

**CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CHANGE LEADERSHIP:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE LEADERS IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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**Christian School Change Leadership: A Phenomenological Study of
Educational Change Leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian Schools**

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CHANGE LEADERSHIP: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE LEADERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Kevin Anthony Mirchandani

This dissertation explores Christian educational change leadership in British Columbia (BC) K-12 Christian schools using social capital and complex adaptive systems theories. It examines the interaction between three domains of literature including school leadership, organizational dynamics, and faith integrative research. The purpose of the dissertation is to investigate how BC K-12 Christian school change leaders experience organizational change by describing (i) change leadership processes and practices, (ii) resistance to change, and (iii) the role of faith in the dynamic relationship between self and their learning community during change initiatives. It also explores how network connections are leveraged for school change and details the essence of leading change within Christian learning communities. The dissertation advances the study of resistance to change and faith informed leadership practice by integrating social capital insights with Christian theology in a practice-oriented dialogue. It forwards that the energy, power, and tension in resistance can be used constructively to positively disrupt, create social interconnectivity, form an adaptive faithfulness, and catalyze change. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to reposition research on leaders' experiences,

practices, and meaning making, rather than on analyzing organizational change from outcome-based perspectives and measuring effects quantitatively.

Qualitative thematic analysis of 28 interviews with current BC K-12 Christian school leaders revealed three themes: (1) Being and Becoming the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader; (2) Communal Adaptive Faithfulness; and (3) Meaning of Educational Change Leadership: God's Mission and Kingdom Network Expansion. While the results of the qualitative research may have limited transferability to other educational contexts due to the unique socio-political, cultural, and spiritual dynamics that comprise BC's Christian independent schools, the description of change leaders' experiences that emerged provide a framework for academic institutions, supporting network associations, and policy makers to plan strategies that enhance and support the faith and identity, knowledge and skills, and collaborative network capabilities that is needed for change leadership of K-12 Christian schools. The findings in a preliminary proposal for a Change Leadership Institute that grounds preparation in four change dispositions is forwarded to lead to greater preparation for leading change through organizational disruption.

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CHAPTER ONE

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Leading K-12 Christian schools in British Columbia (BC) through organizational change efforts can be a complex sociological, psychological, pastoral, and theological task for the educational leader. Organizational change evokes a range of responses ranging from a sense of impending disaster to the mysterious and fragile, yet compelling hope in an alternative future. This dissertation is motivated not only by a desire to clarify practices that promote greater acceptance of change, but also by a commitment to uncover critical gaps in our understanding of educational change leadership with BC K-12 Christian learning communities.

Organizational change theory has been preoccupied with understanding outcomes related to the system, key stakeholders, and interactions within organizations, yet leaders' experiences appear to be left out and of secondary concern in theoretical and practitioner literature. This has left a gap in understanding the formative and transformational experiences that prepare Christian educational change leaders, personal encounters of change, and the ways in which leaders experience the presence of faith in the dynamic relationship between self and learning community. Empirical research has largely focused on how to drive positive outcomes towards change and navigate resistance, while leaving the leader's own experiences and formation within the change process largely unexamined. It is for this reason that the dissertation study focuses on exploring the inner lives of change leaders to create a detailed description of the essence of change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools.

Within persistent concerns about declining leadership resilience and shallow leadership pipelines, change leadership has become a critical pressure point. Yet, in Christian schools, leaders can lack a clear understanding of where productive energy for change originates and how it can be generative and sustained rather than unintentionally dispersed and depleted.

As Christian school leaders help their communities of faith navigate educational changes in theological identity, organizational practice, and curricular improvement, the antecedents that enable leaders to bring their faith into change management and school reform initiatives needed to be examined. The importance of the change leaders' competencies leading to effective organizational change has been well-studied for the past several decades (Beer & Walton, 1987; Burke, 2024; Burt, 1992, 2005; Fullan, 2005, 2015; Granovetter, 1985; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947; Marsden, 1982; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Weick, 1976). The following were gaps identified in organizational change literature that framed the critical constructs for the dissertation: (i) the formative experiences that have changed leaders; (ii) the interactions of a leader within their communities; (iii) the faith-informed practices sustained by Christian leadership practitioners; (iv) the relationship a leader has with and within their community; and (v) practices embodied and embedded in communities of change that have adopted more adaptive and resilient approaches to episodic and bounded change. By examining the educational leaders' experiences, this research study aimed to support better social science theories to assist with the preparation of leaders for the present and future emergent realities of change leadership.

In Chapter Two, Domain One, the literature review examines seminal organizational change theorists' discussions of the purposes, processes, practices, and the persons of educational change; such theorists were preoccupied with presenting models that addressed

organizational dynamics leading to positive outcomes (Burke, 2024; Finn III & Feldhaus, 2021; Fullan, 2015, 2020; Hallinger, 2003; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1944). Practitioner models advanced the field of studies to raise concern for the interactions between *persons*, *brokers*, and *agents* within the systems, but change models required further analysis from social capital perspectives.

Consequently, complex adaptive systems and complexity leadership theories (Burt, 1992, 2005; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden, 1982; McKelvey, 1999; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Prigogine, 1955; Putnam, 2000; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Weick, 1976) provided the theoretical basis for examining how change can be facilitated through social capital and networked relationships. Complexity scientists, who have represented a broad interdisciplinary field, have described the non-linear dynamics of how people behave within systems to increase the adoption of change through social interactions (Burt, 1992; Holland, 1992; Kauffman, 1993; Nicolis & Prigogine, 1977; Simon, 1962; Weaver, 1948). Because complex adaptive lenses help researchers analyze emergent properties, complexity scientists inquire into an organization's capabilities to adapt, self-organize, and promote resilience in the presence of disruption.

Capacity for change in Christian schools was also of primary concern for the dissertation. Ashby's (1956) *law of requisite variety* stated that for an organized system to survive, its internal order generated must match the external forces acting upon it. Similarly, Boisot and McKelvey (2011), building on Ashby's (1956) theory, proposed the *law of requisite complexity*. Boisot and McKelvey (2011) argued that a system's ability to adapt and thrive depends on whether its internal complexity can rival the level of complexity of external forces (p. 279). A shift in understanding educational systems and Christian learning communities as complex adaptive systems has carried with it some implications: without dynamic, networked approaches, Christian schools may struggle to adapt to the complexity of the social forces acting on their

environments. Christian schools must ensure that their internal capacity for change, including their leaders, social structures, and approach to community engagement reflects a more adaptive and relational model. This approach extends to the relationship between leaders and their communities, as well as the educational and Christian faith-informed beliefs they hold and share.

Chapter Two, Domain One also reinforces an indispensable bridge between the field of social dynamics with educational change leadership theory. It was necessary to establish a stronger relationship between these respective fields because their contributions appeared to be mutually beneficial. Theories related to organizational behavior and social dynamics require a better understanding of how structured communal learning leads to relationships, while educational change theories required better understanding of the importance of social capital as part of reforming schools. Key educational change theorists proposed how professional capacity emerging from social and decisional capital (Fullan, 2012) has been found to be a way that organizations might increase the velocity of change, linking to social dynamics models that enable depth of adoption for change initiatives (Arena, 2018).

Chapter Two, Domain Two critically assesses the limitations in the integrative relationship between Christian faith-informed practice and organizational spirituality in both theories and empirical research. The study sought to better explore the relationship between how Christian educational leaders bring their faith into their organizational change practices, with a view of supporting greater adaptability, resilience, adoption of change, shared learning, and Christian school understanding of communal change.

There has also been a gap in Christian educational leadership studies regarding how leaders navigate resistance within their communities. The dissertation research sought to explore how Christian educational leaders address resistance and promote constructive engagement with their

change communities. However, concerning Christian approaches to leading educational change, Beckman et al. (2012) expressed frustration concerning the overreliance on leadership models from the public sector that do not “explicate the unique attributes of leadership or the theological aspects of the vocation” (p. 105). To better understand if it is possible to build Christian hypotheses about educational change leaders, one can ask, what can the experiences of Christian educational leaders tell us about leading communal change in faithful, Biblically and theologically informed ways? The challenge of change leadership in British Columbia’s K-12 Christian schools lies in navigating a complex socio-political landscape while maintaining a distinct identity beyond merely being a school of choice with a faith-identity. Effective leadership in these schools has been thought of as cultivating a unified social vision that integrates epistemological, theological, and communal perspectives of the Christian faith. What distinguishes Christian schools’ models of change from public models of change is not merely parental preference or school choice, but the social dynamics of leaders actively pursuing Christian purpose and practice. The respective constructs were explored more comprehensively in Chapter Two, Domain Three.

In Chapter Three, within the social dynamics of educational change leadership, the study examines resistance to change. According to Mohamad et al. (2019), there are a range of definitions that encompass acceptance to organizational change from levels of readiness, openness, proactivity, commitment, and positive reaction that offer a “multi-dimensional view” of attitudinal responses. In contrast, resistance studies have addressed additional concerns about the high tendency of failure with organizational change due to pressures on a system (Mohamad et al., 2019, p. 82; Oreg, 2006; Smollan, 2011). Piderit (2000) described the importance of rethinking resistance to change by recognizing the relationship between categories of strong to

weak positive and negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses and the simultaneous ambivalence that might be held by members within an organization (p. 787). Oreg et al. (2011) in their sixty-year review of antecedents of change argued that reactions to change can be complex, confounded, and compounded to include cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. However, Oreg et al.'s (2011) analysis overlooked the prevalence and omission of spiritual resistance in workplace research. This missing component could have provided a fuller understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of resistance to change at group and whole system levels that was explored throughout the dissertation study.

Empirical studies exploring how change leaders experience resistance to change are scarce (Mohamad et al., 2019, p. 85; Smollan, 2011). Resistance to change has been well-documented to typically emerge from psychological well-being (Mohamad et al., 2019) and complex manifestations of “context, factors, antecedents, process, work-related outcomes, reactions and consequences” (p. 85). As such, the dissertation argues for further research that could explore more closely the relationship between leader, community, and socio-cultural interactions, beliefs, structures, and processes.

There are also problems of practice for educational school leaders in K-12 Christian schools that are highlighted in Chapter Three. Change leaders that prioritize active engagement with resistance appear to build a more coherent and integrative social vision, energize members of their system through diverse forms of participatory decision-making, and use networks to support whole scale transformation (Arena, 2018; Bunker & Alban, 1992, 1997; Dannemiller et al., 2000). However, BC K-12 Christian schools do not yet have robust experiential descriptions about what this means for the development of Christian resistance practices how to help communities adapt so that the changes endure.

Chapter Three forwards a Biblical and theological discussion with the social sciences for how to develop energy, adaptability, and resilience when encountering resistance throughout a change initiative. Arena's (2018) "Adaptive Spaces" social science model was applied to describe practices that allow for positive disruption (p. 238) and as a way to use the force of resistance to facilitate educational change. Chapter Three also addresses why change is so difficult to facilitate within Christian learning communities. Resistance to change practices reveal the heart of the Christian educational leader. Resistance to change can, for the educational leader, become something to fear. In contrast, God's change leadership accompanied by Ezekiel's change leadership throughout the Book of Ezekiel reveals theological wisdom for how leaders might constructively repurpose resistance to change in their educational communities.

A critical gap that the dissertation study investigated is the experiences of leaders and the beliefs, behaviors, and emotions they held, which has been relatively absent in both theoretical and practitioner literature, particularly within Christian educational organizations. Given that Christian communities are knowledge communities with their distinct epistemic and educational ideals, how one investigates a community of faith requires both an intellectually dependable research paradigm and an understanding of the distinct philosophic characteristics of the community (Byerly, 2021; Holmes, 1987). As such, this study employs a phenomenological research design to investigate the experiences of educational change leaders. To make a distinct contribution where current research on Christian educational communities has been limited, the dissertation's approach aims to have a high view of both intellectual dependency and contextual understanding, which synthesizes Mittwede's (2012) "epistemic humility" (pp. 32-33) and Byerly's (2021) virtues including benevolence, transparency, communicative clarity, audience sensitivity, and epistemic guidance.

There are eight guiding values that have uniquely been created to help provide a more solid phenomenological basis for inquiry into the relationship between change theory, Christian change practitioner, Christian faith, and Christian change community: (1) *authenticity*: respecting the faith-informed personal and professional identity of the Christian leader provides greater clarity about leaders' inner lives and beliefs, which are often overlooked in secular studies; (2) *trustworthiness*: establishing a credible dialogic process that invites participants to explore their theological, organizational, cultural, and historic dimensions may move Christian faith-informed descriptions from more implicit to explicit expressions; (3) *context*: situating the dissertation research within organizational realities enables participants to connect theory to practice, experience, and location; (4) *coherence*: facilitating comprehensive narratives that interweave personal and professional experiences and link to theological concerns allows for other Christian educational leaders to access the findings; (5) *integrity*: framing the study in a way that that is intellectually honest, rigorous about Christian concepts, and accurately represents what participants mean about their beliefs embodied in practice; (6) *resonance*: highlighting the relationship between experiences and spiritual implications that enables participants to move through abstraction to a fuller description with the essence of change leadership opens up more pertinent practical concerns; (7) *groundedness*: connecting participants' faith to their practice to retrospective insights creates unity around the *whatness* and *howness* of participants' perspectives; (8) *precision*: providing practical, actionable, detailed descriptions that could be reflected on by the practical educational theologian ensures that participants support as they account for realities. The challenge was to advance how one investigates Christian school leaders' lived experiences while also being a Christian educational leader to better understand the essence of change leadership. Leaders and practitioners, who are being formed to the likeness

of Christ in their work, are also members of their Christian learning community, and tasked with the responsibility for the well-being of the community that they serve in. A goal of the dissertation was to facilitate greater exploration of how to conduct research with people of the Christian faith and bridge faith, theory, experience, and practice through exploration of Christian change leadership.

By inviting participants to describe how they experienced resistance within themselves, their communities, and with their initiatives, this study aimed to help leaders navigate, reconcile, and live in the tensions that emerge within Christian educational communities. Ultimately, the developmental components were aimed to help Christian leaders thrive as they enter into new contexts of leadership without any social capital or develop social capabilities throughout a change initiative. The study aimed to better understand how leaders experienced moments where the presence of their faith enabled them to integrate who they were as Christian leaders into their practice more fully. Consequently, the main problem explored what it meant to lead a Christian learning community through bounded or episodic change initiatives, navigate resistance in faith-informed ways, detail distinct practices may be differentiators for Christian educational leaders throughout experiences of change, and what this means for educational change research when organizational dynamics theories are mutually beneficial partners.

Finally, descriptions about the purposes, processes, and practices associated with the phenomenon of change leadership in K-12 Christian schools, particularly in the province of BC have been relatively absent. Given the problems raised, there were five main implications for leading educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools that drove interests in this study:

- (i) *practical concerns*: Christian schools experience the complexity of organizational change at multiple levels requiring leaders to plan for, implement, reflect on, and

assess the impact of change efforts in their learning communities (chapter two, Domain One).

- (ii) *faith-integrative concerns*: the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Christian school leaders with change efforts, ways in which leaders integrate their faith and reconcile their theological perspectives in practice while leading their Christian educational communities are necessary for informing policy, programs, and sustainability of Christian school leadership development (Chapter Two, Domain Two and Chapter Three).
- (iii) *developmental concerns*: the ways in which leaders learn and grow professionally leading to capacity building, learning, and changes they personally experience, sources of care and support, and equipping for the leader's lifespan development are essential to understand within British Columbia's K-12 educational contexts (Chapter Two, Domain Three).
- (iv) *theological concerns*: the only thing more constant than change is resistance to change; the study questions if resistance to change reveals the heart of a change leader and if there are formative practices and Christian ways of being that grapple with the tensions and multidimensional nature of resistance to change that may better inform Christian school improvement, reform, or system-wide change (Chapter Three).
- (v) *epistemological concerns*: how theories of organizational change are developed required closer phenomenological examination of current Christian school leaders' experiences of bringing faith into their leadership practice as one cannot separate

theories from practice from lived experiences from context or community (Chapter Four).

Taken together, when it came to the phenomenon of change leaders, the study explored social dynamics and interconnectivity (Arena, 2018) of Christian change communities in BC. Updating existing understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of resistance to change as experienced by leaders has led now to practical consideration of what leaders might do before, during, and after a change initiative to engage with the tensions of resistance in Christian faith-informed ways. Encompassed in the phenomenon of change leadership, broadly speaking, were tensions of positively disrupting and using the unparalleled strength of resistance to amass the necessary power to catalyze change. However, to delimit the study, because encompassed in organizational change is a socially interdisciplinary field, the main problem explored concerns for what the leader described in their perceptions, feelings, retrospective reconstructions, and the meaning they ascribed to the interaction between self, faith, and community leading to change leadership. Each concern drove the study and informed the investigative framework embedded in the research problems. The background and importance of the study is discussed next.

Background and Importance of the Study

The integration of faith and educational leadership is necessary for the sustainability of K-12 Christian schooling in BC. According to the Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia, a non-profit, non-partisan society that advocates for independent schools and choice education, there are approximately 23 evangelical Christian schools represented by the Association of Christian Schools International and 46 schools of various denominations affiliated with the Society of Christian Schools (FISA BC, 2023). British Columbia's K-12 Protestant Christian schools operate and exist within unique contexts, cultures, and communities,

reflecting distinct socio-political characteristics. Practically speaking, because of historic and present advocacy (Cunningham, 2002), Christian schools are positioned to make distinct contributions that bolster a diverse social fabric that is encompassed by freedom of religious expressions (Hunt & Van Pelt, 2019), increased by rich narrative, experiential, and practitioner dialogue concerning the prevalence of spirituality in leadership and learning communities.

BC Independent schools that meet certain fiscal, administrative, and educational requirements are eligible to receive up to 50 percent funding per pupil for operational costs (Government of BC, 2023). The implications of the funding arrangement establish a shared accountability framework between the Ministry of Education and Child Care, Christian schools, and tuition-paying families. Moreover, the division of funding highlights the collaborative responsibilities shared between the Ministry and the independent school; for Christian schools, the agreement of up to 50 percent funding allows for choice distinctives in Christian school leadership, curriculum, community, and shared identity.

Consequently, Christian schools live in the tension between push from society and pull from their stakeholders. In the framework of Burke and Litwin (1992), there are transformational factors from the external environment, mission and strategy, and leadership that shape the core of Christian learning communities. The external factors to Christian schools are legislative, socio-political, and economic from families and society, and their internal factors are diverse from the multi-generational Christian traditions that founded them to the current realities that it takes to sustain partnership with tuition paying families (Cunningham, 2002; Van Brummelen, 1996). There are also transactional factors of structure, management practices, and culture that provide the context in which change occurs. This dissertation study sought to understand the phenomenological expression of change communities, studying how leaders described their own

and their community's experiences with complex adaptive change. More of the implications for the Canadian, British Columbian, and K-12 Christian school context are analyzed further in Chapter Two, Domain Three and what this means for educational change leadership.

Practical, Faith-Integrative, Developmental, Theological, and Methodological Concerns

Empirical descriptions about BC K-12 Christian educational leadership have been under-researched in academic literature. Lack of discussion about the phenomenon of change leadership specifically in Christian schools has highlighted a gap in what Christian leaders experience in the preparation and desire for Christian theologically-informed reform efforts. Change leadership has been applied diversely across various Christian schools. Swaner et al. (2022) described that there has been a sustainability challenge for Christian schools' "readiness for the future" (p. 13). Their work was situated on change processes in Christian schools pertaining to organizational mission, culture, structures, practices, people, and community from an appreciative inquiry approach (Swaner et al., 2022, p. 13). An intent of the dissertation study was to address a gap in research concerning how individual phenomenological experiences of Christian school leaders might (i) contribute to a wider conversation about leadership development, (ii) encourage understanding in the preparation for K-12 Christian school leadership, specifically in the province of BC, and (iii) question whether there are distinct Christian practices involved with educational change leadership. Curiosities driving the study led me to wonder if those leading BC K-12 Christian schools might be able to share some important perspectives, experiences, and meaning in their development that inspire leadership preparation for educational change.

Organizational change is both an essential component in Christian school leadership today and a competency needing some updates in current literature supported across the lifespan

development of leaders (Fullan, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2006). As such, K-12 Christian school communities need better empirical research and theologically integrative investigation around the topic of organizational change. The primary problem the dissertation study was concerned with was that educational organizations believe in change and have clarity in purpose, but often lack robust processes and contextually grounded change practices to lead Christian learning communities (Burke, 2024; Lindstedt, 2022). Such a study was necessary as academic programs and leadership institutes prepare current and future K-12 Christian school leaders in BC. It is a disservice to future school leaders to separate theory from practice from experience, and thus, leadership preparation programs and developmental initiatives need to address real faith-informed contextual expressions from current Christian school educational leaders to inform training around educational change.

Western educational change theorists have argued how change is about building leadership capacity so as to navigate shifting internal and external organizational conditions (Stoll, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2006). A significant notable concern in recent literature on educational change, reform, and improvement was the prevailing focus on issue-driven research, which can come at the expense of addressing leadership development and human lifespan growth that is not as transferable to other contexts (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; McChesney et al., 2021; Vanlommel & van den Boom-Muilenburg, 2024). Issue-based research has been received more prestigiously as it has drawn attention for its sweeping transformational outcomes. Empirical research designed to help leaders develop greater awareness of their inner lives would help educational communities with school improvement, change, and reform efforts in the application of principles, processes, models, and practices related to change leadership. Another distinctive contribution of this study was the dissertation's design informed by voices of leaders themselves,

working in the BC K-12 Christian school context, encompassing more personal and theological integrative reflexivity. This dissertation was inspired by the question of how religious faith can deepen understanding of the purposes, processes, and practices of educational change within Christian leadership development and learning communities.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of BC K-12 Christian school leaders and address an area of educational leadership that required further theological examination in change leadership. It sought to understand what current leaders might be able to tell us about supporting their lifespan development personally and professionally. Gaining insight into how people make sense of their experiences by understanding subjective feelings, perceptions, meaning, and the essence of how leaders have experienced change given their history and interaction with their organization's socio-cultural context was found to be necessary for exploratory research. The purpose of this study was framed inductively, moving out from individual experiences to a priority on personal perspectives in order to organize, describe, detail, and account for the phenomenon.

The study's secondary purpose or exploratory aim was to employ a phenomenological methodology to probe into the inner lives and experiences of BC K-12 Christian school leaders for how they have experienced and facilitated educational change within Christian schools. It was important to understand the meaning that participants ascribed towards facilitating organizational change initiatives in their respective Christian learning communities. Reflective theologically informed perspectives were needed to understand if there were Christian ways of being for educational change that might be more embedded and embodied in Christian

educational change efforts. The end goal was to create a detailed description about the essence of change leadership within BC's K-12 Christian schools.

What, if anything, is distinct about *Christian* educational change? In an article by Tim White (2018), *Change Management in the Christian School*, a number of questions were raised concerning how the stories of leaders shape their communities of faith “because they guide how we view and live in the world” (p. 30). Guiding narratives can be identity-forming for individuals and communities and encourage organizations to adapt to different challenges while exploring new possibilities (White, 2018, p. 30). A distinct component discussed in Chapter Four was the study's collection of narratives to share with the BC K-12 Christian school context from participants' lived experiences of change leadership.

The study was designed to explore the experiences of Christian school leaders who have led their communities through school improvement efforts organizationally, theologically, communally, and curricularly. By seeking to understand the voices of Christian school leaders, the purpose was to better encourage decision-making about leading Christian schools in theologically informed ways. It was therefore important to consider change as both an eschatological concept unfolding within the broader future hope for humanity and also something ontological that bears on human vocation. The study explored whether there were Christian ways of being for leading change using empirical approaches. Participant narratives, reflexivity, and meaning making, practiced in deeper experiential listening (Seidman, 2019) helped detail the contexts and conditions in which change leadership has taken place in BC.

Statement of the Research Questions

This study focuses on Christian educational change leadership by examining the literature on school improvement, educational change, and system reform. There are a number of research

questions that guide this study. Chapter Two explores the theoretical and empirical foundations of educational change leadership (Domain One), faith integration in leadership practice (Domain Two), and the context of leadership development in Canada (Domain Three). The first two research questions were identified to critically analyze aspects of what is currently known about each domain from the main variables in the study. Furthermore, the first two research questions seek to investigate the relationship between educational change, the leader's faith, and their context. The research questions address how, if at all, faith is distinctly experienced and integrated into leadership practices, embodied within a Christian learning community, and prevalent in organizational change initiatives. Specifically, the second research question guides the literature review toward understanding how leaders navigate educational change within the expectations and norms of Canadian leadership development theory and the empirical context of BC Protestant K-12 Christian schools:

1. What is the current discourse concerning educational change leadership (Domain One), the integration of faith in educational leadership practice (Domain Two), and the context of leadership development in Canada (Domain Three)?
2. What are the critical gaps in understanding for Christian leaders facilitating educational change initiatives with their faith-informed practices in BC K-12 Christian schools?

Chapter Three provided a Biblical and theological dialogue with the social sciences to examine the essence of resistance to change, which is an important aspect revealing the leader and community's experiences and practices. A Biblical and theological understanding was derived by analyzing Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 and the implications for educational leadership from God's response to Israel's pattern of resistance. The integrative discussion explored practices that help Christian educational leaders embrace the force of

resistance to positively facilitate educational change initiatives. Chapter Three concluded by providing practical guidance for how to help educational leaders that may be struggling with change, have experienced failures with change initiatives, or want to apply more network and complex adaptive systems approaches to facilitate change with the constructive power of positive disruption.

3. How do biblical and theological perspectives of Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 interact with theories of educational change and organizational dynamics to inform change leadership practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Three)

To support the main research question in Chapter Three, two subsidiary questions were also explored:

- a. How can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders reframe resistance to change in a way that constructively leads their communities towards greater adaptability in response to educational reforms? (Chapter Three)
- b. What practical strategies can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders adopt to positively harness the energy of resistance when facilitating curricular, organizational, or theological change initiatives within their communities? (Chapter Three)

These respective questions are chosen as Israel's resistance to change revealed more of the socio-cultural nature of change at individual, group, and whole-scale levels. The questions critically engaged with how resistance is defined, prevalent, and perpetuated in different forms of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral tendencies. They also sought to better understand how to support leadership development efforts that address current and future anticipated needs.

The questions were selected to narrowly define the research design and methodology, which were primarily derived from a phenomenological inquiry paradigm. Because the questions

were concerned with what an experience meant for participants and a comprehensive or detailed description about the essence of the phenomenon, a phenomenological approach is the most suitable method (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14). While the research investigated individuals, the focus of the study was directed to how the phenomenon of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools manifests in context (Vagle, 2024, p. 22). As such, the dissertation questions were about detailing participants' experiences, practices, and meaning making to critically describe and raise critical interpretations of the phenomenon for Christian communities of practice.

4. What developmental experiences have led participants to becoming educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Four, Field Research)
5. What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia? (Chapter Four, Field Research)
6. In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices? (Chapter Four, Field Research)
7. How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia? (Chapter Four, Field Research)

Integrating the insights with theological, philosophic, and practical interpretations to address the implications of the research questions supported the study's aims.

Definition of Key Terms

This study uses a few key terms. A brief description about each term is provided below.

Capacity Building

Stoll (2020) defined capacity building as the practices that strengthen habits of mind and create sustainability with continuous organizational learning. Capacity building reinforces shared

goals. In addition, Gmelch and Buller (2015) highlighted four key aspects in their definition of capacity building: (i) systematic development, which ensures continuous improvement based on feedback and institutional needs; (ii) evidence-based practices, informing strategies to support institutional growth; (iii) skill building, which focuses on equipping leaders to navigate complexity using key skills of strategy, communication, and problem solving; and (iv) reflective practice, that encourages leaders to grow through critical examination. Capacity building can take place at individual and system-wide levels.

Change Leaders/Agents

An interchangeable set of terms used throughout the study, going back to the seminal work of Fullan (1993, 2015) to describe the moral and leadership character of building greater change capacity (p. 3). In addition, Fullan (1993, 2015) argued that change leaders/agents build shared vision, create organizational structures, norms, and practices of inquiry, and develop a repertoire of skills to promote work culture.

Change Management. Twenty-first century conceptual definitions of change management under examination in the research study included tools and processes for studying the “environment, organizational culture, policies, structures, management processes, technology and personnel behavior” (Jedaman et al., 2023, p. 137). Jedaman et al. (2023) argued that organizational management for change includes “vision, strategic management, teamwork and participation of personnel to work successfully” within the context of innovative leadership practices motivating personnel towards achieving shared goals (p. 136).

Christians. The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* described how Christians are followers of Christ, informing aspects of their being and becoming (Rayburn, 2001).

Christian Leadership/Christian Leaders. Emerging from Krispin Jr.'s (2019) work, Christian leadership involves leading with Christ-like character and Biblical principles to positively impact people and communities. Christian leadership involves the application of competencies such as spiritual development, strategic vision, collaboration, practical skills, and emotional capabilities. The goal of Christian leadership is to serve within an organization and see a community look more like Christ.

Christian Learning Community. The term Christian learning community encompasses the mindset of a learning organization from Senge's (1990) seminal work, ". . . organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). A learning community, in Swaner and Wolfe's (2021) work on flourishing Christian schools, was defined as a complex relational ecology, which involves a "web of relationships and reciprocal actions . . ." between its members, leading to the community's learning and flourishing (pp. 4-5). Christian educational organizations and learning communities are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

Educational Change Leadership. For the scope of this study, leadership for K-12 Christian educational change is defined by the reform efforts of leaders working with and seeking to develop their learning communities organizationally, theologically, communally, and curricularly (Fullan, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Lee & Cheng, 2021). Educational change or reform aims to improve the conditions for learning and occurs at individual, collaborative, and systemic levels. Broadly, it encompasses the revision of educational materials, approaches or behaviors, beliefs and assumptions, or values leading to improvement (Fullan, 2015). More specifically, this study applied the notion of educational change to address improvement efforts

of organizational interactions and dynamics (systems, structures, governance, and policies); communal (connection, belonging, and shared identity); theological (expectations concerning faith-informed thought and expression); and curricular and instructional (pertaining to teaching and learning). Educational change is the umbrella concept that the study used to describe change leadership, reform, and system-wide, organizational change.

Faith-informed. Guided by one's philosophic and theoretical orientation, faith-informed implies both the content and active effort to see the world through Christian, Biblical, and theological perspectives of the world; it is an embodied practice that involves putting on Christ to better live in the world (Packer, 2001). Throughout the study, faith-informed is used interchangeably with the notion of theologically informed integration to describe how the Christian faith is embodied in approaches to organizational change, leadership development, and the integration of faith in practice.

First and Second Order Change. Hallinger (2003) distinguished first-order change effects as “direct impacts on the system” and second-order change effects as “the conditions in which others work towards change outcomes without specific top-down direction” (p. 338). The definition was utilized throughout the dissertation study to distinguish between types of educational change being facilitated by individuals in formal positions of leadership from educational change facilitated by those in non-formal leadership roles. This definition was necessary for assessing and clarifying at what level (individual, group, or system) educational change took place within an organization.

Living Systems and Mechanistic Systems. The notion of a living system ontology served to describe how organizations exist in complex ecosystems whereby all aspects are “interconnected, reciprocal, and relational and in which knowledge is always partial, conditional,

and situated” (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016; Wheatley, 2007). In contrast, mechanistic or managed systems are understood philosophically from a positivistic paradigm to operate within predictable, stable, and within fixed laws and principles that are universalized and standardized (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016; Wheatley, 2007).

Non-Linear Change. Change is not merely about straightforward linear growth, momentum, or continuous improvement. Change can be non-linear and happen in cycles (Burke, 2024). Non-linear change is more than simply “adapting to adversity or overcoming obstacles” (Finn III & Feldhaus, 2021, p. 24). Non-linear change intrinsically involves cycles of learning and unlearning within an organization.

Resistance to Change or Change Resistance. Throughout the dissertation study, the notion of resistance to change is operationalized either as the forces acting in opposition *to* change or the forces acting in opposition *with* change. Dannemiller et al.’s (2000) work on whole-scale change defined resistance as the natural factor that must be overcome *to* bring about a real or transformative change (pp. 16-17). This definition of resistance as something *to* be overcome is suitable when it pertains to organizational change as moving the entire organization forward (p. 17). In contrast, Lindstedt’s (2022) definition of change resistance embodies how leaders create resilience *with* their organizations to challenge groupthink and complacency (p. 34).

As leaders introduce practices that create organizational resilience, they lead *with* risky dissention, challenge the status quo, go against prevailing wisdom and standard operational procedures, and introduce agile and antifragile practices (pp. 14-15). Resistance, by this definition, is a part of the adaptive and innovation process. Leaders introducing resistance to change practices challenge complacency and apathy (Lindstedt, 2022, pp. 34-36). A third

definition involves different forms of resistance to change emerging in the psychological, blind, emotional, social, ideological, political and existential push factors (Burke, 2024). Finally, Maurer (2010) argued for the need of the “voice of resistance” because “not all ideas are good ideas” and “we need to be open to criticism from others who see things differently” (p. 22) leading to positive disruption to increase agility and cohesion.

It is important to note that, within this definition, Chapter Two discusses McKelvey’s (2010) notion of “management by tension” which is linked to complexity theory and leadership. A description was provided about how resistance relates to complex adaptive components of “adaptive tension, self-organization, interdependency, and coevolution” and how there are social resistance dynamics leading to adaptive change (McKelvey, 1999, p. 13). Chapter Three provides a more extensive definition of resistance to change that further encompasses spiritual and communal resistance and practices that harness the capacity for resistance to be used as a positive force for educational change.

Whole-Scale Change. Developed by Kathleen Dannemiller and Associates (2000), whole-scale change focuses on drawing from the collective wisdom of the whole workforce and creating critical events in an organization’s journey to catalyze meaningful commitment to change from members (p. 3). By gathering representative voices or members to serve as part of the microcosm, which is comprised of the essential “DNA” of the organization, Dannemiller et al. (2000) argued for recreating the whole without the requirement to have every member present (p. 7). Whole-scale change is built on theories of large-group interactive processes and real time strategic change (Tolchinsky. 1995; Bunker & Alban, 1997). Arena (2001) highlighted how whole-scale change clarifies organizational realities and change drivers, shapes vision, develops future-oriented action plans, and addresses information, processes, structures, and relationship

issues. In essence, whole-scale change focuses on identifying the shared factors that accelerate change while ensuring that commitment to that change is practiced by a collective.

School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI). SESI as described by five main considerations from Townsend's (2007) work to (i) redefine the concept of effectiveness to consider contextual issues, (ii) measure effectiveness based on outcomes, (iii) clarify the structure and implementation of schooling in a way that accounts for complexities, (iv) consider the role of technology in schools, and (v) redefine professional development. Each of these measures relate to how the system improves as a whole.

Description of Research Approach

Empirical research on change leadership has been largely conceptual, grounded in secular theories of change purposes, processes, and practices, and assessed quantitatively. Current literature has been missing the lived experiences of Christian educational change leaders. As such, the research problem and questions demanded a phenomenological methodology set within personal narratives, contextual dialogue, and meaning making through the lived experiences of participants. Descriptive phenomenology was the particular methodology employed to elicit participant narratives, meaning making, connection to the phenomenon, and hermeneutic interpretation (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2019; van Manen, 2016).

The research design involved participants engaging in 75–90-minute, in-depth, semi-structured, phenomenological interviews about the essence of change leadership in K-12 Christian schools. In the first part of the interview, participants re-narrated formative and developmental experiences from their life history that contextualized how they came to understand change as an essential aspect of their Christian school leadership experience (Schuman, 1982; Patton, 2014). In the second part of the interview, participants situated

themselves in their past and present work experiences to describe details of their context and community. In part three, participants explored their experiences in the purposes, processes, and practices of change leadership addressing feelings, perceptions, and impressions of faith and resistance to change. In the fourth part of the interview, participants reflected on the meaning of the previous experiences they shared and clarified how that helped them make sense of their work and the phenomenon of educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools (Seidman, 2019; Schuman, 1982).

Data collection strategies included the generation of interview transcripts (Seidman, 2019) and the use of NVivo 15 to organize significant passages from the participant interviews. Narrative hermeneutics were employed to reconstruct understanding of the participants' lived experiences in each of the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Analytic coding to categorize the data was utilized. Through iterative data analysis processes, themes were generated to highlight both convergent and divergent understandings of the research questions based on the participants' insights (Saldaña, 2021). Chapter Four presents a more detailed account of research design and methodology to support the study.

Sample Selection

This study utilized purposefully selected criterion sampling (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Patton, 2014; Salmons, 2022). Moreover, Patton's (2014) criterion, critical case, and intensity sampling methods framed the dissertation approach to sample selection. According to Patton (2014), criterion sampling enables the researcher to contrast cases from those that do not manifest the criterion. Critical cases are "information rich" as they manifest the possibility of the phenomenon occurring for others. The advantage of intensity sampling, which is similar to critical cases, is that it delimits participants who have not experienced the phenomenon (Patton,

2014, p. 40). Salmons (2022) argued that critical and intensity sample selection types are important when the researcher wants “very specific sources that fully exemplify the issues and problems under investigation” (p. 145). As such, criterion, critical case, and intensity sampling methods were employed in the approach.

Another critical issue to consider for sample selection was homogeneity of the group. Participants were required to understand themselves as senior Christian educational leaders that have facilitated a curricular, organizational, or theological change initiative within a BC K-12 Christian school. Defining educational change was the first step in delimiting the dissertation study and participant selection parameters. Educational change or reform aimed to improve the conditions for learning and occurred at individual, collaborative, and systemic levels. Broadly, it encompassed the revision of educational materials, approaches or behaviors, beliefs and assumptions, or values leading to improvement (Fullan, 2015). Such a definition of being a change leader emerged either formally in a job description or informally through self-identification in one’s work of leading a Christian learning community. With in-depth phenomenological studies, participants were seen as more than informants; in accordance with the theoretical framework proposed by Seidman (2019), being a participant implied a sense of relationality, active involvement, equity, and reciprocity in an interview conversation.

The criteria for identifying participants for the study included the requirement that participants were presently serving in different Christian school leadership capacities of school principals, superintendents, and directors of learning at the time of the interview. A target representational sample of 25-30 Christian educational change leaders was to be recruited with 28 participants having participated in the dissertation study. Salmons (2022) argued that the researcher must align the sample size with a “clearly defined [research] purpose” (p. 149) and

consider the balance between an appropriate number of sources, sufficiency of the criteria, and as many as the researcher can interview to discover what they need to know (p. 147). At various points, additional participants were invited to participate in the study to ensure that theoretical saturation was achieved (Salmons, 2022, p. 149). The participants were situated in a range of geographic regions from the lower mainland, the interior, the metro-Vancouver area, and Vancouver Island. Participants were not selected based on a particular Christian denominational affiliation, cultural background, or gender, though attempts to represent and diversify participants on the part of the researcher was implicit to ensure maximum variation.

Christian Worldview Integration Focus

Leading change in Christian educational contexts requires faith-informed approaches that bridge theological depth with practical wisdom. Chapter Two, Domain Two evaluates the role of organizational spirituality to promote faith forming practices. Different approaches to faith integration are conceptualized and critically assessed for their strengths and limitations. This study advances a practitioner model of faith integration that reflects the relationship among cognitive, affective, behavioral, and communal-contextual factors, addressing a gap in current theories of faith in educational leadership practice. In Domain Three, BC Protestant K-12 Christian schools are situated within their broader socio-political, philosophic, and historical context to describe implications for their existence within the Canadian social fabric. Critical assessment reveals that Christian leaders' faith is vital to the fidelity of Christian schools and discourse concerning spirituality in the workplace.

Chapter Three presents a Christian dialogue that integrated Biblical, theological, and social science perspectives. This approach served to deepen exploration of educational change, focusing on Israel's resistance to God's work of transformation in Ezekiel 36. A Christian

educational leadership practitioner case study was offered as a space for reflecting on adaptability and resistance to change to engage in an integrative dialogue about how leaders can redistribute the energy of resistance as a powerful force for brokering whole system change and creating social interconnectivity within learning communities (Arena, 2018). This study is driven by a practical aim: to equip BC K-12 Christian educational leaders to understand and lead through resistance by building adaptive competencies, applying resistance protocols, and strengthening networks that sustain lasting change.

The scope of the theological analysis in Chapter Three reflects on Israel's ongoing resistance to change throughout the Book of Ezekiel and interacted with social science literature to propose how resistance can be repurposed in a change leader's process. The practical guidance for how to help Christian educational leaders offered a preliminary assessment of Christian ways of being that lead to organizational change within educational communities. Theologically integrative discussion of biblical and theological perspectives with complex adaptive leadership practices throughout the study facilitated a more holistic understanding of change sustaining uncovering the dynamics between the Christian school leader and learning community.

Secular literature concerning change management has much to offer in terms of practically engaging with forms of resistance (blind, political, or ideological), drawing from the disciplinary fields of psychology, change management, sociology, and education. Within empirical study of educational change, Stoll (2020) argues that educational change must deal with resistance through capacity building, strengthening habits of mind, sustaining the continuous learning for all people in a system, and allowing the development of communities towards shared goals. The discussions in Chapter Two and Chapter Three frame critical components for Chapter Four, where the research methodology, design, and interview framework are detailed.

Assumptions of the Study

There are a number of key assumptions that must be acknowledged for this study. First, a leader's ability and effectiveness with facilitating organizational change is not related to their intrinsic value. For example, while leaders reconstructed experiences about failed efforts with organizational change, they provided valuable insights conversely for how to facilitate organizational change with members of their communities.

A second set of assumptions is that change leaders cannot create enduring change without the work of God, who is the true change agent. Theologically, the Holy Spirit is the only one that can do the deep structural work of transforming individuals and communities (1 Cor. 3:6-7). This perspective emphasized the essential role that the Holy Spirit plays in informing, conforming, and transforming people to the likeness of Christ. God is the catalyst, guiding source of energy, and necessary agent of change. At the same time, God has worked through fallible human actors and agents to enact change, so there is a human component to God's change agency that reveals a mystery of partnership.

A third assumption is that organizational change serves not only to help individuals and communities adapt to ongoing disruption, but also to facilitate lifelong learning and lifespan development (Roberto, 2022), with change itself evidenced through observable habits of practice and patterns of learning.

A fourth epistemological assumption is that the participants are legitimate sources of knowledge about experiences that others might be able to derive meaning from (Moustakas, 1994). Chapter Four engages with Mittwede's (2012) "epistemic humility," which involves holding the relationship between what participants tell as legitimate knowledge and the tentative nature of perceptions (pp. 32-33).

Fifth, ontologically, the Bible describes a broader vision of change taking place within humanity; change can be both a mystery and a systematic progressive process that humans are being transformed (changed) to be more like Christ. Change, informed by Biblical and theological perspectives, is the means by which Christian leaders and learning communities participate in God's reconciliation, transformation, and liberation in all of creation.

Sixth, at a metaphysical level, change is not limited to social transformation but includes deepened awareness, partnership, reconciliation, conserving, and sustaining within a dynamic reality. Ultimately, God remains active in transforming people and communities, even when human efforts resist such change.

Seventh, anthropologically, while humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), the systems and conditions that appear to lead to improvement may in fact be flawed, dehumanizing, and work counterproductively. Axiologically, change is not merely a transactional process of right inputs automatically producing right outcomes. Ethical considerations related to change are embedded universally and also within contexts of transformation.

Eight, there is no optimal time in an organization's life to change, yet change is a requirement for both survival and thriving. Furthermore, Dannemiller et al. (2000) described how the desired change may "not [be] what they thought the changes would look like" but are the ones much needed (p. 58). With innovative and transformative change, the desired outcomes may also yield new unplanned possibilities sometimes even more prescient of the change needed.

Finally, faith maturity takes place non-linearly, with some aspects of spiritual growth linked to the interplay between individual and collective sanctification, cognitive and biological development, and intra/interpersonal formation.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study was primarily focused on exploring BC K-12 Christian school leaders' reconstructions and meaning making about the narratives and experiences that have impacted their understanding of Christian change. Consequently, the research focused on the Christian school leader's voice and not a broader chorus of voices such as the members of their respective leadership teams or observational data as might be found in a case study. The scope of the research was to reconstruct developmental experiences pertaining to Christian leadership development and examine educational change practice within BC K-12 Christian schools.

There were several delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was inherent in the definition of change utilized for this study: Christian educational change leadership was defined by transformation at theological, organizational, curricular and instructional, or communal identity levels.

The second set of delimitations pertained to the participants and sample: A purposeful sampling strategy was employed, which is a criterion that participants must use to establish whether they understand themselves as change leaders. Participants must reside in BC K-12 Christian educational schools and agree with two descriptions: (1) have experienced significant changes in their own understanding of leading theologically informed organizational, curricular, or communal educational change, and (2) understand a significant part of their work to be about educational change leadership. Another delimiting factor in the sample was the exclusion of Christian educational leaders working in Catholic schools or in public schools in BC. Furthermore, this study reported on, but did not focus explicitly on, years of experience, cultural background, gender, or generational tendencies; instead, it focused on narratives and lived

experiences while accounting for variance in identity markers, including events and meaning ascribed to experiences of facilitating educational change.

