity and desire to let their faith impact their life in a new way, in an uncompartimentalized way.

In these one-on-one relationships, Daniel noticed that students have made changes in their faith commitments, allowing their faith to begin affecting many aspects of their lives. As a result of the mentor relationship, the student also changes their understanding of their faith identity, or theory.

In a different setting, Cory mentioned the impact that asking reflective questions about music can have in shaping students' faith identity. He recalled a time when he played a song that critiqued some aspects of the church. Cory noted that at first many of the students were angry, but as he asked reflective questions, he could visibly tell that some students were developing through their change in speech or opening up to actually listen to other students' perspectives. He claimed, "It felt like actual development of students because students were in some cases at least hearing other people more."

Through the dialogue, students began lowering their defenses and opening up to hear the perspectives of their peers. Cory attributed this change to the student's development and developing a different understanding of his or her faith, or even reconsidering his or her faith. Though some of these conversations occurred in groups the change occurred to the

individual students. This is especially important to Cory because he believed that every student should have at least one conversation that makes him or her think about their faith and define it while in college.

*Affirmation.* A few participants noted that students developed their personal identities as a result of the faith integration process. Tim recalled how one student left a disciplinary conversation feeling encouraged. Tim claimed that encouragement is a large factor in faith integration because “giving encouragement to someone and being able to fight fear and helping students not to live in fear, I think is a huge piece of their own development because uh, well that strangles them.” Because of the encouragement that Tim was able to offer the students, he felt as though this impacted the student’s development because encouragement fights fear, allowing the student to begin to break free from living out of fear. Tim mentioned that this conversation with the student was very recent and that he would know more about how it affected her in the future. Instead of leaving his office fearful of an administrator, Tim was able to offer the student affirmation and encouragement about her identity and her experience, which in turn shaped her understanding.

The administrators perceived that the affirmation of students and the validation of their experiences was closely linked to their faith integration practices. These programs and meetings helped the students to have positive experiences on campus during adverse situations, such as graduating from college, citing a grievance about a program, and attending a disciplinary conversation. The change in the student was that they entered the conversation fearful and exited the conversation with affirmation regarding their identity, experience, or concerns.

### *Unknown Change to Individuals*

More than half of the participants made statements that alluded to the fact that they knew that change was occurring but they did not know the nature of that change. Most of them attributed the unknown impact to the work of God and the eternal significance of what they are doing. For example, Jeremy claimed:

I won't know until I am in heaven what that looks like, but I trust that God is going to, you know there is going to be a bountiful crop of just loving on students and loving on my staff and doing what I can to serve them.

Jeremy believed that he was doing work of eternal significance with his students and staff, but he did not yet know the nature of that change, but he knew that it was important and significant.

Other participants noted the unknown nature of change simply because as administrators, as Dylan noted, "what we do on a broad level effects students." Sometimes administrators do not see the individual changes that are made in the lives of students as a result of their programs and rules, but they know it affects them.

### *Change to the Group*

Many of the participants expressed that they noticed changes occur to groups (Figure 3, Part 7). These changes occurred for the institution and various student populations.

### *Change to the Institution*

More than half of the participants noted that they noticed institutional change as a result of their incorporation of their faith in their work. The institutional change occurred in a variety of areas: fostering conversations, philosophical changes, professional

development of staff, and programmatic change. A few of the participants mentioned that the campus began engaging in new conversations resulting from their commitment to incorporating faith in their work. Susan mentioned that after she gave a talk about vocation on campus:

I do know that I have had many good conversations with faculty, especially, and some staff members, and, and I think especially that has generated at least two new invitations, one into a classroom setting, and one into more of a staff interaction that I am not sure would have naturally emerged without me having kind of done that forum, and those then, I hope will have ongoing kinds of.

Susan's talk has resulted in a change in the broader conversation on campus. Both faculty and staff have sought conversations with her regarding this topic, and have asked her to speak at different engagements.

*Programmatic Change.* A few of the participants noted that through their faith integration they had helped start new programs on campus that have continued. For example, at a former institution Amanda "initiated... a whole program for senior students that would kind of focus on that transition out... And it ended up being a pretty successful initiative that I think is still going on there at some level." The program that Amanda helped to facilitate has created long lasting institutional change that is occurring even after she is gone. The program was not dependent upon her existence at the institution, but it has become a part of the institutional programming that is offered. Daniel and Dylan also created programs at their institutions. Both of their programs work to support men. Daniel's program is a support group for men that are struggling with sexual purity, such as pornography. When Daniel discussed this program he talked more about the change that he hoped occurred in the students' lives, but the program has

continued for many years, and it has a solidified curriculum, resulting in both a change to the institution as well as individual student's lives.

Similarly, out of a conversation that Tim had with a concerned student, he took the students' considerations regarding chapel and changed the way in which the music and chapel speakers are chosen. He asserted:

I actually took those arguments to our worship team and said this is a really valid consideration so when you are choosing songs, let's think through the theological content, and let's mix in some of the traditional maybe even hymns or some of the songs that are really strong and solid theologically along with some of the songs that are very, really emphasizing God's present relationship with us now.

Tim's willingness to listen to the students' concerns and incorporate his faith in his conversation and response, resulted in restructuring how they conceptualize the music choices and chapel speakers. Because chapel is mandatory, this programmatic change has had reaching effects. Earlier this example was noted as change to the individual, as it shaped Tim's personal faith. Consequently, some changes have effects at the individual and group levels.

#### *Change to a Student Population*

A few participants noted that they had seen change occur to student populations or student groups as a result of their faith integration process. Taylor explained that she worked with a student group in which the individuals were struggling to negotiate their racial or ethnic identity. She did a lot of research in this area, and began meeting with student group to help them gain a new understanding of their identity in Christ. She claimed, "For four years I watched these students who would just come in search of truth, and when they would get the truth, they became a new person." She mentioned that the students would find freedom in their identity to listen to different music and dress

differently, as a result of their new identity. By speaking what Taylor saw as truth to the students about their racial and ethnic identity, she saw many aspects of the students' lives change as a result of their newfound freedom and understanding of their faith identity. She noticed that the students would become "more focused on prayer and Bible study."

Similarly, Amanda created a program to help students transition out of college. She felt that the institution was not doing a good job of showing care for the students after college and created a program that helped senior students gather together and process how they were feeling. She remarked that the students gathered to talk about their experiences and concerns for the future. She noted that the students gained an understanding that they were not alone in the process that they were going through, which she attributed to providing a sense of calmness to the students and peace. Though the students did not show a marked change in their identity, meeting as a group helped to affirm the student's experiences and validate them, offering them encouragement as they moved into the next phase of their life. Not only did the students change on an individual level, but the culture of the senior student body shifted in how they perceived their transition out of school, creating a shared community with shared experiences.

## CHAPTER SIX

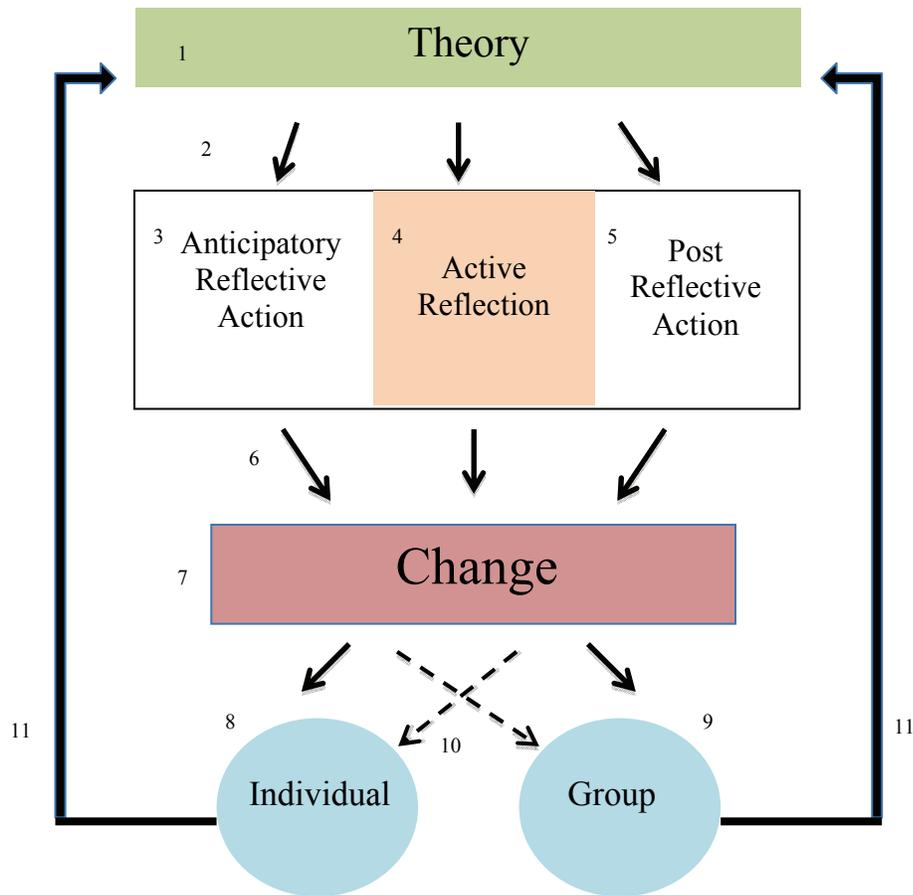
### Discussion

Scholars have previously addressed faith integration practices for faculty and institutions as a whole, but little research has been conducted regarding faith integration in student affairs (Hasker, 1992; Moroney, 2014; Nelson, 1987; Smith & Smith, 2011). Existing research suggests that student affairs administrators working at Christian institutions need to incorporate their faith in their work (see Beers & Beers, 2008; Guthrie, 1997; Hirt, 2006; Reed, 2012). For example, Beers and Beers (2008) argue that if Christian colleges and universities “take seriously the holistic nature of our institutions’ educational missions, the student development staff and their programs become a unique and primary tool for integration” (Beers & Beers, 2008, p. 70). However, researchers have not sufficiently explored and explained the process through which student affairs administrators incorporate their faith in their work.

The thesis question for this study was: *What is the process through which student affairs administrators’ Christian faith shapes their professional work?* To answer this question I operationalized praxis as a conceptual framework or lens through which to understand how student affairs administrators integrate their faith in their professional work. In this chapter, I will discuss how the pieces of the model fit together and relate to one another. I will also discuss changes to the proposed framework, discuss the limitations of the study, and explore implications for further research and professional practice.

*Praxis Model: The Relationship Between the Elements*

In chapters four and five, I discussed the elements within praxis that are part of the participants' faith integration process. In this section, I will discuss how the pieces of the model relate to one another. I will also discuss how the pieces of the model work together as a system through the reflective process to produce change and to repeatedly modify individual's faith commitments and integration process. This section will also detail changes to the model evidenced in Figure 4.



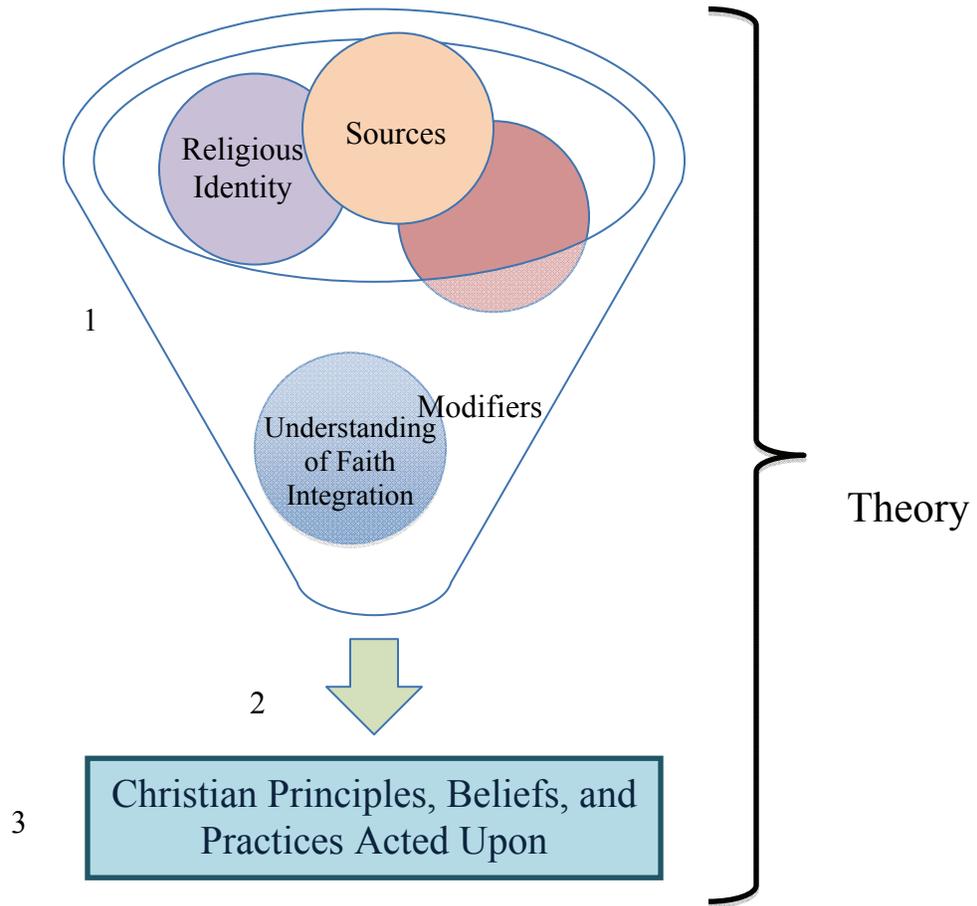
*Figure 4, Praxis Model*

## *Theory*

Within the model, theory includes the assumptions and beliefs that shape the participants' faith integration by informing the reflective process (Figure 4, part 1). The elements in theory include participants' religious identity, sources, modifiers, and faith integration definitions, which result in commitments to specific beliefs and practices that are incorporated in work. Theory is a confluence of the sources, modifiers, religious identity, and understanding of faith integration working together in various combinations to result in Christian beliefs, practices, and principles that are planned, processed, and acted upon during the reflective process. This relationship between the elements in theory can be seen in Figure 5.