The third set of delimitations aimed to clarify what was not being examined: This study did not aim to measure the effectiveness of educational change leadership. Instead, it focused on understanding the experiences and formation of leaders working towards educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools to pave the way for future potential studies.

A final delimiting factor was that along the lifespan development of a leader, the data was collected at a particular point in the leader's journey of meaning making. Insights gained were internally delimiting as one's perspective evolves with other experiences. The study specifically contextualized the lived experiences of leaders in the province of BC's K-12 schools and is not intended to be directly generalized to other Christian educational contexts.

Chapter Summary and Brief Overview of the Dissertation

This chapter presented a brief overview of the relationship between organizational dynamics, Biblical and theological perspectives, and the leadership development realities of British Columbia K-12 Christian schools for leading change. Framed by concerns about leadership sustainability and adaptive capacity, the chapter clarified the study's purpose of supporting Christian school leaders in leading change by having faith and growing in resilience. By investigating Christian school leaders' experiences, and by examining variables such as resistance to change, network connections, and the formative role of faith, the chapter positioned the study within existing research gaps and set the foundation for generating practice-oriented insights that strengthen change leadership in Christian school contexts.

This study was designed to provide a detailed description of becoming a change leader, leading communities through change, and the meaning making of educational change leadership

in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools. A goal was to understand the lived experiences of Christian educational leaders in the province of BC to shape leadership development efforts accordingly. A transcendental phenomenological design was employed using a single interview protocol with four distinct parts: (Part I: Life History & Work Experience; Part II: Work Context, Experiences, and Process of Change; Part III: Educational Change Leadership Practices; Part IV: Meaning Making). Using a qualitative phenomenological inquiry research design supported by in-depth interviews, participants reconstructed the details of their experiences and reflected on the essence of educational change leadership in their BC K-12 Christian school context and initiatives (Seidman, 2019; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2016).

Chapter Two reviews three domains of literature. Domain One concerns the theoretical foundations in organizational change management and the current state of literature on educational change leadership. Furthermore, the first domain examines how organizational change leadership definitions have evolved from structured linear processes to dynamic non-linear, contextually-embedded conceptualizations since Kurt Lewin's work on social behaviour in the 1930s and 40s to complex adaptive theories (Burt, 1992, 2005; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden, 1982; McKelvey, 1999; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Weick, 1976). Domain One analyzes the main theoretical assumptions in key seminal theories of organizational change (Beer & Walton, 1987; Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1947; Burke, 2024). It also explores theories of complex adaptive systems, brokerage theories, social network theories, and system-wide educational change theories.

A second domain on the integration of faith and leadership explores the context in which the participants bring Christian theological perspectives to the practice of leading K-12 Christian schools. Furthermore, the second domain examines the main theoretical assumptions in recent

discourse about the preparation, professional learning, and leadership development informing Christian school leadership (Banke et al., 2012; Fowler, 1991; Greenleaf, 1977; Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

The third domain is a minor domain. It explores theoretical and empirical literature of leadership lifespan development and their implications in the Canadian, British Columbian, and K-12 Protestant Christian educational context. Taken together, Chapter Two concludes on Research Questions One and Two.

Christian theological perspectives concerning change leadership are integrated in the research design and in the interpretation of findings, with a practical focus in Chapter Three on the following: (i) what the prophet Ezekiel models in change leadership practice, (ii) God's renovation of the human heart where resistance occurs, and (iii) how Christian school leaders can harness the positive energy of resistance to change to create an adaptive, agile, and connected network that looks more fully like a thriving learning community. Chapter Three provides a Biblically and theologically integrative conversation with social sciences theories to offer practical insight for leaders struggling with resistance to change. It provides conclusions about Research Question Three. Chapter Four explains the research design and analysis procedures used. Descriptive phenomenological interviews were employed (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2019; van Manen, 2016). Chapter Five describes the results of the study, situating much of the reconstruction of meaning in the voice of the participants and organizing it in a way that a comprehensive description of the phenomenon of educational change is understood. Chapter Six summarizes conclusions related to Research Questions Four, Five, Six, and Seven. It reports on the interactions with the literature review findings of Chapter Two and theologically integrative dialogue of Chapter Three that applied to the research phenomenon. The final chapter also

explores the implications for change leadership practice and offers recommendations for leading educational change, highlighting the limitations and further research studies to support the trustworthiness and future oriented outlook of the study. All supporting materials are included in the appendices to ensure that the process was grounded ethically.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which Christian educational leaders bring their faith into educational change practices within British Columbia (BC) K-12 Christian schools. The study aimed to explore the relationship between formative and developmental experiences that situate leaders in the work of organizational change, practices of integrating faith into leadership, and approaches to organizational change. To accomplish this goal, this chapter describes a theoretical and empirical foundation by reviewing current literature. After providing a brief rationale for each of the three domains, the theoretical foundations and recent empirical literature within each respective domain are reviewed. Chapter Two concludes by summarizing what is known about the research problem and what remained to be investigated further in the empirical data collection, analysis, and reporting, grounding the study phenomenologically.

Rationale for the Domains of Relevant Research

Two main domains were chosen for this study: educational change leadership and the integration of faith in organizational leadership. These two domains provided a theoretical and empirical foundation for the research questions. In addition, a minor third domain, Canadian educational leadership development, was chosen. The rationale for each of these domains is provided in this next section.

Rationale for Domain One: Educational Change Leadership

Change leadership was the central construct for this study. It emerged as a field of study that has sought to address individual and organizational developmental concerns (Beer & Walton, 1987; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947; Burke, 2024). Change, according to Kotter (1996) “requires creating a new system, which in turn always demands leadership” (p. 4). The theoretical foundations of social systems provided the basis for understanding there are interconnected, interdependent, and integrative components that enable organizations to adapt as they self-organize to create their own solutions leading to change (Capra, 1996; Schein, 1988; Wheatley, 1992). Complex adaptive systems and social network are birthed from within the system theories and provided a basis for understanding and examining how organizational change takes place through interdependent, multidimensional confluence in relationships (Burt, 1992, 2005; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden, 1982; McKelvey, 1999; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Weick, 1976).

Research on educational change or reform has largely been centered around measuring factors that promote change through supportive, collaborative, and transformational leadership in learning organizations (Lastovska et al., 2023; Robinson et al., 2008). Philosophic concerns about whether secular models can and should be adopted for Christian change leadership have been raised in the literature (Fenwick, 2001). Spirituality of educational change process and practice have also been emerging in recent literature (Le Tran, 2023; Miller et al., 2022a, 2022b; Rabinovitch, 2023). As the field of change leadership has grown, overlapping traditions in the educational change movement have proliferated into theoretical branches of whole-system reform, school improvement, and educational change management as well as learning leadership, which is expanded on in domain three through comparative analysis with adaptive leadership.

Fullan (2005) argued that educational systems need to grow in their adaptive capacities for complexity and continuous improvement (p. ix). However, according to Lee and Cheng's (2021) research on Protestant Christian school leadership, current approaches sustained in secular leadership studies do not offer compelling generative descriptions for Christian schools due to "differences in educational goals, pedagogical practices, underlying educational philosophies, and organizational cultures across the school sectors" (p. 244). Organizational change is an essential component in the K-12 Christian school leadership skillset, yet it remains a competency that is not consistently supported across the lifespan development of leaders, nor thoroughly researched within Protestant Christian schools (Fullan, 2015; Lee & Cheng, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2008). In the first domain, seminal theories and recent studies for both revolutionary and evolutionary change as well as themes of continuity, stabilization, discontinuity, and change are explored (Burke, 2024). The goal was to provide the theoretical and practical foundations that guide Christian educational leadership practice.

Rationale for Domain Two: Integration of Faith in Educational Leadership

The key problems raised in the second domain are that K-12 Christian schools experience pressures for internal and external change but often lack adaptive frameworks and Christian faith-informed practices to navigate educational change within British Columbia's education context. Numerous studies concerning the integration of faith in teaching and learning have been published to Christian educational, psychological, theological, and interdisciplinary journals. The theories emerging in disciplinary studies have different assumptions that direct the purpose, process, and practices of leaders within an organization. Research on the integration of faith in practice, borrowing from the disciplines of business, healthcare and nursing, politics, and higher education contexts has some transferability and applicability to the K-12 educational context.

However, a corpus of literature pertaining to the K-12 context and specifically within Christian schools is necessary for understanding the experiential implications and for building theory.

To summarize the scope of Chapter Two, the literature review analyzes seminal theories in organizational change management or educational change leadership (Domain One), the integration of faith in educational leadership (Domain Two), and Canadian educational leadership preparation and developmental theories and studies (Domain Three) to understand the current state of research that is pertinent for the dissertation research on the purposes, processes, and practices of change leadership in the K-12 Christian school context.

Rationale for Domain Three: Canadian Educational Leadership Development

While Domain Two specifically examines how faith might be integrated into educational leadership practice, there is a lack of research on the educational context of BC. Domain Three raises concern for the developmental needs of leaders to grow across their lifespan and the implications for educational leadership development in Canada and British Columbia.

In 2014, the Alberta Teachers Association and the Canadian Association of Principals (2014) jointly conducted a research study concerning *The Future of the Principalship in Canada*, which aimed to provide insights into the shifting context of educational leadership. Over ten years later, Canadian educational research has identified that the role of the principal and school leader continues to shift and with that, developmental needs in training, networks, capacity-building, and knowledge mobilization (Kutsyuruba et al., 2024a). Canadian educational leadership studies have discussed change leadership within public school systems and schools, but more research is needed to identify and analyze the implications of such models for BC K-12 Christian learning communities and change leadership practice.

To summarize the scope of Chapter Two, the literature review addresses Research Question #1 and #2 by analyzing the theoretical foundations and empirical research in organizational change management and educational change leadership (Domain One), the integration of faith in educational leadership (Domain Two), and educational leadership practice theories in the context of BC (Domain Three). The scope of the analysis examines the current state of research that is pertinent for the dissertation research on the purposes, processes, and practices of change leadership for BC K-12 Christian schools and their leaders.

Literature Review on Theories of Educational Change Leadership Domain

There is a growing debate over whether traditional change management approaches adequately capture the complexity of modern organizations and the need for both readiness and resilience for successful change (Le Tran, 2023, p. 208; Rabinovitch, 2023). The first domain explores theoretical and empirical research within the field of organizational change to assess critical gaps in the literature and position the dissertation study's research focus.

Overview of Organizational Change Theories

This first section discusses the theoretical foundations of organizational change management (Burke, 1992, 2024; Lewin, 1947; Kotter, 1996; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). These studies have largely revolved around senior leaders enacting top-down change and their efforts towards navigating external and internal resistance. In contrast, the theoretical foundations of organizational network theories conceptualizing loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976) and theories of strong and weak ties in organizations (Granovetter, 1973; Podolny & Page, 1998) expand the theoretical foundation concerning non-linear change. Furthermore, analysis of the relationship between complex adaptive systems, brokerage theories, and system-wide educational change theories links corporate and educational research. These theories describe that the strength of strong bonding and bridging in social capital leads to transformations within

organizations from decentralized approaches. Analysis is then extended to the field of educational change leadership (Fullan, 2015; Hallinger & Heck; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al, 2008; Sackney, 2007; Stoll, 2020; Wang et al., 2023) to identify the implications in current research on system-wide educational improvement.

It was necessary for the field of change management, in the infancy of its 20th century iteration, to communicate neatly organized categories to think about replicating change and transferring competencies (Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1944, 1947). It became evident that leadership was a key factor for organizations to sustain across their expiration dates and collapse due to pressures from their internal culture or external environment. Theories of change management evolved into theories in the field of educational change (Fullan, 2005). However, theorists describing the different environments that organizations operate as and within revealed the need for more robust, non-linear approaches that were not only oriented in practice with top-down approaches but riddled by the paradigms associated with top-down change (Granovetter, 1973). Bottom-up change in organizational network theories (Marsden, 1982; Podolny & Page, 1998) and complex adaptive systems (Holland, 1992) have extended leadership practices to develop relational trust, adaptive leadership, and capacity building (Heifetz et al., 2009; Weick, 1976, 2001) while brokerage and middle leadership theory reveals another shift in how leadership is being positioned within organizations (Burt, 1992, 2005). System-wide educational change theory has challenged predominant ontologies in organizations (Fenwick, 2010), leading to the need for greater hypothesis and theory building about leaders' experiences with facilitating educational change as social capabilities and capacity are analyzed.

The Evolution of Change Theory

Global understanding of change processes and practices have continued to change, thus impacting the groundwork for what is meant by educational change. For example, organizational change leadership definitions have evolved from structured linear processes to dynamic, non-linear, contextually embedded conceptualizations since Kurt Lewin's work on social behaviour in the 1930s and 40s. Lewin (1944) studied how to manage change by helping the emotional state of the people who are to experience the change. He argued that motivation to change is not only derivative of information but from feelings. Friedlander and Brown (1974) introduced the notion of "target of intervention" to conceptualize how organizational processes including communication, decision-making, and problem-solving contributed to organizational behaviour and design with respect to "human fulfilment" and "task accomplishment" within the work environment (p. 315). Porras (1987) expanded Friedlander and Brown's (1974) model and shifted discussion towards organizational components including (i) goals, strategies, structures, and systems, (ii) social factors pertaining to cultures and attributes, (iii) technology and systems, and (iv) physical design changes. These seminal theorists created an expansion of thought about how to manage and organize the systematic interactions within organizations.

The proliferation of organizational change models continued to lead to increased complexity, building on Lewin's (1947) original model of "unfreeze, move, and refreeze" (p. 344). For example, Nadler and Tushman (1977) created a model to diagnose organizational behavior and emphasize transformation processes between inputs and outputs. Weick (1976) described how educational organizations are loosely coupled systems, that is, they are "somehow attached, but that each [component] retains some identity and separateness and that their attachment may be circumscribed, infrequent, weak in its mutual affects, unimportant, and/or

slow to respond” (p. 4). He argued that loose coupling allows for localized adaptations, enabling components to maintain resilience in the presence of change and also sustain coherence (Weick, 1986, p. 8). However, Weick (1976) argued that more research was needed to understand both the emergence of authority in loosely coupled educational systems and the role of perceived authority within those systems.

Weisbord (1976) provided the seminal practitioner tools for diagnosing the cognitive maps that exists within organizations. Weisbord’s (1976) “Six-Box Model” of practice was an evaluative tool that helped organizational dynamics specialists examine the purposes, structure, rewards, helpful mechanisms, relationship, and the leader. The leader plays a central role in the middle of the model to keep the boxes in balance (p. 432). Of notable importance for the theoretical foundations of complex adaptive systems, Weisbord’s (1976) contribution to three different types of work relationships including the relationship between people (peers or boss-subordinate), between units doing different tasks, and between people and their technologies (systems or equipment) expanded research on larger scale interventions within organizations. The Six-Box organizational model was a way to test if the intervention was a fit for the whole system. Other thinkers expanded the field of organizational dynamics such as Lippitt (1982), Bunker and Alban (1992, 1997), and Dannemiller and Jacobs (1992), and each of whom built on total management, large-scale organizational change, and system-wide team theories (p. 482). The large-scale theorists generalized the importance of a critical mass or representational microcosm of members to participate in understanding the needs for change, analyzing the current reality, generating ideas to change existing processes and structures, and implementing the supportive change framework (Bunker and Alban, 1997, p. xvi). These respective theorists’ work brought whole-system intervention even further into the practitioner field with

entrepreneurship, corporate training, and strategic planning to address issues of membership, control, and goal formation, essential for facilitative practices leading to real-time implementation of ideas (p. 490; see also Dannemiller et al., 2000, p. 235).

Weisbord's (1992) work with the futures search conferences built on Lewin's (1947) model of change. As organizations felt the pressure to adapt as wholes and not fragmented parts, a critical shift in the field of organizational studies from the small group or team intervention practices of the 1970s and 1980s was marked by the large-group intervention towards whole group intervention. Weisbord's (1992) work with the future search conferences awakened a greater attentiveness towards "full participation of the shared environment" (p. 31) and the notion of "getting the whole system into the room" (p. 8), which other change practitioners such as Dannemiller et al. (2000) scaffold for their consulting work with organizations. Adoption of these theories in relation to resistance to change is discussed further on in Chapter Two and with consideration of the practical implications in Chapter Three.

Tichy's (1983) framework to manage strategic change evaluated strong and weak impact factors on an organization's effectiveness to change. Whetten (1989) aimed to propose a complete theory of organizational change that included components of (i) *what*: factors of content including strategy, culture, and performance; (ii) *how*: the relationship between the what factors and the processes; (iii) *why*: the soundness of the fundamental views pertaining to how people organize themselves in social processes; and (iv) *who/where/when*: the tentative contextual factors that create boundaries of generalizability (pp. 491-492). Models were not necessarily developed attempts to solve organizational change dilemmas but help strategize interventions and transform organizations through human connection and relationships.

Much of the expansion in a range of different theories about organization culminated in both Burke and Litwin's (1992) "Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change" and Kotter's (1996) eight-step process for change. Burke and Litwin (1992) highlighted the relationship between transformational components of change at an external level and how they influence transactional components within a system. Kotter (1996) resonated with organizational thinkers because he introduced how organizational transformation could be broken down, guide leaders, shift to more people-centered approaches, and be applied broadly across disciplines using process-oriented systematic steps. Kotter (1996) attempted to describe the reality of system change as not about quick fixes but about sustained change.

Organizational theorists in large-scale intervention continued to build upon Lewin (1947) and Weisbord's (1976) theories. For example, Lippitt's (1983) model expanded each of Lewin's (1947) phases to orient practitioners to diagnose the past within an organization's working conditions, change the leader-follower dynamic, and plan for new futures (p. 397). With greater expectations for shared responsibility, Lippitt (1982) dealt with distributive power and futurist leadership, arguing for two-way, shared evaluation and joint progress (p. 402). Bunker and Alban (1992, 1997), building on Weisbord (1976), postulated how "the idea that you could work successfully with hundreds of people at once contradicted the common wisdom in consulting practice that tended to focus on face-to-face groups, teams, management groups, and the like" (p. 476). Thinking about the global inter-connectedness within a system and network dynamics led to the idea of emergence (McKelvey, 1999), which marked a notable shift from organizational scientists studying top-down or centralized change to complex adaptive systems that are adapting and evolving as they interact with their environment.

McKelvey's (1999) work on complexity theory at the edge of chaos described the nature of self-organization, complimenting Kauffman's (1993) complexity catastrophe across different disciplines with exploration of adaptive tensions within microstate models in biology, computer science, and chemistry in the works of other complex system theorists. McKelvey's (1999) work identified that complex adaptive systems, an interdisciplinary field, was overlapping with other fields (organizational dynamics was also exhibiting emergent properties), leading to exploring the idea that theories of other scientific disciplines might offer some relevant explanations for why there is birth and foreclosure within social systems. The focus on microstate events that appear to have random adaptations (microstates) as in molecules, genetics, or economic shifts reveal lead to eventual macro level emergent structure changes (p. 3). Complexity theory signaled a departure from reductionistic and Newtonian theories that were (pre-)deterministic and teleological. The implications were that complexity scientists embraced theories in which order emerges from dissipative structures, challenging the predictability of organizational elements. Instead, complexity scientists shifted social scientific inquiry toward understanding how systems respond to critical values that shape the social dynamics, environmental interactions, internal behaviors, and the role of agents in navigating between chaos and order (p. 3). Critical from McKelvey's (2004) work was the notion of emergence that higher order complexity arises from localized, unpredictable adaptations, challenging notions that evolutionary theories are more about equilibrium and self-organization within systems rather than new order creation explanations (p. 315).

Kauffman (1993) theorized how, in the field of biology, scientific inquiry often finds that "transformation to deeper understanding is pressing upwards in some as yet poorly articulated form" (p. 3). Kauffman (1993) argued for four concepts in Neo-Darwinian synthesis: (i)

selection is the sole source of order, implying that there are processes that move towards order and resist entropy; (ii) organisms were thought to have been controlled by a preconditioned program, but instead would be a “regulatory network;” (iii) evolutionary change is “cobbled together” through ad hoc adaptations; and (iv) there are developmental constraints in evolution. Such a statement emphasizes the puzzling nature of evolutionary development where the simple moves towards the complex through mutations, self-reproducing, self-organizing, and towards both means and ends (pp. 4-5). How organizations conceived of producing novel solutions began to shift predominantly from information to contextually-based adaptations in environment.

One of the more comprehensive systematic frameworks for organizational design and behavior emerged in Van de Ven and Poole’s (1995) work that generated four major schools of thought or organizational models from 200 articles: life cycle, teleological, dialectical, and evolutionary. Life-cycle theories follow developmental stages, teleological theories describe the ongoing modifications and strategy towards particular goals, dialectical theories describe creative synthesis through discontinuity, and evolutionary theories describe competitive environments and struggle through scarcity (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). While these respective organizational processes and models in Van de Ven & Poole (1995) became more complex, they were largely two-dimensional and organized around tightly coupled, centralized units of authority. It moved the field of organizational dynamics forward to account for better mental models to situate different schools of thought, paving way for more context-based science.

Bunker and Alban’s (2006) updated work on large group intervention situated the theoretical foundations of change practice in Katz and Khan’s (1966) theories of organizations as systems in the field of social psychology. Bunker and Alban (2006) reinforced that there had been an evolution taking place from theorizing about large group intervention (1980s to 1993),

adoption of the new methods (1993 to 1997), and diffusion, experimentation, and embedded methods (1997 to present [2006]; p. 4). A key shift was from organizations adapting to meet present challenges to organizations anticipating future-focused challenges (Lindaman & Lippitt, 1980). Thinking about the system as a whole would present a new set of challenges around resistance to change. Some concerns that are raised while reviewing the empirical literature included what means to navigate entropy and negative disruption with change initiatives. Intergroup thinking also moved from the private to the public space and Bunker and Alban (1997) argued for understanding the change consultant's work as primarily about intervention with large groups and not only working directly with management teams. Bunker and Alban (2006) also introduced the notion that large systems operated as communities. This is the language used when describing BC K-12 Christian educational institutions that have a collective ontology self-identified in the learning community tradition.

Lippitt's work in the 1970s and Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) subsequent efforts with corporations in the finance and business sector facilitated the development of the large-scale event framework later conceptualized as whole-scale change, which employs a total quality management framework to catalyze large-scale events led by consultants. A key area that Schein (1988) argued was how organizations can create their own solutions from leadership amongst the ranks within their own communities and not necessarily by a consultant; this is important for this study examining the work of in-house or field practitioners that are working as change agents within their own learning communities.

Dannemiller and Jacob's (1992) unique contribution to corporate change management interacted with the notion of resistance as negative entropy to overcome. Chapter Three discusses a key distinction from thinking about external consultant intervention to internal leader

intervention by evaluating Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) work and its relevance for leadership in the presence of resistance to educational change. Dannemiller et al.'s (1992) proposal of the whole system change approach argued for a refocus on overcoming resistance to change: $C = [DVF] > R$ whereby C (change) is a function of D (dissatisfaction with current circumstances), V (vision of what is possible), F (first steps taken towards vision) factors that must be greater than R (resistance). Dannemiller et al. (2000) described how whole-scale processes “evoke the system’s wisdom without needing to direct or control the results. Thus, when the system is ready, the answer will come” (p. 210). Their work bridged theory to practice, making the field of organizational dynamics not something done only by social scientists but by ordinary field leaders.

The major paradigm shifts in biology, chemistry, computer sciences, physics, economics, and organizational sciences went from a more reductionistic to holistic complexity perspective of nonlinear dynamic systems (Eisenhardt & Piezunka, 2011, p. 508). Complexity refers to particular behaviors that emerged within adaptive systems and “partially connected agents whose interactions give rise to the ‘complex’ behavior” and social dynamics in systems (p. 508). Kauffman (1993) argued that the main focus of complexity theory resides around the rules, scale, formalization, and connections bounded at the edge of chaos leading to emergence. This is the site in which the study explores organizational adaptations and innovations.

In contrast to these two-dimensional models, Burke (2014) examined the complexities of changing loosely coupled systems, critiquing Weick’s (1976, 2001) descriptions and proposing that the growing interest in social network analysis for organizational change better addressed the complexity of organizations. The main argument was that leaders fear making mistakes, so they transform their change systems into tightly coupled bureaucracies; change practices that are

continuous, small, improvisational, accommodative, and local best support adaptability to different organizational models promote interdependence and transform loosely coupled systems (Burke, 2014, pp. 435-437). Other sub-strains of theories from the field of psychology and organizational development such as individual to group cognitive, social, and behavioural theories began influencing the way that other disciplinary organizations thought about internal and external change factors concerning transactional and transformational components (Burke, 2024).

Complexity models of organizational change have been proposed by various theorists. For example, Stacey et al. (2000) proposed the complexity model that categorized behaviors into simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic. In one Canadian higher education context in the province of British Columbia, Stacey et al.'s (2000) model has been adopted by Simon Fraser University to correlate variables of agreement and certainty with political and judgmental decision-making (Simon Fraser University, 2024, n.p.). Furthermore, the model represents how prediction is difficult in complex environments and leaders should focus on the emergent behaviors rather than rigid planning or forecasting (Simon Fraser University, 2024, n.p.). Stacey et al. (2000) argued that complex systems evolve when introduced to "micro diversity" (p. 124). In contrast, complex theorists, Snowden and Boone (2007) studying chaos theory in the field of organizational dynamics proposed their Cynefin sense-making framework that described themes of stabilization, disruption, disasters, and resilience in organizations (Lindstedt, 2022, p. 95). Snowden and Boone (2007) were more concerned with organizational ontology to explain why organizations are in their present state. Each state of being for an organization (clear, complex, complicated, or chaotic) have implications for leaders' practices. The implications about what this means if change leaders help their communities to move from chaos and resistance under the

surface to open and productive ways to handle resistance using intrapersonal leadership practices and social learning theories.

Oreg et al.'s (2011) sixty-year review of quantitative studies with key word searches of “reactions to change, resistance to change, openness to change, attitudes towards change, willingness to change, readiness to change, and receptivity to change” from the *PsychInfo* and Proquest databases (p. 463) identified that there was a significant methodological gap with organizational change being primarily investigated from the recipients' reactions linked to consequences (p. 513). They cited that the main antecedents in the 79 articles they reviewed involved analysis of the change recipient, process, and content as the primary antecedents of analysis (p. 462). Oreg et al. (2011) concluded that three critical areas were important for organizational change efforts including change recipients trusting their leaders and the process, involvement of members in decisions leading to commitment, and selection of leaders to manage the change (Oreg, 2006; Oreg et al., 2011). Their work was vital to understanding consequences of change, for example, resistance, why it occurs, and the related variables such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction as “antecedents and change consequences” (Oreg et al., 2011, p. 513).

Another key gap in organizational change research that Ford and Ford (2012) attempted to investigate was the change leader's approach to change, behaviors, and change activities (p. 9). From their study, they attempted to explain how leaders did not appear to alter their behaviors to become more transformative, collaborative, or communicate more clearly. Thus, the character and competencies of change leaders were being explored, but leaders' connections leading were not examined nor were descriptions given about how network capacity is built. There was an overemphasis in the studies about the role of the leader rather than the social capacity of the

organizational system as a whole. The issues are discussed further in the section that explores theories of complex adaptive systems.

O'Reilly and Tushman (2016) explored the importance of ambidextrous leaders who had the capabilities to “exploit existing assets” and “reconfigure these to develop new strengths” (p. 20). They attributed and equated qualities in leaders to “integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments” (p. 20). Leading up to the global crises of the 21st century that drove change, more popular and contemporary literature on organizational change dynamics began to be produced in the late 1990s and early 2000s including Johnson’s (1998) *Who Moved My Cheese*, Gladwell’s (2000) *The Tipping Point*, and Kotter and Rathgeber’s (2006) *Our Iceberg is Melting*. Chip and Dan Heath wrote (2007) *Made to Stick* that transformed organizational communication, and Bolsinger (2018) provided a spirituality of change leadership and adaptive challenge to address a rapidly changing world. Chapter Three further explores contributions to change management theories through Biblical and Christian theological perspectives.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a new context of social change that this study only briefly addresses in some studies reviewed. The pandemic placed national and global change efforts under the microscope, revealing the fragility and interdependence of educational systems within their external environments. Moreover, since starting this research, the field of organizational network analysis and the use of artificial intelligence have expanded substantially, raising timely questions about how a spirituality of leadership is enacted for this moment.

The central theoretical foundation is that sustaining a Christian school’s shared identity and its change processes requires social interconnectivity, expressed in both bonded and bridged social connections (Arena, 2018). The next frontier in building theory for organizational

dynamics, and for the scope of this dissertation, is to examine the spirituality of leaders and their learning communities. To deepen the theoretical grounding of change leadership in Christian education, it is necessary to explore how practitioner-leaders understand and live into their Christian identity as they reconstruct experiences of Christian school change leadership.

This following section therefore explores the theoretical foundations that inform this study including organizational network theories, brokerage models, complex adaptive systems, non-linearity, and relational sociology. These frameworks provide the conceptual architecture for analysis of change leadership as they navigate their identity, change processes and practices, and relationships within K-12 Christian independent schools in BC.

Organizational Network Theories

Organizational network theories provide a lens to understand how relationships and connections shape the flow of information, influence, and lead to emergent dynamics within complex systems. Granovetter's (1973) seminal work on the strength of weak ties to brokerage perspectives and Weick's (1976) notion of loosely coupled systems offer a framework for analyzing how structural patterns enable or constrain organizational change.

Theories of Strong and Weak Ties

Granovetter's (1973) seminal work on social networks initially emerged as an analytic tool for examining the interactions between micro- and macro-organizational levels. The degree of overlap between two individuals' networks impacts "diffusion of influence and information, mobility opportunity, and community organization . . ." (p. 1360). Analysis of processes and interactions in interpersonal networks reveal how to bridge complexities between micro- and macro-organizational ties. According to Granovetter (1973), the strength of interpersonal ties is related to time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocity (p. 1361). In other words, ties can

be strong, weak, or absent, forming the basis for nodding relationships, tied relationships, and negligible connections (p. 1361). Weak ties are significant as they create more, local, and shorter paths between individuals, thus resulting in greater diffusion of ideas, resources, or opportunities. They are more likely to create links between “‘different’ small groups than are strong ones, whereby the latter tend to be concentrated within particular groups” (p. 1376). Amorphous groups are indispensable to individuals and their opportunities to integrate into communities. Strong ties promote local cohesion but fragmentation at a large-scale level.

Granovetter (1983) revisited the argument for the strength of weak ties forwarding that Ego (an arbitrary selected individual) will have a dense network of close friends, a collection of acquaintances, of which a few know each other, and each of those friends have their own dense network that differs from one another. Individuals with few weak ties or only strong ties are deprived of information from more distant parts in a social system, leading to fragmentation and incoherence (p. 202). The advantage of weak ties is when those ties connect to different social circles from one’s own immediate strong ties (p. 208). Concerning change, individuals with only a few weak ties are less likely to “mobilize effectively for collective action within their communities” (p. 224), thus making it an important aspect of organizational change within complex interdependent relationships.

Strong ties may provide a more long-term, stable and reliable basis when organizations experience chaos or crisis; however, the limitations of densely organized strong ties might limit the introduction of new ideas and echo create chambers (Granovetter, 1983), making external change monolithic in an organization’s ability to adapt. Strong ties may be some of the impetus for resistance to change and prohibit new practices. In contrast, weak ties are vital for

introducing structural change. Access to a range of perspectives can be leveraged to build collective commitment and catalyze more flexible and adaptive responses to change.

According to Podolny and Page (1998), every form of organization operates as a network, of which, markets and hierarchies are perceived as “two manifestations of the broader type” (p. 59). In terms of governance, networks are comprised of a collection of actors that pursue repeated and enduring exchange without arbitrary authority to resolve disputes that might arise (p. 60). Networks form for the purpose of exchange. According to Powell (1990), a key guiding principle that must exist within a network to preserve its integrity is the idea of reciprocity or mutual exchange, on the basis of the felt obligation towards one another. Within a network, there are important functions of network interactions pertinent for the dissertation research on leading organizational change. Podolny and Page’s (1998) research highlighted how organizations can facilitate learning by “promoting the rapid transfer of self-contained pieces of information” (p. 62). Podolny and Page (1998), citing Powell and Brantley’s (1992) network forms of organizational learning, described how interactions in a network may provide richer information than hierarchies and more autonomy than market economies:

[N]ovel syntheses of information that are qualitatively distinct from the information that previously resided within the distinct nodes. That is, rather than simply facilitating the transfer of information between two nodes, the existence of an enduring exchange relation may actually yield new knowledge. In effect, the network becomes the locus of innovation rather than the nodes that comprise the network. (p. 63)

Another important factor pertains to the acting partner’s status and legitimacy within a network (Podolny & Page, 1998, p. 65). This is where theories of brokerage become pertinent to examine further in terms of syndicate relations or the nature of exchange and interactions between groups. Networks also encourage a sense of community (Podolny & Page, 1998, p. 71). The skills required to sustain and “operate in a network form of organization is a skill or capability that

must be learned . . .” (p. 72). Attention is given to factors that lead to the development, failure, and sustainability of networks is needed as it links the actor, who is also the broker and leader, to the implications for the relationships they have as they facilitate change. The next section explores brokerage theories to examine the significance of developing and sustaining weak ties within and across networks.

Weick’s Theory of Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems

The idea of Weick’s (1976) theory of loosely coupled educational systems articulated how persons within a system can be loosely connected but also retain their distinctness, such as a principal from their superintendent or their school counsellor (p. 3). Educational organizations understood as loosely coupled systems challenge traditional assumptions of managed systems that presume rationale “parts, people, processes, products, and persistence” are neatly aligned with organizational goals. In reality, the complexity of organizational dynamics resists such rational descriptions and idealized models, producing outcomes that are far more emergent and unpredictable. For example, it is not simply about management tightening up rules that leads to improvement (Weick, 1976, p. 3). The concept of loose coupling (Glassman, 1973) forwarded that actions can be “somewhat attached” but “each retains some identity and separateness and that their attachment may be circumscribed, infrequent, weak in its mutual affects, unimportant, and/or slow to respond” (Weick, 1976, p. 4). Loosely coupled systems enable more open and adaptive flow of demands and information across networks, allowing for more coordination without rigid control (Weick, 1976, p. 6). Furthermore, loosely coupled systems can be identified by decentralization, delegated decision making, causal independence, and planned unresponsiveness (Weick, 1976, p. 6). Such systems often function with minimal regulation or linkage between units, producing both adaptive flexibility and dysfunction as natural outcomes

of their loose connections. This is where social capital perspectives are needed to understand why and how change takes place within educational organizations.

Essentially, loosely coupled systems allow organizations to adapt to external changes, buffer disturbances, maintain stability, and deal with unpredictable emergent behaviors rather than centralizing control through linear change. The advantages of loose coupling include localize adaptation, preservation of identity and uniqueness of different components, agility to respond to innovation and external changes, higher sense of efficacy and autonomy, perspective sharing across networks, and generally lower expenses to disseminate the flow of knowledge. Weick (1976) forwarded that researchers are going to need to “discover how inhabitants make sense out of loosely coupled worlds” and the invisible social realities shared through their sense-making and stories (p. 18). Some of the advantages of loose coupling enable organizations to have flexibility, build resilience, and create localized adaptations. The disadvantages raised in Weick (1976) identified how loosely coupled systems may also lead to the persistence of outdated practices as would an environment saturated by strong ties. Issues within one sector of a network might be more easily contained, but there would also be limited interdependence between parts reducing a system’s overall coherence and consistency of practice.

Brokerage Theories

Brokerage theories examine how brokers influence network dynamics with their connections to either bridge gaps to develop new exchange connections or bond to fuse existing relationships leading to organizational performance. Furthermore, brokerage theories explore the role of *brokerage*, *brokering*, the *broker*, or intermediary agents that act between “structural holes” within social networks (Burt, 1992), facilitate the bridging of relationships, resources, and influence between social worlds (Marsden, 1982; Putnam, 2000), mobilize knowledge across

emergent gaps to disrupt new perspectives between and within organizations (Burt, 2005), leverage relationships to “filter, distort, or hoard resources” leading to organizational performance (Rechsteiner et al., 2024, p. 308), and introduce diverse connections leading to disruptive innovations (Marsden, 1982). Brokers bridge knowledge gaps and promote exchange and relationship built on mutuality and interdependence to facilitate educational change.

Rechsteiner et al.’s (2024) systematic literature review of 42 studies of brokerage in educational change categorized four theoretical frameworks regarding educational change literature: (1) Brokerage and brokers in social capital theories as in Burt’s (2005) structural holes theory; (2) Brokering and brokers in knowledge mobilization leading to bridging relationships (Lomas, 2007; Ward et al, 2009); (3) Social theories of learning and communities of practice (Wenger, 1999); and (4) Brokers in distributive leadership theories (Spillane, 2005). They found that social capital frameworks recognized the value of weak connections as they facilitate access to “non-redundant information” as opposed to isolated networks that predominantly have strong ties (Rechsteiner et al., 2024, p. 317). Knowledge mobilization frameworks treat actions as commodities and move research into practice (Lomas, 2007) to build capacity (Ward et al., 2009). Social learning frameworks utilize membership to create shared spaces in which practices are adopted (Wegner, 1999). Middle leaders, facilitators, and sub team leaders share knowledge and build capacity in distributive leadership models (Rechsteiner et al., 2024, p. 320; Spillane, 2005). Although there is agreement on the role of brokerage, the practices differ based on the theoretical framework chosen by the researchers. The findings of Rechsteiner et al.’s (2024) systematic review concluded that a leader’s network reveals the extent to which they enact change as brokers and that educational change should be studied as a complex set of social interactions (p. 329).

Within brokerage theories, sub-theories of middle leadership are important to examine. Studies concerning the role of middle-level administrators and non-formal leadership have served to broaden the field of leadership studies (Wang, 2010). Middle-leaders are positioned within organizations to facilitate relationships and enact policy interpretations but constrained by hierarchy (Spillane et al., 2002; Wang, 2010, p. 126). Lipscombe et al.'s (2023) scoping review of school middle leadership found that the challenges of middle leaders as brokers positions them in between complexities taking place (p. 271). They defined middle leadership based on personal and professional accountability with focus on building internal capacity in their colleagues (Lipscombe et al., 2023, p. 276). Furthermore, they distinguished middle leadership from teacher leadership by arguing middle leaders typically are involved in curriculum, pastoral, subject and pedagogical leadership, and require specialized interdisciplinary training in coaching, leading teaching and learning, and staff care. Lipscombe et al.'s (2023) study reveals that perhaps if middle leaders have an important role around school improvement practices, some of those respective practices might be neglected by leaders due to some developmental, workplace, or philosophic concerns in the assumptions leaders hold about their work.

To study the implications of different theoretical frameworks, Rechsteiner et al.'s (2024) systematic review using node representation in content network analysis identified that principals needed to be well-positioned between the teachers and the central office and studies typically analyze individuals as “targets of brokering than as brokers themselves” (p. 323). A critical concern for the dissertation research study is to investigate the brokers themselves. The findings also suggested that most studies report on the “personal characteristics of brokers,” while only some reported on the “necessary conditions to foster brokerage” (Rechsteiner, 2024, p. 323). Brokers typically have broader networks than their colleagues (Hopkins et al., 2013; van den

Boom-Muilenberg et al., 2022), can locate resources quickly to help specifically with professional learning (Slavit & Roth McDuffie, 2013), yet are typically at risk due to vulnerability of managing relationships between disconnected members (Jusinski, 2021). From the findings in Rechsteiner et al.'s (2024) systematic analysis, the vast majority of brokerage theories in education are related to knowledge mobilization, followed by social learning theories, possibly indicating concern for how knowledge is passed on and learned. Some of the key practices include how leaders develop teachers as agents of change to leverage educational improvement, work with teacher education programs to bridge learning gaps and broaden networks to introduce new ideas and materials, and locate additional brokers within educational systems to build capacity for network connections. Examining the lived experiences of brokers may reveal some of the “dark side of brokerage” (Hopkins et al., 2018) as brokers sustain networks, revealing informal power structures, and consequently, what happens when brokers leave organizations (Rechsteiner, 2024, p. 32).

The concept of brokerage provides a framework for studying complex interactive patterns in loosely coupled educational systems. It also helps to “prevent future research from placing undue emphasis on individual brokers and their unilateral efforts, and thereby neglecting the multilateral and dynamic nature of the concept” (Rechsteiner et al., 2024, p. 329). As the relationship between the principal or leader has been most frequently analyzed, future research could explore the relationship between leadership teams and other aspects of brokering relationships for change leadership and shortcomings within social dynamics.

Complex Adaptive Systems Theories

Complex adaptive systems provide a theoretical framework for understanding how organizations must adapt to survive. In contrast to traditional linear systems that have inherent

assumptions around centralization, complex adaptive systems respond to internal and external feedback with emergent and distributive behaviors requiring learning in a “constantly changing organizational environment . . .” (Fidan & Balci, 2017, p. 11). Complex systems are composed of interconnected components such as “self-organization, evolution, and novelty” (Lissack & Gunz, 1999), associated with “emergence, innovativeness, learning, adaptability” (Balci, 2014; Sherman & Shultz, 1998), experience changes that will either be positive, negative, substantive, superficial, transformative, or temporary (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016), fluctuate between disequilibrium and equilibrium through turbulence and perturbation (Wheatley, 1992; Beabout, 2012), and redistribute authority and control through decentralized networks (Fullan, 2007). Fidan and Balci (2017) described how complex theories are built on characteristics such as “emergence, connectivity, interdependence, and dynamic feedback loops” (p. 12). According to Stacey et al.’s (2000) theory of complexity and the emergence of novelty, emergence is a consequence of “local interactions between agents” (p. 107). In addition, Stacey et al. (2000) argued that people following simple rules does not necessarily mean it will produce complex behaviors that are adaptive (p. 107). Practically speaking, it means that agents do not behave according to “if-then” rules and co-create through self-organizing “spontaneous” or “autonomous” (pp. 107-108) interactions leading to change.

For Christian educational leaders, resistance to change is often entangled with theological convictions about spirituality and identity. Stacey et al. (2000) recognized that Christian teleological perspectives, those concerned with why a particular phenomenon exists or becomes what it is was not only a question for those motivated to understand God’s “creation” and motivate “to serve the greater glory of God” (p. 13). Such thinking assumes that human action and organization life ultimately serve God’s creative and redemptive purposes. Within

complexity and management studies, teleology is not merely theological but functions as part of the causal framework shaping social dynamics and influencing how both phenomena are understood and the purposes towards which they are directed in the future (Stacey et al., 2000, p. 25). In Christian schools, this teleological orientation often shapes how leaders interpret and respond to change. This notion will be explored more in the empirical framework for the study. Stacey et al.'s (2000) five frameworks of secular Natural Law, Rationalist, Formative, Transformative, and Adaptionist teleology help situate the importance of "organizational causality, change, transformation, and identity with everyday management experiences" (p. 26). Life, according to Stacey et al. (2000) appears to be inbred with puzzling situations, discrepancies, paradoxes, and silences when it comes to leadership and management.

Uhl-Bien et al.'s (2007) Complexity Leadership

Top-down leadership models, which were criticized as having emerged from bureaucratic paradigms inadequately framed the leader's role with learning, innovation, and adaptability in the complex adaptive system (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 300). Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) defined leadership as an "emergent, interactive dynamic" whereby "heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behavior or new modes of operation (p. 299; see also Heifetz, 1994). The most substantial changes occur at microlevels and direct aggregation at macrolevels (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002, p. 392).

Traditional forms of leadership research ignored the significance of micro interactions leading to emergence (p. 394). Complexity leadership or complexity leadership theory distinguishes itself from bureaucratic, traditional, alignment and control, or hierarchical forms of administrative management. In contrast, adaptive leadership addresses emergent problems and understands leadership as a "generative dynamic" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 299). The

implications are that complex adaptive leadership constitutes the motivated actions of individuals within contexts as a requisite to understanding a system's capacity to "search for solutions to challenges and to innovate because it releases the capacity of a neural network of agents in pursuit of optimization . . . [and] a system's capacity for learning, creativity, and adaptability" (p. 301; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002, p. 401). A key to increasing motivations that catalyze leaders' actions leading to emergence is to build conditions where social capital, networks, and exchange of ideas occur. Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002) argued that leaders can influence emergence by their behaviors and summarized the relationship between complexity leaders and complex adaptive systems with the following:

. . . we have explored what we earlier referred to as complexity thinking. Emergence is enabled by vibrancy, by systems that have built-in tendencies to change and the capacity to retain information about their changes—just the sort of vibrancy that is available in moderately coupled systems. The tendency to change derives in part from the individualist residues of correlation (individuals do not correlate all their resonance) and memory derives from the stable states that emerge out of correlation. Innovation and its diffusion are enabled by aggregation and network, the result of correlation and complex natural teleology within moderately coupled networks. Moderately coupled networks are sufficiently loose to enable vibrancy for generating innovation and sufficiently tight to permit different innovations to find one another, correlate, and form higher order innovations.