In this model, the sources and modifiers shape the individuals' understanding of their religious identity within the funnel, which is then influenced by the individual's understanding of faith integration (Figure 5, Part 1). For example, the Bible is a foundational source for individuals to understand what love is. However, a book that an individual reads can influence how the ethic of love can manifest itself in one's daily life or provide a richer understanding of the concept. Furthermore, an individual's understanding of what faith integration is then alters how faith is expressed in their life, in the form of beliefs, practices, and principles that shape behavior. These elements influence one another and together shape individuals' understanding of their faith. Then, as individuals make sense of how their faith relates to the work they do, they are able to integrate their faith commitments into their professional work (Figure 5, Part 2). As these elements interact with one another, as shown in the funnel, the outcome is that faith is

expressed in the individual's life and work through Christian practices, beliefs, and principles (Figure 5, Part 3).



*Figure 5, Theory Relationship Model*

The specific outcomes are Christian principles, practices, and beliefs or an element of the faith that the individual feels called by God to incorporate in their work that directs and informs the reflective process. Their understanding of virtues, practices, and ethics are molded or modified as they encounter new ideas and perspectives. Consequently, theory

must include the elements that work together to form individuals' faith identity as well as their beliefs about faith in action and their approach to living out their faith in their work.

### *Connecting Theory to Action*

The next phase of the reflective process is *anticipatory reflective action*. The Praxis Model shows the relationship between theory and the reflective process (Figure 4, part 2). The arrows that point from theory to reflection represent the confluence of theory and action as theory is incorporated in the reflection process. The arrows represent theory as directing and informing *anticipatory reflective action*, *active reflection*, and *post reflective action*. Theory and the reflective process are not separate activities or concepts. Theory directs and informs the reflective process in three ways: as the motivation for a behavior, as the form of a behavior, and as the expected outcome. Theory gives a particular form to these three actions during reflection. Consider Brett, who incorporated confession in a program. His motivation for desiring to integrate confession in his work stemmed from his understanding of his theory, or how he made sense of practicing confession. In addition, his theory (confession) was also the form of behavior that Brett wanted to enact. The theory, or conceptualization and commitment to the theological concept of confession, was also the actual behavior that he implemented. Lastly, the theory also helped the participant make sense of the expected outcome. Brett hoped to incorporate confession in his work because of the positive outcomes that he believed could result from the practice.

Theory informs and directs active reflection and post reflective action in the same way, but the contexts are different. Active reflection looks similar to ARA because the behavior is then being enacted in the moment. In post-reflective action, the theory helps

the individual make sense of the motivation behind the behavior, how the behavior took on its form in the action, and if the expected outcome was the result by looking at it retrospectively. The reflective process provides the impetus for how the individual understands the theory in these contexts, and how their theory changes as a result.

### *Reflective Action*

The first phase that an individual enters as they move through praxis is reflection. Reflection occurs before and after the event through *reflective action* (Figure 4: part 3 and 5 of the model).

*Anticipatory Reflective Action.* The model originally suggested that the *reflective action* before and after an event looked very similar, but the findings suggested that these two processes take on different qualities and can occur simultaneously. In *anticipatory reflective action*, the participants both prepared for and processed how they could incorporate their faith in their work. This process includes spiritual preparation, planning an event or meeting, intentionality, and research that are each filtered through theory. One of the elements that I did not expect to find was the spiritual preparation piece. I expected that individuals thought about how their faith could be incorporated in programs or meetings, but I did not expect that active reflection included spiritual preparation. Preparation occurred in various forms such as prayer or journaling. These moments helped individuals' enter the proper frame of mind in order to incorporate their faith during active reflection. Anticipatory reflective actions help an individual prepare and plan the events that would emerge in their day or throughout their year. This process also

had a group element, in which individuals would engage in anticipatory reflective action with their colleagues as they were planning events with one another.

*Active reflection.* The next phase an individual enters within the reflective process is *active reflection*. During *active reflection* (Figure 4, Part 4), individuals incorporate their faith assumptions and beliefs during an event, or they interpret an event during the moment through the Christian faith. Active reflection occurs, often serendipitously, during conversations and within modeling or discipleship relationships. During these interactions, participants incorporated Christian virtues, implemented Christian practices, and modeled Christian principles such as reconciliation for students and staff. The act of reflection during the event motivates the individuals' behavior, serves the form of the behavior, or directs the expected outcome through bringing theory into the experience. The transition from anticipatory action to active reflection can either happen quickly or slowly. For instance, some individuals engage in anticipatory reflective action in advance, such as David's preparation for Resident Assistant training, which he began planning months beforehand. In contrast, some instances can cause individuals to move through the reflective process much more quickly. Some participants spent time spiritually preparing fifteen minutes before a meeting and then entered the meeting and began engaging active reflection immediately. This transition varies depending upon the scenario.

*Post reflective action.* The fifth phase in the model is *post reflective action*, which occurs after an event has transpired (Figure 4, part 5). Post reflective action is the process of thinking about an event after it has occurred in light of one's Christian faith.

Post reflective action occurred for participants by assessing programs, discussing programs or events with others, praying, processing, and engaging in reflection about oneself or the institution. This reflective process helps to bring about change to the individual.

*Transition between reflective processes.* The transition between ARA, AR, and PRA can be quick, or it can be slow and drawn out. For example, creating a new program can be a slow expression of praxis. On the other hand, Dylan's commitment to be intentional about caring for others in the office (ARA), being intentional about asking the administrative assistant how she is doing and how he can pray for her (AR), and then reflecting upon how affirming of an experience that was is a quick process that seems very unintentional, but in fact was rooted in Dylan's faith commitments and carried out through following the praxis process.

*Anticipatory Reflective Action and Post Reflective Action as one Process*

Based on participant's accounts, it appears that anticipatory and post reflective action can occur simultaneously. Because events may occur asynchronously, some of the participants engaged in reflecting upon an event that occurred in the past in light of their faith (post reflective action), while also preparing for an event in the future (anticipatory reflective action). These two phases are not always separate and distinct from one another. This reality makes the Praxis Model non-sequential in some instances. For example, Courtney discussed the role of journaling as a method of reflection in her life. She revealed that when she journals, she does not merely think about things that have happened in her day, but she also plans and processes the things that are to come. This

reflective process includes reflecting upon both the past and the present event, but it occurs simultaneously. It is anticipatory reflection and post-reflection at the same time. In addition, John noted that he is using focus group data to look at the programs that they are currently offering at the institution and thinking about how they can be improved. This is another instance in which the individual is reflecting upon past events and planning for future events at the same time, not just processing the past event or preparing for a future event. Consequently, the faith integration process of praxis is not as linear and sequential as originally proposed. Reflection can occur in one moment both before and after an event because individuals are always before and after events. For example, when an event is one in a series of events, such as a book study, reflection can occur before the next event and after the previous event. I propose that the concept of reflective action can occur before an event, after an event, or at the same time, making the model much less linear. Regardless of the sequence, the reflective process of anticipatory reflective action, active reflection, and post reflective action lead to the next step in the model: change.

### *Change*

The reflective process produces change for the individual or change for the group (Figure 4, part 7 and part 8). Because theory is an instrumental aspect of each part in the reflective process, ARA, AR, and PRA can all result in change to an individual's theory. After evaluating many reflective models, Rogers (2001) noted, "Reflection can enhance learning and overall personal and professional effectiveness" (p. 49). Rogers' (2001) assertion affirms the notion that the result of reflection is change. In this study, change means that participants are revising or reaffirming their theory or faith commitments and

how they make sense of faith integration as a result of the reflective process. Change can either reaffirm a person's theory by deepening their conviction in or commitment to that specific belief, or it can be a shift toward a new perspective. For example, when Tim committed to being intentional about making space in his day for engaging with students, and then he spoke with students in the hallway about ways to deepen their faith, and then reflected upon how great that aspect of his day was, he reaffirmed his theory that he needs to be intentional about student care and development. This changed his theory in the sense that his experience and reflection has affirmed and confirmed the rightness and value of the theory that motivated his behavior originally, and he is more committed to this principle as a result. On the other hand, when Brett engaged in a book study with his students, his theory was changed through the confession and testimony that occurred as a result of the experience. This reaffirmed his belief in the importance of testimony and confession, but it also shaped his religious identity by bringing to light areas in his faith that he needed to develop. He remembered the conversations as "cutting me to the core," and claimed, "I still go back to that, the things that students taught me in that group and that was years ago now, but that has always stood out to me." This changed the trajectory of some elements of his faith. After the participants are changed as a result of their praxis process, they can then move through the model again as they continue to consider ways in which their faith can impact their work.

## *Changes to the Model*

### *Two Sides of the Model: Individual and Group*

As I explained in Chapter 5, the original model conceptualized the process of praxis as occurring only at the individual level and producing change for the individual or the group. One change that I made to the model after analysis of the data is that the model can be both an individual process and a group process. The left side of the model represents an individual moving through the process of praxis. Brett committed to incorporating the practice of testifying in his work based on its influence in his personal spiritual life. He planned to incorporate testimony in his work (during ARA) and then he incorporated it in his work through a book study through active reflection. After the event, Brett reflected on each book study to make sense of the previous meeting and the elements of his faith that he had incorporated and think through the success of the event and prepare for the next meeting. Brett felt as though his faith was shaped as a result of these meetings, but it also reaffirmed his belief in his theory, in this case, in the importance of testifying.

On the other hand, the model can be moved through at the group level or with a group, which is represented on the right side of the model. The group can represent two individuals working together, a committee, a department, an institution, or any grouping that is larger than an individual working alone. Institutions can move through the Praxis Model as a group as they create initiatives and programs for departments or the institution as a whole. For example, Dylan claimed that he was part of a group that was working to reevaluate how the Christian faith can be brought into the First Year Seminar course (FYS). Instead of planning this as an individual, the institution engages in the phases of

praxis in order to accomplish this goal. The institution has a collective theory that guides it stemming from the faith tradition of the institution and the individuals that work within it. Consequently, as a group, the institution was planning the different aspects of faith that they want to incorporate in the FYS (ARA), engaging in active reflection as a group as they entered these conversations (AR), and will be reflecting upon it together through assessment after it is implemented (PRA). In this way, the college or university institutionalizes the process of praxis with its employees.

The process of praxis at the individual level and the group level are not mutually exclusive processes but can shape one another as well. Both the individual and the group transition from theory through the reflective process and then to change. The result of this process can change the collective theory and practices of the institution, or it can change the individual. As shown in part 10 of Figure 4, the dotted arrows reveal that the individual process of praxis can shape the group, and the group process of praxis can shape the individual.

#### *Continual Movement through the Model*

Another change I made to the model was replacing the bi-directional arrows between the reflective process and change with uni-directional arrows (Figure 4: part 6). In the final model, the arrows only point from the reflective process to change because as previously discussed, change includes both affirming the acted upon theory and moving even further in that direction, or changing directions entirely as the theory is understood in a new way or shaped as a result of the reflective process. The process always leads back to theory through change, and does not stay at the reflective process. Individuals move through the Praxis Model whether their theory is reaffirmed or shaped.

Opportunities for praxis are always present, whether individuals choose to enact the process of praxis or not.

### *The Nature of Perceived Student and Group Change*

Each participant discussed incorporating their faith in order to help shape the life of others, whether students, colleagues, departments, the institution, or the larger community. Through this model I propose that both individuals and groups experience change, and their theory is shaped as a result of their experience. Participants recalled observing others change as a result of their faith integration, whether in action, speech, or spiritual development. The nature of that change is difficult to identify and verify, but it was visible in some ways to the participants. For example, John noted that he saw a supervisee change as a result of a conversation that he had with her regarding her work performance. He noted that after that conversation, other events, and the Lord working in her life, the individual was a much better professional. He suggested, years later, she was now capable of running a student affairs department. Because I did not interview the individuals that the participants' noted had changed, the process the individual went through to change, whether they also are experiencing praxis, and if these experiences shape their theory, or if the process is different, is unknown. This is an area for further research. Nevertheless, participants noticed a change to others that arose out of the participant's faith integration process in their professional context. Thus, the adapted Praxis Model accommodates the change process for the individual who is integrating their faith, and for the target (student, colleague, institution) of their faith integration efforts.

### *Results of Praxis*

Another insight about practices that emerged through my analysis process is that completing all the phases of praxis can result in an unintended outcome. When participants were asked about experiences in which faith integration did not go well, their narratives often contained the major elements of the praxis process. However, the outcome was different than they had hoped. For example, Courtney explained that she was working to restructure her department. Before the meeting, she “invited the Lord into it” (ARA), and then she tried to express love and care throughout the situation (AR). She noted that despite these efforts, “It didn’t go great at all, by any stretch of the imagination.” After the meeting, she engaged in PRA, and thought about other ways that she could have handled the situation differently. Through the process of AR and PRA, she noted that she could have been more straightforward. This new insight suggests that her theory slightly shifted. Even though she still believed that she was integrating faith, she experienced a change in theory regarding how to deal with difficult situations with employees. Courtney went through each of the major phases of the reflective process and experienced change to her personal theory, but it did not result in the desired outcome that she had hoped for in the experience itself. For many of the participants, even when they did not feel like integration went well, they noted that God could redeem the conversation and help facilitate the intended outcome. The outcome of praxis can fail to result in desired outcomes and anticipated effects, but the result can still be successful praxis, including change.