Complexity theory suggests that leaders must deal with the conditions of organizational activities more than their local manifestations. It suggests that we create transformational environments, or the conditions necessary for innovation, rather than creating the innovation itself. Complex leaders drop seeds of innovation rather than mandating innovation plans; they create opportunities to interact rather than creating isolated and controlled work cubicles; they tend networks; they catalyze more than they control. Complex leaders are tags, symbols, rather than brave ship captains guiding their vessels to port. Leaders are part of a dynamic rather than being the dynamic itself. Leaders are one element of an interactive network that is far bigger than they. Complex leaders can perceive those networks; they can help enable useful behaviors, including the expansion and complexification of the networks. They cannot, however, control those networks. (p. 414)

An unexamined area of leadership practice in Christian educational organizations is the role of power and how leaders enable emergence to grow out of resistance practices, and

whether such practices increase motivation, engagement, and participation in change initiatives.

Adaptive leadership practice reframes the asymmetry of power and authority from top-down and one-sided to more mutual forms of interactions yielding interdependent change (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 307). Network theories help describe how “interaction, complex patterns of conflicting constraints, patterns of tension, interdependent relationships, rules of action, direct and indirect feedback loops, and rapidly changing environmental demands” require adaptive leadership to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the interaction of people to produce more complex and multi-level outputs across an organization (p. 309). A key contribution of Uhl-Bien et al.’s (2007) work was to challenge leaders from “stifling or suppressing beneficial interactive dynamics” that lead to adaptive dynamics congruent with both the mission and the practices within an organization. This is critical as Christian educational institutions sustain their faith-informed identities while facilitating the integration of new creative structures and outcomes into their systems (pp. 311-312). Finally, Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) also forwarded that when studying complex adaptive systems, it is important to consider the context, the mechanisms, and the variables. The dissertation study will be designed to enable participants to describe their developmental context, socio-cultural context, and the mechanisms (processes, persons, and practices) that they experience within complexity dynamics.

One of the bases for the theoretical foundation of complex systems goes back to Holland’s (1992) introduction to complex adaptive systems where he described how “evolving structures . . . change and reorganize their component parts to adapt themselves to the problems posed by their surroundings” (p. 18). By providing an analogy of the human immune system and its response to foreign pathogens or invaders, the immune system provides the basis for three characteristics,

“evolution, aggregate behavior, and anticipation” (p. 19). Evolutionary change deals with the micro-adaptations that move the constant state towards equilibrium. Aggregate behaviors are defined as the “ability to distinguish self from other” and thus, create an emergent flow of energy required by different components. A system operates based on extant sets of rules, but relies on parallelism, which allows the system to have localized rules to build on other rules, competition to introduce new demands and evolve the system, and recombination to discover new plausible rules from tested events (pp. 25-26). Anticipation involves a conditioning towards response, which may reveal why certain organizations introduce and sustain emergent behaviors and others succumb to competition, are exploited by parallelism, and become redundant through recombination (p. 25). Holland (1992) theorized that complex adaptive systems have “no single governing equation, or rule that controls the system” (p. 21). There are some limitations in Holland’s (1992) assessment as it is argued that the system works towards future consequences “without actually committing itself to those actions” (p. 25). It raises a question about whether adaptive organizations can be both emergent and also rigidly repel aspects that appear to not be desired changes as they cling to their Christian identity and missions. Does an organization reach a point in which its recombination makes it no longer look like its original state and how do members of such organizations feel about moments where continuous expansion changes organizational identity? It is within this dynamic that Chapter Three explores Biblical and theological perspectives of change leadership.

Fenwick’s (2010) critique of the ontology within complexity theories argued that the theoretical foundations were relatively “silent on questions of responsibility” and that leaders always hold a moral responsibility. Davis and Sumara (2008) argued that complexity theory does not quite take up the expansive space in which other more unified theories exist, so they

classified complexity theory as an *intertheory* that is built on the “realization that there are some common themes amongst some very different theories,” which are contrastive of critical theories that aim at deconstruction (pp. 165, 173). Davis and Sumara (2008) argued the following:

. . . complexity theory, while acknowledging that selfish intention can give rise to horrible wrongs, is more prone to regard the injustices of the world as inevitable consequences of complex dynamics. Unequal distributions of wealth and power, argue complexivists, are not only inevitabilities; these are phenomena that are given to self-amplification. Consider, for example the way people aggregate into cities. As insulting as it might sound, the emergent patterns of organization do not depend at all on the fact that humans are doing the clustering. The same patterns show up in colonies of bacteria. In fact, they arise when smoke particles deposit on a ceiling. The rich will get richer, the advantaged will gain more advantage—not because of intention, but because of the laws of nonlinear dynamics. Such statements are met with knowing nods by complexivists and with indignation by critical theorists. (pp. 169-70)

Leaders have a moral responsibility towards reducing complexity (Osberg & Bietsa, 2010, p. 8) and to work towards acknowledging the limitations of social worlds that are “nested, co-implicated, ambiguously bounded, dynamic. . .” (Davis & Sumara, 2008, p. 173). A key concern in Davis and Sumara’s (2008) analysis of critical complex adaptive approaches is that it must lead to a “more diverse, more robust community” (p. 174). Fenwick’s (2010) critique of complex systems ontologies suggested that the possible snares are the failure to address issues in “organization life such as power relations and labour processes” (p. 90). Such exploration becomes a focus point in the dissertation study concerning the interactions between agents. Thus, some key theorists have provided the basis in which empirical research and conceptualization on complex adaptive systems have emerged.

Complex adaptive environments require leaders and their communities to continuously learn as they move through factors from initial resistance through “economic strain, shifting demographics, engrained habits, and pressure to enact change” (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p. 11). As leaders form adaptive leadership teams, complex adaptive theories reveal how leaders

describe the disruption of old practices and expectations leading to new purposes, processes, practices, and personal narratives for building relational trust (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p. 12). The distribution of leadership within a leader's network might reveal how leaders engage with disruption within their social, professional, and religious contexts (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p. 22). According to Heifetz et al. (2009), adaptive leadership involves gaining perspective through reflection emerging from self and system diagnosis and investigative approaches including problem identification and data collection as the leader moves towards interventions (p. 6). Since Heifetz et al.'s (2009) approach that localized adaptive leadership as a process in which the leader does *for* or *to* its organization, the theoretical foundation has shifted towards adaptive leadership as what is done *with* and *by* members of an organization independently and interdependently. To build an adaptive culture involves creating shared norms, acting out of shared responsibility, encouraging independent judgment, developing leadership capacity, and institutionalizing reflection and continuous learning (Heifetz et al., 2009). Fenwick (2010) forwarded the following adaptive leadership activities: "becoming more self-reflexive about their entanglement in the system, amplifying desirable emergent patterns, and anticipating surprising new turns" all approached with caution to clashing ontologies between power relations and the moral responsibility of the leader (p. 95). When brokers grow their personal networks, they gain perspective and opportunities for new practices.

Resistance to Change

Dannemiller and Jacobs (1992) and Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) proposal of the whole system change approach sought to help organizations overcome resistance to change: $C = [DVF] > R$: whereby C (change) is a function of D (dissatisfaction with current circumstances), V (vision of what is possible), F (first steps taken towards vision) factors that must be greater than

R (resistance). Dannemiller et al. (2000) described how whole-scale processes “evoke the system’s wisdom without needing to direct or control the results. Thus, when the system is ready, the answer will come” (p. 210). While this equation is a helpful starting point, more recent complex adaptive theories, discourse around social capital, and integrative dialogue between the social sciences with Biblical and theological perspectives in Chapter Three forwards that resistance is on the wrong side of the equation. Chapter Three explores specific organizational practices that enable Christian educational leaders to develop healthy patterns of resistance while promoting psychological safety. The shadow side of social capital theories and disruptive practices may only lead to destabilization or suitable at different points in an organization’s change lifespan. Discussion of how Christian learning leaders and learning communities navigate change is a key next step in research on educational change.

In terms of the implications of complex adaptive theories, scientific research has provided a rich, interdisciplinary understanding that an organization is a living system with “emergent properties and transformation potential” and that “knowledge is inherently local rather than universal” (Byrne, 2005, p. 97; see also Capra, 1996, p. 36). Complex adaptive systems lenses may provide more dynamic descriptions and explanations about the social and relational occurrence of change leadership within educational organizations.

Yurkofsky et al.’s (2020) research on complexity of managing educational change at system-wide levels sought to attend to ambiguity, variability, and interdependence concerning knowledge mobilization. In contrast, these scholars argued that continuous improvement has been less attentive to relational and political dimensions of educational change. There is a gap in descriptions of change practices (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). Review of fourteen continuous improvement methods (data teams, data wise improvement processes, design-based

implementation, design-based school improvement, design thinking, instructional rounds, lesson study, national center on scaling up effective schools, networked improvement communities, strategic educational research partnerships, spirals of inquiry, teacher research, and total quality management) were all categorized and visually represented using social network analysis (p. 409). Their findings synthesized descriptions of complexity into three central problems: (i) *ambiguous and wicked*: processes that aim to define and frame problems that have multiple solutions (a problem well defined is a problem well solved); (ii) *variable and context specific*: localized methods applied to unique environments with diverse factors that account for varying effects of interventions; and (iii) *interdependent and nested*: focused efforts on the relationship between elements and structured coordination within ecologies, due to the limited perspective that actors have on the outcomes (Yurkofsky et al., 2020, pp. 409-410). Their work on buffering and bridging expands notions of shared or collaborative inquiry to not only mean what the leader does, but what transformation emerges from bottom-up problems of practice and interventions.

Some of the critical challenges with continuous improvement in educational systems for change leadership are as follows: to deepen understanding and commitment, broaden networks to improve reform efforts, employ collaborative processes in the codesigning and development of interventions, and introduce iterative collaboration (Yurkofsky et al., 2020, pp. 421-422). Within complex adaptive systems, the practice of adaptive leadership involves a toolkit of diagnosing problems (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 8). Adaptive leadership, whereby the leader learns, is a key driver of change (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Heifetz et al., 2009; Schlechty, 2009). Adaptive leadership also seeks to introduce change in ways that challenge compliance and control paradigms, whereby higher anthropological and communal views are sustained (Yurkofsky et al.,

2020, p. 425). Further discussion is included in Chapter Three on Christian and Biblical perspectives of communal transformation.

Bridging Theories: Complex Adaptive Systems and System-Wide Educational Change

To bridge the gap between complex adaptive systems research and system-wide educational change theory, it is important to discuss how the dominant literature in the education sector pertains to system-wide educational change research and acknowledge that a shift is taking place. Worley and Mohrman (2014) questioned whether change management tools, processes, and models were obsolete with demands for more complex, agile, and adaptive approaches. The basis for their arguments was that there are clear beginnings and endings for change initiatives and senior executives used competition to sustain their advantage (p. 5). However, the new “theory” is that people need to continuously become aware of the need for learning and make changes at social capital levels (Worley & Mohrman, 2014). Thus, change is not something to manage, nor traditional change management models something to throw out, but acceleration, readiness, agility, and flexibility to engage in organizational learning will be some of the more responsive tools for complex environments.

Miller et al. (2022a) sought to enter into complexity theory at more organizational and institutional levels. It is here that the research is situated on organizational change within diverse expressions of the Christian faith. By understanding interdependent relationships between multiple levels and adaptive change within “moments of disequilibrium” (Reigeluth, 2008), complex adaptive leadership “amplify[ies] actions, recombinations, and stabiliz[es] feedback” (Miller et al., 2022a, p. 60). Fullan’s (1993) work was instrumental in beginning a second wave of reforms in educational research on change in the K-12 school context, particularly in Canada throughout the early 2000s. Fullan’s work has also moved into more adaptive theories making it

pertinent for examining the theoretical foundations for research on Christian educational change leadership.

Whole Scale Educational Change Theory

The global fascination with different change models, bridging theory and practice continued to emerge in the field of educational studies literature throughout the 1960s and 70s in Canada and the United States (Fullan, 2015, p. 5). North American educational reforms began with curriculum changes emerging from psychological and organizational behavior theories that reacted to behaviorist assumptions seeking nation-wide strategies to improve achievement scores in literacy and numeracy (Fullan, 2015, p. 10). Large scale educational reforms were introduced to promote individual and social change (Fullan, 2015, p. 11). Many changes built in what Fullan (2015) identified as “accountability schemes” failed due to the increased pressure on educational systems in an environment of global competition (p. 9). Fullan (2015) linked system and school change or improvement to Fullan (2005), who defined sustainable change as “the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement” (p. ix).

The turn of the 21st century shifted attention towards sustainable change in an era of technological innovation. Within the field of educational studies, educational change theorists described the importance of change as a means of building leadership capacity and navigating shifting internal and external organizational conditions (Leithwood et al, 2008; Stoll, 2020). A key issue in recent educational change, reform, and improvement literature is that empirical study has been focused on issue-driven purposes, rather than on leadership and human lifespan development purposes with concern for contextual needs (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). According to Fullan (2015), change efforts must set the right drivers in place to help direct intrinsic motivation and support continuous improvement across an organization. Recent discourse about

the purpose of change has been to increase organizational capacity and learning capabilities, which involves building interventions that respond to internal and external demands and navigate future anticipated changes.

Continued expansion in the field of educational change studies has led researchers continue to draw from Burke and Litwin's (1992) model, Kotter's (1996) model, and Lewin's (1947) model, and propose adjustments to the original model and its applicability to educational systems (Oterkiil & Ertesvåg, 2012; French et al., 2022). Table 2.1 conceptualizes the two models (Burke & Litwin, 1992; French et al., 2022). Educational change has been studied in terms of organizational design, behavior, and development (Fullan, 2015; Sackney, 2009; Stoll, 2009). The field of educational administration and policy has intersected with organizational change management of other disciplines, particularly business and management, thus yielding a corpus of literature concerning educational change studies.

As the field of educational change studies have grown, international studies on educational change are becoming increasingly contextualized. Within the Canadian educational context, an emergent field of scholarly research around school improvement and reform has directed the field of educational change studies to "whole system improvement" (Fullan, 2015, p. xii). At the same time, the whole system change stream and the change leadership streams appear to be merging around the notion of complex organizational development and readiness for change. Wang et al. (2023) argued that the world has seen global educational reforms, national reforms, and local reforms seeking to improve teaching, learning, and school leadership. However, as organizations have become increasingly complex and interconnected, the interaction between individual readiness and organizational readiness for change have become more important to observe concurrently.

Table 2.1

Summary of French et al.'s (2022) adaptation of the Burke-Litwin's (1992) Model of Organizational Performance and Change using Oterkiil and Ertesvåg's (2012) conceptualization

Burke and Litwin's (1992) Model	French et al.'s (2022) Adaptation of the Burke-Litwin Model using Oterkiil and Ertesvåg (2012)
External Environment	School system, district, community expectations and engagement, policies, mandated curriculum, national accountability
Mission and Strategy	Mission statements and shared goals
Leadership	Transformational (Leader) and Transactional (Manager) forces
Organizational Culture	School Culture
Management Practices	Instructional Practices
Structure	Structures (space, timetables, teaming, departmental organization, space itself)
Systems	Systems (policies, routines, evaluation metrics, procedures)
Work Unit Climate	Team Climate
Individual Skills and Task Requirements	Training, Knowledge, and Teacher Backgrounds
Motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic drivers)	Motivation (achievement)
Individual Needs and Values	Teacher Beliefs
Individual and Organizational Performance	Individual and Organizational Performance (Movement, Student Choice, Empowerment, Learner Collaboration)

Readiness for Change. Wang et al. (2023) proposed four theoretical stages that educational systems move through towards readiness for change including (i) non-readiness-oriented, (ii) development-oriented, (iii) performance-oriented, and (iv) sustainability-oriented. Organizations need both high individual readiness and high organizational readiness to reach the actualized stage that enables high change efficacy, valence, commitment, and leadership at both individual, cultural, and system structural levels (p. 1049). International or global perspectives are seeking more to guide leaders and their school communities through change collaboratively.

Increasing emphasis has shifted from evaluating change efforts to better identifying specific contextual needs while facilitating change. Therefore, studying educational change exploratorily within a Christian educational context becomes a necessary next step with the field of organizational change studies expanding around themes of community, networks, and complex adaptive systems.

This next section explores the theoretical foundations of system-wide educational change. Under this wider umbrella, there are sub theories and components comprising theories of school improvement, a new definition of educational change, theories of measuring educational change, theories of sustaining educational change, and theories of educational change experiences, and theories of school reform. The sub themes are discussed further in this section.

Theoretical Foundations of School Improvement

The theoretical foundations of the school improvement movement, ontologically, represents a shift from largely assessing input-output interactions to a dynamic, ecological, and living systems approaches leading to improved conditions for student learning (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016; Wheatley, 2007). Louis-Seashore (1998) foreshadowed that “educational change, will at least in the foreseeable future, continue to be characterized by disorder, discord, disconnection and turbulence” (p. 36). A shifting organizational ontology helps to describe the current state of educational change theories.

The field of educational change has proliferated at system-wide, school-level, and individual levels of change. However, much of the prevailing bias in educational change research has been directed towards outcomes and, thus, discourse around educational change generally involves processes and practices that are to be measured. Harris and Jones (2017) described some of the “inconvenient truths about system performance” that international benchmarks such

as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) out of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) designed to test 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading, and science (OECD Directorate for Education and Skills, 2024) are driving top-down interventions, corporatizing education, and driving inequities within systems. Large scale internationalization has had a “dramatic effect on the educational reform and change moment, globally” (Harris & Jones, 2017). Pushback has extended further to transformational leadership approaches, which have opened up greater awareness in the need for collaborative, appreciative, narrative, and phenomenological approaches. Such studies appear to be lacking because they raise concerns about the limitations of educational change efforts to bring about enduring change and perpetuate a lustrousness associated with a performance and innovation worldview.

Theories of school improvement in Canada emerged from more extensive empirical research concerning the effectiveness of leadership efforts on shaping teaching, learning, and organizational culture (Sackney, 2007). Educational change theorist Fullan (2010, 2015) described educational change in terms of processes acting on a system to improve student learning. Hallinger (1992, 2003) and Hallinger and Heck (2010) acknowledged that two preeminent conceptual models in educational leadership with instructional leadership and transformational leadership have been the dominant approach with school leadership for change. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) described how the profession can grow as a whole through the change process. Research emerging in the field of educational change literature was reactionary to corporate change literature and pushed back on transactional outcomes in favour of transformational leadership approaches (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

A New Definition of Educational Change

The fascination with theories that measure educational change emerged from greater clarity about how educational change is defined and distinguished. Fullan (2015) first distinguished four levels of educational change: (i) a general meaning of societal change not only “confined to education,” (ii) a “subjective meaning of change for individuals in education,” (iii) “objective meaning of change,” which involves making sense of the formal components of educational change in the complex ontologies of the education system, and (iv) defined the “subjective reality” of educational change as the taking up of shared meaning, consensus, and purpose to sustain change (p. 18). A functional/operational definition of educational change is taken from both Fullan’s (2015) subjective and objective meanings of change. Subjectively, educational change is about “. . . find[ing] some way of developing infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing and applying new knowledge, skills, and understandings” (p. 27). In addition, it involves “deep meaning about new approaches to teaching and learning” (p. 27). It is about changing one’s practice, which involves the use of new or revised instructional materials, approaches to teaching and learning, and alteration of beliefs about policies, programs, and processes (Fullan, 2015, p. 28). Given the contextual nature of defining educational change, there are a variety of ways that educational change is operationalized and conceptualized to support system, curricular/instructional, cultural, and organizational development.

The purpose of educational change is to improve the system and the conditions for all learners, who are members of the learning community. However, non-linear perspectives of change have expanded the field of educational change research further in Canada. Chaos theories define why organizations go into disorder; perhaps there is a contrasting future hope orientation that describes how organizations move towards embracing increasing complexity. Other theorists

working in different disciplinary fields have described how change management has become obsolete; organizations need more living ecological and complex theories to help with the non-linearity of change (Burke, 2024; Worley & Mohrman, 2014). Complex systems theories have introduced social considerations around perceived benefit in the notion of “valence” (Wang et al., 2023). The implications are that the theoretical foundations have shifted in the educational context to communal readiness for change.

Theories of Measurement and Assessment of Educational Change

Vanlommel and van den Boom-Muilenburg (2024) argued that “educators need to find solutions for these complex problems in a rapidly changing context” (p. 606). Current literature requires a more interdisciplinary definition of what counts as evidence of educational change, thus leading to better measurement and assessment tools of educational change that are not only dependent on assessing factors of student learning.

Vanlommel and van den Boom-Muilenburg’s (2024) scoping review intended to synthesize gaps and examine how existing literature was concerned with a system’s readiness, capacity, and alignment for change. To define the field, their study involving the search of 7168 studies distilled to 23 main articles through the snowballing analysis found that evidence-informed change was related to peoples’ “awareness, ability and motivation to use different sorts of evidence to get a rich, fine-grained and unbiased picture of the question and context” (p. 21). Furthermore, Vanlommel and van den Boom-Muilenburg (2024) moved from their theoretical definition of evidence-informed change as “an information source that is transparent, appropriate for its intended purpose, and permits drawing a conclusion” (p. 23) to their literature conceptualization of evidence-informed change drawing from multiple sources of evidence that extends educators’ capacity, awareness, and motivation to question their own assumptions about

their practice by using research, data, or expertise (p. 23). Theories of measuring school improvement account for factors related to membership, retention, well-being, capacity building, and sustainability.

Theories of Sustainable Educational Change

Global or international perspectives and research on educational change have also raised concern that educational reform efforts are not resulting in “deep and sustainable change” (Barakat, 2019, p. 330) because they are often driven by external agencies and lacking transparency, organizational adaptability, and contextualization to facilitate enduring change. International theories on leading sustainable change have become increasingly interdisciplinary. For example, McChesney et al. (2021) summed up the work of change leaders as follows:

If you’re leading people, right now you are probably trying to get them to do something different. Whether you lead a small work team or a whole company, a family or a factory, no significant result is achievable unless people change their behavior. Yet, to be successful, you will need more than just their compliance; you will need their commitment. . . of hearts and minds, the kind of commitment that will endure . . .” (p. 2)

Similarly, Fullan’s (2001) work with educational leadership identified behaviours of moral purpose, understanding change, coherence making, knowledge creation and sharing, and relationship building that lead to commitment of members and changed behaviors (p. 3). Recent leadership change practitioner literature has been focused on managing vision, strategy, goals, and changing collective behavior. It seeks to ensure leaders achieve outcomes while promoting the wellbeing of their organization’s members. In other words, change leaders change their own behaviors and implement practices that lead to commitment of organizational members to change.

Theories of Educational Change Experiences

Reports examining teachers' perceptions of change argue that leaders are to blame for their mismanagement and inequitable use of authority to change systems from top-down, centralized approaches, which removes agency and ownership from the process. Theories of educational change experiences highlight four main indicators of successful change outcomes: organizational members know the collective goals, how to achieve the goals, continuously track progress, and have shared ownership and accountability towards the goals (McChesney et al., 2021, p. 16). International literature that has examined how educators report on their experiences varies based on a range of factors including context, belief systems (religious or secular), and values.

Recent philosophic examination of educational change in global context has identified some “challenges, contradictions, and incoherencies that potentially impede the success of educational projects” (Benji-Rabinovitch, 2023, p. 229). Benji-Rabinovitch's (2023) critique of Western liberal democratic values being effortlessly moved from religious foundations to secular humanism in developing educational systems raised concerns about transferability of one comprehensive system of belief to another: “Is it advisable, or even possible, for international education agencies to successfully transform curricula whose structure, content, and form emanate from such a different way of seeing the world?” (p. 233). The same question could be asked of whether the knowledge claims, internalized ways of being, language, systems, and values from secular change leadership studies could be directly applicable to Christian education contexts.

Theories of School Reform

Theories of school reform generally emerge from the cognitive, behavioral, and developmental theorists, social theorists, or a combination. Theories of school reform have

emphasized the role that teacher professional development plays in supporting student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and promoted professional learning environments (DuFour et al., 1999, 2021). However, Rabinovitch (2023) argued that it is possible to reform the content of an educational system, while “inadvertently retaining traditional structures, methodologies, and hierarchies” (p. 232). He also argues that theories of school reform have been misguided by the wrong outcomes:

Ambitious educational leaders are anxious to demonstrate the results of a successful educational change process, both to their own populations as well as to players on the international stage; simultaneously, personnel on the ground may be struggling to meet the exigencies of a rapid timeline for a complex mix of reasons including: lack of language fluency, a necessity for more training, a clash in foundational belief systems, the requirement to supervise vast geographic regions, disparate levels of needs across the nation, insufficient resources, and self-doubt about their own abilities to enact nationwide change. (p. 238)

Market economies are driving changes to educational systems. Complex change requires time, engagement, and “familiarization with the rules of consensus making” (Rabinovitch, 2023, p. 239). However, “Education is a long-term project” so the extent to which a reform is successful must be measured generationally (Rabinovitch, 2023, p. 237). Narratives of impact and change are needed to critically examine the values and beliefs that leaders bring to their efforts within both religious and democratic environments of change.

Summing Up the Theoretical Foundations of Educational Change

To sum up the theoretical foundations, the key principles and concepts outlined describing the current state of understanding about educational change is as follows: (1) The field of educational change leadership has a substantial corpus of theoretical literature and that has continued to evolve from the process a leader employs to change an organization to the specific learning adaptations that a community embraces together. (2) There are current limitations in the dominant models of school improvement (instructional and transformational leadership) that

require a more dynamic description about the role of networked and bottom-up emergent change (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). (3) For educational change efforts to navigate internal and external complexities such as accountability and socio-political movements, change initiatives must occur at individual, organizational, and societal levels and be localized to impact shared moral purpose, coherence, and knowledge creation. (4) Educational change has been studied qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of outcomes, yet rich experiential descriptions from educational change leaders are lacking, creating a contextual gap in the theoretical foundations supporting a broader definition of evidence-informed change. (5) Change is not something to be managed, but sustained within shared commitments, organizational spirituality, resistance practices, learning, and leadership (Le Tran, 2023, p. 208; Rabinovitch, 2023). The intersection of Arena's (2018) work on adaptive spaces, Uhl-Bien et al.'s (2007) complexity leadership, and Fullan's (2012) theories of professional capital (as a function of human, social, and decisional capital) are where there is considerable overlap between the collective wisdom of the business and educational disciplines converging in the study.

Empirical Studies of Leadership for Educational Change

This section reviews empirical studies to describe the current state of international educational change literature. Appendix A, Table A.1 summarizes the 13 empirical studies concerning the experiences and practices of whole system educational change. In Appendix A, Table A.2 summarizes three empirical articles that utilize complex adaptive system approaches to educational change. Prior to identifying the key and most pertinent studies evaluated in the empirical review articles, there are 11 supplemental articles that are provided to assist others in understanding the field of educational change theory (see Appendix A, Table A.3). Taken together, there are some key considerations synthesized from the table that help frame the

backdrop of the empirical studies explored in this section: (1) Empirical literature has addressed the purposes, processes, practices, and experiences of educational change leadership. (2) We need to know more about change leaders' experiences of facilitating educational change. (3) Leadership change experiences linked to greater explanations of change practices within contexts that describe a spirituality of change, system-wide practices forming social capital and identity, how leaders specifically build relational capacity, and how organizations are transformed through networked relationships require further description. (4) There is an overreliance on self-reporting teachers' perceptions of educational change to evaluate the effectiveness of change. (5) While there is much emphasis placed on measuring attitudinal experiences towards educational change, there is limited description of the relationship between educational change processes and specific practices that lead to the attitudinal formation and perceived receptivity of teachers in response to leadership for change. (6) Current educational change literature is formed within the public education context, thus lacking robust description of *how* educational leaders within particular professional networked contexts facilitate change from a place of beliefs and values.

The empirical articles reviewed in the following section providing more of a description of *what* school and system-wide educational change has looked like in different international contexts and *how* educational leaders have facilitated change, thus supporting the rationale for this study as a necessary next step in educational change research for British Columbia K-12 Christian schools.

This section reviews sixteen empirical studies of educational change literature concerning two main areas: (i) Whole educational system change or reform as experienced by members within educational communities and (ii) Complexity and educational change as practiced by leaders.

Experiences of Educational Change, Reform, and School Improvement

The first seven studies evaluate current international empirical literature related to what the experiences of educational system change, reform, or school improvement has looked like within systems, schools, educators, and leaders' reported experiences.

The purpose of Hübner et al.'s (2021) article was to evaluate the factors that impact teachers' perceptions of curricular reforms in German lower and upper secondary schools and whether there was a relationship between teachers' global curricular reform rating and teacher characteristics, school characteristics, teacher perceptions of specific reform aspects, and support structures (research question one) and predictive power of the respective variables between different school tracks (research question two) leading to successful implementation of educational reforms. Hübner et al. (2021) highlighted the internationalization of educational reform seeking to improve student achievement (Hopmann, 2008; OECD Report, 2015). Their distinct contribution is that they identify that theoretical and qualitative assertions are made about the importance of teachers buying into reform efforts, but there is a lack of quantitative verification about the "acceptability of the reform" (p. 804).

Data for the study targeted 20-22% from the total population of schools in each track (60 intermediate track schools, 75 track schools, and 60 comprehensive schools), of which there was greater than 70% participation in each track and a total sample of 1,132 teachers (M age = 41.36; years in the profession was 12.71; 64% were female). The 20-minute study involving teachers from the three tracks of German schools included a single online survey in which the curricular reform was evaluated. Descriptive statistics were reported in relation to both teacher characteristics and school track characteristics including factors of "added value for pupils, teachers, systems, comprehensibility of goals, and workload," rating of reform aspects,

improvement for school characteristics, value for external supports, and a global curricular reform rating score (pp. 808-809).

Inferential statistics were used to generate five multiple linear regression models, of which four used single set predictors and the fifth were all considered in a final model. The models controlled for teachers' school type, age, and gender, and z-standardized scores were generated, resulting in regression coefficients (p. 809). In terms of relevant conclusions from the study pertaining to educational change practice, teachers' perceived added value of the global reform for "themselves, the comprehensibility of the goals of the reform, its perceived value for school development, teacher motivation, and the added value for students were found to be positively related to the global curricular reform rating" (p. 814), which supported previous theoretical research. Professional development, support materials, and the leaders themselves were all seen to be valued by the teachers; however, after controlling for other variables, Hübner et al. (2021) reported that these respective factors were secondary and positively valued "likely because they help to implement the reform" (p. 815). Professional development programs may serve to "weaken implementation barriers and foster processes of policy implementation through the development of teacher buy-in, in addition to other desired teacher outcomes" (p. 815). Such factors of professional learning for leaders are examined further in the third domain in this chapter.

One concern emerging in this study is that Hübner et al. (2021) utilize the "global rating of the curricular reform" as a net promoter-like score. While this may serve as a helpful benchmark, the researchers do not report on the validity and reliability of the quantitative instrument, nor do they provide a robust operational definition of what a comprehensive reform plan, goals, and support structures might look like with respect to criteria. As such, the global curricular reform

rating seems to largely be based in teacher satisfaction and thus, a limitation is the effectiveness of a reform is related to the perceived value as opposed to measuring the outcomes in relation to other quantitative factors such as student achievement scores or an index designed to evaluate the effectiveness of professional reforms.

A key contribution of Hübner et al.'s (2021) research for the dissertation study was to invite participants to speak to their educational change initiative's specific goals, support structures, and implementation plan. The authors called for deeper investigation of tailored programs rather than overarching, one-size-fits all programs, and thus "a more specific support and implementation structure, which fits the specificities of the culture of schools, may be needed for successful implementation of curricular reforms" (p. 817). Investigating the experiences of leaders may also raise the hypothesis that the success of a reform is not necessarily related to the leader themselves, but the experiences and equipping of leaders impact how educational changes are facilitated at curricular levels.

This respective concern is important for generating narrative descriptions about organizational culture and change beliefs. In the next study, Mukhtar and Fook (2020) apply Lewin's (1947) model of change to the Malaysian secondary school context.

Mukhtar and Fook's (2020) quantitative research designed sought to "investigate the relationships of perceived leadership styles and emotional intelligence on attitudes towards organizational change" (p. 36) and, specifically, to discuss negative reactions to educational change (p. 37). When organizations introduce changes in structure, strategies, policies, procedures, or changes related to finances, employees have attitudinal responses. The Malaysian education system has been restructuring to meet the nation's aims, working with a 2013 to 2025 blueprint (Mukhtar and Fook, 2020, p. 38). The purpose of the study was to understand attitudes

towards organizational change, leadership styles, levels of emotional intelligence from school teachers, and significant relationships between leadership styles and emotional intelligence on attitudes towards organizational change.

The sample was $n = 360$ randomly chosen Malaysian teachers from five secondary schools in Selangor. Data collection included use of Bass and Avolio's (2004) multifactor leadership style questionnaire and Wong and Law's (2002) scale to assess self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion, and use of emotion (p. 39). The two-stage cluster sampling design identified respondents from five schools in the state of Selangor. Cronbach's alpha values were not reported and could have been included to strengthen validity.

The results from the descriptive frequencies found the following: Teachers exhibited a positive attitude towards educational change (66.9% reported high levels of attitude; 31% reported moderate levels of attitude; no teachers reported low levels of attitude). Distribution of scores indicated low standard deviation ($sd = 0.79$), implying compression of values reported around the mean attitudinal scores. Teachers had moderate perceptions of principals' transformational leadership style (ranging between 2.30 to 6.20; $M = 4.66$). Perceptions of principals in the observed scores were moderate in terms of transformational and transactional leadership styles. Standard deviation was 0.94 indicating more variability in how teachers experienced their principals' change efforts. Teachers reported high levels of emotional intelligence (89.2%) and the mean emotional intelligence score was 5.59. Emotional intelligence was "vital to facilitate a positive attitude towards organizational change" (p. 42). Pearson product moment correlations found statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ (2 tailed) for the following: Moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.348, p < 0.000$) between attitude towards organizational change and transformational leadership, weak positive correlation ($r = 0.185, p < 0.000$) between

attitude towards organizational change and transactional leadership, and strong positive correlation ($r = 0.656, p < 0.000$) between attitude towards organizational change and emotional intelligence. The findings align with Lewin's (1947) three stages of change that "emphasized the interplay between leadership and emotion on attitude during the unfreezing stage to impact organizational change" (p. 42).

For leading educational change, Mukhtar and Fook's (2020) study characterized the importance of leadership styles and the relationship with emotional intelligence of both the leader and the learning community. The practical implications for leaders facilitating organizational change would be to develop emotional capabilities and strengthen leadership styles with building social capital. Listening for what participants describe as the practices that help them adapt interpersonally, intrapersonally, manage stress, and cope with change efforts socially and not only descriptions about the processes would be needed in qualitative inquiry to shift thinking about educational change. In the fourth article exploring system-wide change, the study conducted explores educational change in a western Canadian K-12 public education context.

Fisch's (2014) work sought to offer an alternative to quality control in system change and continuous improvement based not only in quantitative measures used by scientific management. He argued, "organizations are best understood through narrative and semiotics—organizations as stories—and not through comparisons—a scale" (p. 156). The main proposal was to explore alternative accreditation and evaluation processes leading to school improvement. Organizations are living, social systems that, in order for thriving to occur, need meaningful "self-direction, self-determination, self-actualization and self-motivation that comes through leadership that is telling their story. . . [and] a new leadership model" (pp. 155-156).

The study involved three methods of data collection including interviews with school personnel and parents, observations of participants, and document analysis (p. 162). All school staff at North Hall Middle School were interviewed over a 10-month period during their participation in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools portfolio process. From which, specifically, the coordinators of the seven steering committees who were school administrators were interviewed. Narrative analysis and the constant comparative method were used. The findings were organized around a semiotic model based on *The Meaning Triangle* (Ogden and Richards, 1989). Some of the findings included the following: (1) Constructing a narrative and portfolio served to connect symbolic with actual experiences of the school's improvement journey that "inspired, motivated, and focused and directed those in leadership positions by eliciting meaning in them through natural language" (p. 164). (2) Narrative leadership constructs the framework for quality control that commentates intrinsically about the relational commitment and validates the shared vision and progress.

Concerning the implications from the study of management through measurement and meeting quality targets, the author addressed the predominant tendencies within organizational change of the industrial and technist paradigms that define successful change based on outcomes and extrinsic motivation. As an alternative, when organizations develop meaningful involvement in relational capacity building, they sustain greater intrinsic motivation around their shared vision, mission, and learning. According to Fisch (2014), the practice of narrative leadership is pertinent for the educators, schools, and external dialogue. Both quality school improvement and educational change is established through reciprocity between personal and shared meaning, which may be a key to better educational change practice.

For the dissertation research study, understanding the experiences of leaders through storytelling would help sustain greater clarity about participants' experiences while working with their schools and draw out a key missing variable on relationships and the intersection of faith expressed in educational change practice. In the next study, Andreoli et al. (2020) explored how change leaders performed following an intensive training model around facilitating educational change.

Andreoli et al. (2020) argued that the demand for leading school improvement is connected to "continuously evolving accountability requirements" (p. 518). As such, the focus of their study was to examine the growth of 10 school leaders that had participated in a consortium training between 12 rural high-poverty school districts and two universities. The research question investigated what participants learned from the Leadership Learning Community (LLC) specifically for helping lead school improvement. The LLC was formed in 2014 and supported educational administrators with 12 days of professional development sessions and 70 job-embedded coaching sessions using Aguilar's (2013) transformational coaching model. Data collected for the single case study utilized naturally occurring data from field notes, audio recordings of sessions, site-based visits, and semi-structured interviews. Andreoli et al. (2020) described how they triangulated three years of data and 1300 pages of interview transcripts from 150 hours of observations. Transcripts were coded and transcribed by a team and categories were generated.

The main findings revealed that leaders developed knowledge, skills, and dispositions that helped them interact with others, share leadership, use systematic processes, and diversify mindset concerning educational change. Participants articulated how they saw the work of educational change leadership as a shared effort not solely dependent on the leaders'

responsibility (p. 528). Discussion of the implications raised points about the importance of reciprocal interactions emerging from job-embedded coaching and continuous reflection. As leaders' learning capabilities grew, their social capabilities including interactions, negotiations, and collaborations also led to greater transformational learning in their communities.

Andreoli et al.'s (2020) study identified that literature should be concerned with the individual needs of change agents. However, much of the work of leading educational change is situated within collectivist environments and social learning theories (Bandura, 1977; Lave & Wenger, 1991) acknowledge that knowledge is socially constructed. The social reconstructions of educational change agents are an important site of understanding what has led to, what are possible gaps in, and what would be pertinent areas for further exploration leading to the development of change leaders' social learning practices. How Christian educational leaders learn to acquire knowledge about change purposes, formulate organizational change purposes, and embody change practices might also be a factor contributing to the experiences, perceptions, and reconstructions of change leaders' understanding of educational change. This next article explores the context and social dynamics of public education systems in Canada.

MacNeil et al. (2021) used a case study design to "understand alternative accountability approaches that foster systems-level educational improvements" in a western Canadian K-12 public school context (p. 214). The research question examined the conditions that supported stakeholders in multiple roles to exercise responsibility for student learning. According to the authors, recognizing alternative accountability frameworks help to share, amongst stakeholders, a sense of responsibility in the commitment to student learning. The literature review identified a convergence between blended notions of managerial and professional accountability, as well as higher moral and ethical commitments to professionalism leading to continuous learning (p.

216). However, there are conflicts between external accountability and leaders who hold both pedagogic and managerial responsibilities. The purpose of the study was to investigate multiple stakeholders' experiences leading to responsibility for student learning.

Participants, reflecting a range of two to thirty-three years of experience in their roles, served as district superintendents, directors of instruction, district principals, and school level administrators ($n = 40$). Data analysis included two main sources for abductive descriptive analysis: policy and project documents from the Ministry of Education. A first round of interviews in the fall invited participants to discuss goals, shifts in thinking, role of assessment practices, experiences in the learning projects, relationship between literacy efforts and district goals, and the project's sustainability. A second round of interviews in the spring revisited the themes with discussions about revisions to thinking and formal learning structures. A strength in the process was the collaborative data verification process involving multiple stages of inductive coding, member checking, and identification of "patterns that extended or contradicted prior research" (p. 224).

The findings identified that trust was experienced when educational leaders were not focused on supervising but instead supporting. The second finding established that regular meetings and opportunities for collaboration supported professional learning. A third finding was that student- and improved-focused data, in contrast to that of high stakes data, was perceived as necessary for improvements in teaching and learning. However, MacNeil et al.'s (2021) study identified a tension: "Research has demonstrated just how difficult it can be for school-level leaders to move away from routines defined by the pressures of external accountability even when both teachers and leaders *want* to shift towards prioritizing student and professional learning" (p. 234). A limitation in the study was that a main outcome concerning responsibility

was not explicitly included in the study's research problem or questions. Rather, it was an inductive outcome from the findings and, thus, might have been explored more in depth.

For the context of British Columbia Christian schools that operate as their own independent schooling districts, what is perceived by leaders in terms of accountability and responsibility for organizational improvement is an area requiring further exploration. MacNeil et al. (2021) described what can be accomplished when leaders share common goals and values with their communities. Further research geographically situated in the BC K-12 Christian school context is needed concerning the tensions, silences, and opportunities when the shared and common goals also exist at a level of faith and communal beliefs. Schools as social learning organizations help frame the theoretical foundations of change in the next empirical article.

Lastovska et al. (2023) examined educational practitioners' (teachers') attitudes towards change and the implementation of the model "school as a learning organisation" by arguing that the top-down approach to educational change have neither led to coherence nor "profound and sustainable change" (Barakat, 2019; Constantinescu, 2015; Hübner et al., 2021; Lastovska et al., 2023, p. 648). Based on the theoretical foundations of school as learning organisation, Lastvoska et al. (2023) described how there is "limited research on educational practitioners' attitudes towards change, their resistance to change, or openness to new ideas, practices, and innovations" (p. 649). While there are mixed conclusions from international literature as to whether openness to school change related initiatives increases or decreases with age and years of experience, or other factors such as school size, Lastovska et al. (2023) specifically examined the extent to which teachers are inclined towards change and innovation, whether characteristics (experience, position, school size, or school type) impact attitudes towards change, or the main factors and barriers to educational change in Latvia general education.

The data sample was collected proportionally from 641 general education (93.1%) and vocational educational institutions (6.9%) to reflect the overall population. From the 86 institutions randomly selected (80 general education and six vocational education), there was a 79.1% response rate. Participants included school management ($n = 92$; 14.3%), teachers ($n = 478$; 74%; and support staff ($n = 72$; 11.2%). The quantitative study carried out online using a slightly adapted framework from Kools and Stoll's (2016) school learning organisation instrument included questions related to eight dimensions including shared school mission, vision and values, internal culture, professional development, team learning, system of knowledge exchange, research and innovation, school administration involvement, and learning from external system environment.

Employee attitudes towards change were reported based on types of educational institutions, size of school, position within school, and years of experience (seniority). Non-parametric tests such as the Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed that there were statistically significant differences ($p < 0.001$) and small effect sizes ($\eta^2 = 0.008-0.029$) in the attitudes from different types of general educational schools towards change, favouring lower-secondary schools on items related to tendencies to perceive change more optimistically and, thus, a greater degree of readiness for change ($\chi^2(2) = 6.709-18.190$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .008-.029$), compared to primary schools perceiving change ($\chi^2(2) = 7.276$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2 = .009$). Small effect sizes occurred across institutions in relation to their size on reported items of attitude towards change. Using the Spearman's rho test based on number of students in a school, weak correlations were identified based on receptiveness of school leaders towards change, of which, the medium-sized schools (with 301-500 students) reported the highest agreement that "school leaders have a clear rationale for implementing change in the school" (Lastovaka et al., 2023, p. 657). Amongst the

correlations, the strongest relationship was between research of professional practice and a culture of innovation at school ($r = 0.346, p < 0.001$). The researchers noted that positive attitude towards change is “connected to a higher level of professional practice, research and innovation culture within the general education institution,” linking attitudes to culture, to supportive and transformational leadership (p. 660).

The findings link to Mukhatar and Fook’s (2020) research that social or emotional capacity building for educations and leaders is vital for sustained change. As teacher practitioners reported higher observations of their school administrations’ openness to change and innovation, clear rationale for implanting change, and skills to manage change, participants had more positive outlook and attitude towards change. Supportive leadership was a key factor consistent with the literature on creating coherence with the learning culture and increased attitudes towards change (Constantinescu, 2015; Hübner et al., 2021). Some of the implications indicate that school administrators hold responsibility towards the implementation strategies and innovation of a learning culture, but “equally important is the cooperation among teachers in sharing experience and knowledge” and a synergy between new and experienced educational practitioners to increase effective collaboration that “fosters the successful implementation of change” (p. 663). For the dissertation research study, inviting educational leaders to describe their learning organisation’s culture and their implementation plans is a necessary area to address. With de-centralized educational improvement initiatives, it is important to generate rich descriptions of how teachers worked together with consideration of the school’s sociocultural context. In alignment with Lastovaska et al.’s (2023) recommendations, “School administrators should implement meaningful and supportive communication with teachers to explain the reasons and effects of change,” (p. 663) questions arise for how educational leaders specifically

create such clarity and coherence with their leadership, especially within a Christian educational context.