### *The Power Element of Praxis*

One of the nuances that emerged during analysis is that there is a power element that occurs within the faith integration process, in which the individual integrating faith directs their integrative process towards people at the institution with equal or less authority than they hold. Even on Christian college campuses, it is difficult for faith to cross the lines of power that structural hierarchies create. Instead of faith integration intention and influence moving in two directions between participants and supervisors, the process was primarily directed down the hierarchical structure. The only time an individual expressed that they incorporated their faith in experiences with superiors was in an attempt to begin a new program on campus. This resulted in the individual's use of language that was informed by the Christian faith in order to help her supervisors understand why the program she was creating was important to the institution. Despite this fact, the goal of institutionalizing the program was not to shape her superiors' understanding of their faiths, but in order to assist students. Every other time that faith was incorporated in participant's work in the examples they provided, it was in a situation in which the individual was equal in level or supervisors to the individuals with which they were interacting. In most cases, their counterpart and target of integration were students. The participants were much less likely to deliberately incorporate their faith with their supervisors. In fact, Jeremy explained it was not easy to integrate faith with upper administration because:

Things can be perceived as too childlike or elementary, which it should be as Christ said. And so you want to be seen as professional, and so I think there is some concern there at times that if we bring something up in that regard it will not be taken seriously, that kind of thing.

He also commented that faith was not expressed as explicitly in meetings with upper administration because they talk more about, “nickels and noses, heads and beds, retention rates, persistence rates, but we don’t talk about qualitative data, like how did the students’ life get change and what is Christ doing in our school.” In addition to not wanting to convey a lack of professionalism, Jeremy noted that faith is overlooked in order to discuss strategies.

This scenario suggests that individuals believe the person in power in a given situation is responsible for planning and processing how faith relates to the work that is being accomplished. Jeremy seemed to think that it was okay for him to incorporate faith with upper administration if they take the lead. In addition, participants felt it was their duty as supervisors to model Christian practices for their staff and students, or help encourage them in their faith development, but none of their examples attempted to engage in those behaviors to influence those that held organizational positions above them. Participants did express that their students challenged them to have a deeper faith, but this was not intentional, and seemed surprising to the participants.

The notion that those in power are supposed to be developing those underneath them is reaffirmed by many participants’ belief that it is the institutions’ duty to provide them with professional development regarding faith integration. Participants felt that the institution should be a factor in their personal spiritual formation through institutional practices and professional development. One participant even wished that her institution “put their money where their mouth is in regard to professional development opportunities.” The participants expressed a desire that the institution help develop their personal faith identities because they felt it was their duty to then help develop and form

the faith of their direct colleagues, supervisees, and students through their faith integration initiatives.

### *The Universality of the Model*

One of the conclusions I drew from the Praxis Model is that it is useful for people of the Christian faith regardless of denominational traditions. For example, Taylor's faith was guided much more by reliance upon the Holy Spirit than that of Brett's or Cory's, but the model functioned well for all of them. In practice, there might be different nuances regarding what each phase looks like for the individual. For example, Taylor's anticipatory reflective action consists of her surrendering to God as she woke up in the morning and drove to campus. She then prepared for the day by praying through her emails and asking the Lord to tell her where and how to act. For Taylor, active reflection occurred when she acted upon what the Holy Spirit was telling her to do in a conversation with a student or an interaction with a colleague. Throughout her day, Taylor engaged in post reflective action as she prayed about her actions, asking God to show her where she had messed up or where she needed to change. This process either reaffirmed or shaped her theory.

For other participants, such as Susan, a Lutheran, her faith shaped the motivations behind everything that she did. Consequently, her faith integration process was not as overt, but she still moved through the process. Susan sought to enter the right "headspace" as she commuted to work and based the theories and discussions that she had regarding calling and vocation in her Christian faith (PRA). When she was interacting with a student, she inserted faith conversations through her understanding of individuals being made in God's image, which drove the topics that she brought up with

students and the direction that she guided them towards regarding future careers (ARA). Susan's contemplative spirituality then guided her PRA. She claimed, "The largest contribution to my faith to the work that I do is the stuff that people can't see." She further noted, "My faith can be really important to me and still be humming along in the background." Though her faith integration is not as overt as other participants', Susan saw her faith as the foundation for her actions throughout the day. Despite the different Christian traditions represented by the participants, each one of them moved through the model. The universality of the model allows it to be an effective tool at any Christian institution because it accommodates the nuances of various faith expressions. This nuance is taken into account because the individual or group's theory is based upon religious identity, important spiritual commitments and practices, and different impacting factors that make each person's and institution's theory unique. The model accommodates different Christian traditions and approaches to faith integration, making it effective for use for various institutions and individuals.

### *Variations of Praxis*

In addition to praxis occurring through individuals and the group, my data analysis highlighted that praxis can occur both on a micro level and a macro level. It occurs on the micro level as it is being practiced in small ways as part of daily routines, or on the macro level in planning large programs, institutional process, or events.

#### *Micro*

Praxis occurs at the micro level as individuals incorporate it in their daily actions. This occurs through daily interactions with others, such as when an individual's faith

impacts their preparation for a meeting with a student, praying throughout the meeting, and then processing the meeting. This expression of praxis is much more individualized and often not explicit when it is being implemented. In fact, individuals often do not see praxis on the micro level as being intentional, but more of a natural expression of their work. This will be discussed in the next section. Nevertheless, praxis occurs on the micro level in daily interactions and programs that individuals and groups take part in at the institution on a daily basis. For example, Dylan was intentional about being available for students when they knock on his door. This was an ongoing commitment that Dylan had made that has emerged out of his faith commitments, but will occur in his daily interactions with his students.

### *Macro*

Praxis can also occur at the macro level as a wide scale process that the institution moves through. For example, staff development facilitated by the institution could be considered as praxis occurring on the macro level. At these events, the department or unit as a whole gathers to think about an issue and how their faith can shape how they relate and respond to the issue. Many of the participants discussed sitting around tables and planning and processing current programs or possible programs that were addressed by a professional development program. For instance, a professional development program regarding diversity that provides the opportunity for group reflection could be a macro expression of praxis. In this way, a large department is visibly engaging in praxis on a much larger scale than in daily interactions.

Furthermore, the rhythm of the school year lends itself to practicing praxis. Various seasons in the year offer opportunities for planning, acting, processing, and

change. For example, the summer is a time when many student affairs departments reflect upon the year that has passed and plan changes for the year to come. The planning that occurs through the summer months is acted upon throughout the school year, and often evaluated again during the months of December and January as institutions plan for the next semester. Institutions then engage in reflection through assessment as they evaluate programs in light of the goals and objectives they put forth. The assessment data is then used in the summer to consider the success of the last year and plan for the new year either affirming the faith integration processes that have been enacted over the last year, or changing the understanding of method of faith integration that is enacted. In this way, the academic calendar is an expression of how institutions engage praxis at a macro level, and why the model lends itself so well to the realm of academia. Thus the yearly process of engaging praxis through the rhythm of the school year has made this process seem like a practice to the institution, when it is still very intentional.