This final empirical article for the first section on international change leadership studies concerns how teachers perceive change leaders in the process of facilitating change. Jedaman et al.'s (2023) research in Thailand examined effective educational change and factors pertaining to leadership including vision, strategic management, personnel management and teamwork, innovation, and achieving common goals to create sustainable learning-oriented cultures. The researchers defined how organizational change management paradigms are pressured to develop quality emerging from leaders managing the policies, visions, strategies, and personnel (p. 136). The purpose of the article was to explore a paradigm shift taking place in educational change management specifically around how contextual features and organizational culture dynamics create and sustain value.

A mixed-method approach was used involving 43 purposefully sampled informants from Thailand's secondary education service offices for qualitative interviews to engage with the question of "how can the paradigm-ship of change management lead the organizations to create organizational value of change for a sustainable educational organization in the 21st century?" (p. 139). In addition, 450 school directors and teachers were identified using a multi-stage cluster sampling technique. A semi-structured quantitative questionnaire, having a reliability rating of 0.87, which had six components on change management factors including vision, strategy, results, knowledge management for change, management of personnel for change, and creating organizational value for quality of change was utilized with the 450 participants. Qualitative data was reduced, organized, and interpreted for conclusions and the quantitative data was analyzed

using descriptive statistics, Chi-squares, correlation coefficients, and structural equational models (p. 140).

Following analysis of the six factors, leading the organization with vision for change had a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) strong, direct positive relationship with four other main factors including reported influence sizes of 0.99 for knowledge management and personnel focus for change, 0.96 for strategic organizational management for change, 0.90 for creating organizational value for quality for change, 0.83 for results-based management for change and 0.94 for sustainable educational organizations. The researchers forwarded that strategic organizational management for change involves the continuous process of setting organizational vision, operational plans, and ensuring the internal and external environments empower personnel to achieve organizational objectives. Vision was reported to have had the strongest direct positive influence on the other respective educational management factors.

Jedaman et al.'s (2023) distinct contribution raised questions about “decentralization of decision-making to solve educational problems quickly” (p. 146). While it merely “tells” and does not “show” where it was drawing this conclusion from, whether a consistent trend in the qualitative interviews or in the quantitative reports, the authors equated the importance of adaptability, agility, and flexibility with the working relationship between leaders and their team members. One of the present gaps in the literature is that educational change has been largely examined from a place of outcomes, quality indicators, and measures of efficiency; Jedaman et al.'s (2023) study adds another characteristic of “results-based” educational change.

Empirical studies related to system, school, and leadership experiences of change have been reviewed in this section. Taken together, the empirical studies on educational change

leadership signal a need for exploratory and descriptive accounts of leaders' and their meaning making of experiences of educational change leadership.

Leadership Practices of Educational Change

This second set of empirical articles reviews studies on leadership practices of educational change and the question of “how” educational leaders facilitate change within their learning organizations.

Salonen-Hakomäki et al. (2024) conducted their study of key Finnish Core Curriculum Reform leaders and analyzed social, interpersonal, personal, and organizational perspectives. The research questions investigated the experiences of 23 key Finnish leaders (6 men and 17 women), how the educational leaders led the reform, what their respective goals were, and whether they successful in the system reform. The study explored participative leadership approaches involving open feedback and collaboration processes, values of trust, equality, and participation, rather than accountability or control. Data collected was refined through pilot studies to increase validity. The qualitative analysis was conducted in several phases and coded into four abductively formed categories concerning social, personal, interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels (p. 7).

From the findings, the authors described how administrators primarily talked about interpersonal aspects of reform but least about personal levels of change. Participation, as a construct, was found to be “a desirable way to lead system-wide change” and “the goal of participative leadership—to find functional, fruitful, lasting coherence in complexity together with central stakeholders in the system—is notable and shared” (p. 17). A key call from the findings was that leaders should consider changing their approach by giving stakeholders a “fair chance” to participate in decision-making that affects them (p. 18). Quasi-participative reform

efforts were also found to be fruitless and harmful to the system. Success with reform efforts was connected to how much participants connected to the purpose and values in the system. A key limitation in the study was the broad generalization of core Finnish values with the findings, as if the Finnish population existed homogenously. The claims could have been better substantiated by quantitative inquiry using correlative values to validate the relationship between national reported values in congruence with Finnish values of equality, trust, and collaborative influence reflected the broader population. Mixed methods convergent analysis involving quantitative data collection might have helped increase trustworthiness of the findings.

A key implication in the discussion of organizational change is that current international literature is missing the personal voices of intrapersonal change taking place in the leaders' lives. Organizational change theory has primarily concerned itself with outcomes emerging at organizational levels. However, in order to get to the personal level of change, research involving participant personal narratives of change, reflexivity emerging at a personally integrative levels, would be an important next research inquiry. Furthermore, Salonen-Hakomäki et al.'s (2024) study argued that greater alignment between explicit values in a change process and values held societally increases trustworthiness in the whole system of change. By extension, some discussion of values exists in extant literature concerning British Columbia's K-12 Christian schools, but there is also a lack of research in this area about the multidimensional nature of values held societally correlating to the values held by K-12 Christian schools while facilitating educational change efforts. The next study explores leaders' educational change practices, connecting complex organizations to the role of the school principal.

Holmes et al. (2013) described the repertoire of a change leader with the following practices: "building a shared vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people,

redesigning the organization where necessary and managing the teaching and learning programme” (p. 271). Each of these practices are described to encourage relationships amongst staff, and improve the structures associated with teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2008). The study connects change practices in the works of Leithwood et al. (2008) to that of Fullan (2010) that principals should have strong motivation for action and tend relationships, position themselves as learners, assist others with complex problem solving, be networked, critically consume research, and have high moral purpose (p. 14). The study proposed the Sustainable Whole School Renewal and Innovation Pilot Project for Australian schools to assess the effectiveness of a reform effort on student learning. Research questions sought to understand whether the reform effort improved the quality of teaching and learning.

The case study method involved two principals and members of their Australian educational communities. In the first case, a high school principal, participating teacher, three non-participating teachers, and one parent were included. In the second case, a primary principal, one participating teacher, two non-participating teachers, and one parent were all interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were recorded. Data collection processes were not detailed extensively and would have been helpful to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings. Five interdependent and overlapping themes were identified: (i) the development of a shared vision, (ii) social intelligence and the development of relational trust, (iii) flexibility to solve complex problems, (iv) leadership of teaching and learning, and (v) engagement with wider community.

Some of the implications raised from the study included discussion of the tension of meeting external accountability measures that increase the pace of change from more inclusive and participatory approaches to the change process. Relational trust was described as an important practice considering the complexity of multiple competing demands and challenges of

finding solutions to difficult problems. A key silence in the literature is around how change leaders experience their own change leadership processes. However, the small sample size of principals and limited engagement with other members in the interviews left several questions about verifying complexity of experiences across diverse geographic locations. For example, would leaders in different Christian schools in British Columbia experience the phenomenon of educational change differently based in factors that pertain to their role, training, experience, geographic region, gender, ethnicity, or school's context? The study argued that evaluative measures about change would need to be assessed using longitudinal studies. However, descriptive accounts might shed light on whether leaders themselves are experiencing transformation or if they experience transactional effects while their community experiences transformational outcomes. Social capabilities and the ability to direct interactions within an organization are explored in the next article.

The purpose of Benji-Rabinovitz and Berkovich's (2022) study was to examine a gap in organizational change literature concerning change agents' psychological ownership experiences of second order change, in which others work towards change outcomes without top-down direction (pp. 99-100). There are three types of psychological ownership described that connect to second-order change: process ownership, ownership by means, and self-interest ownership (p. 102). The study explored the introduction of a sex education programme in Israeli state religious schools. The research questions explored whether the sex education programme was considered a second-order change by change agents; how change agents experience psychological ownership; what factors affect change agents' psychological ownership experience; and what are perceived behavioral implications of change agents' psychological ownership in schools.

The sample of 31 participants included six school principals, six school counsellors, six sex education programme coordinators, and 13 teachers. Semi-structured interviews ranging between 60-90 minutes were conducted. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis methods and included inductive coding to generate three meta-themes: (1) Types of psychological ownership during the implementation of second order change; (2) Components of psychological ownership during the implementation of second-order change in schools, pertaining to motivation around organizational change; and (3) The perceived effect of psychological ownership and how people associate their views with the specific organizational change. Benji-Rabinovitz and Berkovich (2022) described that this meant change agents were not only driving a type of change ownership, but also had certain “interest that the agents must preserve” (p. 107). The study also described how identifying with needs create motivations for change. One principal participant highlighted, “This is an issue that must be addressed, and it is impossible not to talk about it; you must not ignore it and leave it” (p. 108).

The implications for the study raised questions in the need to better understand psychological ownership and motivation from qualitative positionality, rather than quantitative approaches that have taken more evaluative and performatory views of motivation (p. 111). Within the three types of psychological ownership (process, interest, and means), 61% of the participants described psychological ownership of the process, 25% described psychological ownership by interest, and 13% described psychological ownership by means. The study also found that recent research on organizational change has borrowed heavily from business scholarship characterizing psychological ownership as self-efficacy, sense of belonging, self-identity, accountability, and territoriality (Avery et al., 2009). In contrast, the authors described the following:

It is possible that the self-efficacy, self-identity, and sense of belonging reported by business scholars emerged as irrelevant in our study because of the unique nature of teaching and schooling (i.e., teachers' deep sense of occupational identity and a sense of calling, as well as the loosely couple structures of school). (p. 112)

Their research “decomposed the accountability and territorial components” of psychological ownership in change (p. 112). Thus, the implications of applying business organizational theories to education without more understanding of the psychological and experiential dimensions that change agents experience expose a possible blind spot in organizational change practices. One cannot assume that the fundamental assumptions in a business organization also transfer over to educational communities.

While the research study described that studies in second-order change are necessary, the limitations of small sample size, at times, lack of delineation between participants in the reporting, and examination of points of dissimilarities between participants in their roles diminish the article's explanatory scope and validity in the data analysis of the study. Critical analysis of the study helps to identify an important gap that qualitative research can benefit from identifying more homogenous sample groups and writing rich descriptions about their experiences. Thus, a key need in further educational change empirical research inviting change agents to describe how they build and sustain social capital leading to change in their communities. Specifically, how they function as brokers of change to discover, develop, diffuse, and disrupt connections enabling change and whether that exists unconsciously or explicitly in language, role, and relationships. It also evokes what leaders within a network system might hold in common concerning the experience of facilitating educational change within a Christian learning community. The next empirical article concerns the experiences of educational change leaders who have led their learning organizations through change initiatives.

Kovačević et al.'s (2023) mixed-methods study of a large-scale educational reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina examined how change factors such as school leadership, culture, and institutional culture influenced teacher efficacy. According to Kovačević et al. (2023), schools have become more complex due to internal and external pressures, focus on structural aspects of reform, prioritization of wrong drivers, social and political influences, leadership potential of principals, and teacher characteristics (p. 220). The main research questions assessed the relationship between principal leadership practices, school cultures, and collective teacher efficacy on “organizational and emotional paths of leadership influence” and how institutional context influences leadership practices and collective teacher efficacy “on emotional and organizational paths” (p. 220). The researchers surveyed teachers, analyzed formal reform documents, conducted semi-structured interviews, and analyzed the data quantitatively to assess the “influence of principal leadership and school cultures as predictors of collective teacher efficacy” (p. 221).

The study took place within a transitional European country that has been influenced by both “democratic and non-democratic mechanisms” in their leadership structures (p. 221). Western concepts have influenced approaches to curricular reform and leadership. The operational definition of educational reform was “an intervention in the system [that] changes the resources available to reform implementers, therefore changing the context” (p. 223). From the quantitative population of 33 registered secondary schools, 1266 teachers representing 15,231 students were contacted. Eight schools representing 24% of the population and 249 teachers representing 77.32% from the teacher population in the sample and 19.66% from the overall teacher population participated in the convenience sample. The qualitative sample was obtained simultaneously with the quantitative sample. Semi-structured interviews with a criterion that

informants must have served as principals for a year, represent different locations (urban and rural), and be principals who “exhibited high levels of cooperation” reported from the teacher survey. From the 33 principals in the Canton Sarajevo region, 14 principals met the informant selection criteria, of which six principals were interviewed. Secondary analysis of reform documents was conducted. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Grounded theory codes were generated, and multivariate statistical analysis techniques were employed.

The quantitative data analysis from confirmatory factor analysis identified statistically significant positive relationships between transformational leadership and flexible school culture and transactional leadership on a stable school culture, indicating a higher maximum likelihood of estimation. There was a statistically significant negative relationship with collective teacher efficacy based on teacher age. With follow up post-hoc Mann-Whitney *U* tests, the differences were between teacher age groups 25-34 years and 35-44 years that had “significantly higher scores in group competence” than teachers from age groups 45-54 and 55-65 years. There were also statically significant differences in collective efficacy related to school location. The findings, indicate that both transformation and transactional principals promote capacity building. However, a key finding in the quantitative data analysis is that leadership behaviors are not the only factors for change, which relates to other contextual influences such as the institutional context, transition, reform policy, socio-demographic variables, school cultures, government funding, infrastructure, principal autonomy, and school culture affecting collective beliefs (p. 232).

Data analysis was conducted in CAQDAS QDA Miner using the v. 4 software to quantify the qualitative data and create four hierarchical clusters of reform themes including the following: (i) Procedural-organizational reform activities, (ii) Collaboration activities, (iii)

Pedagogy, and (iv) Technology. The findings indicate that there are constraints to reform and enablers of reform in each of the themes. Principal leadership practices such as developing school culture, intellectual stimulation, articulating high-expectations, individualizing consideration, participative decision-making, setting objectives, and being a role model were all seen as mechanisms leading to change (p. 236). Multidimensional scaling and qualitative analysis identified that principals are implementing transformational leadership and innovative school cultures but are experiencing constraints by their lack of autonomy and accountability from their system-level leadership. The lack of financial support and trust from the Ministry of Education inhibits principals' abilities to implement instructional programs. Principals are faced with the challenge of impacting teacher collective efficacy from more entrenched cultures, making school reform challenging.

One of the key limitations in the study is that it sought to generate a single variable in collective teacher efficacy, when many of the factors being correlated in the multivariate studies are complex and may be related to other factors. Leadership behavior is not the only indicator of effective school change and thus, necessitating greater awareness about the experiences of leaders concerning their organizational environments and external factors from training to socio-political and institutional contexts that pertain to how their schools experience educational change. The qualitative analysis in Kovačević et al.'s (2023) study raised questions about how and when principals experience autonomy and agency to implement changes successfully with their schools. Discussion of Christian religious context is also missing concerning educational change and thus an area for further exploration in Domain Two. This next study examines some of the scarce literature on educational change leadership in a US Catholic schools' context for

more pertinence concerning the context of leadership for Christian religious educational change efforts.

Miller et al.'s (2022a) study of US Catholic schools examined an enrollment crisis taking place that required system-wide reform by superintendents. The literature review raised concerns that Catholic schools are going through an identity crisis including what makes them distinct, whether their graduates are better prepared academically and socially, and if stakeholders are more satisfied with Catholic schools than public counterparts (p. 944). Catholic (arch)diocesan educational systems largely resemble public school districts. There has been limited-peer reviewed study about the effectiveness of organizational change efforts in Catholic schools in contrast to organizational change processes for the public-school context. The research question was as follows: “[W]hat are the organizational conditions in those systems and what capacity do those systems have to initiate or sustain educational change?” (p. 945).

A qualitative study involving 26 purposefully sampled superintendent “system-level leaders of Catholic school systems” was utilized to explore the relationship between Catholic school governance and sector educational change initiatives. Participants served in the Catholic education system leaders at least one year, had experiences of leading systemic changes, oversight of governance models from one of the 1613 sample schools from the wider 6000 school population. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and invited participants to describe the organizational structures and approach to educational change leadership. Data analysis processes followed grounded theory methods (open, axial, and selective coding), wherein data was coded into three clusters including forms of (arch)diocesan organization, opportunities/capacities for change, and micropolitics (p. 951). The findings indicated four themes: (i) Superintendent beliefs that Catholic school systems “were necessarily decentralized

. . . [as] ‘systems of schools’ rather than ‘school systems;’” (ii) beliefs that the system reinforced the “system of schools” approach; (iii) beliefs that the “system of schools” directed educational change efforts towards navigating micropolitics rather than reforming the system; and (iv) beliefs that there was low capacity for “any desired system-wide reform” because of the “system of schools” infrastructure” (p. 952).

The implications from Miller et al.’s (2022a) study raises several questions about decentralized system change, perceptions of “managerial, bureaucratic public system” change, and “school-by-school reform” (p. 953). For example, some of the participants described how their offices allowed individual schools to make changes about curricular decisions and others provided more stringent guidelines and requirements for adherence. They expressed how they were hamstrung to “change ingrained organizational leadership conditions [from the dioceses], subsequently foreclosing the opportunity to pursue system-wide reforms” (p. 961). Catholic system leaders believe in the decentralized “system of school” infrastructure because that is how they were designed in the first place, limiting the possibility of system-level change (p. 963).

Superintendent participants described a common frustration that while they held authority for leading change, the decentralized structure limited their ability to implement a change, relying heavily on the individual school leader and noting their own inability to intervene with educational change initiatives. Many of the participants described how their time was dedicated towards micropolitics, specifically appointing high quality school-level leaders that would be primarily responsible for leading educational change in their systems. Some discussion of the central role that (arch)bishops played in directing the Catholic identity of the schools related to superintendent beliefs about their ability to direct educational goals and policies within the school. Current Catholic education system infrastructure runs antithetical to extant literature

theoretically grounded in system-level change, thus leading to superintendents' disposition being "resigned to the organizational and political foreclosure" and not open to the possibility of transformation system-wide change due to incentivized status quo. Educational change was defined as response to immediate crises and based in school level. For school systems that exist in the "system of schools" (p. 946), the authors argued that successful educational change initiatives would have to be located "somewhere between the school-by-school reform strategies" and "system-level change" (p. 952). Within schools, there is a balance between educational change emerging from top down centralized or bureaucratic approaches and decentralized approaches.

For BC K-12 Christian schools, Miller et al.'s (2022a) research reveals the need for educational leaders to describe what the educational iteration of adaptive spaces look like, the tensions that exist within centralized and decentralized systems, Christian identity and school identity sustained in change, and participation within and participating distinctly from other schools in the system of schools. For the dissertation study, participants will describe the organizational infrastructure for their educational system to better understand how they experience their organizations as they describe phenomenologically their processes and practices of educational change in K-12 Christian schools. Participants will be invited to describe how networked relationships might have influenced their educational change practices.

This next article analyzes Meyer and Slater-Brown's (2020) case study of educational change agents in New Zealand schools. Meyer and Slater-Brown (2020) examined lead teachers' change practices using a case study methodology. Participants were mathematics lead teachers in a national change initiative that supported teacher professional development. The researchers argued that lead teachers are "uniquely positioned to promote educational change . . . [because]

[t]hey understand the complexities of teaching and possess the necessary knowledge and skills to support teachers with content specific issues” (p. 140). The research questions explored whether and how the extent to which lead teachers changed their own practice affected change in school-wide mathematics practices, and the factors explaining degree of change achieved by lead teachers (p. 140). Current literature describes barriers to lead teachers being a barrier to educational change complexities include navigating an expansive field with multiple roles and expectations. Other factors that limit or enable lead teachers’ change efforts include principal or school leadership support, access to professional learning, and positionality within the organization (p. 141). Furthermore, it was identified in the literature review that school leaders support to lead teachers, the provision of time with busy workloads, and the training provided to develop leaders either supports or hinders lead teachers’ perceptions of their work (p. 142).

Methodologically, theories-of-action describing the relationships between individual, organization, and society were utilized to explore how people “claim, believe, or report to be the basis of their actions” supported by qualitative in-depth examination in the form of semi-structured interviews (Meyer & Slater-Brown, 2020, p. 145). Participants were selected using purposeful, convenience sampling. The criteria required lead teachers to have served in their role for at least six months, been employed at one of the 11 cluster schools that was provided specific professional development training, and the lead teacher would have attended the cluster meetings in the last six months. A limitation in the representation of the study was that participants were all from “mid-size, high-income schools” (p. 146). Data analysis focused on detailing theories-of-action in the constraint structures (beliefs, reasons, conditional factors) described by participants were summarized deductively into actions, constraints, and consequences (p. 147)

and inductively to identify main factors including the positional authority of lead teachers, support from leadership, and expertise of lead teachers (p. 148).

The findings revealed that some or limited change in lead teachers' practices took place when their beliefs only changed marginally from the factors of leadership support, access to professional development, and position within the organization. For example, Moira, one of the participants, described how her school leader supported her to attend the professional development, but later on did not afford her time to implement the changes. Participant Poppy's constraints came back to beliefs based on students' academic capabilities and seemed to stymie her ability to experience change within her class and school (p. 150). In contrast, substantial change as experienced by other participants such as Ruth and Lyn noted how their beliefs that they could teach mixed-ability groupings of math students was further supported by their principals and further graduate level mathematics training. School-wide practices were noted to have changed in strong cultures of "teacher autonomy" to plan together and shift beliefs through shared work. Positional authority, while it made it easier to implement change at their class level, appeared to be a requirement for system-change in participants Moira, Poppy, and Sue's descriptions as they "felt that they did not have the authority to mandate change across the school" (p. 154).

The findings indicated that most teachers only marginally changed their practice from educational change initiatives without active agency or involvement. Only three lead teachers reported being able to affect school-wide change. The positional authority, support from leadership, and expertise of the teachers including the persistence of their beliefs were all factors that explained the variability of change. To strengthen this study, a mixed-method case study exploring quantitative factors triangulating with other sample group participants would serve to

not only generate theory but test the extent to which the variables are related to improved educational change conditions.

Complex Adaptive Systems and Sustaining School Improvement Initiatives

This next article reviews Kershner and McQuillan's (2016) study that utilized the theoretical framework of complexity theory to compare and contrast the educational change leadership in St. Catherine's School (K-8) and Jeffrey Jackson Elementary School (K-5), both located in Boston. The researchers' study examined how Lynch Leadership Academy in Boston College equips cohorts of principals to understand the multidimensional nature of change requiring learning about technology, new behaviors, and adopting new beliefs (Evans, 1996, p. 15) and how to lead schools through change (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p. 5). The purpose of their research was to examine decentralized networks and localized adaptations within complex systems. Their assumptions were that the greater the extent of freedom and autonomy a teacher has within a strong culture and clear purpose, the more likely the adaptive change to become germane.

The research design involved multi-participant case studies that explored initial school conditions and disequilibrium, networked interactions, school culture, and leadership issues within the two schools (p. 8). Kershner and McQuillan (2016) acknowledged that their research paradigm makes it impossible to study causation, but they attune and attend to factors of building relational trust within networks. The main research questions sought to explore (i) how the policies and practices from the Lynch Leadership Academy influenced participant principals' school leadership, (ii) the implementation of leadership within schools, and (iii) what can be learned by using features of complexity theory to report on the experiences of the Academy principals and schools (p. 9). Qualitative data collection occurred over three years. Participants

were interviewed three times formally over the three-year period and informally during school visits during that respective timeframe starting with their Academy experiences and moving to school leadership change efforts. Teachers, parents, and students were also interviewed using open-ended protocols. Data was analyzed to generate themes.

From the data analysis, the findings reveal that turbulence occurs when change emerged from top-down leadership. Disequilibrium typically correlated with destabilization from external conditions of economics, shifts in cultural demographics, or needs to change the status quo (p. 10). Examination of data in collaborative teams was a key practice that led to distributing control, creation of networks, and promotion of trust. Positive school culture-building processes require co-ownership (p. 13). Involving teachers in decision making was a key practice leading to increased networks. Micromanagement encroaching on teacher autonomy was a key concern inhibiting successful change. Distributing control and creating networks in both schools aligned with Fullan's (2005) notion that "adaptive challenges require the deep participation of the people with the problem" (p. 53). To disrupt initial conditions, participant principal Helen, from St. Catherine's school created a decentralized network structure by sharing power and authority (p. 22). In contrast, participant principal Harold, from Jefferson Elementary, struggled with change and could not overcome the resistance from staff. The findings reveal that relational trust and creating a shared vision are essential when disrupting a status quo. Addressing shifting power by utilizing networks helps introduce adaptive mechanisms. Schools cannot be reduced to inputs of leadership behaviors. Instead, Bower (2008) is cited as follows:

Renewal, sustained change, growth, and creativity emerge from within. We cannot create these qualities by fiat or by devising lists of goals and objectives. We can, however, help to create the conditions that allow for these qualities to emerge." (p. 110)

A more dynamic learning description about how leaders create transformational conditions would serve to expand the field of research further, shifting from implicit worldview assumptions about transactional leadership to interdependent relationships leading to change. The next study investigates adaptive systems in the context of sustainable school change.

Koh et al.'s (2023) study addressed a key limitation in linear efforts to sustain change by adopting a complex adaptive systems perspective in their analysis of long-term school improvement. Their definition of sustainable school improvement was the “continuation of an intervention,” practices, or a programme after the initial implementation phase or funding has ended (Lennox et al., 2018; Wiltsey Stirman et al., 2012; Koh et al., 2023, p. 299). Building on the theoretical foundations of Fullan (2005) who defined sustainable change as “the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement” (p. ix), Koh et al. (2023) sought to understand how improvement initiatives led to changes in school policy, teaching practice, social and environmental changes, allocation of resources, personnel changes, and formation of community (p. 300).

The study's literature review identified a series of exemplar participant statements that tuned into the different themes of change (organisational culture, personal dispositions, implementation processes, organisational capacity, data collection, and change orientation) and linked it to how researchers might observe components of change (site improvement, agency, resilience, programme selection, planning, leading, commitment, involvement, teams, external connections, capabilities, funding, staffing, time, implementation data, outcomes data, adaptability, processes, relationships, and site renewal), making it pertinent for developing the mental concepts and interpretive approach for conducting phenomenological research around lived experiences of educational leaders. Koh et al.'s (2023) literature review on features of

sustainable implementation of initiatives organized four main premises: (i) sustainability of school improvement is the problem leading to waste, fatigue, and stagnation; (ii) examination of complex adaptive system designs and processes have been overlooked in research possibly due to lack of funding, appreciation, or knowledge; (iii) successful school improvement requires distributed leadership around co-learning; and (iv) limitations in current research linking to practice suggest more attention on participants' perspectives, language and context is needed (p. 303).

The purpose of the study was to provide a microlevel qualitative analysis of the practice of educational leadership to frame examples of contextual backgrounds, curriculum initiatives, and practitioner advice (p. 303). A total of 70 interviews with educational leaders and practitioners, of which 12 were extensive narratives with educational leaders in Australian schools.

Participants were identified through convenience and snowball sampling and nominated by staff that were involved formally and informally in school improvement initiatives (p. 304). The characteristics of participants varied from four male and eight female participants to school principals and programme directors; from the wider group of 70 participants, parents and teachers who had informal roles were also interviewed. The interview questions were broad, inviting participants to share about the factors that enabled the initiative to be sustained, the main challenges for continuing the initiatives, and the advice to provide to other schools about sustaining new initiatives. The research sites included a boys-only Catholic school, an educational research team, a state suburban public school, and private girls-only non-denominational early learning to secondary Christian school with boarding options. Data was transcribed and inductively coded to generate site descriptions and synthesized into strategies and emergent products.

There were seven components that emerged as vital to sustainable school change: (1) A clear sense of shared moral purpose motivated staff towards their mission, selection of higher quality targets, professional education, and succession planning; (2) Strategic staff leadership and management that addresses staff recruitment, professional education, implementation based in stage (early, middle, late), and staff attrition; (3) learning leadership that leads to accountability and co-learning built on trust, shared responsibility, and high interaction social networks; (4) Sharing information involves processes to make decisions based on data collection, feedback, and adaptations leading to assessment of whether initiatives are effective or ineffective and how middle leaders fulfilled their role while balancing educational responsibilities; (5) Time and resource management was concerned with how leaders work with the limitations and introduce initiatives within the general work expectations; (6) Distributed leadership accounted for the different initiators and original drivers of the initiative, whether grassroots/bottom up, top down, or lateral (from external agencies). In addition, distributive leadership was found to prevent the loss of system capacities and adapt when new agencies or students came through the system through shared decision making and accountability; and (7) School culture, which is an emergent product of systematic relationships were found to be places where everyone had a responsibility towards leading and where staff were trusted to “deliver what was promised . . .” (p. 323). The study identified how certain inputs such as distributed leadership, culture change, or professional learning led to long term sustainable success; however, phenomenological accounts of participants making meaning about their experiences are needed to help practitioners reflect on whether their practices are sustainable within their organization’s contextual dynamics, such as Christian faith or curricular identity.

A critical limitation in the study is that while the researcher's paradigm was based on complex and adaptive theories, the results of their study were organized in an input-output report, rather than in an emergent account. Presenting the results in a linear fashion did not fully represent the interdependent relationship between the research site and phenomenological descriptions involving experiences and practices. This approach emphasized transactional outcomes, instead of a more exploratory account of dynamics that are involved in shaping organizational change practices. The study's reliance on short term (two to three year) reports of change present a plausible case but would require multiple longitudinal data points to capture more of the enduring evolution dynamics in sustaining school improvement efforts. Given that the interviews were identified as "extensive narratives," the reporting might also express the narratives in such a way that helps to develop insights in non-linear ways. According to Koh et al. (2023), "leadership is an emergent product of conjoint agency when a group or a network of people interact formally and informally to solve sets of problems due to change, perturbations, or the introduction of a new event. . ." (p. 303). Their study highlights the importance of the researcher's consistent and judicious use of paradigms in the data collection, analysis, and also reporting.

The final article of this section returns to another study by Miller et al. (2022b). The researchers explored how spirituality was connected to educational change practices within faith-based schooling contexts. The theoretical foundations are based in complex adaptive systems, indicating that there is a shift in the way that change management and organizational readiness might be perceived in the context of K-12 education.

Miller et al.'s (2022b) longitudinal study of two Catholic elementary school principals in the United States involving "process-tracing methods" through qualitative interviews, site visits,

observations, and document analysis (p. 61) sought to explore an underexamined area of organizational change. The study distinguished “complex adaptive” leadership practices in from traditional “technically rational” approaches for organizational change. The authors described how the “technically rational” approach has been utilized to save failing systems and the “complex adaptive” approach is about enhancing overall relational trust and utilizing multidimensional organizational, spiritual, and academic decision-making skills while not in a state of organizational crisis (p. 56). The research questions guiding the study questioned what leadership for adaptive change looked like in Catholic parish elementary schools, how far participant school leaders were in the complex cycles processes, and what were conditions that contributed to a leader’s capabilities with adaptive change.

The theoretical basis for the research involved discussion of Catholic school leadership, theories of complex adaptive schools, and leadership for adaptive change. The researchers’ previous works with “cycles of emergence” is referenced characterizing how organizations move through disequilibrium, amplifying actions, recombination, and stabilizing feedback in an unpredictable non-linear cycle (McQuillan, 2016). Two principal participants were recruited from the Lynch Leadership Academy from Boston College. The longitudinal study took place over ten years and involved 67 interviews with one principal and 30 interviews with the second principal (p. 62). Additionally, data was collected from participant groups, long observations of professional development sessions, faculty meetings, teaching sessions, and spiritual meetings. Document analysis was performed on school promotional material, community communication, lesson plans, and meeting agendas (pp. 62-63). To strengthen the study, the authors might have unpacked their data analysis process for distilling a large sample of information down into the main themes for greater transparency and trustworthiness in the data. A critical look would raise

concern that the context pertains to religious organizations, but the implications for faith-based leadership could have been explored more comprehensively.

The authors found that four components of complex adaptive leadership were present in the leader and school's approach including evidence of shared school culture, distributed authority, intentional instructional leadership, and heightened relational trust (p. 67). First, they found that there must be a collective process of replacing old practices with new ones, academically, spiritually, and managerially (p. 69). Second, successful reforms depend on more shared ownership in the process of change management contributing to school cultural change (p. 70). Third, evidence of change must be reflected in improved conditions for teaching and student achievement. And fourth, increased relational trust in leaders and in the school's Catholic identity and mission to "frame the work of change management" was related to complex adaptive change (p. 74).

Miller et al.'s (2022b) study of Catholic educational leaders highlighted the need for more descriptions about the experiences of Protestant leaders, their engagement with organizational spirituality, and integrity to sustain change not only in moments of crisis, but also in the ongoing contextual dynamics demanding change. The gap in Christian spirituality around organizational change practices in the study also raised questions about leadership preparation for "complex adaptive schools" and not only preparation for technical and skill-based change management practices (p. 78). Yet this study helps establish the connection between Domain One and Two by integrating questions about individual and communal spirituality in the process of school change and reform. Where this first domain has explored educational change management, the second domain will explore theories on the integration of faith in educational leadership practice.

One of the areas that continues to emerge across the literature is the belief that change must eventually become mandated for it to be fully enacted. It was identified that teachers may believe in a change, but it only takes place if it is required. It is important to question whether changes might be taking place simply out of necessity, desirability, possibility, or because of efficacy. This dissertation study will explore the experiences of Christian educational leaders and invite them to share freely about what they have experienced, specifically to understand how faith and spirituality orient a leader's change experiences and practices. Capacity building is addressed further in Domain Three with exploration of how leaders build their own capacity for leading educational change (Stoll, 2009) and that of others through professional development across their lifespan.

Summary of the Relevant Literature for Educational Change Leadership

A summary of the critical concerns and gaps emerging from the first domain is presented next. Kin and Kareem (2016), Bezem (2023), MacNeil et al. (2021), and Jedaman et al.'s (2023) studies all revealed that system and institutional context was significant for social learning and perceptions of educational change leaders. There is no one-size-fits-all approach that brings about a successful reform. Investigating BC's context of Christian schools, where schools function as distinct schools fills an important gap in localized approaches to educational change. In Hannay et al. (2013), Mohammad and David (2023), MacNeil et al. (2021), Holmes et al. (2013), Miller et al. (2022a), and Meyer and Slater-Brown's (2020) studies, the role of the educational leader and more specifically, their social and decisional capabilities to improve educational quality as perceived by teachers, was essential. However, contrastive perspectives emerged in Miller et al. (2022b) which operated from the theoretical foundations of emergent organizational networks and complex adaptive systems, raising concerns about whether both the

researcher and leader's paradigm impacts the facilitation, transformation, learning, and outcomes of educational change for the leaders and the community. If the success of a reform is not entirely dependent upon a leader's capabilities, then further research on leaders and their emergent networks might yield more dynamic descriptions of sustainable organizational change as identified in Koh et al.'s (2023) study. In fact, practices such as narrative evidence-gathering, supporting teacher agency, and growing social capabilities amongst educators were highly regarded. Shared leadership and collaboration were seen as a key practice that emerged in Hübner et al. (2021) and MacNeil et al. (2021) as they examined the implications at a system-wide level for decisions not emerging top-down.

There are some emerging tensions that are unresolved in the current corpus of literature that includes how to create intrinsic motivation and intrapersonal reflexivity amongst educational communities: (1) Tensions of how faith communities are impacted in their identity from educational change initiatives and what the implications are for how one integrates faith and how organizations restructure faith-informed priorities as in Miller et al.'s (2022a) study. (2) Other notable gaps include how Christian school leaders experience support in navigating change initiatives within their communities, build capacity, leverage their networks, and promote shared learning within a Christian school context. Research that describes the phenomenological experiences to build theories of change leadership framed from complex adaptive paradigms of both organizations and leaders in the K-12 Christian schools context is needed.

There are several key gaps in current educational change literature that were raised. First, the two main streams of system-wide reform and individual change leadership appear to be merging. Further qualitative and mixed-method empirical research is needed to bridge the gap about the notion of emergence in organizational dynamics research. A second gap emerged in

discussion of geographic and specific contextual research for educational change leadership studies in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools. The importance of non-linear educational processes involving participatory feedback was also raised. However, what was lacking in these was a rigorous analysis of the change leaders' reflexivity about educational change purposes, processes, practices, and experiences concerning the social community to reveal the ways in which social interactions might have served to facilitate communal change. Processes not informed by the lived experiences of educational change leaders appear to create discontinuity in leadership theory, which certainly will not help with sustainability in the profession.

A fourth gap emerged that first order change empirical research is still needed to explain how leaders support changes in Christian faith-based educational systems; however, such perspectives might explore the transcendental nature of change for the leaders themselves, shifting from more outcome-based studies to exploratory phenomenological not attempting to measure variables but unearth them. Furthermore, several studies interacted with so far in the literature review attempted to triangulate findings in case studies by examining multiple groups. To investigate the lived experiences requires greater homogeneity of groups within a shared context of experiences to describe the essence of change leadership. A fifth, and final, gap for the first domain emerged in Miller et al.'s (2022a) study concerning spirituality and educational change. What, if any, are distinct Christian educational change practices that might be transformative to the educational communities and also the change leader?

To summarize, the locus of extant empirical literature on organizational change is very limited in transferability, pertinence, and explanatory scope to the Canadian, Christian, British Columbia, K-12, Christian educational context. Further qualitative, experiential, descriptive phenomenological, and exploratory empirical literature is needed and thus, inquiry on

organizational change research for the K-12 Christian educational context of British Columbia was a necessary next step. A second necessary step was conducting phenomenological inquiry that would examine the voices, experiences, silences, and salient perspectives of the leaders themselves, which has been lacking in educational change studies, particularly within Christian faith-informed learning communities using a complex adaptive system lens. A third area was around exploring phenomenological descriptions about spirituality in educational change experiences and practice with more complex adaptive, brokerage, and social network interpretive paradigms. And a fourth step is to identify that experiential descriptions about participant spirituality while leading educational change in the BC K-12 Christian educational context might further bridge current gaps in existing theories.

Theories on the Integration of Faith and Leadership Practice Domain

This next section discusses the theoretical foundations in empirical literature concerning the integration of faith in Christian educational leadership practice. This section is organized to analyze theories of workplace spirituality, religious leadership, the integration of faith, teaching, and learning, and the integration of faith in leadership practice. Current organizational theories from corporate literature and other interdisciplinary studies, the field of higher and Christian higher education, and K-12 education are explored. By investigating these theories, this domain seeks to understand the approaches, mental mindsets, and implications if the Christian faith is disconnected, fragmented, and disintegrated from educational communities and leadership practice. Thus, in contrast, integration is defined operationally as the “process by which Christian theology, practical ministry skills, and character are combined and developed in a person for the goal of exercising ministry” (Wright, 2022, p. 4).

Theories of Workplace Spirituality

Different definitions of workplace spirituality exist. The definitions encompass organizational factors such as self-discovery (Illes & Zsolnai, 2015), individual development (Khasawneh, 2011), workplace culture (Pawar, 2009), trust (Rahman et al., 2015), purpose (Mitroff and Denton, 1999), and reducing stress (Daniel, 2015). Fenwick and Lange's (1998) seminal work in the area of spirituality as a new frontier in human resource development raised seven critical concerns for the appropriation of spirituality in the workplace that are foundational to the field's proliferation. The first problem is that there is an internal conflict between the values of individual and collective spirituality, which emphasize selflessness and service to humanity, and organizational performance, creating a tension between spiritual growth and market-driven workplace demands (p. 74). The second is that those who lead organizational spirituality operate from a place of enlightenment and not "from theologians struggling as fellow spiritual sojourners to discern and understand a divine authority. Rather, the new prophets are all healed, self-contained facilitators—organizational doctors—who help *us* meet *our* needs, having already divined the truth for themselves" (p. 75). Those that resist are seen as "non-normative, as traditional (intellectually limited), unable to learn, and in danger of being 'left behind'" (p. 75). Third, spirituality in the workplace leads to an invasion of private space of workers, leading to workplace control. Fourth, workplace spirituality demands a particular sort of spiritual surrender and anesthetizing of discernment to neglect the interplay between good and bad and complex human ambiguity. Engagement of one's inner life, hopes, and dreams, is then utilized to serve a higher organizational good. Fifth, the appeal to human emotions and deep needs for love and security sets up organizations as a "perfection, salvation, and eschatological bliss" as organizations promise a spiritual telos in return for surrender (pp. 76-77). Sixth, human

complexity is fallaciously overlooked for a romanticized transformation that neglects essential human struggles, despair, pain, and death that provide real meaning to life and spiritual growth. Seventh, spiritual community has limitations revolving around power, labour oppression, deception, corruption, personal ambition, and even diabolical manifestations (pp. 77-78). Finally, there is a false sense that spirituality is leading to a sense of liberation and instead a form of slavery at the hand of “management domesticati[on]” (p. 79). To rethink organizational crisis, Fenwick and Lange (1998) argued that critical discernment is needed to understand the real intent of workplace initiatives which focus on spirituality, whose interests are served, who is being colonized, and whether the organization is motivated to “support the whole person of a worker” (p. 80). Fenwick and Lange’s (1998) work described that spiritual interest was upsurging due to decreased organizational support, more demands, need for purpose and meaning in work, training around connection, and value in service for people.

Workplace Spirituality Definitions

The proliferation in organizational studies led to the pursuit of further clarifying a more coherent definition of workplace spirituality and collective transcendence. In a study about how corporate managers feel about workplace spirituality, Mitroff and Denton (1999) described workplace spirituality as the search for ultimate purpose, strong connection to co-workers, and congruency between personal and organizational beliefs and values. Their work argued that organizations move towards organizational models and distinguished between *religious-based* organizations, *recovering* organizations, *socially responsible* organizations, and *values-based* organizations (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Spirituality might help uncover the end goals that organizations are working towards for both top-down and bottom-up workplace spirituality. In contrast, Ashmos and Duchon’s (2000) discussion of organizational transformation argued that

we know very little about a definition of spirituality at work and there is limited empirical research to measure it (p. 134). As such, their work sought to generate a valid instrument and questionnaire to administer to executives.

Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) Validation of Workplace Spirituality Measures

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) designed their instrument development procedure to examine the relationship between three factors that were emergent in the literature: the inner life, meaningful work, and the workplace community as it pertains to measuring organizational performance. The instrument they developed was based on their literature review and validation measures including formal review by an academic panel, an organization development specialist, former chief executive, and local business community members, and both content validity and construct validity in factor analysis. From factor analysis, they found the plausibility that workplace spirituality behaviours are related to (where eigenvalues were $\alpha > 0.8$) conditions for a community, meaning at work, inner life, work unit community, positive work unit values, organizational values, and individual and the organization relationship. Their study presented the possibility that organizational scientists could measure spiritual behaviors and the relationship to organizational performance and transformation leading to “more important understanding of what spirituality at work is all about” (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 143). Validation of workplace spirituality has led to its expansion in scientific studies. A link between membership and transformation in the workplace connects the main scope of Domain One and Two in terms of organizational change and Christian spirituality.

Milliman's (2003) Workplace Spirituality Dimensions

Organizational theorists Milliman's (2003) structural equation analysis correlated workplace spirituality dimensions with factors of personal spirituality as contributors to (i)

meaningful work, (ii) sense of community, and (iii) alignment of values with outcomes of (a) organizational commitment, (b) intention to quit, (c) intrinsic work satisfaction, (d) job involvement, and (e) organizational based self-esteem. Millman et al.'s (2003) findings revealed that job involvement, organizational identification, and work reward satisfaction increased, and organizational frustration decreased with a higher relationship between organizational spirituality and personal spirituality congruence. The scale was also utilized in Riasudeen and Singh's (2020) study on workplace spirituality. This meant that there might be a relationship not only between organizational performance but employee retention and long-term sustainability in complex systems.

Fry (2003) and Pfeffer's (2003) Theories of Workplace Spirituality and the Integrated Life

Organizational thinkers such as Fry (2003) proposed that spiritual leadership is necessary for organizational learning and transformation, linking leader and organizational spiritual needs in a causal model. Fry's (2003) model described how effort, performance, and reward are all necessary for intrinsic motivation, leading to calling and organizational membership, and leading to organizational commitment, productivity, and outcomes. Leaders that exhibited hope, faith, vision, and love, would be able to create conditions for followership and thus, organizational outcomes (Fry, 2003, p. 695). Fry (2003) also linked workplace spirituality to ethical dimensions, theories of leadership, and membership. Fry (2003) along with Pfeffer's (2003) discussion of workplace spirituality and management practice establish that there is a level of integration taking place whereby leaders participate in meaningful work that develops themselves and their organizations, create a sense of purpose, forge a connection to the workplace that motivates employees, and demonstrate the "ability to live an integrated life, so that one's work role and other roles are in harmony with his or her essential nature and who the

person is as a human being” (Fry, 2003, p. 704). Such conclusions are significant because they frame the workplace itself as a site of integration, rather than locating integration solely within the leader’s personal beliefs and behaviors.