*Unintentional Intentionality: Intentional Expressions of Faith*

Another conclusion from the study is that the incorporation of the student affairs administrators' Christian faith in their work is very intentional. Sites, Garzon, Milacci, and Boothe (2009) found similar results in their phenomenological study claiming, "From the beginning of the first interview, all eight participants described their faith in ontological terms, such as the essence of their being, inseparable in every way from every aspect of their life and work, the center of everything they do." (p. 32). Sites et al.'s faculty participants expressed similar sentiments to the student affairs administrators in my study. A common way that people in higher education think about their faith integration experience is that it is an ontological or natural expression. Despite the shared

desire for faith integration to naturally emerge out of their faith commitments, all of the participants in my study discussed integrating their faith in their work as a very intentional process. This seems to suggest that their espoused theory, or what they say they are doing, is inconsistent their theory in use, what they are actually doing.

Although participants prefer to see their expression of their faith as natural, they are actually working through the process of praxis in these moments. For example, even after recalling multiple faith integration experiences in which she intentionally planned and prepared for events, Amanda claimed that her faith integration “is more spontaneous.” In addition, Jeremy was one of the participants who was most adamant about how unintentional his faith integration process was. He claimed, “Faith integration is everything I do. It is like breathing and so similarly.” Despite making statements like this throughout the interview, Jeremy’s examples of faith integration nevertheless mapped to the major elements of the Praxis Model. In one example, Jeremy discussed that he prepared for a meet with a supervisee for almost a year regarding her work performance, before the meeting actually took place. He planned for it with her other supervisor and colleagues, considering multiple ways to approach the situation, including through the reconciliation principle in Matthew 18 (ARA). When he met with the supervisee, Jeremy noted that during the conversation he tried to speak “truth” that he felt like God wanted her to hear and desired to help her grow as an individual and employee (AR). Since the event, Jeremy has reflected upon the changes in his supervisee and his perceptions about the interaction (PRA). Jeremy noted that his reflection always has a faith component. Jeremy acknowledged that through his integrative process as well as God moving in the individual’s life, his supervisee was a much improved professional

“capable to be the vice president of an office” (Change). This process reaffirmed Jeremy’s theory as his understanding of his “source” of scripture and the Matthew 18 was confirmed as a successful approach to dealing with conflict. Furthermore, his incorporation of “beliefs, practices, and principles” (honesty and truth) proved to be effective. The reaffirmation of his theory suggests that he will be more likely to incorporate them again in the future because of their proven benefit. Despite his statements that his faith and life are “ubiquitous” and that faith integration is like “breathing,” Jeremy was very intentional about the way in which he goes about his work, engaging in all aspects of the Praxis Model.

### *The Relationship between Practice and Praxis*

One of the outcomes of this study is that it clarifies the relationship between practices and praxis in the context of the faith integration process of student affairs administrators. The terms practice and praxis have similar conceptual grounds. Alasdair MacIntyre’s definition of practice and David I. Smith and James K.A. Smith’s (2011) explication of his definition illuminates the relationship between these overlapping yet distinct concepts. MacIntyre (2007) defines practice as:

...any coherent and complex form of socially established and cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p. 187)

Smith and Smith (2011) note and analyze three features of this definition of practice.

First, they claim that, according to MacIntyre’s definition, “A practice is social, communal, and inherited: it is a complex of routines and rituals that is handed down from

others” (p. 8). By comparison, praxis is potentially but not necessarily social and communal. Persons can go through the praxis phases individually, as well as in coordination with others. Praxis can also be expressed communally as institutions engage in reflective action through institutional processes or programs, such as assessment. Like practice, praxis can be “inherited”, or passed on by individuals or institutions. Many participants were directly instructed in how to integrate faith through institutions where they sought degrees or were employed. In other cases, these behaviors and values were modeled for them. Like practice, praxis also involves complex routines and rituals. For example, Taylor engages in a daily routine of praying when she wakes up in the morning and as she drives to work, surrendering to God (ARA). Praxis is like practice in that it includes similar components. It differs from practice in that the components that MacIntyre suggests are necessary for practice are not necessary for praxis but can be part of the praxis process (social, communal, and inherited).

Second, Smith and Smith (2011) note:

Not all routines and rituals are ‘practices’ in this sense. MacIntyre draws the distinction by emphasizing that a full-blooded ‘practice’ has ‘internal goods.’ These are goals or aims that can be achieved *only* by engaging in the practice. ‘External’ good can be achieved in any number of ways. For example, chess is a practice with internal goods which are specific to the game (analytical skill, strategic imagination, competitive intensity). To really play chess – to be a *practitioner* of practice – is to seek these internal goods. Now, I might also play chess to become rich and famous; but such goods are ‘external to the practice – they could be achieved by any number of strategies. If I merely ‘instrumentalize’ a practice for some other, external end, then I’m not really a practitioner. (p. 8-9)

Praxis, like practice, contains internal goods, but a person does not typically set out to achieve those internal goods through praxis because it is primarily others focused. Praxis and practice both have internal goods, but the distinction between the two is that praxis’

ultimate aim or *telos* is not internal goods for the individual engaging in the action but for change in others. My findings reveal that participants almost always had a target for praxis that was other than themselves, whether students, staff, the community, or systems. Furthermore, unlike practice, the ultimate aim of praxis is not to perfect the process but to fulfill a calling. More specifically, it is a calling to transform people and places.

On the other hand, praxis is not seeking external goods, primarily, but the internal goods it is seeking are for the other. The external goods that individual receives for engaging in praxis is that they may profit professionally or interpersonally because they are noted at being exceptional at integrating their faith in their work. Individuals can also generate internal goods as they experience change to the theory as a result of the process. Because praxis can be a successful process but not achieve the intended outcomes, it may still reify one's theological commitments, but not accomplish its' primary goal. Praxis can still result in internal goods even if it does not affect the target individual in the desired ways. For example, when Courtney had conversations regarding the restructuring of her department with her supervisees, she expressed that the conversation did not go well, despite her efforts to integrate faith. On the other hand, she noted that her understanding of faith integration was shaped as a result of this process. Despite this fact, internal goods are not the goal of praxis. Instead, the goal is to change other people and systems through faith integration. Thus, internal goods are latent functions to the manifest function of changing others. Praxis is distinct from practice because the process does not aim to accumulate internal goods for the doer of the process.

Third, Smith and Smith (2011) offer an insight about the role of standards of excellence within MacIntyre's understanding of practice:

Every practice has relevant standards of excellence, determined (but also debated) by the community and tradition that nourished the practice. Thus 'to enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards,' for the good internal to the practice 'can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners'.