Pawar’s (2009) Theory of Spiritual Meaning in the Workplace

The cross-pollination of empirical research on non-religious organizational spirituality borrowing from the language and mental conceptions from religious organizations led to conceiving God as a higher source of transcendence in the workplace (Fry, 2003). As a result, organizational thinkers began to generate spiritual theories full of the divine but absent of the personal Christian God. Spiritual vision, faith/hope/love, and values could be divorced from their Christian roots. As such, Pawar’s (2009) study sought to confirm variables in Milliman et al.’s (2003) study and found attitudinal relationships and direct effects between meaning in work and individual spirituality as contributing factors to job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment. A central conclusion in Pawar’s (2009) work was that workplace spirituality and the attitudinal and behavioral factors associated lead to greater group transcendence, satisfaction, productivity, and shared purpose. People find spiritual meaning when their workplaces help them to form relationships that help them get their work done well.

The Expansion of Spiritual Leadership Models

Models of spiritual leadership began to emerge linking theory and practice to performance excellence, organizational commitment, productivity, and spiritual well-being (Fry et al., 2017). The models endeavored to promote congruence between transcendent values and managerial implications. Both personal growth and organizational growth were found to be necessary outcomes. English et al. (2005) provided a brief glimpse into spirituality in educational workplaces as more holistic practices. To not encompass spirituality as part of one’s whole being

was found to be a missing component of adult formation vital to human thriving. English et al.'s (2005) assessment is that “the best approach for educators concerned about spirituality is to attend to their own spiritual development and the integration of their spirituality into the way they live their own practice” (p. 23). Furthermore, they contend that those concerned with the integration of spirituality in the workplace share a common concern for “connectedness and compassion for people, reverence for all living things and the potential sacredness of each task and moment in one’s work life” (p. 23). The employer holds a great deal of power that requires discernment about the role of spirituality in educational workplaces where such practices towards holism are learned.

Rathee and Rajain’s (2020) Systematic Review of Workplace Spirituality Theories

More recently, Rathee and Rajain’s (2020) systematic review highlighted the elements of workplace spirituality, which included the inner life (nourishment, satisfaction, and needs met), meaningful work (connection to commitment), sense of community (living in relation to others, belonging), alignment with organizational values (explaining reasons to quit or commit), and sense of contribution to society (endowment to community making work meaningful) (p. 31). These scholars argued that the value of workplace spirituality is “not to invoke a particular faith, but scientific assessment of whether such spirituality impacts the functioning of organizations” (Rathee & Rajain, 2020, p. 32).

Empirical studies have sought to confirm the presence of workplace spirituality variables, but empirical substantiation has not yet clarified the strength of factors associated “with fulfilling and meaningful work” thus, situating the “intimate relationship between organizational performance and workplace spirituality while also probing possible moderators and mediators of this relationship” (Rathee & Rajain, 2020, p. 38). Furthermore, the degree to which workplace

spirituality theories extend to Christian, religious, K-12 education contexts is also an area requiring empirical investigation.

Assessment of Spiritual Transcendence in the Workplace

In terms of implications from the current theories, it was argued that the generic establishment of God as a “higher power allows for what has been traditionally the domain of theology into the realm of scientific inquiry without the need to assume an all-powerful theistic God . . .” (Fry, 2003, p. 30) has led to an a-theistic organizational spirituality. There is a life of transcendence that work, purpose, and relationships bring access to that depends on empirical exploration. Furthermore, the vital stewardship that must exist with the integration of spiritual beliefs in partnership with scientific processes and paradigms serve as “a means to advance spiritually have a possibility of applying greater effort in comparison to those who see it merely as a means to a pay check” (Rathee & Rajain, 2020, p. 37). It raises the question of whether faith integration in a Christian educational context would look different. As Fenwick and Lange (1998) argued, a theology of liberation is needed that enables communities to move beyond political ideologies, utopian thinking, to lament, to challenge power, and to bring back historical memories and the “Spirit to create havoc with humanity’s ingrained images” (p. 84). Organizational leaders need a “prophetic imagination” to bring compassion, hope, and promise of new order (Fenwick & Lange, 1998, p. 84). A brief theological critique of the call to move onto “higher ground” (Fenwick & Lange, 1998, p. 69) suggests that organizations may have displaced the personhood of the Spirit, substituting it with a non-personal form of relationality unified by shared purpose but not by divine personhood. The result is a theologically unstable foundation. After undergoing a process of disintegration that sidelines the personhood and agency of the Holy Spirit, organizations paradoxically attempt to reclaim it through

organizational ideals of democracy, dialogue, empowerment, development, and mission/vision. Without the animating presence of the Holy Spirit that gives such ends meaning, organizational spirituality becomes hollow performance and an echo of transcendence without its true source. It exposes the reality that organizations need the personal work of the Spirit to promote interconnectedness, transformation, personal meaning, healing, and freedom, which might be a contrastive concern for Christian educational organizations.

Theories of religious leadership are reviewed next, specifically within the Christian tradition as it helps situate the dissertation study on the integration of a leader's faith, but also on the integration taking place between a leader and their organizational beliefs and practices. This section also helps extend English et al.'s (2005) discussion about integration of learning and spirituality in educational workplaces.

Theories of Religious Leadership

The notable gap in workplace spirituality was identified in Miller's (2003) works that brought together the disconnect between people uniquely positioned to have impact as they live out their faith while also working to improve organizational outcomes. It was reported that Christian people in the workplace, particularly in the corporate world, were rejecting the division between their faith and spiritual work identities, seeking to better integrate their faith with their work demands (Miller, 2003, p. 301). Several disconnects were highlighted in Miller's (2003) theory about the faith at work movement in the church and the *Sunday – Monday* gap: (i) A compartmentalized life was "no longer a viable strategy for life or for work" (p. 301); (ii) The church needs to be a part of the equipping to bridge the Sunday – Monday gap, that is, the relevance of Sunday worship to the work week through spiritual practices; and (iii) Ministers and those engaged in the workplace need better dialogue to better understand the social and

economic realities they each experience. Miller's (2003) movement proposed the "integration box" that sought integration between evangelization, experience, ethics, and enrichment. A practical framework for training, equipping, and dialogue emerged in Miller (2003). It challenged "rigid typologies that places individuals in strict opposition or incompatibility with one another" and called for a "variety of understandings and expressions of integrating faith and work" (p. 308). The implications from the Faith at Work movement was a viable critique of current theories of leadership, including servant leadership and spiritual leadership.

Towards a Christian Spirituality of Leadership

Babyak (2018) argued that Jesus' leadership does not fit into the construct of servant leadership. The theory of servant leadership emerged in Greenleaf's (1977) work that argued that the leader is "servant first" (p. 27). Furthermore Greenleaf (1977) argued the following:

The natural servant, the person who is *servant first*, is more likely to persevere and refine a particular hypothesis on what serves another's highest priority needs than is the person who is *leader-first* and who later serves out of promptings of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations. (p. 28)

The question is raised not whether servant leadership has Biblical elements, but if it looks like Jesus' approach to leadership. Babyak's (2018) argument was that because Greenleaf (1977) forwarded "the starting point for servant leaders is that they must desire above everything else to be a servant first" led to uncritical acceptance of servant leadership without recognition of its limitations. In contrast, Niewold's (2007) martyrological leadership offers a dissimilar yet complementary paradigm. Jesus' leadership included believers for the purpose of the Gospel, Kingdom, and mission. Jesus called his followers into his own suffering, in which the cost was great. Jesus offered the Holy Spirit as the transformative agency that could bring coherence around the disconnect between the world that is and the world that ought to be (Babyak, 2018, p. 61). As such, Babyak's (2018) model of Biblical leadership emerging from a model divided into

four components, sought greater integration between a leader's spiritual life, relational and professional abilities, and desire for higher goals: (a) Relationship with God, (b) relationship with man/[others], (c) focus on completing the mission, and (d) organizational relational skills. Organizational mission could thus be prioritized above the leaders and the members, while sustaining a high view of relationships. The implications from Babyak's (2018) work were, again, another step towards clarifying leadership faith integration first emerging from God's relating to humanity.

Theoretical and descriptive models of Christian leadership have continued to evolve from Engstrom's (1976) model of Christian leaders that emphasized personal traits. Clark (1998) and Whittington et al. (2005) examined the apostle Paul's leadership to describe how to live a life of following after Christ and leading others. Bekker (2006) and Niewold (2007) reflected on Christological leadership and martyrological witness in Christian leadership to challenge current secular models of leadership. The limitations in each of these models is that they captured the personhood of Christ and the purposes of the Gospel, kingdom, and mission, but they were disconnected from the applied context of Christian leaders serving in the workplace navigating external pressures of resistance and change. In contrast, more recently, the ICETE Manifesto II (2022) forwarded five components of integration that are useful for analyzing the frameworks in extant religious leadership theories: (i) foundations (the purpose and task of theological integration), (ii) contexts (theological education in local and global contexts), (iii) processes (designing and delivering teaching/learning processes that are 'fit for purpose'), (iv) scope (theological education for all spheres of life), and (v) institutions (providing leadership and organizational structures that are 'fit for purpose'). This brings the discussion to how organizational thought around the relationship and intersection of faith, teaching, and learning

helps to reconcile tensions between organizational mission, leaders, members, and both internal and external dynamics.

Theories on the Integration of Faith, Teaching, and Learning in Christian Higher Education

There is a depth of Christian theology that undergirds this next section on the integration of faith, teaching, and learning that spans a discussion taking place over thousands of years. It would take a deeper historical investigation in the Judeo-Christian tradition to lay the foundation rightfully on which the recent scholarship of faith, teaching, and learning might be examined. With that provision, this section provides discussion of the basis for what has become known as Biblical integration, or the integration of faith, teaching, and learning, as an important foundation leading to the final section of discussion on Christian leadership faith integration, which is the critical issue at hand in Domain Two. There are two main tributaries flowing from a central river of the integration of faith-learning. One tributary explores the role of Christian faith-integration for Christian Higher Education (CHE) and the basis for faith-integration in learning communities.

The context of CHE is a suitable place for empirical review as there are well-defined models that have been developed and critiqued over many years, leading to a robust field of studies across global Christian universities. However, models and theories have predominantly emerged in the North American context. Christian colleges and universities are learning communities that must navigate factors concerning community, academic, and faith formation, making some of their concerns applicable to K-12 Christian school education in terms of organizational design, faculty development, and leadership. The role of Christian faith-integration in CHE is discussed next.

Gabelein's (1954) Pattern of God's Truth

One of the first occurrences of the notion of integration in Protestant educational literature is in Gabelein's (1954), *The Pattern of God's Truth*. Integration is described as "the living union of [education's] subject matter, administration, and even of its personnel, with the eternal and infinite pattern of God's truth [as] the heart of integration . . ." (p. 9). It provided some of the earliest definition and clarification within the context of Protestant evangelical liberal arts colleges.

Holmes' (1987) Assessment of the Christian College

Holmes's (1987) assessment of different integration models of faith-learning in Christian colleges gave rise to his Christian educational philosophy:

In principle, Christian perspectives . . . all-transforming, and it is this perspective which gives rise to the integration of faith with learning. . . Interaction differs from integration, the two sit side by side in real contact with each other and engage in dialogu[e] on a variety of particulars. Yet we need more than this if we are going to relate faith and learning as a coherent whole from the ground up. (p. 46)

Holmes' (1987) work on faith-learning integration led to other works and the unpacking of the term for CHE. For example, Badley (1994) sought to clarify the general usage of the phrase faith-learning integration around five main paradigms or logical models: (i) Fusion integration, where $A + [\text{fuses with}] B = [\text{and results in}] C$; the parts are easily distinguishable because they "may retain their individual characteristics, or $A + B = AB$ " (p. 152); (ii) Incorporation integration, where A is fused into B but one element may "disappear into, dissolve[] in, or infiltrate[] the other" (p. 152); (iii) Correlation integration, where there is a relationship between structural and formal aspects of pedagogy and strategic activity so the educator points to contact between areas (p. 153); (iv) Dialogical integration, where " A has come to bear on B in such a way that a dialogue results" as in the example of an activity or discipline on a procedural view or framework such as Marxist theory on education; (v) Perspectival integration, whereby "a

worldview supplies the coherence, in the sense that disparate and even conflicting elements cohere as they fit into a larger framework of thought and practice” (p. 153). To this, Badley (1994) argues for the perspective integration as it reminds that the task of integration is not merely cognitive but about the learner articulating Christian faith, while much more needs to be done about the community dimension and subject-discipline specific ways that worldview informs all of life (p. 159).

Discussion of Western Faith Integration Theorists

Other key western faith integration theorists have sought a more dynamic working relationship between technical job learning and the total integration of Christianity to all aspects of self, leadership, teaching, and learning. Scholars have general agreement that integration starts from the *Missio Dei* or God’s purpose (Bauckham, 2003, p. 11; Goheen, 2016; Wright, 2022, p. 15) and moves to the context of the church (Wright, 2022) before the individual theological level. Western theological work has recently taken to the task of renewing a stronger understanding of global contexts as a necessary space of addressing the different questions, conversations, and articulations that exist in commitment to doing Biblical and theological interpretation and application (ICETE, 2022; Wright, 2022).

At a more popular educational level, P. Palmer (1997) framed the inner spiritual landscape of the teacher’s soul in the words:

We teach who we are. Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. (p. 2)

Holistic teaching, according to P. Palmer (1997) emerges from one’s identity and integrity, meaning the integrated self is a necessary component for the whole enterprise of education to be integrative. Estep Jr. (1998) argued that faith-learning integration should be the “distinct characteristic and nomenclature of Christian higher education” and the problem is that faith-

learning integration is an assumption, “rather than an intentional commitment to the task of theological integration” (p. 60). The implications are that faith must find a home within a Christian learning community and the challenges against integration emerge internally, which include anti-intellectualism (W. E. Hull, 1992; Badley, 1994; Noll, 1994), community, theological, and institutional challenges (Narramore, 1992), and pseudointegrationist paradigms (Wolfe, 1987). Estep Jr. (1998) proposed the transformationalist/integrational approach as an alternative to the reconstructionist/triumphalist approach that questions the value of secular disciplines and the value-added integration approaches that have an unstable epistemological grounding and strong ontological ground. Estep Jr.’s (1998) unique contribution is that a transformationalist/integrationist approach preserves the distinctive of a Christian college. Using Niebuhr’s (1951) *Christ and Culture* model, Estep Jr. (1998) endeavored to move educators from lack of integration, through disintegration, to argue that the “integration of Word and world in the mind of the Christian into a unified perspective and approach to all life” is a practical concern in the real world (p. 69). The implications for this are supported in Gangel’s (1978) work that faculty must filter everything through the Bible, be amateur theologians in every discipline, help students integrate the Christian worldview and life view, distinguish between integrating truth and classroom devotions, navigate open mindedness and unchangeable doctrine, and approach integration with “reverence, relevance, and relaxation” (p. 108). Such integration activities forwarded that the basis in which faculty become integrative are through collaborative learning experiences.

Concerning the Notion of Faith Integration in Christian Higher Education

Within recent discourse around the semantics concerning *integration* as a concept in Christian Higher Education, many scholars have offered their perspective on the value of the

term and also critiqued the absence of Christ as the source from which it draws its life inherent in the terminology (Badley, 1994; Dockery, 2008; Glanzer, 2008; Wolterstorff, 2004). Langer (2012) sought to provide clarity on the faith-learning nomenclature by distinguishing whether the problem around establishing non-ambiguous terminology could either be related to polarity, compartmentalization, or antagonism. Langer (2012) argued that integration has been localized around a handful of theological issues: (i) the unity of truth, (ii) two sources of knowledge from God's Word (special revelation) and the world (general revelation), (iii) the effects of the fall on our intellect, and (iv) the goodness of creation, the image of God, and common grace. Langer's (2012) assessment is that the integrative posture matters: nonintegrative postures *raze* the house (prophet and philosopher), while integrative postures *raise* the house (butcher, baker, and candlestick maker). Langer (2012) is critical about each of these postures and affirms from a complex perspective, we need to hear voices of both scripture and the world to recognize the merit and limitations in integration perspectives. Furthermore, the implications from Langer's (2012) historical survey are that we need to have a high view of scripture and subject discipline, acknowledge variability of interpretations of truth, promote dialogue that does not demand harmonization, cultivate wisdom in "adjudicating contrary truth claims and restraint in claiming final contradictions," and that "wisdom, experience, and history" can guide integrative practitioners in their posture in any unique circumstance (p. 175).

Limitations and Opportunities in the Notion of Faith Integration

A key limitation in recent theoretical foundations about the integration of faith-learning is that the conversation taking place has largely been localized in the North American context. It raises the question about non-integrationist approaches within historically-rooted Christian contexts and the eastern Church that continue to trace their denominational traditions to the early

church for example. Taken together, the limitations in these models are that their scope leaves questions around the relationship between faith integration, communal inclusion, and academic development; there ought to be a non-compromising relationship between each of these three respective components to the point where community, faith, and academics are all explicitly understood as efforts in Christian education. Furthermore, Christian faith-integration risks becoming insular, dogmatic, disconnected from theory from practice, from experience, and esoteric if not explanatory in scope with both individual and communal identity formation. It also, at the same time, presents opportunity to think about social connection and reality that is highly complex, based in implicit interactions, dynamic, and both personal and communal. While more descriptive terms are preferred, in the dissertation study, integration is utilized as an intermediate and unifying concept that has emergent meaning, despite the current criticism the term has received.

Theories of Biblical Integration in Christian Learning Communities

As the integration of faith and learning became central to the thinking of Christian educators, Narramore (1992) identified that the disconnect between God's special revelation and general revelation led to a disintegration. Furthermore, Curtis (1986) argued that an element missing in the faith-learning discussion was the Biblical basis for the process of integration. Curtis (1986) argued that the Old Testament concept of wisdom is what (a) associates humanity with God the creator, (b) imposes limitations on humanity's reality in fallenness, and (c) God gives to instruct humanity to respond to the complexities of life. Curtis' (1986) invitation for scholars of the Bible and other disciplines to cooperate together provides a basis for further discussion of Biblical integration in educational contexts.

Chewning's (2001) 12 Styles of Biblical Integration

Models of Biblical integration continued to expand in Christian Higher Education. For example, Chewning's (2001) proposal that there are many seeking to "embody" God's "world/lifeview" in academics, require four habits to form the mind: (a) There is no integration without the Holy Spirit; (b) The mind of Christ is available to Christ followers through salvation; (c) Integration requires cooperation and partnership with the Holy Spirit; and (d) There are a variety of different styles, methods, processes, or ways that integration takes place (p. 114). Chewning's (2001) assessment found that there are 12 varieties of styles of Biblical integration (p. 119). By styles, Chewning (2001) enumerated and illustrated examples to stimulate discussion. Table 2.2 synthesizes Chewning's (2001) descriptions; however, critical assessment is provided following discussion of Roller's (2013) styles of Biblical integration.

Roller's (2013) examination of Chewning's (2001) approach affirmed how Chewning described styles and not methods of Biblical integration for faculty committed to developing understanding of the four habits to form the mind of integration. Roller (2013) argued that Chewning's (2001) approach is a caution to academics for focusing too much on the head (p. 30) and that other embodied ways of integration are as essential for "God [being] in the process of changing hearts" (Chewning, 2001, p. 120). In addition, Roller (2013) proposed 21 methods for Biblical faith integration grouped according to natural, intentional, and strategic integration (p. 31). Some of Roller's (2013) suggestions include the following: prayer, student led devotionals, and biblical perspectives clearly connected to course material; reflection on devotional material, class discussion, biblical integration essays, spiritual/ethical exercises, cases with Christian content, service learning, and comprehensive spiritual curriculum connecting complexity of content to student assessments. These methods would be helpful to tune into whether participants

describe some of these faith integration practices as supportive of their educational change efforts.

Chewning's (2001) emphasis that the styles are examples of accomplishing the four habits of mind is limited. Some of the biblical integration styles, even sufficiently practiced, are insufficient when it comes to refining one's educational repertoire, which is not only for the purpose of "stimulating" but also forming, conforming, transforming, reforming to the likeness of Christ. Some practices such as the cherry-picking or the selected lenses (Chewning, 2001, p. 12, 15) may be a starting point, but certainly not a place in which to build a community of learners or model exemplary practice. Furthermore, caution is needed with the underlying notion of assimilated integration. While integrating biblical principals into life can be assimilated uncritically into preexisting frameworks, students in other disciplines often lack the contextual and theological work to apply select passages of scripture. Instead, a more embodied and discerned communal approach is lacking in Chewning's (2001) assessment and only briefly acknowledged in Roller's (2013) work. The process of being formed in community is about letting the word dwell within community, requiring a relationship between personal and collective approaches to discernment, which may better operationalize Chewning's (2001) four habits of mind with a fuller transformative vision.

Table 2.2

Summary of Chewning's (2001) Styles of Biblical Integration

	Styles/Models	Description
1	Presuppositional Assimilation/Integration	Some behaviors “rest on top” of unarticulated “beliefs, assumptions, or presuppositions that proceed, lie behind, or undergird their communication or actions” (p. 4).
2	Doctrinal Assimilation/Integration	Biblical doctrines are “subjects or topics that are either discussed or merely mentioned in many different places in the Bible” and they serve to expand our minds and “world/lifeview” (p. 5).
3	Principles Assimilated/Integrated	Doctrine focused on theological matters, but principles are “ferreted out and discovered with the Holy Spirit’s involvement in our persistent searching” (p. 6). It is to determine if what is said in scripture is applied elsewhere.
4	Personality Traits Assimilated/Integrated	Christ is the archetype for all of humanity and all personality, character, and conduct is measured in light of the typology of Christ (p. 7).
5	Wisdom Literature Assimilation/Integration	Wisdom “can be, in many ways, likened to common sense. It does not require a great deal of special discernment or intellectual power to understand what they are calling for you to contemplate or do” (p. 8).
6	Allegories Assimilated/Integrated	Scripture is rich in applicable meaning and can have different levels of interpretation and meaning (literal, moral, and transformative; p. 9).
7	The “History Books” Assimilated/Integrated	Context discourse provides understanding about “when do we take a revealed historic activity, event, or occurrence and treat it as if it is normative?” (p. 10).
8	“Selected Lenses” Assimilated/Integrated	Everyone brings a “mental lens” to Scripture which serves to interpret the text. Some lenses are distorted. Integration requires the Holy Spirit to help reform interpretative lenses (p. 12).
9	“Answered Questions” Assimilated/Integrated	Scripture answers questions that people of a different time, place, and context are asking thousands of years later. The Bible’s moral questions are pertinent for the world today (p. 13).
10	“Cherry-Picking” Assimilation/Integration	“It is the ability to associate specific verses of scripture with specific occurrences or happenings in the world and relate this association to others,” (p. 15) generally fallaciously or without rigorous contextual engagement.
11	Paradigms Assimilated/Integrated	Paradigms are models “through which we can screen our thinking process” as Scripture, person, and world interact. It can sometimes lead to the paradigm becoming more important than Scripture (p. 17).
12	Disciplined-Specific Assimilation/Integration	That which resists theological isolation to connect Scripture to work application. It emerges from asking “God to help them and read the Bible with an open heart in search of the answer to the question, ‘Lord, does this portion of Your Scripture have anything to say to my work in (_____)?’” (p. 18).

MacCullough's (2016) Biblical Worldview Approach

At the K-12 practitioner level, MacCullough's (2016) worldview approach to Biblical integration forwarded three types of integration: (i) subject-to-subject integration, whereby multiple disciplines converge to create thematic units; (ii) subject-to-life integration, which encourages application between learning and the real world; and (iii) subject-to-worldview integration, where the teacher promotes a Biblical worldview in the strategic design of the curriculum (p. 29). The worldview approach takes a philosophic (epistemologically, metaphysically, axiologically, and methodologically) to frame how a Christian worldview informs answers to life's biggest questions (MacCullough, 2016, p. 105; Sire, 1976/2009). A worldview approach informs the activities, thinking, and lessons that encourage Biblical integration. Some of the strengths of a worldview approach is the broad philosophic application to faith across different subject areas and interdisciplinary contexts. However, the limitations of the worldview include the complexity of reconciling subject discipline-specific knowledge in light of the application of Biblical principles.

Having a high view of Biblical truth without oversimplification or misrepresentation of the philosophic domains in a subject discipline presents challenges. The possibility of indoctrination at a worldview level if practitioners do not invite students to form their own answers to worldview questions might discourage critical thinking and encourage arriving at predetermined conclusions. The focus on special revelation revealed in the Bible might overlook the importance of general revelation leading to a limited spiritual view. While it seems like a great idea for teachers and leaders to be mini theologians, it is not always realistic to expect that individuals might be experts in multiple fields; Biblical worldview integration has typically been viewed as

an individual enterprise in contrast to a more integrated whole system approach that emphasizes communal integration.

Assessment of Chewning (2001) MacCullough's (2016) Integration Approaches

Both MacCullough (2016) and Chewning (2001) endeavored to describe a repertoire of integration styles; however, there are some inherent limitations in both of these playlists. In MacCullough (2016), the worldview approach lacked theological depth in terms of discussion of the wide-ranging depth of scripture that informs disciplines taught in education. Developmental theories describing the child and the community's capabilities are also lacking in their work, taking the arguments to a more pragmatic level about the reality of the child. In addition, Chewning's (2001) integration styles, in essence, set up a hierarchy of integration as if the Disciplined-Specific model was the quintessential approach. In fact, it created its own assimilationist dualism, instead of more saliently critiquing some of the models and dismissing them as particularly unhelpful. The mind of Christ is one paradigm that the Biblical text presents to understand Christ's relational presence in the world. Chewning's (2001) assessment is that there can be no growth without the Holy Spirit, and faith without the Holy Spirit giving humanity the mind of Christ. There can be no transformation and ordering of love without the work of the Spirit, which is missing from the discussion about communal integration. Thus, in current North American faith integration literature, the need to research communal faith integration is a necessary next step that is raised for the dissertation study.

The limitations in MacCullough (2016) and Chewning's (2001) models are that, while they sustain a high view of God's special revelation, they have a low view of the wisdom found in other subject disciplines, prioritizing the head and cognitive processes for Christian formation above the heart and hands. MacCullough's (2016) Biblical worldview approach is one possible

framework for addressing a particular component of Biblical or theological integration in faith and learning, but not a comprehensive model. Chewning's (2001) model lacks a broader institutional and practitioner basis for the integration of faith. The next section explores a more comprehensive frameworks concerning the integration of faith, teaching, and learning.

Practitioner Theories of Faith Integration

Theories related to the integration of faith, teaching, and learning revolve around Christian education as a holistic developmental effort, and not just one that encourages primacy around intellectual development, but also spiritual and moral formation. Wolterstorff (2004) and Woodley (2012) have argued that the goal is to create shalom communities where peace, justice, and reconciliation are markers that the new creation is here. P. Palmer (1997) argued that teaching emerges from the educator's identity and integrity and spiritual convictions are the best way to help others in their becoming whole. For leaders, this means strengthening the connection between integrative wisdom and student formation by intentionally developing the practitioners whose daily decisions embody faith integration. For example, J. K. A. Smith (2009) argued that liturgies or practices shape habits of mind and worldview needs to be situated in relation to Christian practices (p. 11). With the same practical concern, D. I. Smith (2018) argued that faith could be related to not only a school's Christian context, but also to its "pedagogical process" (p. 9). By this, D. I. Smith (2018) positioned the conversation in relation to embodied practice and not about putting together different components that are disassociated:

I am not doing language instruction for three minutes and then moral engagement for four and communicating a worldview for two. These things happen more or less at once, woven together in the same process, part of the same complex of practice." (p. 30)

As such, faith can inform Christian commitment to teaching without “canceling out the focal purpose of a given teaching sequence” such as teaching skills, real world context, or content (D. I. Smith, 2018, p. 34).

Other scholars in the realm of Christian curriculum studies have taken to the efforts of reflecting on how education informs curriculum (Van Brummelen, 2002) and educational aims (J. E. Hull, 2003), directing the practical work towards particular ends or telos. Questions are raised about the role of personal spirituality versus collective spirituality and the role of social and cultural context in shaping the ethos of integration.

Further research has been conducted in non-western or majority world contexts in which the values reflect a global Gospel and intercultural expression of the Biblical text integrated into leaders’ teaching, learning, and community. For example, John Mbiti (1999) examined how the Christian faith engages with traditional worldviews, focusing on reconciliation, communality, and relationality of African Christianity. Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1993) and *Pedagogy of the heart* (1998) examined the notion of liberation as an expression of communities becoming whole. The social level of contextual integration awakened different purposes of education to create opportunities for healing, justice, and freedom. Chapter Three discusses the theological implications and social dynamics of how faith can be integrated within a learning community’s practices.

Dockery and Finn (2005) endeavored to reclaim the historical roots of faith-learning integration from the Christian educational tradition. Dockery and Finn (2005) affirmed that a community of truth is needed with the worldview approach to also attend to the Moral, spiritual, and social development of its learning members (see also P. Palmer, 1997). Furthermore, Dockery and Finn (2005) also recognized that faith-learning integration is more than just the

identity and integrity of the educator modelled, which extends Palmer's (1997) spirituality of identity and integrity integration further. In Dockery and Finn (2005), it is no longer sufficient to think of spontaneous integration from personal experience, but instead, "bring[ing] faith to bear upon our learning and to encourage other Christians to think about life in Christian categories" (n.p.). In essence, Dockery and Finn (2005) argued that integrating faith could not possibly be confined to ad hoc, impromptu use of Christian concepts, Scripture branded in promotional ways, faith-based co-curricular activities (chapels, discipleship, missions trips), a type of worldview approach in the curriculum, nor only educators introducing spiritual exercises or practices. Instead, the integration of faith and learning "means to teach our disciplines from a perspective animated by the Scriptures . . . [and] re-framing the disciplines in the context of the grand biblical narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration" (n.p.). Who the community was directing their life of learning towards could be the integrative core of a learning community.

Cosgrove's (2015) metasynthesis of faith-learning integration models grouped approaches into compatibility, worldview, modeling, ethical dialogue, balancing assumptions, reconstructionist, and no integration models (p. 10). Two key implications for practitioners were raised in the study. The first was that organizations and leaders need to be clear about the purpose of integration for their learning communities and organizations, which typically accounts for the variability in expectations. The second is that institutional leaders need to recognize the role of individual faith traditions that form epistemological orientations and paradigms. As such, to bring together the theoretical foundations of faith-learning integration, Table 2.3 synthesizes some of the main conceptual examples pertaining to the integration of faith and learning for both Christian Higher Education and K-12 Christian schools.

Table 2.3*Synthesis of Biblical Integration & Learning Models*

Biblical Integration & Learning Model	Sources	Locus of Biblical integration	Possible aims of Christian education
Integration of self	See Palmer (1997); (Heinemann et al., 2017); Lynch (1997)	Who- identity- the educator, scholar, administrator	Lifelong faith formation; sanctification
Integration of worldview	See Dockery (2005), McCullough (2016); Naugle (2012); Knight (2006); Esqueda (2014)	Why – the mind	Engagement with the world; incarnation
Integration of theological concepts	See Bartholomew & Goheen (2014); Van Brummelen (2002)	What – the mind and heart	Gospel and Kingdom truths; revelation
Integration in communities of practice	See Wolterstorff (2004); Swaner & Wolfe (2021)	How – application of faith in community and learned in community	Communal Formation; liberation and reconciliation
Integration of skills	See D. I. Smith (2018); D. I. Smith & J. K. A. Smith (2011)	How – disciplinary specific application; spiritual practices	Discipleship and Transformative learning experiences; application
Integration of character	See Holmes (1991)	What – virtue tradition	Growth in godly character; formation
Integration of content	See McCullough (2014); Smith (1998)	What – doctrinal truths and disciplinary connections; role of the Bible	Preparation for life; assimilation
Integration in whole program	See Azuza Pacific University (2012); Holmes (1987); ICETE (2022); Morrison (2014); D. C. Wright (2022); Kaak (2016); Langer (2012); Reynolds & Wallace (2016); Swaner and Wolfe (2022)	We- whole program and holistic or comprehensive models with multiple facets	Holistic, communal, reflective; renovation

(table continues)

Table 2.3 (continues)*Synthesis of Biblical Integration & Learning Models*

Non-integration in global context	See Mbiti (1999), Freire (1993; 1998), Pardue (2023); Mburu (2019); Woodley (2012; 2022); Lewis et al. (2022) – spiritual formation through distance ed; Langer (2012)	Where – In liturgy, mystery, communal union, and practice, in cultural and traditional contexts of Indigeneity When – Non-spontaneity, across time, but localized around created order and sacred spaces	Reaching back and future focused; embodiment

Taken together, each model provides both a possible prescription or description of faith-learning integration. Cosgrove's (2015) convergence thinking argued that no model is perfect but questioned whether a model was useful for generating descriptions or exemplars. Organizations and leaders must clarify the end goals of the frameworks they promote. The collaboration between different approaches to faith-learning integration might be a key to institutional leaders answering the question of unstated expectations and the purpose of faith-learning integration, the ethos endeavored to create, and the descriptions and exemplars that would follow.

More recently, Springer's (2017) dissertation research on exemplary faith integrationists in Christian Higher Education investigated the affective relational domains of integration learning. Springer (2017) described the "complete-integration model" (p. 44), offering description of how all of life is informed. Springer' (2017) model clarified much of the purpose, process, practices, and persons of faith integration within the context of affective bonds and relationality to describe integrative capacities in Christian Higher Education. What remains, according to Springer (2017) "is to understand how the persons and perspectives models of faith-learning integration function together to do the work" (p. 33). By extension, the dissertation study questions whether exemplary faith integration could also be theorized and observed phenomenologically in

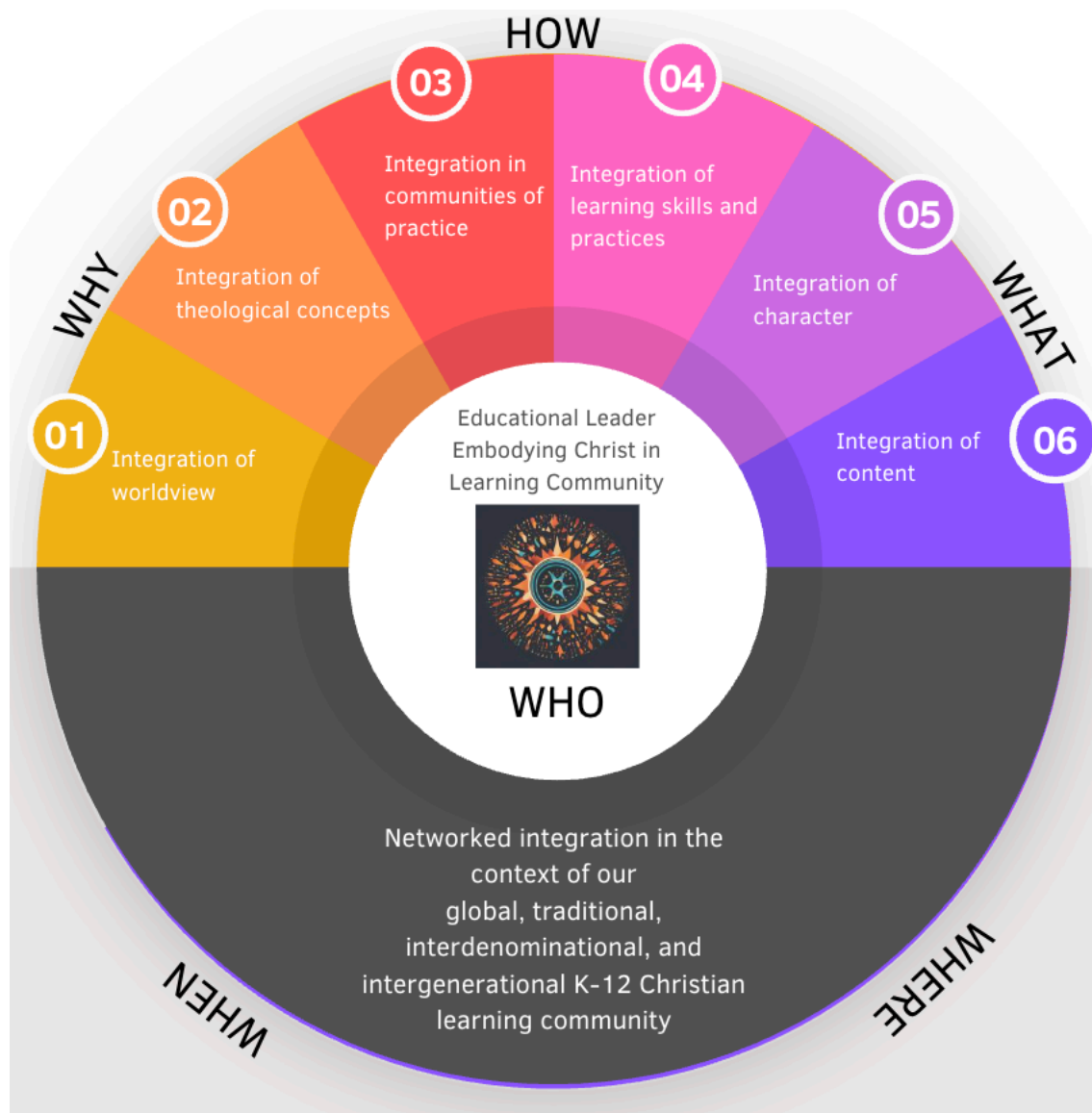
organizational leadership and frame this in Chapter Four as an integral part of the dissertation research.

The ICETE Manifesto II's (2022) conclusion was that the quality of leadership was "a key factor for the development of sustainable and relevant theological integration" and must evoke a commitment to invest in "leadership, governance, and management" training leaders for their responsibilities built on Christian theology inspired by the work of the Holy Spirit (p. 273). To bring together and clarify the various goals within the theoretical foundations of Biblical integration and learning models (Table 2.3), Figure 2.1 (below) outlines each of the components of faith integration revolving around the educational leader's practice. This model is revisited after the discussion of research findings in Chapter Five to examine the types of integration leaders employed, identify potential gaps, and highlight new insights into the integration of faith within change leadership practice, thereby exploring the relationship between organizational dynamics and faith integration. In the next section, theories on the integration of faith in leadership practice are analyzed.

This study is primarily concerned with the development of Christian educational leaders. Theories of faith-learning integration are generally applied within course-based or program-based structures. However, the fields of administrative leadership, specifically within Christian educational organizations requires further attention and hypothesis generation. The next section discusses the current state of faith integration theories in Christian organizational leadership.

Figure 2.1

A Model of Educational Leaders Embodying Christ in Learning Community



Theories of Faith Integration in Christian Leadership Practice

The field of leadership and administration could be described as a large and broad-ranging field (Frank, 2006, p. 113). Frank's (2006) report on leadership and administration as an emerging field in practical theology argued that leadership and administration are only meaningful in their communities of practice and answers to theories of leadership practice are

more likely to be found in Business Journals than in Christian or Religious reviews (p. 115). Leadership in the pastoral context, for example, is generally conceived of as “preaching, teaching, and pastoral care” (p. 114) as opposed to a separate activity. Frank (2006) argued that an organizational leader’s practice is about transforming organizations around shared visions. The critical issues in leadership rhetoric revolve around the urgency of change by viewing organizations in a constant state of decline, thus requiring leaders who frame organizational development through rapid adaptations. Broader sociological data is sometimes mistakenly induced into a theological community. Theological traditions are neglected in approaches to leadership. The measurement of growth by outcomes promotes performative approaches. According to Frank (2006), “reflective practice,” which is a continuous conversation between practice and reflection, situations and concepts, depth and current situations in faith communities is a “useful integrative concept used for a generation by practical theologians . . .” (p. 130). Furthermore, inviting leadership reflective practice might be a key to understanding the mental frameworks, perceptions, and interpretations essential in leadership within the dissertation study (Frank, 2006, p. 130).

Drawing from the field of complex management, Gratton and Cockerham (2024) theorized about the relationship between faith-integration and adaptive organizational leadership. They questioned how we learn how to practice faith integration by “walk[ing] with confidence in faith, rather than fear, in a world that we cannot clearly understand or control?” (p. 44). Describing the Christian faith as complexity management and antifragile practice for minds that “cannot visualize the whole infinite self-embedding of complexity” (Gleick, 1987, p. 100; Gratton & Cockerham, 2024, p. 44), all of the Christian faith reveals the field of complexity studies as congruent with the “unpredictable, uncontrollable, and unknowable elements of the whole, even

if knowable in part” (p. 47). Furthermore, they raised another pertinent concern for how Christian leaders engage with a Biblical worldview and address problems in society “with the love of Christ” (p. 45). Gratton and Cockerham (2024) promoted a problem of practice and learning, which they are trying to offer clarification for the particular ways of being that a leader approaches their work. Investigating how one reflects on their practice may be a key to better understand multiple dimensions of the integration models in a leader and organization’s lived experiences. The notion of fear as a contributing factor in resistance to educational change is discussed in Chapter Three.

Wallace (2021) argued that, for faith integration to be effective, it must start from one’s identity in Christ and move towards habits of followership (pp. 67-68). Worldview can have a “praxis orientation” by which it moves towards the practical concerns of respect for human dignity, love of truth, personal responsibility, integrity based upon God’s character, commitment to community, stewardship, proper use of power, justice, care for the marginalized, and reconciliation (p. 69). Wallace’s (2021) assessment is that for faith integration to be successful, it needs to be transformative and holistic in both content and delivery (p. 71). How leadership practitioners facilitate transformational learning experiences might be a key to the integration of faith in organizational leadership practice and directly applicable to navigating conflict, leading organizational change and school reform, or other competencies needed for Christian educational leadership.

A key area raised in Cosgrove’s (2023) recent instrument validation that sought to measure faculty faith and learning involvement is whether it is possible to create valid measurements that test hypotheses concerning the applied faith integration and leadership practice. The study, methodologically, aims to generate a thick description of faith integration for educational

leadership practice in complex adaptive paradigms, requiring hypothesis-building through empirical qualitative research.

Summing Up the Theoretical Foundations of Faith Integration

To sum up the theoretical foundations of workplace spirituality, religious and spiritual leadership, the integration of faith-learning, and the integration of faith in educational leadership practice, the growing need for practical models of Christian educational leadership stands as a key contribution to research. In Domain Two, analysis of the theoretical foundations has been focused (i) on the organization and (ii) on the actions and interactions taking place through leadership. Leadership roles and practices within Canadian educational contexts, principals' leadership, its specific implications for leaders, and its impact on educational leadership practices are discussed in Chapter Two, Domain Three.

Further clarity is needed about the challenge of managing complex Christian educational organizations and doing practical theological work (Frank, 2006, p. 134). (1) The field of workplace spirituality has a substantial corpus of theoretical literature and that has continued to evolve and reveal the importance of shared vision, while raising questions about the leader-follower relationship and spiritual transcendence. (2) Current limitations in religious leadership theories require further examination of not only the approach but also the practice of faith-integration. (3) For faith-integration to occur within an organization, leaders must clarify expectations and create coherence about what approaches are acceptable and construct descriptive examples that support faculty. (4) Theories on the integration of faith and learning might be applied as the theoretical foundations to the emerging field of faith-leadership practitioner research to form new hypotheses about contextually-based adaptive leadership practice.

The Integration of Faith in Educational Leadership Practice

This next section reviews empirical studies to describe the current state of research on workplace spirituality, the integration of faith and learning, and faith integration in educational leadership practice. Twelve empirical studies are reviewed: (i) There are six studies concerning the integration of faith in Christian higher education contexts, with some studies pertaining more specifically to research on faculty and administration integrating faith in learning contexts (Appendix B, Table B.1) and (ii) There are six studies concerning the integration of faith in K-12 Christian educational contexts, with some studies pertaining more specifically to school or whole system faith integration and other studies reviewed integrating faith in leadership practice (Appendix B, Table B.2). Empirical literature is reviewed first by building on theoretical analysis of workplace spirituality, religious leadership, and the integration of faith, teaching, and learning to evaluate the current state of literature in Christian higher education contexts in North America. The purpose of evaluating research in CHE contexts serves to draw from a robust field of studies where there is a lack of K-12 studies on faith integration. This is where the dissertation aims to contribute to existing literature. CHE research has also offered various frameworks for communal formation making some of the concerns raised applicable to K-12 Christian school theoretical foundations and empirical assessment. K-12 studies are discussed in Domain Three in the Canadian educational context.

Cases were limited based on research pertaining to leadership integration of faith in work, Christian spirituality in work, and leadership of faith-based organizations. Discussion of spiritual leadership forwards some of the purposes, processes, and practices associated with empirical research situating the leader within both secular and religious organizations. Some studies are included emerging from theoretical studies concerning the integration of faith in learning that

have organizational implications, thus making them relatable to the dissertation study on organizational leadership. This raises questions about the purposes, processes, and practices associated with the integration of leadership Christian faith in the workplace. Common themes include the discussion of leadership behaviors and how integration is defined.