Praxis differs from practice in this regard because there is no standard of excellence for praxis or faith integration processes. The nature of faith integration and how it should be and is accomplished in higher education has been a source of debate in higher education literature (Alleman, Glanzer, & Guthrie, in press), although some attempts to categorize faith integration has been made. This is because there is no standard of excellence that currently exists that details how faith integration should be accomplished. Individuals do not have a definitive rubric to implement in judging their work. Although a standard of excellence is not available, the manifest purpose of praxis is an improved faith integration process and product. From the individual's perspective, the latent function (affirming or re-directing theory) may be invisible, but is clearly at work in the praxis model process. Consequently, change is the focal point of the praxis model in a way that it is not in practice. As a result, the two concepts conflict with one another because practices have a relative standard by which they can be measured that is agreed upon and debated, and faith integration does not have an agreed upon form. Currently, outside of modeling, there is no agreed-upon standard by which to measure or understanding how to praxis.

Despite the differences between the two concepts, practices are an instrumental aspect of the praxis model. One of the relationships that emerged between practices and praxis throughout the study is that practices are an influential variable (input) and

frequent receptor of change (output) of the praxis process. Within the model, practices are a part of theory, and they manifest themselves within the reflective process. Practices are an element of theory because the understanding and importance of practices are found within individuals' religious identities. Furthermore, they are an output of theory as they are forms of behavior that are enacted during the reflective processes, as previously discussed.

### *Telos*

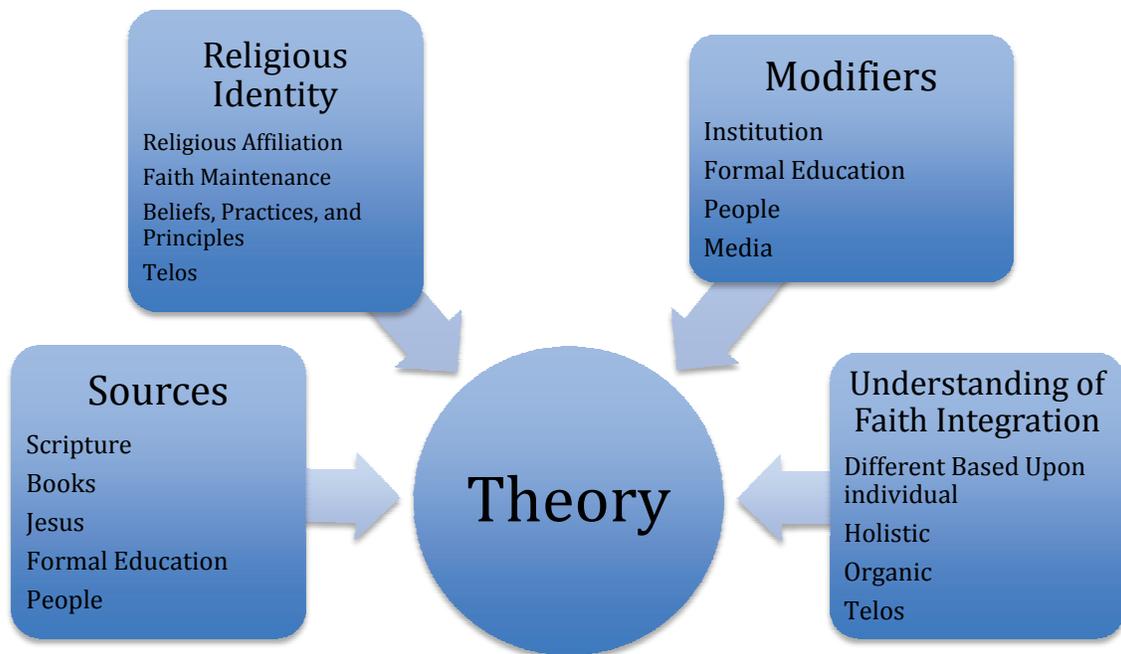
In his discussion of practices, MacIntyre (2007) suggests that practices are aimed at a specific telos, or end. According to MacIntyre, practices help orient individuals towards their specific telos. This is an important concept that was not necessarily explicit within the participants' accounts, but it is implicit. Though participants in this study did not explicitly note a larger purpose or telos at which they aimed their integrative process, they implied that a larger purpose existed. The participant's desire to shape individuals and to form them arises out of their beliefs about their larger life purpose and aim. Though it was not a finding, the theory model has been adapted to include telos as part of the participants' *religious identity* as well as their *understanding of faith integration* (Figure 6). Their telos helps them make sense of their personal end goal, as well as how their understanding of other people's purpose, which then shapes how they make sense of integrating their faith in their work.

### *Limitations*

The restricted timeline for data collection and analysis is the primary limitation of this study. The restricted timeline of this study was a limitation to the research because I

was unable to conduct multiple interviews with each participant, which provide additional trustworthiness to the findings. Furthermore, I could have included additional participants had the study time line not been truncated. A richer data set would help me further understand the nuances within the Praxis Model. Despite this, the data set is diverse in gender representation, faith tradition, and positions held by the participants.

I intended to use reflections from the Vice Presidents of Student Life at the various institutions in which the participants work about how each participant incorporates their faith in their work, but I was unable to receive these reflections from all of the participants' institutions due to various reasons.



*Figure 6, The Position of Telos in Theory*

This data would have helped me understand the nuances to the individual's faith integration processes and how their supervisors perceived the participants' faith as impacting their work.

Another potential limitation of the model is the use of the term theory. Remaining true to Freire's (1993) language of theory and practice comprising praxis, might not allow for the nuance of an individual's faith to clearly be understood. The term theory in this study is meant to describe and encapsulate the complex factors that contribute to one's beliefs and religious commitments that contribute to the reflective process during faith integration. This understanding of theory is a broad use of the term and contains many elements that might not be conveyed clearly when the model is used for practical purposes.

### *Implications*

#### *Implications for Future Research*

The findings in this study and model are an important starting point for understanding the faith integration process of student affairs administrators. Despite the large amount of literature on faith integration (APU, 2012; Beers & Beers, 2008; Hasker, 1991; Holmes, 1987; Moroney, 2014), student affairs administration remains an area where additional consideration is warranted. This study reveals the process through which student affairs administrators who are committed to faith integration, incorporate it into their work. The participants' integrative process is more complex than simply praying before meetings; it permeates various aspects of the participants' worklives. In addition, this study demonstrates that the participants are deliberate and purposeful about faith integration. This study also provides the insight that praxis looks the same for the participants in terms of outcomes despite differences in religious commitments.

Further research could explore whether Christian student affairs administrators at institutions outside of the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities go through the same process of integrating their faith in their work. Some options for this research might include conducting a similar study at Catholic institutions, CCCU affiliated institutions, or even with Christian faculty at non-religious institutions. Christian student affairs administrators working in non-religious institutions are an understudied population and might benefit from this sort of study. Similarly, the participants chosen in this study were noted as exemplars at incorporating their faith in their work. A similar study could be conducted without this stipulation to see if the findings parallel those from this research.

Another implication for further research would include studying how others are shaped by the incorporation of student affairs administrators' faith in their work. Many of the participants suggested that they witnessed students, staff, or the community change as a result of their faith integration process. Further studies need to be conducted to understand the nature and process of these changes from the perspective of the individual that is changed. This could include the sense making behavior that individuals go through as a result of the faith that is incorporated in the work. Do they move through the process of praxis as their theory changes or is affirmed through the same process, or does the recipient of the praxis reflection process look different? A study of this nature could also focus on the practices and actions that produce the most significant change in individuals' lives. This information would be beneficial for student affairs administrators as they plan their faith integration processes.