Appendix B, Table B.3 summarizes eight supplemental empirical studies pertaining to workplace spirituality, involving corporate studies to supplement understanding of the theoretical and empirical foundations. These studies augment and extend the theoretical foundations provided above about workplace spirituality and integrative organizational practice across a wide range of non-educational disciplinary fields. Common themes include the discussion of leadership behaviors and the leadership-followership-membership dynamic. An integrated perspective of spiritual practice is understood both corporately and communally. A variety of qualitative and quantitative research exists, and the research is largely directed towards healthy workplaces and organizational performance. Appendix B, Table B.4 summarizes eight supplemental empirical articles related to religious leadership practice. Finally, it is important to note that, while some discussion of empirical literature ranges across different disciplines (the church, higher education, and business) and international contexts, it was only possible to locate some limited leadership and faith integration research in the K-12 Christian schools context that met search parameters. However, the context of Christian higher educational leadership and administration had pertinent studies that are analyzed in the empirical section below.

Taken together, there are some key considerations synthesized from the empirical research that is pertinent for both analyzing the relationship between workplace spirituality and the integration of faith in organizational leadership theories and framing Domain Two's purpose: (1) Empirical literature has presented the problem and purpose of faith integration: there needs to be

congruence between what leaders believe and what they do. (2) We need to know more about leaders' experiences of bringing their faith into different aspects of their practice, specifically around the leader-follower dynamic. (3) Empirical literature supporting how Christian leaders bring their faith into educational context is needed to identify specific gaps concerning practices that sustain educational communities of faith. (4) While there is much emphasis placed on worldview integration and learning, there is limited description of the relationship between leader faith integration in practice and organizational adaptive growth, whereby researchers have a theoretical understanding of educational organizations as complex adaptive systems. (5) Current faith integration literature has not clarified the comprehensive relationship between context, approaches, and integration ends, forming a full description about integration in the life of a community and not only teaching educators to develop a Biblical worldview. Such perspectives on their own appear incomplete, fragmented, and only partial. The dissertation study critically questions whether there could be more of a comprehensive and unifying framework for how leaders integrate faith *with* the distinctiveness of their community as the integrative space and how non-linear models of faith integration form reciprocal relationships between leader and community and how the Bible is animated in the life of communal faith forming leadership practices.

This next section reviews relevant empirical articles that provide a description of how and what leader faith integration looks like in practice, thus supporting the rationale for the study to generate rich descriptions of faith integration approaches in BC K-12 Christian schools.

The Integration of Faith and Leadership in Christian Higher Education

In the first article, Neff et al. (2021) examines the popularization of the term integration, that merges the fields of several disciplines with the Christian faith. In particular, Neff et al.

(2021) argued that integration promoted the inclusion of theological voices, emphasis on broader experiential, contextual, relational, and dialogical dimensions that help frame training for doctoral students. A key concern in their literature review was that faculty in higher education deemed some areas essential for learning integration, but there were differences in the constructs that students perceived as importance (Neff et al., 2021, p. 69). The article is pertinent for this study as it explores how faculty are trained to facilitate learning of integration in learning environments.

The faculty participants ($n = 51$) and doctoral students ($n = 350$) were recruited from several APA-accredited Christian higher education doctoral programs that endeavored to explicitly integrate psychology and Christianity. The online survey consisting of 64 items had participants respond differently based on their role as faculty or students. In total, there were eight sections on the survey with 5-point Likert-type responses: (i) Relational community; (ii) Community Satisfaction; (iii) Curriculum Effectiveness; (iv) Integration topics; (v) Intersectionality of faith and clinical work; (vi) Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (Underwood & Teresi, 2011; a similar scale developed by Underwood (2006) was also used in Pawar's (2014) research that is highlighted in Appendix B, Table B.3; (vii) Formative qualitative experiences about barriers to integration; and (viii) Demographic information, program details, and religious commitments. Cronbach alphas were above 0.9 for reliability.

The quantitative findings using Wilks's factor solutions and repeated-measures or paired samples t -tests indicated that there were differences between how faculty and students reported on several factors. For example, faculty endorsed higher levels of integrating faith in community and curriculum on items such as professors developing spiritual journey ($p < 0.05$; students' mean score = 3.44; faculty mean score = 4.00), professors openly talk about faith struggles in

their integration of faith and psychology (students' mean score = 3.24; faculty = 4.16), and sense of connection to professors who teach integration courses (students' mean score = 3.20; faculty = 3.82). Qualitative findings indicated that students found exposure to different perspectives, community, mentorship, and professorial transparency in their experiences to be most formative for integration. In terms of areas for growth, just under one third of the respondents mentioned issues about curricular integration, articulating that it was often too abstract and not contextualized, experiential, or relational. Reported differences also existed in that faculty valued Biblical content as integration at a higher level compared to that of the students, who valued integration at more embodied levels so it would show up in their practice.

Differences in reported scores indicated not only reveal a priority for doctoral training programs for Christian leaders to focus on their places of applied practice, but also be guided by a set of values and principles sustained in andragogy or adult learning. While faculty might be looking to teach integration and model integration at more conceptual, theological levels, students experienced theological commitment when there was congruence between how integration was learned and how it was taught. Further descriptions are needed for how educational leaders practice increased “relational, dialogical, contextual, and experiential learning methods inside and outside the classroom” (Neff et al., 2021, p. 80), specifically as it pertains to bringing faith into educational change practice and the relationship with Christian educational communities adopting and participating in educational change initiatives.

Roso's (2022) study of service learning as a means of faith integration in a doctoral course on ethical leadership bridges several different research fields including CHE, Christian/biblical perspectives, K-12 leadership, and the integration of faith in learning, making it pertinent for empirical review. The author's argument was that faith integration involves helping learners see

the connection between faith and real life (p. 104). Service learning provides a formative opportunity in doctoral courses on ethical leadership and faith integration. A key philosophic problem raised is that faith integration has emphasized self-actualization rather than service towards others. The research questions encouraged a thorough review of literature pertaining to the scholarship of teaching and learning by examining theories of effective teaching in graduate education, ethical leadership in education, faith integration in education, service learning in education, and faith and service learning in ethics and instructional methodologies. Taken together, the theories shift focus from faith integration as self-preparation to the equipping of others to put faith in action.

The purpose of the study was to assess how faith and learning in action could encourage doctoral students to understand its relationship with ethical leadership. Participants were nine female and one male doctoral student, of which seven were already serving in educational leadership capacities at their respective schools. Students authorized consent to participate in the class knowing the service-learning project was included in their coursework. Data was collected through multiple written assignments, pre- and post-course reflections, discussions, presentations, and a focus group with 10 of the student participants. Students read literature from Henry Nouwen's (1989) *In the Name of Jesus* and Chambers' (1965) *Am I My Brother's Keeper*, emphasizing that ethics emerge from who people are and temptation is directed towards becoming relevant, spectacular, or powerful (Nouwen, 1989).

Findings from the study indicated that students "perceived the role of faith in guiding one's morality" (p. 113). Paired sample tests were utilized for quantitative pre- and post-test comparison to support personal reflections. From the quantitative pre- and post-course reporting, 63% of students believed that their learning would be enhanced by service learning (pre-course

54% either a 3 or 4 score out of 4; 9.1% disagreed; post-course, 75% of students agreed that learning was enhanced by service learning). Notably, the pre-course assessment identified that 91% of students thought service learning would provide opportunity to live out Christian values, and the post-course assessment indicated a drop by 75%, meaning either a three or four score out of four that service-learning provided opportunity for faith integration. Other key findings reported were that the skills taught (ethical reasoning and knowledge to serve the public good) were reported at 77% agreement whereas the Christian beliefs and course content and Christian worldview and life/work were much lower (55.55% agreed that the course helped them understand the connection between beliefs and course content; 66.67% reported opportunities to relate Christian worldview to their life and work).

Such findings raise concern for whether the differences in initial perception are based on students not “seeing the connections between faith, service, and ethics” thus requiring “explicit instruction on the interconnectedness of faith integration, service learning, and ethics and how faith and learning in action aligns with the biblical perspective of faith and deeds” (p. 119). It also raised questions about the relationship between other factors such as enjoyment, relationship with professor, timing within educational program, execution of service learning, or the rigor of assignment directs appreciation and adoption of faith integration within a learning community and not only the leader’s one-sided transaction of faith integrated to others. Further research would be required to examine how educational leaders see their integration efforts taking place *with* other members of their community and not only *for* or *to* outside of a course learning context.

The next article investigates how senior leaders working together collaboratively in CHE bring their faith into their practice. In the context of Christian higher education, scholars have

recognized that leadership teams have the potential for affecting change, innovation, effectiveness, and performance (Smith & Monihen, 2024, p. 140). Smith & Monihen's (2024) review of the literature found that Christian higher education institutions face increasing crisis and complexity, thus requiring shared leadership efforts that integrate faith in scholarship and programming. A comparative case study approach was utilized to contrast two senior leadership teams of Christian higher education and describe in-depth application of governance practices.

From a list of six Counsel of Christian Colleges and University Institutions that reported high levels of employee "Confidence in Senior Leadership," two institutions were selected. The first case site was "Inspired University" (suburban, Northeast USA, with a denominational affiliation, female president, three female and three male senior leadership team members) and "Mission-Driven University" (small town Southern USA, interdenominational, male president, two female and six male senior leadership team members). Data collection involved three researchers who conducted 36 interviews, three observations of meetings, document analysis, and multiple sources of evidence (p. 145). Data analysis procedures included interviews, field note observations, and document analysis. The researchers uploaded their data into Dedoose, a web-based application for data organization, visualization, and analysis to engage in cross-checking the data and support theoretical propositions while maintaining trustworthiness of the findings (p. 146). The findings identified four major themes: (a) Designing teams to develop trust; (b) Prioritizing shared team mission and institutional values; (c) Affirming strong presidential leadership that empowers others; and (d) Emphasizing clarity throughout the crisis (p. 146).

Presidential leaders in both cases were reported to be "charismatic in their distinct ways and passionate about the institutional mission as well as deeply committed to integrating their

faith and vocation” (p. 148). However, this was linked with both presidents as relational leaders who invested in the “transformative care of their followers,” servant leadership, and non-foreclosure on questions yet passionate participant in discussion (p. 149). Descriptions of leadership practice for both teams and presidents emerged from the study. Some of the findings raised questions that if faith was such a notable concept for the leaders, why there was very little discussion about how it directed specific practices of building trust, engagement of faith in teams, and descriptions about how the senior leadership team members experienced growth in their faith as part of their work.

There might be possible limitations in a case-comparison method as opposed to articulating a specific set of research questions that examined why some Christian higher education institutions might be thriving around their mission. Furthermore, one might question if healthy leadership teams are also ones that “honor the example of Christ, as shared approaches value each other” more implicitly in how they are organized around implicit leadership integration theories. A key implication is whether faith integration is evident even when not overly described as Christian faith through theological content, but whether participants describe the value of shared leadership as a faithful expression of Christian leadership and faith integration.

In this next article, Allen and Alleman (2017) raise concern about the paucity of data-supported approaches to examine faith integration in the lives of CHE administrators. The integration of faith has been examined for faculty with teaching and learning. Findings from the literature review provide a helpful summary of recent discourse around the integration of faith in Christian higher education and key voices:

The aims and ends of education (Glanzer & Ream, 2009; G. Smith, 2014), institutional perspectives (Holmes, 1987), students’ faith and spiritual development (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Badley, 1994; Glanzer & Ream, 2009; Holmes, 1987; Moroney, 2014), faculty teaching and scholarship (Alleman et al., 2016;

Badley, 1994; Hasker, 1991; Moroney, 2014), and upper-level administrators (Heie & Sargent, 2012; Longman, 2012). (Allen & Alleman, 2017, p. 286)

To summarize, there are a variety of models and approaches, but the gap that the research addresses is around mid-level leaders' faith integration and administrative work and religious commitments. Using Rogers' (2001) reflective model involving description of problem solving, examination of the problem, planning, and committed action that draws from Kolb's (1984) theories of experiential learning and Freire's (1993) *praxis* as social change, the authors investigate how their praxis model illuminates how student affairs administrators of CHE integrate religious commitments and professional work (p. 286).

The research design sought to bring awareness 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" (Rogers, 2001, p. 54; as cited in Allen & Alleman, 2017, p. 289). An interpretivist lens was utilized. Four Christian colleges and universities were selected as the research sites. The participants were 11 student affairs administrators selected through criterion-based purposeful sampling because they were seen as helpful informants, identified as exemplars by their supervisors who were senior-level administrators. Data analysis consisted of three cycles of analytic coding.

The findings from the study articulated how participants found congruence between religious beliefs and professional behaviors: "... I think it comes out of who I am. It is more spontaneous, kind of integrated, organic" (Participant Amanda; Allen & Alleman, 2017, p. 289). Similar assertions were made between participants about how formal learning and previous experiences serving in the church influenced spiritual practices that transferred over to institutional work. Participants cited the importance of personal relationship with God informing how they served and mentored others, bringing faith into conversation and behavior. A key area was that "for all participants, an outcome of reflection and action was change at individual or

collective levels” (p. 296). This echoes discussions in Holmes (1987) theories and theories emerging around the integration of faith and learning that reflection leads to change and integration.

Participant middle administrative leaders described the “relative ease of integrating faith into relational student contexts and the difficulty of introducing faith into situations of organizational procedure or function” (Allen & Alleman, 2017, p. 297). Some of the obstacles to faith integration were at more interactive levels across levels of power or authority. For example, Participant Amanda explained that it is harder to address senior leaders about budgets or administrative tasks with a Christian perspective and participant Jeremy argued that he did not want to appear “childlike or elementary” by bringing in faith when addressing administration: “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 changed and what is Christ doing in our school” (p. 297). Factors that shaped the participant administrators’ faith integration was their engagement with scripture, media, education background, colleagues, institutional culture, “religious habitus” (faith identity formed by spiritual experiences driving motivation to integrate faith into professional role), and personalization of faith in practice through reflexivity (p. 297).

Further research is needed to understand how reflection catalyzes educational change and the integration of faith. The theory of religious habitus and faith integration helps to situate Christian administrators in their own descriptive faith profile which may serve one of the key gaps in missing descriptions about leaders’ experiences of faith that they bring to their leadership efforts. The praxis model highlighted that there might be a narrow focus on faith integration and expansion around concepts of power, systematic redemption, or prophetic witness might help with faith integration for leaders across different denominational contexts and across hierarchical

lines. What is raised in middle leadership links with concerns raised in Domain One about leading change in complex adaptive systems about the need for not only top down and bottom up agency, but adaptability from within the middle personnel and processes of an organization.

This next article explores transformative leadership models that are derivative of religious and spiritual models, linking theories of organizational transformation to theories of transformation in faith integration. R. E. White et al.'s (2017) discussion of how transformational leadership "at a Christian university enables faculty to guide students in critical thinking and in evaluating knowledge and its application through the lens of faith" (p. 276) can occur at organizational, class, and program levels. R. E. White et al. (2017) found that transformational leadership can be evident in classroom contexts and motivate educators and students to transform their thinking. Furthermore, the "connection between the leaders and their followers' performance was clear and alluded to a potential connection with follower development" (p. 278), making it pertinent for faith integration studies in CHE.

The purpose of R. E. White et al.'s (2017) study was to identify professor qualities that students perceived as transformational for faith. A mixed-methods design involving a questionnaire and open and closed- ended questions was utilized, enabling participants to share about their instructor's transformational leadership characteristics and behaviors. Data was collected from 34 undergraduate students in both religious and nonreligious classes. Participants reflected on feelings of significant impact on their spiritual development, specifically distinguishing transformation as not about content knowledge but about growth as an individual (p. 280). Qualitative themes were refined and reported.

From the open-ended responses, participants described compassion/caring, encouraging, and optimistic as the highest transformative characteristics in their professors for spiritual

growth. Ranked scores indicated that demonstrating personal interest in students, incorporating biblical teachings into instruction, challenging students, trustworthiness, and prayer (least prevalent) were rated most highly for transformative value impacting student faith. Student participants also indicated that a professor's religious values did not impact their view of their professor's leadership style. No unifying themes were found in the sample about successful or unsuccessful faith integration methods.

As for the quantitative findings, the reporting was limited. The researchers reported that “[a]n overwhelming majority of students (27) said a classroom instructor had affected their faith,” of which, two participants “recogniz[ed] both positive and negative effects” (p. 281). Individual comments highlighted that it is possible to reconcile Christian faith in the business world and other professors had done so to a greater extent. The implications are that transformative leadership had perceived association with faith integration and was impactful in nonreligious courses. Furthermore, transformative leaders that demonstrated the value and application of the Christian faith in the real world through characteristics of compassion, positivity, openness, and Biblical application in “secular” spaces were “just as likely to encourage faith transformation” as religious professors because the transformation appears to be related to instructor behavior rather than course content (p. 282). Clarification about how to train educational leaders in transformative leadership may lead to serving educational communities better. It would be important to assess whether transformative leadership through shared vision would be perceived as faith formational by members of learning communities and which aspects of formation it does not reach.

R. E. White et al.'s (2017) study affirms the need for greater clarification of behaviors that leaders describe in the integration of faith that leads learners to make connections between

Biblical teaching and application to the world. The gap in the research on faith integration is that it is taught from more conceptual and content related approaches, when the research indicates that communities and learners experiencing the transformational effects of faith integration learn it from leadership behaviors, relationship, and embodiment. Empirical narrative studies situating Christian educational leaders in their organizational settings and faith traditions would serve to clarify how leaders bring their faith into their organizational practice.

Alleman et al. (2016) sought to provide an empirical basis for the relationship between teaching and faith-learning (p. 103). Badley's (1994) five main paradigms of integration (fusion integration, incorporation integration, correlation integration, dialogical integration, and perspectival integration) were forwarded as the theoretical basis. However, their literature review found a recent shift from faith and learning integration as bringing one's tradition into practice to more practice-based liturgies informing interdisciplinary practices drawing from the diversity of theological traditions and cultivating the habits and attitudes and attending to them in teaching (pp. 104-105). Institutionally based approaches have also forwarded different categories of integration (vocational, ethical, practice-oriented, conceptual-theoretical, tradition-based, psychological, relational, pedagogical, sociological, and aesthetic; Azusa Pacific University, (2012). The researchers attempted to explore how Christian professors in CCCU institutions incorporated their particular Christian traditions in their instruction.

Data for the study was drawn from a larger dataset generated from an online survey of faculty from CCCU institutions. Phase I of the study surveyed institutions about their denominational affiliation, of which, 48 institutions (61%) participated in the second phase. There were 11 different denominations represented. When asked about whether participants'

theological tradition influenced their teaching, 52% responded “No.” Participants mostly held terminal degrees (PhDs) and 45% received their degrees from public institutions.

Results from the coding process indicated that their faith tradition inspired them to engage in eight ways of integrating one’s faith tradition into the classroom; they are grouped in terms of two main categories: (i) Activities of the teacher: introduce the data of scripture, employ specific interpretive views, make distinctive curricular choices, and use unique methodological approaches; and (ii) Student-focus: cultivate personal spiritual growth and practice, integrate a Christian worldview, understand and utilize theological traditions, and develop ethical thinking or behavior (p. 110). The degree to which faculty mentioned their tradition did vary.

A key limitation in the study is that some of the faith traditions were only marginally represented in the sample and thus in the population. For example, the *High Church Combined* group made up a sample size of 30, which was smaller than the next group (Other group; 39). Further clarity on whether the eight integration themes are also corroborated in the smaller theological traditions would be needed to increase validity. Alleman et al. (2016) argued that there are limitations in how one integrates components of Christian theological traditions and how they are “incarnated in the classroom” (p. 122). Some of the conclusions reveal a less straightforward and more complex set of outcomes for faith integration. The researchers argue that it is possible that the popular models such as proof-texting, abstract “heady” ideas, disconnect between worldview and narrative approaches, unclear ethical categories, and devotional aspects might be stifling:

Since the typology is based on short responses, we cannot know the degree to which individual faculty members may draw upon these eight, but we would hypothesize that most individual faculty members do not think about all eight types when considering how their theological tradition may influence their teaching”. (Alleman et al., 2016, p. 124)

As such, a more collaborative curricular and program-based approach might best support faith integration in educational contexts.

The study reveals that we have a breadth of integration models or expressions of integration but are lacking deeper explanations emerging in the interiority of educators and leaders that take the current discourse further. Some pertinent questions are raised from the research for the dissertation study: Which of the eight indicators would overlap in the Christian educational leader's integrative practice? Given that this research occurs in CHE, which practices might be added, taken away, or refined within the context of K-12 Christian school leadership and faith integration? How might a leader's expectations "to include and synthesize all the different strands [of faith integration] into their course objectives . . . provide a strong and robust line of help to students seeking the wisdom of faith-shaped course objectives in the classroom" (p. 124). Inviting educational leaders to provide descriptions of their faith integration and meaning making would continue to expand the empirical basis that Alleman et al. (2016) raised in their study.

Key insights from empirical studies on the integration of faith in Christian higher educational leadership have been reviewed. The relative ease of reported faith integration by Christian leaders in Allen and Alleman's (2017) research contrasts from Chalwell et al.'s (2024) study which were analyzed in the section on empirical studies pertaining to Pre-K to 12 research. Chalwell et al.'s (2024) study concerns middle leadership in Anglican Christian schools. However, findings from Allen and Alleman's (2017) are consistent with Neff et al.'s (2021) article that found integration existed more functionally at relational levels than at procedural, cognitive, or structural levels. The research design in Allen and Alleman's (2017) study provokes questions about how to probe into the interiority of Christian educational leaders, their

perceptions, thinking, meaning making, and experiences about bringing faith into their practice. This is also supported in Alleman et al. (2016) and R. E. White et al. (2017), who found that integration was experienced when the learning, service, innovation, or relationships were transformational; there can be no faith integration without shared faith transformation. The next set of studies explores international empirical research on the integration of faith and leadership in Pre-Kindergarten to Secondary schools.

The Integration of Faith and Leadership in Pre-Kindergarten to Secondary Schools

Shifting to the context of K-12 Christian school education and specific empirical studies concerning the integration of faith, Wiens et al.'s (2022) study raised concern that "little is known about Christian teachers' self-efficacy in integrating faith into their instructional practice," which may highlight a possible gap in improving the "ability to implement practices effectively in both instructional and professional situations" (p. 14). Furthermore, the study examined theories of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), faith self-efficacy, and antecedents of self-efficacy to situate the study in the context of how K-12 Mennonite schools link school mission with self-efficacy and faith integration and the factors that predict faith integration self-efficacy amongst school educators.

The participants in the study were 390 educators from Mennonite-affiliated schools across North America with students from three years old to 18. Surveys were distributed by paper. Data emerged from a 61.8% response rate from 621 educators in 21 schools affiliated with the Mennonite Schools Council. From the sample, 97.7% of participants identified as Christian with 51.8% identifying as Mennonite. Participants were predominantly ethnically Caucasian/White (90.1%) with small percentages identifying as Hispanic/Latinx (2.1%), African American/Black (1.5%); thus, there were some limitations in sampling without reported clarification if the sample

reflected the population. Data collection included demographic variables, religious views and fit with the mission of the school, and faith integration self-efficacy where participants described the extent to which teachers guided students in faith integration; such items on the questionnaire met the standard for confirmatory factor analysis (factor loadings between 0.368 and 0.669 with model fit of $\chi^2 = 287$, $df = 65$, $p < .001$; meanwhile RMSEA = 0.0937) and the 13 items were combined into a single variable ($\alpha = .898$) for analysis.

The findings indicate the highest factor correlated to faith integration self-efficacy was related to “showing students ‘they are loved and valued by God’” (p. 20). Another limitation in the study was that integration practice was not concretely defined, linking it to integration self-efficacy. As such, it is possible that early, primary, middle, and secondary teachers had different conceptions of faith integration, but common understandings of self-efficacy. Further clarity in reporting is needed here as the items generalize faith integration self-efficacy around beliefs rather than practices. Covariate analysis of Bible teachers could have also been controlled and reported from other samples to increase validity of results and make greater comparison to non-Bible teachers. From the regression models, it was found that school membership was “a significant predictor of faith integration-self efficacy” for teachers (p. 20). As the study expanded Elliot et al.’s (2019) to non-Bible teachers, a key question raised from the research is whether integration self-efficacy could be extended to school leaders and if membership would also be a predictor of faith-integration in leadership efficacy, or if other factors, such as leadership experience, fit with the school’s mission, or personal relationship, would also be antecedents. The next section reviews studies more directly concerned with leadership and faith integration within the K-12 context.

Tarrant's (2014) study addressed possible gaps in description about how leaders embody faith in a case study of a tragic school event in New Zealand. The school principal was interviewed two years after the event of six students (aged 16) and one teacher (aged 29) losing their lives in a river canyoning incident. Community support is described as levels of support for the principal, support for the teachers from other schools, support from community agencies, and support for families affected by the tragedy, communicating how the school's Christian foundation was a fundamental place of strength and guidance (p. 413). Current research describes that, in distressing times, people turn to the comfort of others and higher beings for love and a sense of meaning (p. 414). The report examines how a school leader's faith and perspectives directed the school.

MB, the pseudonym used for the principal who was serving at the time, was a Christian educator, had undertaken various leadership roles in churches over a period of 25 years, and had been serving the school for seven years (teacher for 28 years, 21 of those years as principal, and was 50 years old). The qualitative interview design involving the principal was conducted two years later. The researcher did not "impose any questions or themes" but "wished to hear MB's personal account of leadership from his own perspective" (p. 415). The interview lasted two hours and involved open account of the events, including how MB and the team responded from their Christian foundation over the past two years. Discussion about decision making and various issues emerged in the interview. An inductive data collection approach was utilized.

The findings provided narrative descriptions about how the wider community was impacted, the key decisions, moments of spiritual care (prayer and chapels), and how the principal's team communicated from a place of Christian character. The narrative recounted not only what MB (the principal) did, but what the collaborative response from other team members

looked like. Theories of how communal resilience is formed helped provide meaning to MB's work with students. The school community grew in its spiritual practices and that crisis response reveals the heart of compassion from leaders. According to the researchers, children are not always sufficiently represented in post-traumatic event studies. While the study provides a helpful descriptive account of how a leader worked collaboratively with an adaptive communal response, the discussion of faith integration largely revolved around the content of Christian character and how that informed decision making. Examination of the specific contextual needs that the school had and how MB's specific practices, not only his beliefs, guided the school would be informative to educational leaders responding to communal change from a place of lament and grief, rather than only opportunity to grow.

The next article raises questions about faith integration from within middle leadership. It is a relatively absent voice, contrasting external, top down, and bottom-up integration approaches. Chalwell et al. (2024) argue that much of the research on Christian schools focuses on the principal and further examination is needed on middle leadership in Anglican schools and how faith connects with leadership practice. According to Chalwell et al. (2024), "Middle leadership is not a role title. It is a recognition that there are formal leadership roles in schools today beyond the principal" (p. 8). Middle leaders do leadership work beyond the capacity they are given and in the space between formal leaders and teachers.

A qualitative multi-site case study methodology involving phenomenological, in-depth, semi-structured interviews to understand the influences and practices of Christian middle leadership was utilized. The main research questions explored the relationship between a school's expression of Christian faith and how the Christian faith of middle leaders influence the exercise of their role in the school. Nine participants emerged from two schools in Melbourne

and Sydney, Australia. The researchers were affiliated with the schools they recruited participants from. Grounded theory coding was utilized to generate themes through iterative analysis.

Reported experiences and expressions of faith between each participants differed, even though they shared a common creedal conviction. Four themes emerged in each of the interviews: God is in control and that directs daily interactions; Pastoral care is needed everywhere to support teachers and not lose sight of the child; Faith is lived out in practical action; and Faith is evident in both the talk and walk and normalized in the learning community. The researchers sought to develop a theory of Christian middle leadership by answering their research questions. They argued that within the discourse of Christian faith and middle leadership, Christian middle leadership is about putting faith in action and expressing faith in words, bridging the themes that God is in control and that pastoral care is everywhere to direct their vocational role as middle leaders.

While the article is framed around middle leaders, the question is raised about whether formal leaders understand the importance of how faith is integrated at more conversational levels, shared amongst informal and middle leaders, embodied in pastoral care, and if leaders will “flourish when all three discourses are engaged at both personal and institutional levels” (p. 18). To integrate faith in organizational practices, middle leaders must be supported as they have the capacity to . . . “impact curriculum, pedagogy, and formation amongst teams of teachers, integral to authentic, hospitable expressions of faith” (p. 19; see also Cairney, 2018; Smith et al., 2014). Notably, Middle leaders “professing faith may also play a role in supporting the ethos, values and conditions within their Anglican schools through the intersection of their faith and their curriculum knowledge and the pastoral care they provide in collaboration with

other staff” (p. 8), broadening perspectives of both the field of Christian integration and perspectives of educational leadership. Faith in practice is not only expressed in what leaders do, but in how they discern the meanings emerging within themselves and in their organizations through the feedback they receive. Such reflection reveals how faith is continually being formed in and through practice.

The literature review in this next article forwarded that there are particular values, attributes, content, principles, and practices that “Christian leaders feel, think and act when interacting and connecting with God, students, staff, families and the community [that] should contribute to building relationships” (Shields & Hattingh, 2022, p. 2). Shields and Hattingh’s (2022) research question investigated the relational values (accepting, welcoming, loving, respecting, empathizing, and caring) and practices that Christian early childhood leaders implemented. Bringing together theories of Christian leadership and early childhood leadership, the article described how “[u]nderpinning all aspects of authentic Christian leadership is the faith relationship between the leader and God” (p. 4).

Methodologically, a Christian worldview and constructivist grounded theory approach was utilized to enable a co-constructed hermeneutic approach emerging between the researchers and the early childhood leaders (Charmaz, 2014). There were 14 participant leaders that completed the survey questionnaire that was mailed to them. Participant leaders reported diverse Christian religious affiliation. From the 14 participants, four were purposefully selected with different regions, educational contexts and experiences, and church affiliations to participate in semi-structured interviews and observations. Participants describe Christian leadership in early childhood centers, noting the strong two-way relationship between the leader and God evident in prayer, worship, reading, and reflection (p. 15). The relational values directed the leaders to

describe how they continuously reflected on Jesus “hav[ing] the members of their community understand that they were loved and valued again reflecting the intentional Christian worldview” (p. 15). Such relational practices emerge from the leader’s values: authentic Christian early childhood leadership was found to also enable leaders to have God-inspired relational values which, in turn, lead to God-inspired relational practices (p. 16). One leader summarized a conceptual approach to integration at a program level: “In this context, I can very much embed the ideas and philosophies of my Christian beliefs into my whole daily program, so it’s not just a token moment in the day but it’s the whole embodiment of what we do and why we do it” (p. 17). There was congruence between workplace spirituality theories around themes of engagement with the inner life, meaningful work, and workplace community as factors contributing to faith integration (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

A limited literature review was provided as the researchers cited that “there is little information in the literature about Christian early childhood educational leadership” (p. 5). The participants in the sample were all Christian women and exemplars taken from the sample. For the dissertation study, identifying a range of participants without preconceived endorsement of exemplars may serve to generate a more descriptive account of the phenomenon rather than identifying exemplary cases of how leaders integrate faith into their practice, thus raising possible gaps in preparation and equipping of leaders. Shields and Hattingh (2022) examined whether Christian theories make up the foundational beliefs that leaders bring to their relational values. The study was conducted in New South Wales, inviting further research in other international Christian educational contexts in BC and a key stipulation was that the learning centers had “Christian” in the center’s name. A key assumption with schools and leaders self-

identifying with the characteristic of “Christian” is that they profess and embody a certain set of relational values.

The next article explores a key question that articulated the need for more comprehensive program-based research in K-12 Christian schools that are working towards faith integration and not only integration studied from top-down leadership models. Witwer (2022) investigated 1,059 certified Christian school teachers from Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) schools. Faith integration and learning has typically referred to the “teacher’s role of presenting subject matter (course content) from an academically robust Christian perspective” (p. 7).

However, why both a robust implementation of faith and learning in K-12 Christian schools have not taken place and studied empirically is a key gap raised in Witwer’s (2022) study. The majority of large-scale quantitative studies assessing organizational factors that contribute to faith formation have taken place in CHE. As such, Witwer (2022) sought to assess whether there were statistically significant differences between perspectives on faith influencing course content among teachers from various academic disciplines, instructional strategies among teachers from various academic disciplines, course content among teachers from various theological traditions, and instructional strategies among teachers from various theological traditions (p. 10).

From a population of approximately 11,000 teachers that had received ACSI certification in the previous five years, 1,059 K-12 Christian school teachers completed the online survey. Locational identified or cultural backgrounds were not collected. The instrument was Glanzer and Alleman’s (2019) study of CCCU faculty that analyzed the respective variables of subject discipline, theological tradition, and instructional or teaching methods. Validity testing with the adapted instrument for the K-12 Christian school context involved expert panel (inter-item correlation = 0.352; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.884) and pilot testing from 55 Christian school

teachers (inter-item correlation = 0.337; Cronbach's alpha = 0.877). Data analysis involved nonparametric tests due to non-normal distribution with moderate to high skewness. Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to rank ANOVA data and the Wilcoxon test for nonparametric two-sample *t*-test supported assessment of reported scores.

The results reported the descriptive and inferential findings from the adapted version of Glanzer and Alleman's (2019) instrument and compared and contrasted the findings from the latter's CCCU assessment. Key findings included statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary teachers by academic disciplines, with mathematics and science as the lowest indicator of faith integration. Theological tradition did not significantly affect elementary or secondary teachers. Faith influenced course content more than instructional strategies, particularly for secondary teachers. Comparing and contrasting whether theological tradition influenced course objectives between K-12 results (Witwer, 2022) and CCCU results (Glanzer & Alleman, 2019, p. 125), the Baptist professors had a strong emphasis on the role of the Bible and the Reformed, Quaker, and Wesleyan faculty emphasized God's revelation in human reason, experience, nature, self-reflection, and church tradition, where no statistically significant differences existed for K-12 faculty. Elementary teachers did report stronger instructional strategies compared to secondary teachers, and some secondary teachers were "unsure if a given strategy qualified as faith-influenced because it was not uniquely Christian" (p. 20).

Some of the implications raised from the study concern whether familiarity with what might be understood as a distinctly Christian instructional practice might lead to higher perceived faith integration. Clarifying how the relationship between Christian faith varies across discipline might be a key to increased confidence in practice. Witwer (2022) argued that the "results provide an incentive to train teachers from a posture of improving what they believe they

are already doing, rather than confusing absence of evidence with evidence of absence” (p. 21). The report of no statistically significant differences when grouped by theological tradition might be due to differences in context or population homogeneity. Limitations in the descriptives do not allow for correlation tests between participants indicating different years of experience, cultural backgrounds, or prior training for example. Witwer (2022) described how a “robust vision for teaching Christianly” would include “every aspect of classroom culture, everything students experience in the learning process” such as information and opportunities comprised in instructional strategies, physical environment, daily routines, assignments, assessments, activities, and the way that the class is managed and cared for (p. 22). Broadening attention to what students *do* and also what students *know*, Witwer (2022) raises concern that the things we do shape us. The conclusions could go further to describe that there are not only ways of doing and knowing, but also ways of being that could be described as habit forming practices, thus describing a form of integration that connects knowing, being, and doing.

Christian faith integration is yearning an expansion beyond cognitive and instruction related study to more analysis of holistic, community-based models. Actionable steps for educators and leader practitioners for how faith can be brought into practice are not yet being addressed. It would benefit both the Christian educational leaders and teachers to know how to shape learning experiences and classroom environments so they support faith formation with a high view of subject disciplinary specific methodologies and approaches to learning. In addition, there is very little discussion about the weaknesses in some approaches to faith integration that would offer a more compelling critique of what faith integration is not.

In this final empirical article of Domain Two, Martin (2018) builds on Harrison and Allen’s (2015) study, in which the latter focused on Christian school administrators in Southwest

Washington and Oregon to examine perceptions of administrators' characteristics, roles, and professional development programs. Martin (2018) found that despite the small sample size of Harrison and Allen's (2015) work in a US context, it highlighted the importance of investigating how K-12 Christian school leaders sustain a learning vision in their community, make decisions, celebrate and promote success, and lead learners. Martin (2018) described the qualities of instructional leaders and learning practices in K-12 Christian school communities. As expectations from boards, churches, families, and accrediting bodies in BC grow for school leaders to embody their educational missions and visions of learning (Harrison & Allen, 2015; Martin, 2018), exploring the qualities of Christian school principals and the relationship to instructional and servant leadership practices has been one way to understand the integration of faith in educational leadership.

Martin's (2018) research builds upon theories of effective school management and the role of the principal in instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022). The mixed-methods research methodology involving six high-performing schools across the USA identified nine lower school principals (grades K – 5), nine upper school principals (grades 6 – 12), and 280 teachers within the respective schools. Two survey instruments including Hallinger's (2013) Principal instructional management scale including 50 questions (agreement raters was 0.80 for each item) and Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) Servant leadership questionnaire. The researchers were primarily interested in determining if Christian worldview would be present in principals' responses to instructional leadership, professional development, literacy pedagogy, and missional thinking. Data collection involved examination of audio files from interview transcripts and the constant comparison method was used to organize data into themes.

According to Martin (2018), principals reported high levels of creating positive school climate, managing their school's instructional programs, and defining the school mission. There were different definitions of instructional leadership between lower and upper school principals: lower school principals defined leadership pertaining to increasing practices that support student learning and upper school principals defined it as pastoral care, vision, and monitoring “. . . practices [that] flow from our theology” (p. 169). All principals reported beliefs that they desired congruency between faith, learning, and their leadership practices. From the list of management responsibilities, Martin (2018) did not report any distinctly Christian description that followed around principal discussion concerning communicating with parents, hosting administrative meetings, engaging with student discipline, responding to crises, working on budgets, building culture and community, spontaneous responses, and responding to marketing activities.

With respect to the second research question about the relationship between instructional leadership and servant leadership as a means of faith integration, teachers' reports were lower than principal self-responses, but relatively high (principals $M = 4.275$; teachers $M = 4.08$) using Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) index. The author highlighted that there were some limitations in the upper school leaders' discussion around instruction from curricular decisions, assessment practices, use of student data, and principals “could not offer knowledge of literacy instruction . . . such as vocabulary development, reading and writing strategies, or disciplinary literacy practices” (p. 176), emerging from a mindset about “keeping the ‘consumer’ satisfied” and directing how principals prioritize their time (p. 177). Some of the implications of the research concern the expectations that teachers have for their K-12 principals to integrate faith into their instructional leadership and not only organizational management. Martin (2018) argued the following:

It is possible that these principals, who have such strong and admirable tendencies toward servant leadership and emulating Christ's example of servanthood, are self-identifying their calling toward servanthood as a supreme characteristic as a principal leader, not realizing, as well, the equal importance of instructional leadership to impact student learning. (p. 178)

As it concerns organizational research, Martin's (2018) three domains of school mission, instructional program, and positive school climate are areas requiring further description about leadership faith integration practices. More specifically, the question is raised: for the extent and areas in which a leader brings their faith, if only in terms of servant leadership, perhaps there are areas of faith integration lacking that might be better satisfied by team leadership integration studies whereby expectations for a leader to integrate faith into all aspects of their leadership efforts might perpetuate a heroic view of leadership. In other words, what are reasonable expectations for a leader to integrate their faith within the various domains they are responsible for and is this communicated to a learning community and help direct lifelong development. Some of these developmental considerations are explored further in Domain Three.

Summary of the Relevant Empirical Literature for the Integration of Faith in Educational Leadership Practice

Finally, summary from Domain Two about the key concerns and gaps emerging in empirical literature for the integration of faith in leadership practice in K-12 Christian schools are forwarded. Taken together, the following challenges and opportunities are raised for further research: (i) Faith integration has largely been something conceptual, abstract, and related to worldview formation. The limitations of this approach have left a gap in practitioner theories and both qualitative descriptions and quantitative approaches to assess faith integration; (ii) Faith integration has become something done by leaders to their learners and employees, rather than connecting with Domain One, a phenomenon that occurs in networked relationships. The

underlying assumptions are that faith integration leaders are gifted educators who have found a distinct personal way to express what they believe in the way they lead others, rather than by creating a comprehensive and transformative vision that mobilizes many, and equipping under a unifying core of practices; (iv) Integration has been studied as an outcome rather than a formative set of practices within a community. As a result, faith integration is perceived as that which is invested in communities of deficit, rather than deriving out of what is already there, a contextual expression taking place between leaders, bottom up, from the middle, and animating the life of learning and engagement within a community; (v) The need for a leadership practitioner model in K-12 Christian schools that links developmental theory to specific organizational practices such as faith integration training for educational leaders, models of practice for leading learning, organizational leadership around financial stewardship, fundraising, marketing and human resources, and leadership of leaders; (vi) A practitioner framework would help to categorize types of Christian faith-informed practices that might be developmentally sustainable for the leader and clarify the skills that are needed to support a faithful expression of Christian leadership; (vii) The need for the voices of leaders who are also exemplary faith integrators to frame more comprehensive descriptions about the inner life, meaningful work, and the reciprocal formation of a relational community of faith around concepts of transformation, reconciliation, and liberation; (viii) The need for descriptions about the relationship between a leader's faith and what that means for the learning community's faith formation; (ix) The need to explore some of the tensions that emerge related to leaders suspending personal faith beliefs for the organization's communal expression of faith; and (x) The difference that faith integration makes in the life of the leader and the reframing of theologically faithful expressions of

communal learning. Some of the questions are raised further in Chapter Three on Christian and Biblically integrative perspectives.

Literature Review on Canadian Educational Leadership Development Domain

Domain Three, a minor domain, provides the context for the research study by situating understanding first within the Canadian educational landscape, second, the British Columbia provincial landscape, and then finally, the context of BC K-12 Protestant Christian independent schools. It discusses theories pertaining to leadership distributed, instructional, and transformational leadership, as well as subsidiary components in these respective theories pertaining to capacity building and learning leadership. The purpose of situating the theories previously explored in Domains One and Two within their recent Canadian educational discourse was to ensure the research is grounded in the local dialect of educational leadership, tuning attention to the ways of knowing, being, and doing, for conducting research on educational leadership in British Columbia. By discussing how recent leadership development theories contribute to school improvement, reform, and change, the study is set up for further theological integration dialogue in Chapter Three and phenomenological research design in Chapter Four as next steps to address gaps in current understanding.

Context for Canadian Educational Leadership

In 1867, Canadian Confederation occurred, which created a nation comprising the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick (Robson, 2019, p. 62). At the same time, education became a “provincial, not federal” mandate, which included policies for each province to determine protection rights for denominational schools (p. 62). British Columbia (BC) as a province joined Confederation in 1871. The decentralized approach to provincial leadership, in contrast to federal or national oversight with each province holding responsibility for education, was established to protect different ethnic and religiously distinct

populations within the provinces (Robson, 2019, p. 84). With the establishment of BC's public school system, it was determined that provincial revenues as opposed to household taxes would be used to fund BC the public system (Johnson, 1971, p. 30), thus shaping future socio-economic implications for partnership in a child's education.

While it is outside the scope of the dissertation's analysis, it is important to acknowledge that BC has continued to navigate the past, present, and future historical ramifications of Aboriginal education through residential schooling, segregated schools for black, Asian, and other immigrant populations, and failures in proper socialization from mass schooling choices (Robson, 2019, p. 78). Canada has a diverse landscape of transnational and interdisciplinary leadership. Localization has emerged as a key practice for conducting research within the BC educational context and more specifically a practice of reciprocity learned from Indigenous knowledge communities. The notion of localization reflects a Canadian ethic that land and place matter for generating collective knowledge and meaning (Cruikshank, 2012, p. 240). Localization also serves to prevent cognitive imperialism that assumes universality without careful consideration of the distinctness of preserving knowledge within collective communities (Battiste, 2002, p. 11), inside which Christian schools are knowledge communities with their distinct localized and contextualized features, philosophic assumptions, biographies, histories, and socio-political structures.

Despite the decentralized system, a key impetus for more unified social change across the provincial educational systems in Canada was the establishment of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T&R Commission) in 2008. The T&R Commission was a national inquiry into the impact of Residential schools, of which the church and government were responsible for the intergenerational abuse (National Centre for Truth and

Reconciliation, 2024; Robson, 2019, p. 73). In addition, the T&R Commission of Canada called all levels of government to respond to 94 actions, with action numbers 62, 63, and 64 pertaining directly to education for reconciliation. The T&R Commission (2024) report from 2014 states the following:

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

The implications of the T&R Commission established the values that guide the distinct relationships with Indigenous peoples including respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility leading to mutuality (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). These values are important components in what might constitute more emergent Canadian forms of educational leadership.

The significance of educational change pertaining to healing and reconciliation is explored in the implications of communal change in Chapter Three's theological analysis.

Defining Canadian Educational Leadership

A distinctly Canadian view of educational leadership, according to White and Cooper (2017) is “deceptively difficult” to describe due to different forces pulling in “divergent directions” (p. 433). R. E. White et al. (2017) conceptualized five qualitative descriptive lenses to situate past, present, and future thinking about educational leadership in Canada to not only describe what leadership *is* but what leadership *does* (p. 434), which is of practical concern in the dissertation research study's context of BC.