Because the findings of this study suggested that faith integration occurs within a hierarchical structure and is acted upon by those within power, further research could be conducted regarding the perceptions of upper-level administrators in this regard. This could include asking upper-level administrators to describe how lower level administrators have influenced them, even if the lower level administrators did not know it. The study could also include questions regarding how vice presidents perceive their role in integrating faith on campus. This information would be beneficial to understand if there is a power element to faith integration, or if this is a perception of mid-level administrators because of their position at the institution or the campus culture.

### *Theoretical Implications*

The findings of this study have added to the current theory pertaining to faith integration. This study adds to the literature that addresses how people can conceptualize faith integration. Prior to this study many scholars have proposed frameworks and typologies that detail different approaches that individuals can use when integrating faith in their work (Holmes, 1987; Hasker, 1991; APU, 2012; Moroney, 2014). None of these studies detail a process that individuals go through in order to translate their Christian faith into their work commitments.

This model adds to the current theory by introducing a process model of faith integration practices. The model does not focus on the theological approach to integration, such as a Christian worldview, because the model allows those commitments to emerge out of the individuals' theory; instead, the Praxis Model details that phases that administrators go through in order to merge theory and practice. This is a new way to conceptualize faith integration practices. Sites et al. (2009) found that faculty participants

discuss faith integration as ontological rather than deliberate. Many of my participants expressed the same sentiments, but when asked about faith integration experiences, they were all purposeful about incorporating faith in their work. Sites et al.'s (2009) model does not provide the nuance that is found in the Praxis Model. The Praxis Model illuminates the elements that are hidden within a presumed monolithic whole. Though individuals perceive their faith integration as ontological, it is much more of a process. The Praxis Model details what is occurring during the faith integration process, and gives the opportunity for individuals to make intentional adjustments to the process.

### *Implications for Practice*

The findings of this study result in significant recommendations for institutional practices. The model offers a way for student affairs administrators to be more intentional about incorporating their faith in their work. It can offer assistance to student affairs administrators that are struggling to incorporate their faith into their work, especially if they have been educated at non-religious institutions or have not worked at Christian institutions in the past. This model could be incorporated into professional development programs for student affairs administrators. It could be used at the department level, the sub-departments of student affairs, such as student activities, or on the individual level. This model can help individuals think about how they incorporate their faith in their work and possibly inspire them to think about incorporating their faith in their work in a new way, such as a practice or a virtue.

The findings of this study are also beneficial for graduate programs that are training future student affairs administrators. Many of the current student affairs graduate programs at Christian institutions rely upon books about faith integration at the

institutional level or within the classroom to facilitate discussions regarding how the Christian faith relates to the work that they will be doing. This model offers a tangible process for graduate students to consider as they think about how their faith will impact their work in the future.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Positionality Statement

My interest in exploring how student affairs administrators integrate their Christian faith in their work arises from the fact that I am a student in a faith-based higher education and student affairs program looking to work at a Christian college or university. During our program we have studied and discussed the nature and purpose of faith integration. I began to realize that there are models, approaches, and frameworks that discuss how faculty can integrate faith within their scholarship and pedagogical practices, but there is currently little research that provides similar frameworks for student affairs administrators. I was frustrated by the lack of approaches that were relevant to the student affairs profession in particular. The Christian faith is something that we discuss that we should develop in students, but little focus has been placed upon our personal faith in relation to our future jobs. As an individual that is looking into going into the profession or teaching students going into the profession, I am interested in how student affairs administrators actually go about incorporating their Christian faith in their work.

In part, I am interested in faith integration specifically because my Christian commitments have played an integral role in my life. Attending a Baptist undergraduate institution and a Baptist university for my graduate degree has shaped my desire to work in a Christian institution. Because I hope to work within Christian higher education in the future, I am hoping that this study will provide an understanding of how my colleagues

and I can begin to consider ways that we could incorporate our faith in our forthcoming careers, as well as our current apprenticeship positions.

My hope is that I will find that there are student affairs administrators that are thinking deeply about faith integration and doing it well. I also have an assumption of what faith integration might look like based upon my personal experiences. One of my fears is that I will find that student affairs administrators are not committed to critically thinking about new and innovative approaches to faith integration.

### *Biases*

Because of my interest in faith integration as well as the influence of my personal faith tradition, I will have to resist the temptation to judge participants' actions in light of my biases of what faith integration should look like. Furthermore, I am biased in that I deeply desire to find that student affairs administrators are prioritizing faith integration in their positions. Consequently, I do not want to read into the interviews and claim that I find something that is not present.

### *Addressing My Biases*

Because of my Christian faith and my invested interest in the topic, I will be interpreting my study through this lens. In order to minimize the impact of my bias on the findings of my study, I will utilize member checking during data analysis, triangulation, and debriefing with peers. These actions will address my desire to find something that is not there by holding myself accountable to other parties.

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions

*What is the process through which student affairs administrators' Christian faith shapes their professional work?*

#### **How do student affairs administrators articulate their Christian faith and its expression in their work?**

- How would you describe your religious identity?
- What informs your ideas of being a person of faith in student affairs?
- Are there specific guiding Christian principles, practices, or values that you find influential in your spiritual life?
  - Do these transfer over into worklife?
- Does the work in your department look different at a Christian institution than in the same department at a secular institution?
  - How would you describe that difference?
  - How does your understanding of that difference change the way you do your job?

#### **What does the concept of praxis illuminate about the way that Christian student affairs administrators' faith shapes their professional work?**

- Think of two situations where you think that you integrated faith well? What occurred?
  - How did you prepare for it?
  - Did you prepare for it?
  - In what ways?
  - What were you thinking about it as it occurred?
  - Did your thinking about it change as you went on?
  - Were there unexpected occurrences that made you have to react?
  - What thoughts did you have about the experience after it was over?
  - Has it influenced your thinking or behavior since then?
  - Did you see impact of that change in other places or in other ways beyond yourself?
- Can you think of a time when you tried to integrate faith in your work and you failed?
- Do you spend time planning or thinking about how you will incorporate your Christian faith in your work?
  - Can you explain a time when you did this?
- Can you think of a time when an event at work, or your reflection about an event changed the way that you understand your faith?

**What experiences have influenced how administrators think their faith should shape their work processes?**

- What are the job responsibilities that take up the majority of your time?
- Does your institution provide professional development aimed to helping you integrate faith in your work? (helpful, not helpful, how did you build off of them).
- Does your institution have formal faith integration objectives and are they assessed?
  - Does this impact the way you think how your faith shapes your work, if so, how?
- Are there experiences or influences that have informed or shaped how you think about your faith in relation to your work?
  - Can you give an example?
- Are there formal or informal ways in which you incorporate your faith in your work?
- Thinking back over your career in this position, what have you learned about how your faith relates to the work that you do?

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