Building on R.E. White et al.'s (2017) efforts to “disentangle complex subjects” (p. 434), contextualization helps to clarify Canada's distinct biographical, historical, political, postmodern, and philosophical landscapes. This process makes the Canadian transnational and interdisciplinary leadership context more accessible and comprehensible. Each respective component is discussed in the following section:

- ***Biographically.*** Canada's social fabric is as vast and diverse as its geographically space.

The interaction between multiple cultures, a history of colonization, bilingual (French/Canadian) and globally linguistic duality, diverse educational systems across provinces, non-standardization of educational policy, and decentralization away from a national system describes the multifaceted, complex, and pluralistic society that has a heterogeneous composition.

- ***Historically.*** Canadian education systems have embraced integrative social reforms.

Driven by the democratization of education and progressive social reforms to improve classroom instruction, policy makers have been critical about neoliberalistic market

tendencies, placing the independent sector under close scrutiny. Dialogue between competition and social reform ideologies have led to curriculum theorists navigating the tensions between educating for excellence versus equity, Indigenous and western paradigms of education, the technical and relational paradigms, academic and social learning, standardization versus personalization, and “curriculum-as planned and the lived curriculum” (Aoki, 2005, p. 159).

- ***Politically.*** Despite provincial fragmentation and gaps in understanding between provinces due to western, eastern, and territorially divides, the national identity is shaped constitutionally by a pluralistic and multicultural ethic that focuses on serving the common good by being both a Canadian and global citizen.
- ***Postmodern ideologically.*** Global forces from neoliberal market pressures, tensions between progressive and essentialist educational movements, increasing demands and need for upscaling skills, and tension of whether to push back against policy-driven compliance systems have raised questions about educational leaders’ agency while balancing local and global demands.
- ***Philosophically.*** Educational leadership is tasked with a reconciliatory role to alleviate social pressures, fragmentation in regional diversity, create culturally responsive approaches to break down homogenizing effects in standardized education, and imagine a future that has a unified and diversified collective approach (White & Cooper, 2017).

Without a unified definition of Canadian educational leadership, Canadian values drive emergent forms of leadership. The Canadian context has birthed its own dialects around distributive (Leithwood et al., 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), instructional (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), and transformational (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, 2005;

Leithwood et al., 2004), leading to current theories of school improvement, change, reform, and leadership (Fullan, 2005, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008, 2019).

Liberating social perspectives are prevalent in Canadian forms of educational leadership and in a sense, evoke a sense of spirituality about leading others that is learner and community-centered, and constantly reforming in nature.

The school improvement movement in Canada could be characterized as the efforts that are taken for leaders and schools to partner in changing “aims, expectations, organization, way[s] of learning, methods of teaching, and organizational culture” (Hopkins, 2001, p. 12; Sackney, 2007, p. 170). Sackney’s (2007) history of the school improvement in Canada described the shift from top-down change to bottom-up change and the merging of focus on building capacity for learning communities. Sackney (2007) described the basic elements of a learning community to include the following: shared mission, vision, values, and goals, collaborative teams, action research and orientated practices, shared leadership comprising a community of leaders, data-sensitive decision making leading to improvement, shared responsibility for improving learning, communities of practices developed through learning networks, and sustainable leadership. The implications are that strong leadership is needed to develop “the capacity to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose” (Fullan, 2005, p. ix). Research on school improvement should emphasize both the measurable evaluation of improvement on student learning and improvement on more holistic, ecological views of school impacting “patterns, connections, relationships, interactions, and mutual influences” (Sackney, 2007, p. 180) that support more collaborative and integrated approaches for systematic change. Building capacity across the system so leaders are prepared for the work of continuous improvement remains an important goal for developing leaders professionally.

Shifts in Conceptions of Canadian Educational Leadership

The importance of relationships between leaders and members of educational communities has been well established within Canadian educational leadership literature. This importance has been explained in professional capital theories (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) proposed a shift away from a business capital view of schooling that sees education as a product or “commodity” (p. 2) to a professional capital view that encourages improvement for the individual, the performance of teams, and a collective responsibility “across the whole profession” (p. 23). Expectations placed on Canadian principals and school leaders have shifted from more managerial and administrative settings to more of a trust broker, raising concern for social capital in schools and moral forms of leadership (Kutsyuruba et al., 2016, p. 346). School leaders being identified as brokers of change is becoming more prevalent in recent literature, as trust has been shown to be a contributing factor to communal flourishing (p. 346). Perhaps the shifts reflect Canadian multicultural and democratic values that are embedded within extant educational leadership theories.

Kutsyuruba and Walker (2014) describe in their research on the lifecycle of trust in educational leadership that because schools are living systems, “inherently unstable, interdependent networks” (p. 107), trust and moral agency progress through iterative life cycle stages: (i) establishing trust, (ii) maintaining trust, (iii) sustaining trust, (iv) breaking trust, and (v) restoring of broken trust. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2014) framed the shifting role of “administrator” and “manager” to “leader” in terms of a moral and ethical responsibilities in personal judgment (p. 86). They found that moral agency and leadership are more about influence emerging from decisional capabilities rather than position (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2014, p. 95). Developing decisional capital is also well-supported in Hargreaves and Fullan’s

(2012) theory of how Canadian educational systems can continuously reform and increase professional capital, which is derived from social, human, and decisional capital.

The notion of capabilities is preferred, because it helps to reframing leadership studies on the interiority and internal components of a leader, including their social capacities, capabilities, and interdependence within learning communities. A key next step in the research would be to analyze school leaders' relationships based on mutuality, trust, and shared vision and evoke the need to apply more networked and brokered approaches to better understand meaning making. These ideas are reflected primarily in subsidiary theories such as distributive, instructional, transformational, and change leadership within the K-12 education context.

At the same time, Green's (2021) *Cardus Perspectives* report critically examined the use of the word *innovation* in education. Green (2021) argued that a distinctly Christian posture of innovation is oriented towards the other and working towards concern for the common societal good. In addition, Green (2021) argued that innovation works towards human flourishing, embraces nonconformity by rediscovering old ways and non-linearity of change, and affirms formative vocational practices such as creativity, experimentation, and risk taking (p. 3). Green's (2021) concern is that the Christian hope rests in a new creation and not on a utopia (p. 14) and that there is often confusion about the words *new* and *change* because such notions are often accompanied by assumptions that could be reduced to flippancy about the past, obsessiveness about riches such as "self-expression, self-service, and self-determination" that have pervaded education systems (p. 13). While Green's (2021) assessment invites refinement of language around how we measure success (p. 15), her discussion missed a key concern: a distinctly Christian approach to innovation or change is not only the story about a community of traditions that preserves and presents the past through its institutional routines (p. 15), but one about a

relational community that has been transformed and then becomes the place of innovation, change, transformation, reconciliation, and liberation within itself because Christ is there. These claims are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three but are important to describe the current theoretical discourse which the dissertation research aims to enter into conversationally. Context for education in the province of British Columbia is provided to situate the research study.

Context for British Columbia K-12 School Leadership

The British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care (formerly the Ministry of Education) released the educational leadership development framework in 2017 as an executive summary of the current state of leadership today around vision, challenges of change, competencies, commitments, professional development, collaboration, and measured success. The key strategic leadership commitments in the framework included five components: (i) establishing common competencies; (ii) defining shared proficiencies; (iii) prioritizing professional development opportunities; (iv) increasing collaboration; and (v) measuring success (p. 3). The common competencies established the following leadership practices: (a) setting strategic directions; (b) leading the organization; (c) ensuring accountability; (d) developing people; and (e) building relationships (p. 4). My assessment is that presenting an educational leadership framework serves to link the theoretical foundations to expected or desired leadership values to learned practices. The educational leadership development framework (BC Education, 2017) described how school change and improvement is built on attitudinal and behavioral practices such as building capacity to meet the complex demands of a changing socio-economic environment, recruiting and retaining leaders, and developing competencies.

A key implication from the leadership development framework (BC Education, 2017) was that leadership organizations (including the BC School Trustees Association, BC School

Superintendents Association, the Principals and Vice-Principals' Association, the BC Association of School Business Officials, and the Federation of Independent Schools Association of BC) were called into the responsibility for developing “organizational managers, talented instructors, moral leaders, and change agents” (p. 7). This extends also to academic organizations and professional networks supporting the current and next generation of leaders across the province. The work cited key theorists in the field of educational change and school improvement to forward distributive, instructional, and transformational practices (Fullan, 2005, 2015; Hattie, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Schlechty, 2009), reinforcing British Columbia's leadership development paradigm within the educational change management tradition and Canadian democratic values of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility.

A Snapshot of the Principalship in British Columbia

Recent literature has described principal work in British Columbia as continuously evolving in an “age of unprecedented accountability and countless reforms,” expecting principals to do more with less resources (Wang & Pollock, 2020, p. iii). Wang and Pollock (2020), researchers from the University of British Columbia, with support from some of the aforementioned leadership organizations in BC, explored how principals describe their well-being and why that matters. The researchers' executive report on BC public school principals recommended several collective commitments from different levels of policy makers to address work intensification, well-being, safety, coping strategies and supports for principals. The findings are summarized and organized in Table 2.4. A key finding is that that top-down structures over principals are imposing limitations on principals; the findings indicate that decentralized approaches would promote greater principal well-being and development over their lifespan. These respective concerns will be revisited in Chapters Five and Six to explore any

connections or meaning making that participants within the K-12 Christian school context share that are pertinent.

Table 2.4

Summary of Wang and Pollock's (2020) Study on Principals' Work and Well-Being

Work Intensification	Well-Being	Safety	Coping Strategies and Supports
Establish ad hoc committee to examine the changing principal role	Create or expand existing well-being strategies/initiatives and ensure that these strategies extend to principal well-being	Implement the existing occupational health and safety regulation and strategies	Increase supports and services for principals
Increase school leadership allocations to address work volume	Create or expand mental health and wellness teams	Use additional public sector organizations to support employee wellness	Create a mechanism for principals to have a greater sense of control over their work environment
Conduct an education system workload study	Set up or expand existing well-being and safety positions	Create or expand district safe school teams	Take inventory of your work stressors and how you react to them, then seek out and build a repertoire of healthy coping strategies
Review policies for required follow up documentation	Continue to expand existing services and explore effective approaches to support principals' well-being	Create a comprehensive and supportive protocol	Principals must know their rights
Increase localized discretion and decision-making	Create a Wellness Fund Beyond Current Health and Well-Being Benefits	Continue to build a safe and healthy work culture	Reduce isolation and build supportive networks

(table continues)

Table 2.4 (continued)*Summary of Wang and Pollock's (2020) Study on Principals' Work and Well-Being*

Work Intensification	Well-Being	Safety	Coping Strategies and Supports
Create online, provincially standardized templates, sample documents, and interactive portals	Create More Opportunities for Minoritized Principals to Succeed	Expand and diversify member support services	Create or update the quick and handy reference list for principals
Expand lieu days and discretionary leave expanded		Better protect principals	Manage email volume by setting boundaries

The combination of principal issues related to work intensification, well-being, and the philosophic, social, professional, and practical expectations placed on school leaders for reforming schools has reinforced the need to understand how school leaders experience their work socially and spiritually. Factors related to leadership well-being, while not necessarily primary variables in the dissertation study, may emerge in the descriptions that participants share as they describe lived experiences with their work. For this reason, there are implications from the dissertation study for understanding how leaders bring their faith into their educational change practices and their lifespan development.

Churchley et al.'s (2017) efforts to map principal preparation programs in BC under the transformational leadership and effective school principals' framework (p. 113) highlighted the need for analyzing how school leaders understand the practices that lead to their development. Their research raised questions about how theoretical orientations lead to leadership development (Churchley et al., 2017). However, the study has delimited leadership development theories in this domain to Canadian studies, whereby distributive, instructional, and transformational leadership directs educational change in K-12 contexts.

The research questions' primary focus pertains to the integration of faith in educational change leadership. A concern, for example, is whether BC school leaders bring their concepts of distributive, instructional, or transformational leadership approaches, how they set goals, motivate people, re-design their organizations, and improve instructional programs may reflect a different praxis orientation. Furthermore, should leaders operate from transformational orientations of leadership perceive enlisting and involving community stakeholders, influencing teacher efficacy, establishing the organizational and cultural conditions for improving learning, or focusing resources on system development (Churchley et al., 2017, p. 113), and would their experiences and practices of change leadership look differently from that of instructional or distributive leaders? Questions are also raised in the research study whether there is congruence between what public and Christian independent school leaders report about their developmental and practitioner experiences. The context for British Columbia K-12 Protestant Christian independent schools where the participants experience their work and the phenomenon of educational change leadership is unpacked further in the next section.

Contemporary Context for British Columbia K-12 Christian Independent Schools

This next section provides some brief historical snapshots to situate the dissertation research and discuss relevant points from the British Columbia Independent School Act and the current context of BC independent schools, of which many are Protestant K-12 Christian independent schools.

The earliest BC schools were religiously based. Some of the earliest theological traditions that established BC Christian schools had their roots in the post-WWII immigrant context from Mennonite, Calvinist, and other Evangelical Protestant backgrounds (such as Seventh Day Adventist, Lutheran, Baptist and charismatic traditions; Van Brummelen, 1996). Between 1940

and 1966, before independent schools came together to form the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA), “parents rather than the state were seen to have the duty of educating children, and should be allowed to do so with religious instruction that would also enhance the community’s morals” (Van Brummelen, 1996, p. 115), leading to increased social pressure for independent schools to become more sustainable parts of the educational landscape in BC. Van Brummelen’s (1993) research on principals and teachers in BC’s Christian schools reflects the most recent academic and empirical literature that could be located for Christian independent schools. Perspectives on independent schools were highlighted in Wilson’s (1981) study on BC independent school parents that explored the landscape of pluralism in Canada and BC. It was found that 54.4% of parents provided religious reasons for choosing independent schools, 51.2% for quality of discipline, and 30.4% for quality of education (Wilson, 1981, p. 104). Families desiring the preservation of Christian values in their child’s education as well as partnership between home, church, and school also began to value provincial recognition that the education their children would receive would be accredited at a ministry level.

In 1977, the BC provincial government passed the Independent School Support Act that granted qualifying independent schools based on the funding equation model up to 30% tuition costs per pupil to support local school operational costs. The provision went up to 50% per pupil with the new Independent School Act, passed on July 7, 1989, and proclaimed on Sept. 1, 1989 (FISA BC, 2024). However, in a personal conversation with former BC school inspector Tom Ellwood, who was responsible for locating non-registered homeschool students in the 1980s before the Independent School Act was passed, he shared how he was tasked with doing what the minister of education and deputy minister of education in BC were unable to do, which was brokering a connection with leaders of home school networks so the government could put

together a policy that would support home school education. Ellwood shared that it was through bridging connections with key members of these networks such as Dr. Daniels, a medical doctor, pastor, and principal of one of the unregistered home school groups that led to what Ellwood called, “An opened door for the whole group to be working with the government” (T. Ellwood, personal communication, November 21, 2020). He described the earliest mapping of social networks that united independent schooling in BC while maintaining their distinctiveness and choice not formally under a “Christian system,” because that does not exist in BC’s educational landscape.

In addition, Ellwood shared that there were opportunities for the independent schools to lobby for more than 50% funding per pupil and the government was willing to increase their per pupil grant well past 60%; however, advocates from religious schools wanted to make sure that families could maintain choice in their child’s education, so the shared funding model was established (T. Ellwood, personal communication, November 21, 2020). Van Brummelen (1996) described the shift in enrolment to independent schools in the previous decades as a “disenchante[ment] with public schooling” and a search for alternatives (p. 101). The 50% funding model has conveyed the “parental right to choice in education is also of great significance” (FISA BC, 2024, n.d.). Parent choice has continued to be a key distinctive of BC Christian independent schools in the 21st century.

Today, FISA is a non-profit society, umbrella organization to group independent schools, and voice between schools and the government, assisting in independence with schools operating as their own boards and maintain fair legislative and financial treatment (FISA, 2024). Other organizations, such as the Association of Christian Schools International, Catholic Independent Schools, and the Society of Christian Schools in BC, are membership groups that strengthen

networked relationships through “service, community, advocacy, and vision” (SCSBC, 2024). The decentralized context for BC’s funding model, parental values for sending their children to independent schools, independence, and interdependent networks is unique at a global level. In total, the Society of Christian Schools in BC presently has membership of 40 school societies and serves over 16,000 students across the province. The dissertation research explores the experiences and practices of Protestant Christian school leaders within the network of Society of Christian Schools in BC and Association of Christian Schools International, making it pertinent to explore the context of a decentralized system for researching change from more complex adaptive, social network, and brokered approaches.

Protestant Christian schools in British Columbia (BC), under the Independent School Support Act, have become viewed by the public as independent ventures and alternative schools (Van Brummelen, 1996), and description still largely fits today in our current BC educational context. Cardus Education (2011), a policy think-tank committed to building Canadian social architecture, conducted a research study of the different provincial education systems’ independent schools. They found that families were sending their children to independent schools so they would not compromise in choice between religious and academic education (Pennings et al., 2011, p. 11). The Cardus education survey in (2011) exploring the motivations of private religious Catholic and Protestant schooling stakeholders in North America and whether their perceptions align with graduate outcomes questioned whether change is on the horizon for Protestant Christian schools to serve as catalysts for school improvement and lead religious, philosophical, and pedagogic thought in the integrated fields of “spiritual formation, academic development, and cultural engagement” (Pennings et al., 2011, pp. 11-12). Furthermore, Pennings et al. (2011) argued that parental choice should not be perceived as a

threat to the social fabric of Canadian society (p. 11). Educational change and reform continues to be a topic of concern in Christian schools due to the changing integrated nature of organizational leadership.

More recently, in an updated 2019 study, Cardus Education reported on who chooses BC Christian schools and why; the study expressed similar findings to the 2011 Cardus report (Hunt & Van Pelt, 2019). For example, Hunt and Van Pelt (2019) argued that parents choose independent schools because of their supportive environments, emphasis on well-being, reliable instruction and learning, frustration with public schools, and communal approach to individual learning (p. 6). The implications are that independent schools play a critical role in the continued development of Canada and BC's diverse social context. As such, Van Brummelen (1996) questioned whether religious schools would continue to be seen by the public as true alternative learning communities that rigorously prepare students for ethical and social engagement in society. Such concerns have wide-ranging implications for human rights pertaining to religious freedoms, but also to inclusion and diversity and healthy democratic process. Independent schools exemplify principles of complex adaptive systems as they introduce localized adaptations and challenge what it means to be a pluralistic society.

Hull's (2003) research concerning Christian independent schools in Canada articulated the challenge of leadership for school reform in Christian schools by a cavalier spirit of enacting change, resistance efforts towards "substantive changes," and a question: "Why do Christian educators think they can implement their alternative educational vision without contesting the same forces that stymie the most radical public-school reformers?" (p. 216). Christian schools should consider whether notions such as change and innovation concerning faith-education are viewed as threats or opportunities to reimagine faith-informed decision-making. Since the era

that the Independent School Support Act (1977) and the Independent School Act (1989/1996) established the current legislation for protecting and sustaining Independent Schools in BC, Christian educational spaces and leaders have been underrepresented group in empirical literature when it comes to providing a comprehensive assessment of Canadian educational leadership values and the role that spirituality plays in shaping Canadian identity.

Fenwick's (2001) research out of the University of Alberta in the field of educational change and organizational spirituality articulated four spiritual tensions to explore with adult spirituality and educational leadership including the separation between church and state, how one nurtures a contemplative inner life, the distinction between notions of spirituality and religious faith in a context of meaning construction, and how diverse spiritualities can be brought together to address different human problems and needs. The dissertation study is primarily concerned with the latter three spiritual tensions in the research. Christian educational institutions will continue to be challenged to envision a more "sophisticated public theology that impacts communities more substantially" (Pennings et al., 2011, p. 38). There is a need for more integrated frameworks that help educational leaders engage with the practices incubated within the Christian tradition, facilitating more holistic commitments to individual and collective growth. The dissertation explores whether Christian approaches to educational change are prevalent and if phenomenological methods can unearth discussion of the relationship between faith and educational change practice in Christian school leadership. The next section examines the theoretical foundations in distributive, transformational, and instructional leadership theories.

Review of the Relevant Literature for Theories of Distributive, Instructional, and Transformational Leadership

This section discusses the nature of distributive leadership definitions in Canada and their specific implications for educational change leadership in Canada.

Spillane et al.'s (2004) Theory of Distributed Leadership

Spillane et al.'s (2004) theory of distributed educational leadership emphasizes collaboration, teamwork, shared leadership amongst different levels within a learning community. Some of the key components include creating collective efficacy, common goals, shared norms, promoting interdependence, task delegation, and adaptive leadership (p. 3). Leadership is enacted across multiple members within a system and not only those in formal roles (p. 6). However, argue that leadership is not confined to formal roles but is distributed across the organization, emerging through four functions: (i) leadership tasks and functions, (ii) task-enactment, (iii) social distribution of task-enactment, and (iv) situational distribution of task-enactment (p. 3). Leadership is the synergy of divergent actions and interactions around specific tasks. Spillane et al.'s (2004) theory is built on Weick's (1976) theory of loosely coupled systems, arguing that observers of complex emergent behaviors should develop protocols to "decouple" formal structures which leads to improvement of school leadership practices. This perspective shifts the focus from individual leadership traits to social context that promotes change.

Harris' (2008) Theory of Distributed Leadership

Similarly, Harris' (2008) theory of distributed leadership described the form of leadership as a "catch all" phrase used to describe practices leading to organizational improvement and change and the dynamic notion that leadership is an emergent concept and not static or fixed (p.

173). Harris (2008) also suggested that there are some implications when leadership is effectively dispersed or delegated, in contrast to being distributive. For example, proponents of distributive leadership argue that the approach encourages decisional-capital building (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) and increases leadership influence for future anticipated adaptive leadership challenges (Harris, 2008, p. 182). Opponents argued that distributive leadership introduces hidden discrepancies and inefficiencies such as informal leadership “dispersion,” increased conflicts, lack of coordination without centralized communication, and the need for social validation from leaders (p. 178). For example, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) argued that there are some hidden effects in distributed leadership. More centralized leadership does reduce the number of redundant connections and allow for better coordination of tasks, reduced meetings to attend, more direct connections, and social validation (Harris, 2008, p. 178). However, planned and coordinated distributive leadership efforts were found to be a factor in improving student learning for Canadian schools linking it to the educational improvement literature that emerged in the early 2000’s (Leithwood et al., 2006).

R. E. White et al.’s (2017) and Gronn’s (2002) Theories of Distributed Leadership

Different integrated theories of leadership practice have conceptualized the shift from solo leadership to distributive leadership. For example, R. E. White et al. (2017) speculated about the future of distributed leadership without glamorizing it as a utopian concept (p. 682). They found that increasing complexity in Canadian education contexts have led to the need for others to assist in the responsibilities faced by administrative teams (p. 687). Distributive leadership involves collective mobilization, decentralization, bottom-up procedures, and intentional resilience to change and dynamic process (p. 688). Gronn’s (2002) description of distributed leadership described three frames of integrated practice: (1) spontaneous collaboration: the

coalescing of expertise around a task for a particular time; (2) intuitive working relations: shared roles that are emergent when members must rely on one another in mutually dependent ways; and (3) institutionalised practices: adaptive team models or task forces reflect co-equal or shared responsibility across traditional hierarchical lines. Gronn's (2002) theory of integrated work expanded the discussion of integration in Domain One concerning complex adaptive systems and collective integration. Capacity building is one of the ways that distributive leadership and adaptive leadership help to describe what integrated educational leadership practice. The next section explores the implications of Stoll's (2009) theory of capacity building.

Stoll's (2009) Theory of Capacity Building

Stoll's (2009) theory describes how capacity building was the engine for the school improvement movement. Learning conversations that "force people to reexamine their practice and explore ways to enhance it," including facilitated professional learning and networked conversations, build shared commitment (p. 123). Capacity building is a power focused on "engaging in and sustaining the learning of people at all levels of the educational system for the collective purpose of enhancing student learning in its broadest sense" (Stoll, 2009, p. 125). By describing schools as complex ecologies (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016), Stoll (2009) argued that there were many different influences acting *on* and *in* the system including the following: (i) external context, local community, global change forces, political action and tone; (ii) history, relationships, school learning culture, leadership, support staff, morale, and students as context; (iii) individual teacher factors, micropolitics, structures, and a complex multifaceted ecology. Capacity building involves improving relationships leading to learning.

Stoll (2009) forwarded that capacity building is also about leaders developing their teams and improving students' learning conditions (p. 122). Network capacity building requires

leadership efforts to develop the personal, interpersonal, and organisational levels while navigating external pressures and internal resistance (Mitchell & Sackney, 2016; Fullan, 2006; Stoll, 1999, 2009).

Instructional Leadership Theorists

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) are credited as the seminal theorists for proposing instructional leadership models and the importance of the principal role as manager of the school's educational program. Functions of instructional leadership include the following: (i) framing and communicating school goals, (ii) supervising and evaluating instruction, (iii) coordinating curriculum, (iv) developing high academic standards and expectations, (v) monitoring student progress, (vi) promoting the professional development of teachers, (vii) protecting instructional time, and (viii) developing incentives for students and teachers (pp. 2-3). As principals perform these tasks, they create learning structures and opportunities to develop their leadership capabilities. They proposed that communication, decision making, conflict management, group process, change process, and environmental interaction all follow substantively in instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) argued that relationships based on collegiality and collaboration "rather than solely on authority" were more likely to lead to successful instructional changes. Their assessment was that principals could be either highly directed or "orchestrat[e] from the background" (p. 13) but the main distinction is how they use their process skills. However, other theorists have proposed different aspects of instructional leadership including Darling-Hammond's (1990) work on instructional policy into practice and (2000) work on teacher quality leading to student achievement, DuFour et al.'s (2021) work with professional learning communities, and Seashore-Louis and Robinson's (2012) work was instrumental in reframing the theory around school principals acting as mediators within

complex systems to navigate external accountability and promote school improvement using data. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) theory of instructional leadership reflects concern for contextual features and the principal as a lead learner. The implications are examined further in the discussion section conceptualizing learning leadership.

In contrast, Canadian educational leadership theories are saturated with these respective key instructional leaders' theories. The measurement of educational outcomes has, however, gone under criticism, leaving school leaders misguided with one mainstream tradition pushing back against educational outcomes, and another stream raising concern for using data effectively to ensure student learning improves (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In Canada, Leithwood (2008) argued that school leadership is "second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (p. 5). Since 2008, the claim has been endorsed by many educational thinkers (Hattie, 2008) and further validated in their updated research (Leithwood et al., 2019). School leaders are tasked with the responsibility to staff, support, monitor, focus, and improve the instructional program (Leithwood et al., 2019, p. 8). Creating a context in which leadership can adapt to different external challenges (declining school performance, for example), school leaders must provide pathways to use their indirect influence to motivate staff, improve working conditions, and develop teacher capabilities (p. 10). Internationally, there appears to be more discontentment with the western brand of instructional leadership. For example, Zhan et al. (2023) synthesized instructional, transformation, and distributed leadership into "shared instructional leadership" which broadened the decision-making around a collective vision, focus on instruction, monitoring of progress, and measurement of impact on student learning and achievement (p. 77). However, the Canadian version of instructional leadership appears to have traction due to it

being situated within distributed leadership theories and Canadian values that promote communal forms of well-being.

A key concern that Leithwood et al. (2019) raised was that researchers will need to move towards better descriptions of how successful leaders do their work and measure the resulting impact (p. 17). The dissertation research study utilizes a complex adaptive research paradigm to tune into this distinction between not only what a leader does but how or in what ways do the leaders perform their work. In the next section, theories of transformational leadership are discussed as a reaction to distributive and instructional leadership theories.

Transformational Leadership Theorists

Hallinger (2003) described a growing dissatisfaction in North America with instructional leadership in the 1990s. School leadership models began to evolve and embrace practices of “empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 331) leading to increased attention on second order changes primarily aimed at “the conditions in which others work towards change outcomes without specific top-down direction” (p. 338). My own assessment is that this had more to do with heroic and monolithic views of leadership practice than the theory itself. As such, seminal theorists reacted towards top-down and heroic reform approaches that were evident in instructional leadership (Bass, 1985, 1997; Burns, 1978; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Robinson et al., 2008). This led to renewed research on practices that better asserted decentralized power relationships between leaders and followers.

Burns’ (1978) theory of transformational leadership defined the relational and moral components that lead to an organization’s social change dynamics. In his theory, Burns (1978) distinguished transactional forms of leadership built on one way exchange to transformational leadership that promotes mutuality, opportunity for a more appropriate use of power, and met

needs for both leaders and followers (p. 11, 19). Transformational leaders began to be perceived as moral brokers tasked with the responsibility to develop the moral capacity in followers to achieve mutual purposes (Burns, 1978, p. 20). This shift emphasized how an organization's shared moral purpose and collaborative efforts, expanding the role of organizations, especially learning institutions from learning outcomes to having a function as microcosmos of social change.

In contrast, components in Bass' (1985) theory involved clearly defining a shared vision, managing teaching and learning, and creating a positive organizational capacity for learning. Both the theoretical and practical value, according to Hallinger (2003), needs to be validated in leadership models (p. 330). Theories of transformational leadership couple school improvement and school effectiveness theories with distributive and instructional leadership theories.

In the educational context, Robinson et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis of differential effects of leadership types in instructional and transformational leadership sought to account for small and indirect effects on school improvement consistent with extant literature. Robinson et al. (2008) systematically investigated 27 studies published between 1978 and 2006 in Canada, Australia, England, Hong Kong, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States, distinguishing factors in the literature on leadership within in elementary, middle, and high school contexts, and outcomes pertaining to social, school, well-being, attitudes, and assessment outcomes. Their findings revealed a "strong difference in the impact of transformational and instructional leadership" but cautioned against that interpretation because transformational leadership was predominantly used to understand social outcomes, whereas instructional leadership was used to investigate academic outcomes (p. 658).

Robinson et al.'s (2008) findings revealed that instructional leadership improved student outcomes three to four times more than transformational leadership due to quality of relationships in transformational leadership "not [being] predictive of the quality of student outcomes" (p. 665). Furthermore, their findings suggest that the loose coupling in schools between leadership and teacher has weakened interactions and conversations over what it means to build social capital to improve cultures of learning. Leadership practices that introduce and sustain a clear purpose around improving quality of teaching and student learning, supported by teacher development, resourcing, collaborative leadership, and a reflective professional environment, were found to be practices that could link the two leadership models. The dissertation study's interest is in how leaders make meaning about implicit and explicit social consciousness about transformational organizational practices. Consequently, the dissertation study develops descriptions about how the participants lead different types of change curricularly, theologically, socially, or professionally, as part of contextual exploration.

Robinson et al. (2008) critiqued transformational leadership's overemphasis on vision and inspiration, advocating instead for a focus on leadership practices directly tied to improving teaching and learning outcomes. Transformational leadership in education can be seen as not only motivating individuals but also strategically developing the skills and resources necessary for sustained improvement. When combined with distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2004), transformational leadership's emphasis on capacity building has served to enhance collective efficacy and led to the birth on the emphasis of schools as professional learning communities (Du Four et al., 2021). While Senge's (1999) theory of the learning organization is not explicitly examined here, it has been foundational to the shift in language from schools as educational

institutions to learning communities, thus describing an ontological reference point to a school's context for interactions.

Leithwood (1992, 2000) and Leithwood and Jantzi's (2005) corpus of theoretical and empirical work with K-12 school principals and effective schooling in Canada has examined how instructional and transformational leadership supported educational reforms by comparing their outcomes. For example, Leithwood (1992) argued, "We are learning that schools are complex systems made up of parts with greater interdependencies . . . Successful first order changes usually depend on the support provided through significant second-order changes" (p. 9). The dissertation seeks to analyze complex social interactions perceived by leaders through second order effects. Leithwood and Janzi (2005) studied both schools initiating their own reforms and responding to district-initiated reforms. They found that transformational leadership introduced and sustained a collaborative professional learning culture, supported teacher development, and improved group problem solving and decision making.

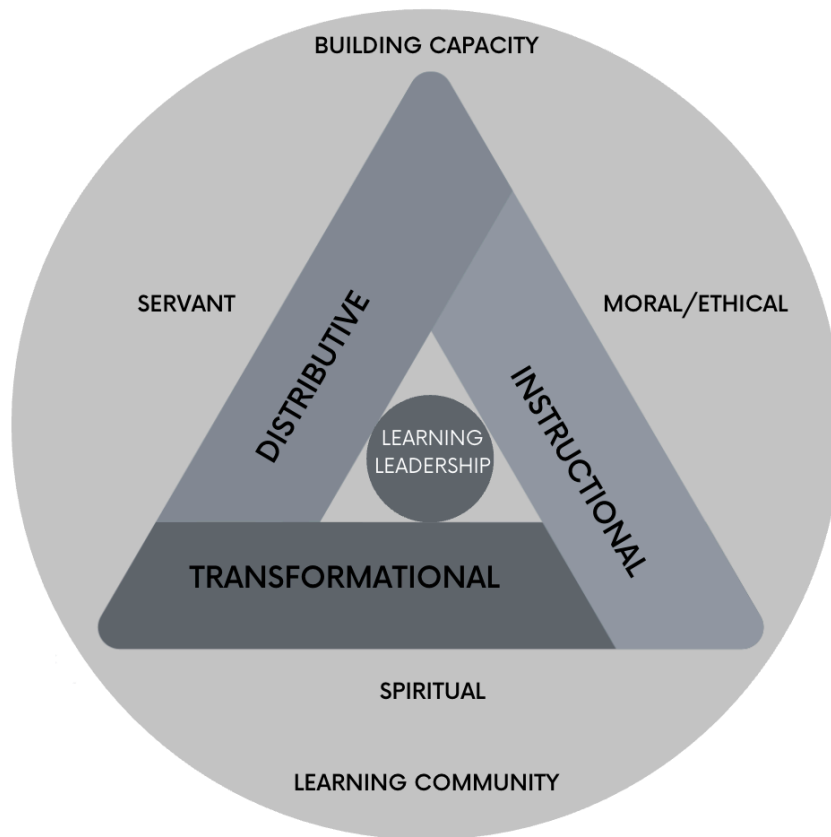
In BC, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in promoting capacity building by developing a shared vision and inspiring collective action toward educational improvement. Leithwood and Jantzi's (2005) theory of transformational leadership found that building trust, promoting collaboration, and developing a sense of purpose among staff. There is alignment between Kutsyruba and Walker's (2014) study on the lifecycle of trust for school leaders and Wang and Pollock's (2020) study of principal well-being. In addition, Leithwood and Jantzi's (2000) article reported that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' attitudinal responses towards school changes and improvement in instructional behaviors. Leithwood et al.'s (2008 & 2019) seven strong claims about successful school leadership established that leadership is important but only explains about five to seven

percent of differences in student learning. The dissertation on educational change or reform is not only concerned with transactional outcomes if change occurred, but also with what is internalized as experiences, feelings, and concepts of change for the leaders themselves. For that reason, the concerns are about generating strong hypotheses or claims about Christian educational reform practices that address teaching and learning, organizational culture, practical theological formation, and leadership development in the dissertation study.

Theories of Learning Leadership

As outlined, distributed, instructional, and transformational leadership theories have strengths and limitations. The interaction forwards an expansion of leadership theory in BC. In summary, transformational and distributed theories respond to social concerns directly and learning outcomes indirectly, and instructional leadership directly to achievement outcomes and social connections indirectly. As Canadian educational theories actively respond to the social conditions for reconciliation and the need to improve academic learning conditions, this has birthed what is being described in the Canadian educational context as learning leadership (see Figure 2.2 where the theoretical foundations are conceptualized).

The theoretical foundations of learning leadership have emerged from three main theories: Senge's (1999) theory of the learning organization, distributive, instructional, and transformational leadership with interactions informed by other theories such as servant, moral, and spiritual leadership, and Hallinger and Heck's (2010) theory of leadership for learning. Senge's (1999) theory of the learning organization described how as the world has "become more interconnected . . . complex and dynamic, work must become more 'learningful'" (p. 4) and that organizations are "bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions" (p. 7) leading to change. Senge's (1999) primary interest was in how mutual connections led to organizational

Figure 2.2*Theoretical Foundations of Learning Leadership*

learning. The convergence of distributive, instructional, and transformational leadership has deepened inquiry into the principal's role as a lead learner who advances student achievement, strengthens curriculum coherence, cultivates professional learning communities, expands networks, and drives instructional improvement. Hallinger and Heck's (2010) theory of leadership for learning sought to conceptualize a form of leadership that is distributive, shared, formally and informally transformative, having impact on student outcomes, building capacity for change, deepening organizational innovation and commitment, improving teaching and learning, and sustaining a school-wide focus for all members of a learning community (pp. 656-657). In essence, leadership for learning encompasses more of the dynamic and emergent process

within the social context of change in a learning community that described initial conditions, adaptive conditions, and long-term impacts.

Hallinger and Heck's (2010) systematic study shifted attention from direct effects in instructional leadership to measure the indirect effects of leadership on school improvement. The development of literature on indirect effects of leadership, beyond only the principal, to leadership teams, collaboration, capacity building, and longitudinal studies raised questions about whether collaborative leadership makes a difference on school improvement. Wood's (2023) discussion of learning leadership in transactional systems discussed in the empirical articles section here in Domain Three is set within Canadian educational contexts. It builds on Burns's (1978), Cherkowski's (2016), Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012), Leithwood's (2008, 2019), Senge's (1999), and Timperly's (2011) theories. It characterizes the shift to understand leadership decision making and meaning making, deepening understanding of the relationship between purpose, process, practices, and persons. The key shift in learning leadership is the definition that all members of the community are learners; thus, the efforts of educational leaders are also to develop the learning organization for the purpose of recirculating professional capabilities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Canadian educational leadership has been derived from several dialects in complex adaptive, relational, servant leadership, instructional leadership, within the Canadian socio-political expression that both embraces and resists centralization, values voice and social reform, and understands collaboration to be necessary for most tasks worth pursuing. Thus, Canadian educational leadership is distinguished by mutuality, shared responsibility, value for diverse perspectives, co-creation, interdependence, and collectivist purposes leading to not only individuals but communities thriving because of learning. The next table aims to connect

previous theoretical and empirical concerns in Chapter Two, Domain One with complex adaptive leadership to educational change leadership in the dialect of BC's notion of learning leadership.

In the shared components category, there is a proposal of the language anticipated that would occur as participants describe adaptive leadership in the dialect of educational learning leadership practice. Table 2.5 compares adaptive leadership to that of learning leadership, helping bridge the connection between complex adaptive leadership theory with the conceptual framework of learning leadership and capacity building that directs the goals, approaches, and efforts to develop the learning leader and learning community. Capacity building is also linked to theories of adaptive leadership and learning leadership, which is compared and contrasted below in Table 2.5.

Synthesizing the Theories

We have a system of values that are built on mutuality, shared learning, adaptive practices, community engagement, and benefit to all members; however, Canadian educational leaders appear to still experience top-down expectations and fragmentation, which has led to the current proliferation of studies concerning leadership development and practices. Participants may describe, for example, that there are possible benefits to flatter or more distributive organizations, or they may align with recent research that has emphasized how flatter organizations intensify the work of leaders and increase managerial tasks. The theories are brought together to better attend to the current state of research in educational leadership practice.

Table 2.5*Comparison Between Adaptive Leadership and Learning Leadership*

Component	Adaptive Leadership	Shared Components	Learning Leadership
Goals	Adapt to new challenges in flexible ways; resilience as the emergent property leading to improvement (Lindstedt, 2022; Heifetz, 1994, 2009).	Improve the system by using learning groups and innovation to mobilize teams towards resilience and learning.	Develop the learning community and develop the learning leaders: All members of the organization are learners, contributing to continuous improvement <i>for</i> , <i>with</i> , and <i>by</i> formal and informal leaders.
Approach	Meet the next challenge within the system by responding with emergent solutions (Heifetz, 1994, 2009).	Collaboration, reflection, learning and development, and system, group, and individual response.	Learning to learn, learning to lead, leading from learning, and leading to learn: Capacity building whereby leaders develop members of their organization (see Figure 2.2).
Efforts	Address ambiguity by developing relationships, promoting recombinations, and creating feedback loops (Miller et al., 2022a, p. 60).	Improve educational goals by engaging members of the learning community.	Learning <i>about</i> the community, learning <i>with</i> the community, and learning <i>for</i> the community's purpose, function, and formation.

Taken together, Figure 2.3 proposes a synthesizing model for what appears to be the goals, approaches, and efforts in learning leadership.

In the next section, four empirical studies on the experiences of BC K-12 school leaders are forwarded, focusing the analysis on leadership well-being and social capital. Four empirical studies follow, focusing analysis on the practices of BC K-12 school leaders, adaptive and learning leadership, synodality, middle leadership, and social capacity building. Appendix C, Table C.1 provides a summary table of the eight empirical articles that are reviewed related to Canadian Educational Leadership experiences and practices. Appendix C, Table C.2 includes a

table of eight supplemental empirical studies that may direct other researchers to the research conducted related to the field of Canadian educational leadership practice. However, it is important to note that there are no recent empirical articles concerning Christian educational leadership practice in BC that could be identified. Consequently, this is an area where the dissertation research intends to make a contribution.

Figure 2.3

Proposal of Learning Leadership



Empirical Studies on the Experiences of British Columbia (BC) K-12 School Leaders

In this first article, Cherkowski et al. (2020) analyzed a multiyear research study on BC K-12 school leadership by using a positive organizational perspective. The purpose of their study

was to describe the lived experiences of principals and vice-principals and how they experience workplace flourishing. Seligman (2011)'s five pillars of well-being that include positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment form the theoretical basis in which the well-being of BC lead from positive school leadership (Louis & Murphy, 2018; Murphy & Louis, 2018; Cherkowski et al., 2020, p. 6). The researchers incorporate their findings from positive psychology to describe positive, oral, relational, and spiritual stewardship orientations.

A “reflective and interpretive” research design was used to explore sense of flourishing amongst the participant BC K-12 school leaders. Qualitative phenomenological interviews and analysis were employed to examine “lived, concrete and situated experiences” of informants who had experienced a sense of well-being at work, positivity, meaning, purpose, and accomplishment. Participants were recommended by superintendents from each district, of which seven were principals and two were vice principals having between five and 25 years of experience, in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, with school populations ranging in size from 250 to 800 students. Data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews sought to detail experiences in about a 90-minute timeframe. The phenomenological analysis aimed to both describe *what* participants experienced and *how* they experienced it. Deductive analysis grouped data into three well-being constructs (purpose, passion, and play), and inductive analysis revealed *presence* as a fourth value-based construct (p. 6).

Participants described flourishing narratives where they were able to work hard and also stay “engaged, connected and purposeful” leading to being fully present in both their personal and professional lives (p. 7). Collaborative flourishing was also described as how school leaders built capacity, helped facilitate connections for others, enabled members of their teams to fulfil

their ideas and hopes, brought joy into the workplace, built and sustained trust, and established relationships that benefited their school communities. Sense of purpose for the school leader participants was largely connected to working with members on shared goals, typically around improving learning. A leader's quality of relationships revealed feelings of safety, well-being, and effectiveness. Play was a key value that actively promoted positive feelings amongst the teams, broke down barriers, and increased social agency within the leaders' learning communities. Supporting administrator well-being was a key finding as the leader is positioned between "wider social and professional contexts" (p. 12) and a key agent of communal well-being.

A possible series of interrelated limitations in the study was that the researchers started by having superintendents identify principals from their districts that "seemed to demonstrate a sense of engagement, quality relationships, positivity, meaning, purpose, and accomplishment" without the researcher describing transparently from the recommendations of superintendents which participants were purposively selected and not only based on "willingness to participate" (p. 5). Furthermore, along the same sample selection concern, it would have helped to justify this decision by exploring any literature that supports how superintendent supervisors influence district leadership well-being. In addition, the deductive analysis procedures raise questions about compatibility with phenomenological inquiry, as the research paradigm involves rigorous bracketing of how the researcher comes to the research by minimizing their preconceived interpretations and working inductively to understand what the experiences mean for participants. It is necessary to question whether ascribing preidentified or deductive codes to the data was a suitable measure and this researcher would have liked to see how the researchers built

relationship with the participants inviting their mutual evaluation of the findings to support trustworthiness and accurate details of the research phenomenon.

The findings in Cherkowski et al.'s (2020) study connects closely with the discussion in Chapter Two, Domain One on brokerage theories. Leaders are positioned within a wider network ecology and their well-being reflects the strength of strong and weak ties. As leaders experience flourishing, they are able to target subcultures and build capacity with informal leaders. Evoking positive emotions leads to adaptive leadership practices that enable leaders to sustain change within their communities, which was an implicit finding in Cherkowski et al.'s (2020) study: sustainable change emerges from the practices of flourishing leaders, which was raised in Chapter Two, Domain One. It also raises questions about the prevalence of different values between public and Christian independent schools and whether achieving balance for leaders is desired. In addition, the role of resistance is almost entirely unexamined, raising concerns that a positive leadership lens may miss the essence of complex adaptive leadership for Christian schools, particularly around notions of disruption, chaos, disorder, and hurt.

In the next study, Mombourquette (2017) interviewed 27 elementary, middle, and high school principals from Alberta using a semi-structured format to understand principal practice quality and the role of vision. The Alberta Ministry of Education formalized standards for principals in 2009. One of the standards includes "Embodying Visionary Leadership," which describes communicating sound educational philosophy based on research, leadership with school authority's vision and mission, meaningful community engagement leading to school improvement, planning and decision making based on shared vision and school culture, change and innovation leadership with current and future needs, analysis of data to achieve school goals, and communicate, celebrate, and inspire continuous growth (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 4). The

purpose of the study was explore the following questions: (i) whether Alberta school leaders have clear school visions, (ii) what the vision of the schools looks like, (iii) how principals establish and maintain school vision, (iv) how the vision in urban, rural, provincial, and First Nations schools looks, (v) if gender is a contributing factor to differences in school vision, and (vi) if years of experience influences ways in which school leaders implement vision.

A multiple-case orientation involving semi-structured interviews was conducted with the 27 principal participants. A professional company transcribed the interviews. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used to generate themes in the final report. Principal participants were nominated by district superintendents or directors of education. Data emerged from school achievement data that was publicly available and from the interviews. Two types of questions were asked: (i) Descriptive questions: What is happening or what has happened? and (ii) Explanatory questions: How or why did something happen?

The findings discussed school achievement levels in relation to the implementation of a shared vision, socio-economic status, and location of the school. Principals from the *higher-than-expected* achievement schools believed strongly in their capabilities of developing a community with shared vision. They described how they used data from major assessments kept them on track especially when it came to discerning whether an initiative was a new fad or worth their innovation efforts (p. 28). Principals from schools with results lower than expected did not have their school's mission internalized, "My vision for our school is . . . okay . . . I think that we need to work on our school vision. We did have a school vision when I started to work here . . ." (Principal 2, as cited on p. 30). Principals of the lower-than-expected group struggled to "articulate a clear way in which they could help build levels of trust and in turn develop more effective practices within their schools" (p. 30), raising concerns about how mission and vision

could be used to drive program development. Provincial schools compared to First Nations schools, of which four out of the five First Nations schools met the criteria as high achieving and one did not, described how the school was connected to the culture of the local people, and they had input from various members of their community. First Nations schools collected different forms of data from stakeholders, raising considerations about what is meant by data-informed leadership and how schools can benefit from gathering evidence of growth.

In terms of the implications, Momberquette (2017) described how the “down to earth” vision articulated was as important as the “official” version of the vision (p. 32). While some research around distributive leadership critiques top-down forms of transformational leadership, Momberquette (2017) offered an alternative perspective that both individualist and collective vision setting are necessary and even more important is that the leader beliefs in their capabilities to communicate vision with educational stakeholders (p. 33). For the research study, it will be important to reflect on the interaction between the leader’s practices and their community’s practices and how there is mutuality, independence, and interdependence around how leaders operationalize their visions of change within curricular, organizational, and theological initiatives. What a leader believes about their change efforts may implicitly reveal factors of self-belief congruent with Momberquette’s (2017) assessment of a leader having vision for themselves, leading to coherence in vision for their learning communities.

One of the recurring limitations that Hartney et al. (2023) aimed to address in their research was to disentangle confirmatory research on educational leadership from exploratory research using generative dialogue (GD). GD is a “conversational approach in which partners let go of taking or defending a position and instead attend to the flow of a conversation,” leading to new ways to think about their experiences and practices (p. 85). In contrast, current leadership

research has been “problematic” as Hartney et al. (2023) argued, in that authors are “essentially evaluating their own work,” but what is needed is increased methodological objectivity so researchers are “uninvolved in the process that they are evaluating” (pp. 85-86).

The purpose of the study was to understand how today Canadian principals are “viewed as champions of change and innovation and as leaders of teaching and learning, rather than solely administrators and managers” (Alberta Teachers Association, 2014, p. 15), while discussing principal and vice principal priorities, evaluating the applicability of GD approach for leadership development, and evaluating GD leading to school improvement.

The study included anonymously invited principals and vice principals from 47 schools in an affluent Western Canada school district. Participants were already involved in GD as a part of their professional growth. With the study being conducted in two waves, Wave I included 37 data submissions and Wave II, five virtual interviews were conducted. Data was transcribed and analyzed using NVIVO 11 and grounded theory. Wave I developed the themes for Wave II to construct the final model. The researchers designed the study to minimize preconceptions and instead focus on the expressed views of the participants. Review of open and axial codes took place by two independent researchers before generating the final model.

The findings organized the principal and vice principals’ priorities, experiences of GD, and evaluation of GD in school improvement. Findings from Wave I described the following themes: centrality of relationships, challenges to relationships, and supports to relationships. A key concern revealed was that principal interior reflection on their professional relationships disclosed how they experienced support and challenges. For example, principals described how to build conflict conversations with members of their communities such as parents and teachers. Participants described constraints around addressing short and long-term priorities with

insufficient resources. One participant was critical about how the network of principals and vice principals was a “closed group of people – keeping head down, eyes on shoes” (p. 88), and instead the purpose of networks are to rebuild supportive relationships conveyed through messages of care and learning. Wave II’s findings identified that the environment, relationships, and leadership practices, through the process of leadership communication, self-reflection, safety, honesty, supports, and supervision, lead to outcomes of professional growth, positive school culture, and accountability encouraging continuous improvement. In terms of understanding priorities, participants affirmed the importance of managing stress, conflict, time, resources, and communication. There were a few statements that related to the GD process that were positive, yet the low response rate did not serve to confirm the effectiveness of GD or its particular value as an approach supporting principal and vice principal professional development or school improvement.

As such, Hartney et al.’s (2023) study raises the importance of methodological objectivity when exploring participant self-reflections; however, Hartney et al.’s (2023) study, methodologically, needed a third wave, separating their research questions on participant experiences of interactions from a more retrospective assessment of the GD approach in their professional learning at a later data collection point. While the researchers suggest that the GD approach is more of a non-directive, developmental approach facilitating professional learning and “does not fully address the challenges [participants] are facing, as reflected in the data,” they argue for more “directive, deficit-based approaches” to meet the gaps. Their assessment makes sense, yet it is possible that a more multi-step phenomenological approach inviting participant context and storytelling, then participant meaning making, might be a more effective means of describing possible shifts in the understanding of school improvement and the school leader.

One of the limitations that was identified raised questions about the trade off in the research methodology of being focused on engagement with participants using the GD approach, some may have “demonstrated a lack of understanding GD” (p. 88), versus collecting accurate data methodologically. As such, in the dissertation research study, it would be important to build relationships with participants in a primary interview and then allow participants to return to their experiences. Such an approach may facilitate a higher level of data validity as preconceptions are bracketed out while allowing both a higher view of participant meaning making and confirmation of their experiences in a follow up interview. The methodological considerations are discussed in Chapter Four.

In the last article of this section exploring BC K-12 school leaders’ experiences, Wang (2022) examined the implications for how job demands have overburdened principals’ “personal and professional capacity and affect[ed] their performance and well-being,” requiring further interpretive studies on their experiences (p. 1014). The key problem is that the job demands have led to work intensification and shifts in how change is manifested in the principals’ work experiences. Previous research has highlighted factors contributing to principals’ work intensity and how they manifest in context and in detrimental ways (p. 1013), and literature has also raised concern for principal well-being and self-care (p. 1014). The principalship is difficult and complex (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 2), requiring “instructional, managerial, and day-to-day educational and non-educational tasks” (Darmody & Smyth, 2016), and the work continues to change.

In essence, Wang’s (2022) research addressed a gap in understanding the supports that principals need to prepare them for the changing nature of the principalship. The literature review explored job demand characteristics that identified several contributing factors to work

intensification including work overload, role ambiguity, task interruptions, interpersonal conflict, job insecurity, constraints, work-home interference (Olafsen & Frølund, 2018; Tadić et al., 2015; Van den Broeck et al., 2010), linking motivational processes to well-being, performance, and psychological needs. Job demand has potential to yield both possible positive and negative outcomes as it “stimulate[s] and appeal[s] to employees’ competence and contribute[s] to their personal and professional growth” (Van den Broeck et al., 2010; Wang, 2022, p. 1015). The research questions explored the ways job demands manifest in principals’ intensified work conditions and what perceived aspects of the job demands help principals create a sense of control by seeking to understand their reactions to educational policies and practices.

Eighteen principals in the Metro Vancouver area participated in qualitative, semi-structured one-hour interviews on leadership practices and challenges. Participants were recruited through an advertisement in the BC principal and vice principals’ association e-newsletter. Efforts were made to consider a range of principals’ work experiences, age, race/ethnicity, and school type. The interviews were conducted by phone and Skype, transcribed, and explored using thematic analysis. Two main categories including (i) job challenges: obstacles that can be overcome and (ii) job hinderances: threatening constraints connected the components of workload, time pressure, cognitive demands, role ambiguity and conflict, interpersonal conflict, and policy and organizational constraints to the manifestations (ie. Intensity of role, competing priorities, interruptions, conflict, dealing with difficult, and hiring and firing; p. 1017).

Guided by their conceptual framework in the job demands model (Van den Broeck et al., 2010), the findings identified how principal work has become increasingly fragmented due to the following: more demanding from board offices, complicated by inadequate resources,

dilemmatic situations leading to unresolved conflicts and stress, pressure to complete tasks and meet everyone's needs, significant cognitive demands, expanded administrative and managerial responsibilities, obligation to solve problems, unclear work parameters, and unhealthy work environments leading to decreased achievement and well-being. Increased workload has led to increased unpredictability and work fragmentation, while increased expectations on transformative and instructional leadership has not shifted demands away from managerial tasks (p. 1026). Principals are taking on responsibilities outside the purview of their job descriptions, thus requiring more skill development as the "traditional managerial concerns of school administration have not disappeared but are amplified . . ." (p. 1026). The findings raised concerns about leading in unionized environments might reduce principal autonomy, relational capabilities, and increase job demands without increasing job control. Wang (2022) concludes by suggesting, "[w]hat was lacking in their principalship was a greater sense of control and autonomy over their work environment. This lack of control tends to make their role more a manager than a leader or an educator" (p. 1027). With additional concern for some of the principal demands being downloaded to middle leaders and adding to their complexity, there was minimal discussion of principal work becoming more distributive or shared.

Wang's (2022) discussion of the shifting socio-political environment in which BC K-12 leaders work is changing, thus raising the importance of studying educational change from leadership lived experiences in the K-12 Christian schools' context. While an explicit goal of the dissertation is not to contrast Christian independent school leadership from public school leadership, implicitly, questions of how the different system and school environments operate in conditions of complexity and change might raise questions about differences in job demands interpersonally, politically, and spiritually for BC K-12 Christian school leaders. Examining

principal work intensification in BC K-12 Christian school teachers' experiences is a worthy task, yet the dissertation study delimits from addressing factors contributing to well-being to instead framed the dissertation study's purpose and scope on what participants might reveal about their lived experiences of educational change. By examining studies in the BC education context, the dissertation research aims to be more attentive to what participants share about the experiences of their work and set additional problems aside for further inquiry following the dissertation research.

Canadian School Leaders' Practices

Within the Canadian educational context, learning leadership has emerged as a framework that addresses components in leadership theories such as servant leadership, adaptive leadership, school leadership, and instructional leadership. Wood's (2023) research on the Canadian principalship linked schools as transactional systems to the complex actions and interactions that leaders take to orient their communities towards professional and relational development (Harris & Jones, 2021; Timperley, 2011). Learning leadership has been contrasted from accountability, managerial work, or reform, and in essence is the ability to encourage transformation and learning that is connected to the system's purpose (p. 43). Principals engage in complex leadership, which often involves actions from incongruent roles (p. 42) and integration of transactional actions that yield outcomes with transformations that are meaningful, sustained, long-term, and supportive (p. 43). In addition to the learning leadership framework, dialogic thinking was forwarded to help frame the educational leader's practice, serving to facilitate exploration of professional and systemic goals and high school principalship.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the essence of how principals enact and experience learning leadership. Participants were seven Alberta high school

principals, initially recruited by soliciting permission from 14 superintendents. The researchers utilized the superintendent's permission to indicate participants would be suitable for the study. From the 20 principals in six divisions, the seven high school principals that volunteered for the study were from rural and urban, small, medium, and large population centers, and had a range in years of experience (three participants had 20 years, two had between 10 and 20 years, and three were in their first decade). The methodology involved "patience, reflection, interrogation, recognition, and discipline" as the researcher's understanding developed through analysis and writing (p. 44). Descriptive data, guided by open topics (1) learning to be a leader, (2) transactional learning, (3) transformational learning, and (4) balancing transactions and transformations were collected through open interviews transcribed by a third party. Thematic analysis to uncover meaning (van Manen, 2016, p. 319) was embedded in the three-step process of wholistic reading, selecting reading, and detailed reading. It was not explicitly stated that only one interview per participant was conducted, but this was subtly implied by what was not said.

Principals described their experiences of learning leadership with a heightened awareness of their community's learning needs and how they learned, modelled learning, and their learning affected their school's culture (p. 45). Four themes emerged in the analysis: (1) learning as the purpose, (2) balancing outside with inside demands, (3) utilizing learning to build community, and (4) leadership as mediation. In the first theme, participants described a shift from supporting others to do *their* work to leading others to learn (p. 46). Principals described the tensions of balancing external demands with professional development expectations, professional standards, curriculum changes, and constant school reform. In response, when principals used research and linked the school efforts towards supporting student learning, belief in the reform increased (p. 46). To build a learning community, principals created spaces where teachers were co-learner

together. Principals understood themselves as the middle person, mediators, those that operated in between, creating discomfort leading to learning, and having a high value for the process.

A limitation in the study was that it had to reduce the reported 150 pages of transcripts to short, synthesized and aggregated descriptions. One implication of the researcher's choice to report the themes as large categories seemed to diminish participant voices as the researcher did not describe aspects of internal disagreement between participants' experiences or present findings in an interactive manner. The third segment of balancing transactions and transformations may have introduced a potential researcher bias that school leaders move from being transactional to transformational. The notion of learning leadership links to discussion of middle leadership and educational change leaders as brokers as discussed in Chapter Two, Domain One. Learning leadership presents as a possible way that brokers in complex systems facilitate trust, care, and improvement by bridging transactional and transformational outcomes. In the dissertation study, discussion of the implications should participants raise questions about transactional and transformational components related to their communities of faith would help describe how leaders learn, mediate, facilitate learning, and in essence lead change *for, with, to,* and *by* their communities.

The vision of synodality described in Hoven et al.'s (2024) study of Catholic school system leaders in Canada emerged from the Vatican's General Secretariat of the Synod (2024) as a description of when all the members journey together and take part in the mission, as well as plant dreams, draw from prophecies and visions, allow for flourishing, inspiring trust, healing, building relationships, growing new hope, learning from one another, creating resourcefulness, developing warm hearts, and strengthening hands (p. 3). Hoven's (2024) study considers how Pope Francis' (2024) vision might spark renewal and change in Catholic schools. There are four

commitments in synodality: (i) transforming ecclesial relationships, (ii) creating a culture of encounter and nurturing friendships, (iii) focusing on the essentials of the Christian faith, and (iv) authentic exercise of authority through the Spirit (pp. 2-4). The context in which Catholic schools in Western Canada has many distinguishing features. Notably, they teach religious classes, participate in communal spiritual practices, adopt moral positions, and distinguish themselves from public schools while maintaining government standards (p. 4). The study sought to determine how and where system leaders practiced synodality in their leadership and how it could strengthen Catholic schools.

By identifying ten baptized Catholic chief superintendents who were the CEOs of their respective school districts, the study explored their high-level perspectives of Catholic schooling. Participants were recruited at a superintendent meeting voluntarily. The semi-structured interviews ranged from 50 to 90 minutes and included giving participants 15 questions in advance to discuss at the interview. Transcripts were organized to identify patterns that revealed clusters of meaning related to the theme of synodality; however, the researchers clarified that “the theme of synodality was not explicitly asked about nor discussed in the interviews, the study occurred in the midst of the synod diocesan phase of which some superintendents were directly involved” (p. 5). To protect anonymity as ten superintendents out of a possible population of 30 superintendents were involved, context was not linked to the pseudonymized leader.

The researchers suggested that the results revealed that superintendents’ leadership styles were marked by synodality, but there were “subtle differences,” framing their findings around the four commitments to synodality. In terms of reshaping relationships, superintendents described practices how their district worked to “dismantle the top-down structure” and “replace with collaborative environments” (p. 6) as they participated in shared spiritual conversations

leading to their community's learning. Some participants described how there are shifts from the superintendent leading from their offices to leading out in their school communities. Giving voice to others in their communities was a key practice. As participants described focusing on the essentials of the Christian faith in their district's learning, they described how to address increasing fragmentation of beliefs by ensuring they would support families to pass on the faith. One participant highlighted the challenge of navigating worldly authorities and, in response, their efforts were to help their district make faith more practical by raising questions about the integration of faith in teaching by encouraging more holistic teaching at the heart.

The findings in Hoven et al.'s (2024) study identified the need to re-examine relationships that lead to change and the importance of building a culture of encounter that includes prophetic voices. One particular concern raised by the researchers links leadership practice to faith-informed practice:

When policies and procedures direct decision-making processes, a synodal approach counters by asking for deep listening to others and attentiveness to the Spirit. Instead of blindly seeking greater efficiencies, smoother transactions, and improved networks, a Gospel-inspired school leadership must seek deeper truths through repentance, openness, and a willingness to respond. Interviewed superintendents believed that their vulnerability and faithfulness forged communal bonds. (Hoven, 2024, p. 9)

While superintendents have positioned themselves as the advocates, what seems to go overlooked in Hoven et al.'s (2024) study is that superintendents functionally used to play the gatekeeper role from behind their desks and now are called to be bridgers and bonders of relationship in faithful Christian ways from public spaces. The shift requires the sort of courage that Hoven et al. (2024) is evoking, built upon examination of how Christian leaders embody their faith in their practice positionally within their organizations. Concern was initially raised in Chapter Two, Domain One when exploring how leaders interact with internal and external

members of their networks to facilitate change. A practical concern is how middle leaders are developed not only for performance related involvement but also innovation and diversification of ideas and connections, playing a brokering role within complex adaptive systems. The potential implications are analyzed in Rheume et al.'s (2021) study on how Canadian school leaders build trust across their organizations.

In this next article, Rheume et al. (2021) presents qualitative findings from a doctoral study that examined middle school leadership in Central Alberta public and Catholic schools. The purpose of the study was to understand whether there was alignment with the three-dimensional theoretical model in the Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Leader (DRMLL) developed by Brown et al. (2002) and expanded upon for the past two decades. The researchers took a “fresh look” (p. 2) at the expanded and revised model from Bishop and Harrison (2021). The recent updates in the DRMLL model mark a shift towards more holistic and individualized approaches to adolescent learning. Conceptually, the framework forwards shifts in responsiveness to adolescent needs, aware of increasing social identity and complexity, with school practices leading to their thriving.

Responsive middle level leaders introduce structures that allow for collaboration with students, improve the instructional program, provide opportunities for students to explore their identity, and position staff in places to address strategies that support adolescent development. Responsive leadership in the middle school context also involves understanding the developmental characteristics by “establishing, engaging, equitable learning environments that empower learners to thrive,” developing faculty that create a “shared vision and a collaborative culture focused on continuous improvement” and developing the school by “implementing the organizational structures of the middle school concept” leading to relationships and learning (p.

5). Taken together, leadership has been cited to have a significant effect on the “quality of the school organization and on student learning” (Leithwood, 2007, p. 46), thus aligning with core leadership practices in key Canadian theories of school leadership.

The qualitative, exploratory case study using a constructivist worldview purposefully sampled 17 middle grade administrators (principals and vice principals) from three school districts (nine males and eight females), including and around Red Deer in central Alberta (Chinook’s Edge, eight participants; Red Deer Catholic, five participants; and Red Deer Public, four participants). Participants held middle leadership roles and had various experiences that ranged from one to twenty years and service in elementary, middle, and high school leadership positions. The data collection included six focus group interviews with 11 questions that invited participants to discuss leadership, the middle school concept, instruction, and recommendations for teacher education. Conversations ranged between 28 and 72 minutes and transcripts were generated and analyzed using a long-table analysis. Trustworthiness practices were identified in the consistent use of the focus group guide, inductive analysis and descriptive data reporting, and data triangulation amongst the researchers.

Findings from the study identified three areas of responsive middle leadership including responsiveness to the (a) development of adolescents, (b) development of faculty, and (c) the middle school itself. Instructional leadership practices that promote “teaming” and “community-building structures” (Brown et al., 2002, p. 464), empowerment of staff to support students in shared leadership capacities, removing roadblocks to teacher self-efficacy, promotion of risk-taking, and middle leaders encouraging staff to participate in the shared vision.

Despite the DRMLL’s theoretical basis in responsive leadership leading to capacity building and continuous improvement for students, staff, and school leaders, some of the

limitations in the DRMLL are around the curriculum and instructional components. Rheume et al. (2021) described that while the curriculum was to be “challenging, exploratory, integrative, and diverse” (Bishop & Harrison, 2021, p. 27), it was more of a “promise yet unfulfilled” (p. 13), raising questions about the validity and sustainability of the practices leading to longitudinal growth. This study also describes the need for educational leaders to assess the overall and particular impact of change initiatives and whether it is leading to improved student learning. Alberta Catholic school principals might have described any differences in their experiences due to their contexts or possible beliefs that would situate their practices differently from that of their public-school counterparts. The dissertation study seeks to understand the experiences of Protestant Christian school leaders and the meaning they make about their practices. The middle school concept has grown in the Province of British Columbia, so it would be important to analyze possible implications with an understanding of the unique developmental context in such schools and administrators’ lives.

In the final empirical study, Kutsyuruba et al. (2024a) investigated factors contributing to the flourishing and well-being of outstanding Canadian principals. Attention to well-being has increased in research due to job demands and work intensification (p. 17). The purpose of the research was to question how successful and effective principals perceive positive feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment to excel in their roles, while managing inherent and imposed difficulties on their jobs (p. 18) with the literature review discussing components of flourishing including flow, thriving, resilience, and grit. Furthermore, the study explored 73 (usable) survey responses from award-winning principals from Canada’s Outstanding Principals program between 2004 and 2022, with selection criteria for winners who demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrating something “truly remarkable in public education” (The

Learning Partnership, 2019; Kutsyuruba et al., 2024a, p. 18). The study first sought to understand sense making around flourishing and, second, the antecedent factors contributing to flourishing in school environments.

Methodologically, the study was a mixed-method design of a questionnaire and follow up interviews for elaboration on themes and data triangulation. However, the study presented data from the online survey portion. The survey had 62 closed and 12 open-ended questions that were thematically organized based on the flourishing components (flow, flourishing and thriving, resilience, grit, and well-being; p. 21). Demographic data indicated that all provinces and territories were represented in the participants except for the Yukon. There was an equal split in gender representation (37 participants, 51% female and 36 participants, 49% male; p. 21). The majority of the participants had been principals for 11 years or more (70%) and 75% of the participants responded that they had some training in mental health or well-being (p. 22). An open and inductive approach to generating codes and themes was used for the qualitative analysis.

The findings were organized under the deductive themes of flow, thriving, resilience, and grit. A key strength in the reporting was that the researchers presented findings from each of the items in the questionnaire and descriptions about school leaders' feelings of work: sense of immersion, joy, command, synergy, and accomplishment, which were linked to school leaders experiencing accomplishment when working in shared or collaborative team environments (p. 24). From the correlation analysis, there was significant medium positive correlation between flow and thriving ($r = 0.313$, $n = 73$, $p = 0.007$), flow and resilience had a significant small positive correlation ($r = 0.259$, $n = 73$, $p = 0.027$), thriving and resilience had a significant large positive correlation ($r = 0.814$, $n = 73$, $p = 0.001$), thriving and grit had a significant large

positive correlation ($r = 0.706, n = 73, p = 0.001$), and resilience and grit had a significant large positive correlation ($r = 0.881, n = 73, p = 0.001$). The findings suggest that principal flourishing is a prerequisite for school flourishing and also that there is an interdependent relationship between social factors and skill related factors for leadership development. In addition, the findings in Kutsyuruba et al.'s (2024a) study links closely to discussion of positive social contagion in the organizational change discussion concerning networks and brokerage in Domain Two. The interconnected nature of the factors suggests that well-being is not necessarily placed on a continuum but is a result of a relational network that drives personal and collective flourishing. In other words, leadership well-being can be learned through positive networks.

This led to greater attentiveness that providing opportunity for participants to speak to their well-being as they facilitate educational change by inviting them to explore what it has felt like to lead change was critical for framing the interviews. One of the limitations of generalizability in the study is that it was conducted with public school leaders. The dissertation aimed to situate the lived experiences and perceptions of leaders within Christian independent school contexts. The dissertation's interview design was then constructed in a way to build rapport with participants, to enable them to think reflexively about their well-being, rather than coming to the data with descriptive categories already generated. A summary of the minor domain is provided next.

Summary of Domain Three's Empirical Claims

The primary claim taken from this domain and directly applicable to the context of the dissertation research study is to invite participants school leaders to describe how participants lead educational change initiatives within their BC K-12 Christian independent school's context, detailing how they perceive their learning communities and what their specific practices look

like practically as they facilitated educational change. Concern for work intensification emerged in several studies (Cherkowski et al., 2020; Wang & Pollock, 2020; Kutsyuruba et al., 2024) and would be important to integrate into the dissertation's interview questions as educators both experience external expectations from policies and contribute to the intensification of work for their community as they facilitate change initiatives.

In addition, Cherkowski and Walker's (2014) research positionality for how to enter into learning about leadership experiences frames the dissertation researcher's posture as an educational leader, researcher, and learner, acknowledging that "storytelling is an organizational mechanism that enables us to create new levels of self-understanding and about those with whom we share experiences," and, collectively, it can "shift how we think, imagine, feel, and talk about communities in schools [and] how we perceive and experience the learning and growth that goes on within them" (p. 205). In Chapter Four, the research design is proposed, expanding upon some of the discussion in Chapters Two and Three about gaps in current understanding of educational change.

Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to critically analyze the theoretical and empirical foundation for the dissertation study by reviewing relevant literature. A brief rationale for each of the domains of research relevant to the study was provided. The first domain examining educational change theory identified that the purposes, processes, and practices of educational change within Christian contexts requires hypothesis building informed by the lived experiences of Christian educational leaders. The relationship between spirituality and educational change has been underexamined, which is where the dissertation analysis explored theories and empirical research on faith integration in Domain Two. Faith integration has been abstracted to worldview

formation, as there are limited descriptions of faith-informed educational leadership practice particularly in the context of BC K-12 Christian independent schools. Faith integration has also been perceived as something done by leaders, rather than robust descriptions about mutuality and relationship between bonded and bridged networked relationships, organizations, members, and leaders, informed by practitioner models and practical theology. Finally, in the third domain, threads were connected between Domains One and Two. From Domain One, the importance of distributive and transformational theories of educational reform were linked to their implications in the Canadian educational context. From Domain Two, integrative leadership practices within organizations to spirituality, well-being, and theories forming the context of leadership studies in BC where the dissertation research plans to be conducted. Next, the summary highlights what we know, what we do not yet know, and what we must know to position the dissertation research as a next study for supporting Christian educational change leadership.

What Do We Know?

This chapter has described a theoretical and empirical foundation for the research study by reviewing relevant literature. In Domain One, the chapter first provided a rationale for two major domains and one minor domains of research that are relevant to the study. Educational change leadership is a key area of research in educational studies that supports the Christian school leader's efforts and sustains the Christian learning community. As Christian schools thoughtfully adapt to different societal, cultural, curricular, technological, and pedagogic changes, they can navigate shifting societal values while sustaining high-quality education centered on Christian beliefs and practices. Facilitating educational change is a necessary skill for Christian educational leaders to develop since educational change leads to the development of localized adaptations, sustained change, and coherence (Weick, 1986, p. 8). Research on educational

change has evolved from more top-down managerial planned change (Burke, 2024; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947) to bottom-up adaptive networked approaches (Fullan, 2005, 2015) allowing for episodic changes that serve to navigate destabilization, disruption, and resilience (Holland, 1992; Lindstedt, 2022), to system-wide change through middle leadership (Burt, 1992, 2005; Lipscombe et al., 2023). How spirituality is connected to organizational change practice is a key theoretical gap lacking description about the relationship between a leader's spirituality and their educational change practices, requiring clarification about discrepancies in the observed phenomenon. Discussion how leadership is essential for school change, improvement, and reform in BC K-12 Christian independent schools has been raised. Organizations are complex adaptive systems with intricate social networks that experience resistance. We have processes and practices from public models and propositions that Christian schools might take up to facilitate educational change. Starting with a different *who* may lead to different descriptions of *how*, *what*, and *why* concerning educational change experiences and practices within Christian independent schools in BC.

What Do We Not Know Yet?

To summarize, while research on educational change is primarily focused on measuring outcomes of change, there is a methodological gap in the absence of studies utilizing qualitative methods to understand change leaders' experiences. Detailed descriptions of leadership practices are missing, raising questions about alignment between leadership models and their implications within Christian learning communities. There was a theoretical gap in complex adaptive leadership theories, social network theories, and brokerage theories being applied within Christian educational contexts. The population gap of Christian educational leaders underrepresented in current research raised question about whether innovation is needed around

Christian leadership practices to move the field forward and examine if literature from public and corporate contexts adequately addresses current issues Christian school leaders are facing. A conceptual gap exists in the variation about how leaders describe what their organizations experience in the relational dynamics that take place while facilitating educational change efforts. There is a spatial gap in terms of research on the specific geographic region, limiting generalizability within BC's K-12 Christian school context. Together, understanding the meaning that British Columbia K-12 Christian school leaders ascribe to the interaction between faith integration and educational change practices reflects an important next step in school improvement and reform research.

What Do We Need to Know?

Addressing this gap through phenomenological study would facilitate renewed awareness of leadership development, address issues of resistance to change, and mutually benefit learning communities that are navigating change. Christian faith-informed research built around the following would support efforts to better understand the inner lives of educational change leaders, their faith-informed organizational practices, their retrospective details of what they experienced while facilitating organizational, theological, curricular, or developmental changes in their communities. A goal would be to provide perspective for what policy makers and academic organizations might best consider to support Christian educational leaders: (i) design research that ethically brackets personal assumptions and enables participants to share how their faith grounds their practices may provide practitioners with rich descriptions of applied practice; (ii) explore change as a more dynamic, interconnected process may better reflect the complexity of the Christian faith within organizations operating as living ecologies, adaptive systems, networks, and social realities that have multiple levels of agency; (iii) examine how leaders

experience change, focusing research on personal transformation within context-specific understandings of their practice may tailor educational change efforts to different geographic, socio-cultural, political, theological, and other contextual challenges of leading and sustaining Christian schools; and (iv) ensure that Christian schools can adapt to contemporary challenges while preparing leaders to be ready for the realities of work in their communities. Current discourse as critically examined has not yet compared and contrasted the phenomenon of being a *change leader* from the experiences of *one who leads their community through change*.

CHAPTER THREE

A CHRISTIAN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This dissertation investigated how BC K-12 Christian educational leaders integrate faith into leadership practice for educational change within Christian learning communities. In Chapter Two, the literature review revealed a critical need for application of Christian faith-informed practice in curricular, organizational, and theological change initiatives (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Fullan, 2015). Chapter Three synthesizes insights from educational studies (Fullan, 2005, 2015) and organizational dynamics (Arena, 2018; Dannemiller et al., 2000; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) to reframe resistance to change, not as a barrier to overcome, but as a positive counteractive force that promotes social interconnectivity and adaptability. By examining Israel's rebellion and God's counter resistance culminating in Ezekiel 36:26, this chapter interacts with social sciences literature framed around Arena's (2018) 4D connections of adaptive space: discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption. Leadership resistance to change strategies include developing character, capabilities, and connections to help leaders make positive use of resistance when facilitating change initiatives. Chapter Three informs the research design and interview questions. The research questions that guided this chapter are as follows:

RQ # 3: How do biblical and theological perspectives of Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 interact with theories of educational change and organizational dynamics to inform change leadership practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Three)

To support the main research question in Chapter Three, two subsidiary questions are also explored:

- a. How can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders reframe resistance to change in a way that constructively leads their communities towards greater adaptability in response to educational reforms? (Chapter Three)
- b. What practical strategies can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders adopt to positively harness the energy of resistance when facilitating curricular, organizational, or theological change initiatives within their communities? (Chapter Three)

Social capital (Arena, 2018; Baker, 2000; Fullan, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) and networks (Arena, 2018) are vital for educational change, but the practical application has not yet been thoroughly explored in the context of BC K-12 Christian schools. Christian educational leaders that can anticipate and identify patterns of resistance are able to lead their communities through change tensions, creating greater agility, adaptability, and resilience (Arena, 2018).

Case Study: Practitioner Experiences of Resistance in a K-12 Christian School Curricular Change Initiative

It was 2021, and a seasoned elementary teacher, armed with the skeleton (sic!) template documents of two prior failed iterations of a K-12 Bible curriculum initiative in their Christian school presented them to the review team members as vestiges of previous efforts. Though the documents had a vision, the efforts had faltered, with some members having left the community and others carrying the memory of the disruption the processes had caused. In their place, a new team curriculum review team had been assembled with a few representatives from the elementary, middle, and high school campuses, each equally as tentative about restarting the process again.

A new educational leader assumed responsibility as the review team's chair for overseeing the K-12 Bible curriculum development task force. The curriculum took shape quickly in the middle and high school campus programs: the team working together productively to write and review the formal curriculum documents, implement the learning framework less than a year later, and swiftly adopt a curricular reform that sparked engagement with students and the wider community as a whole. Yet, this rapid development cast a long shadow over the elementary campus where resistance appeared to rest in silent discontentment, lack of agency, fearfulness, and hopelessness.

The resistance was not merely opposition. It was a series of missed opportunities for the chair of the committee to work with groups of teachers and better understand their faith journey, content knowledge, fears, concerns, unmet needs in training, professional goals. The unrealized possibilities could have built social interconnectivity and shared ownership around one of the most foundational tasks of teaching the Bible and teaching from a Christian perspective at a K-12 Christian school.

Discovery was the first lost ally. In the urgency to complete and implement the curricular reforms, the educational leader overlooked the importance of cultivating a deep, shared understanding of the Bible's content with each teacher in the school community. The pace of change was too fast. The teachers, feeling unprepared and unheard, viewed the weekly curriculum implementation and professional learning meetings as impositions rather than invitations to grow their content understanding and instructional practice. The lack of a robust training program for more seasoned educators widened the gap, leaving the elementary teachers ill-equipped to navigate the new curriculum and develop personal agency.

Development efforts faltered next. The process, though designed to incorporate iterative feedback loops, introduced the expectation that teachers would work together and gather a variety of different resources while planning a series of units that reflected each course's main objectives. It had every external impression of being bottom-up but was experienced as top-down; several teachers saw the process as being developed by a small intervention group that would inform the other members, but they wanted something more reflective of a community working together to tinker with and engineer the intricacies of the curriculum. Teachers spoke about their desires for a slower implementation pace that would allow for more thoughtful integration of their curriculum's delivery, especially regarding the developmental appropriateness and accessibility of the language for students. Instead, a sense of inadequacy seemed to manifest with some educators longing for a return to a simpler framework that had already been developed by some grade levels.

Lack of diffusion compounded the problems related to discovery and development with varying degrees of engagement and contribution across the team. Small victories in the curriculum adoption were embraced by early adopters and key influencers, yet broader acceptance oscillated back and forth due to competing priorities in numeracy and literacy initiatives. Initial change was isolated to key members leading to the isolation of others. The implementation plan, though meticulously crafted, failed to map the emotional, social, and intellectual journey of the staff, nor did it account for breaking the monumental task down by using the social capabilities that members of the team possessed to see this change come alive in the community.

Disruption, intended to be a constructive force, instead manifested as a tentativeness in uncharted territory fraught with the fear of not meeting expectations. Only a few members had

public courage to express their frustrations, feelings of loss, uncertainty, apathy, and disorientation of what to do next even when feedback was invited through surveys, in focus groups, group discussions, and individual conversations.

As trust gradually began to take root within the community, the depth of resistance became more apparent, revealing the entrenched biases and uncertainties that were much deeper than initially anticipated. There were lots of blind spots that have, to this day from the end of 2021, taken many years to mend.

The story just told is a description of one of my first whole-scale change effort as an educational leader of a BC K-12 Christian school. I humbly lament as I reflect on these experiences of communal resistance, not as mere observations, but as teachers forged through my own missteps as the change leader tasked with leading the review team. It is in these moments of resistance that I have become aware of the deeper social dynamics of transformation, how innovative or transformative change is sustained, and how it endures by taking root within the social interconnectivity and lived practices of Christian learning communities.

I am hopeful in this chapter that educational leaders reading will be invited to reflect on Christian faith-informed resistance practices *for* and *with* their learning communities. This chapter returns to this case study to apply insights from the Biblical, theological and social sciences to forward how resistance and networks might have been positively used to facilitate change in ways that reflect Christian approaches built on mutuality and adaptability.

Israel's Resistance to God

Both the Old Testament and New Testament are filled with examples of individual, group, and whole system socio-cultural resistance. However, I chose to investigate the Book of the

Prophet Ezekiel for leading change because I observed striking parallels between Israel's pattern of resistance and eventual rebellion, and the patterns I've seen in Christian schools facing decline, disruption, crisis, and chaos. Ezekiel uniquely highlights how resistance and unintended consequences can escalate, yet God's transformative work reshapes hearts and restores relationships, demonstrating that change is not merely procedural but relational and spiritual.

Unlike more commonly explored leaders such as Moses, or the post-exilic examples of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, which often emphasize visible accomplishment and structured reform, Ezekiel confronts the messy, chaotic reality of human social response to change, where unintended outcomes catalyze God's redemptive change. Even the Acts communities, under Paul's apostolic leadership, would be a great example to understand how resistance manifests in distinct ways, yet the prophetic role of the change leader has been underexamined. By centering on Ezekiel 36, this chapter aims to explore how God's Spirit can generate the energy and agency for enduring change, offering Christian schools a framework for understanding that lasting transformation emerges from a change or transformation at the heart and not only from strategy, systems, or structures.

Background Context to Ezekiel 36:1-38

The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel tells the account of exilic Israel/Judah after the events of the first Babylonian attack on the city of Jerusalem around 586 BCE. Ezekiel, the prophet, is among the first wave of exiles taken to Babylon. Ezekiel's prophetic voice laments the state that the people of Israel are in as he (Ezekiel) sees a vision that God's *kevod* (Heb: physical glory, heaviness, or significance; cf. Exod 19, 24, and 25; Taylor, 2016) has departed from Jerusalem and was heading to Babylon (1:28; 10:20-22). Israel is described as a rebellious, exilic, scattered people of resistance who rejected God as their true leader (Ezek 8:10) and the law as their

teacher (20:13), mistreated their own people unjustly (22:29), put their trust in false prophets (13:9) and neighbouring practices (22:2-3), and broke the covenant that had been established for generations (16:59). Israel had forged a pattern of resistance leading to the decay of their social bonds with God, others, self, and creation.

Israel's Pattern of Resistance

Israel existence throughout the pre-exilic period is marked by loss of trust, maladaptive practice, and struggle with God for control over their future. Israel rejected God's kingship and sought to control its own future (1 Sam 8:6-7). Israel's distrust of God created a generational amnesia of God's faithfulness (Judg 2:10-12; Num 14:1-4), leading to them place trust in their own authority. Israel's crisis of nationhood or national identity is described as a spiritual apathy and relational adultery (Jer 3:8). Israel sought its allyship in the strongholds and practices of other nations that God opposed (Ezek 6:2-3). Although Israel resisted God's transformative work, struggling through misplaced identity, refusal to repent, hard heartened forgetfulness, apathetic rebellion, and fearful rejection. God seems to deal with the hardness of Israel's corporate heart by being their restorative agent that ultimately redistributes Israel's force against themselves to work for their good (Ezek 36:26).

Deceived People. In Ezekiel 35, the Lord decrees that he is against Mount Seir (Edom) and will make it desolate. According to Jenson (2009), Edom is encroaching on Israel's territory and impinging upon God's freedoms available to Israel (p. 315). The prophecy against "your brother (Edom)" in the long "ethnographic memory of the ancient world" (Jenson, 2009, p. 315) evokes Israel's historical memory back to Esau in the deception of Israel (Gen 32:3; 36:1). Jenson (2009) describes this brotherhood of nations as a dubious relationship that is leading to

Jerusalem's punishment and ruin (תִּצָּר) (p. 319). The Lord's same opposition to Mount of Seir is then directed throughout Ezekiel 1-35 towards Israel, a deceived people.

Misplaced Identity. Israel was chosen to be a holy community and example to other nations about who God was but strayed away from their identity and adopted the neighboring nations' practices (Ezek 8:9-13). God's temple space was replaced by false idols; the image bearers once called to reflect the divine image in the world sought the security and identity in created things rather than the eternal Creator. Israel bemoaned the responsibility held in their chosen status, "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?" (33:10b). Israel had sought other mountains or high places (*bāmôt*) affiliate with the neighboring nations' identity forming practices (Ez. 6:1-13; 7:7; 20:39-40; 27:5; 28:13-16; 31:12; 32:5-6; 33:28; 35:6, 13-14; 36:1-8; Johnson, 2009, p. 311). The leaders were responsible for the loss of identity and malpractice. The priestly order neglected their duties to teach and help others learn the practices that make the community distinct (22:26). Ezekiel 34 described the decree against the shepherd leaders of Israel who had desolated the land and scattered the flock, a people who had lost their true citizenship identity.

Hard Hearted Forgetfulness. Ezekiel shared messages in hope of renewal, but Israel would reject God as they did with Moses because of the hardness of their hearts (Deut 30:1-10; Ezek 2:3-7, 3:4-11). The spiritual and generational amnesia of how God showed up with Israel's ancestors is reflected in the rejection of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. Israel has "eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious house" (Ezek 12:2). Israel lost its identity and was seeking other mountains or high places (*bāmôt*) affiliate with the neighboring nations' condemnable practices (Ez. 6:1-13; 7:7; 20:39-40; 27:5; 28:13-16; 31:12; 32:5-6; 33:28; 35:6, 13-14; 36:1-8; Johnson, 2009, p. 311). The sabbath laws that were intended

to develop the habit-forming practices of a community had been neglected (Ezek 20). The vulnerable had been exploited by a corruption at the heart (Ezek 22). Israel's hard-hearted forgetfulness was embodied both in forgetting critical moments in their story of resistance and struggle where God showed up and rescued them, and a willful turning away from God, turning towards their own strength to ignore their covenantal duties.

Refusal to Repent. Israel continued to reject the prophetic messages and ignore the warnings that their lands and households were being defiled (Ezek 23:38-39; 44:7). The refusal in disobedience was also directed towards the covenant established with God (Wright, 2001). From the mistreatment of the poor, foreigners, and detestable practices, there were clear violations that Israel had broken God's law and were not lamenting and repenting for their sins (Ezek 22). Their incorrigible spiritual pride prevented them from accepting the warnings and reforming practices that required acceptance of responsibility (Ezek 33:30-32). Block (1998) described how the Genesis garden of Eden narrative was on replay again for Israel as a community, and the hardness of their hearts signals the need for an utter reversal of garden conditions in a dessert of dry bones (Gen 2; Ezek 37). Israel's refusal to repent had eschatological implications (Block, 1998, p. 323). Refusal was a sign that the soil (*adamah*; Ezek 36:17) had been defiled (Jenson, 2009, p. 322), connecting Israel to a grave site land that was no longer holy.

Apathetic Rebellion. Israel's refusal presented as a disparaging, apathetic rebellion and hopelessness, ultimately signaling that the people had been cut off from the source of life with no possibility of restoration. Apathy, or complacency, bred a complacency in Israel marked by the absence of major awareness of a crisis, low standards in worship and care societally, the disassembly of structures that supported communal religious practice in the Levitical order, a

spirit of killing the messenger, passive aggressive surrender to their leadership culture, and their increased capacity for denial (Kotter, 2012, p. 42). The “acute consciousness of the sin which brought [the people of Israel] under his wrath” (Wright, 2001, p. 337) had been ill-contented. Israel was to be a covenantal people, but they had repeatedly rejected God, turning their hearts towards their own selfish interests and coronating themselves as kings without need for God (Ezek 20:33-38). Like a mutiny, Israel’s final resignation was an embracing of their own rebellion against God, identity as exilic people, and utter moral decay leading to them later being described in the vision of dry bones as lifeless skeleton rebels in a valley (Ezek 37); in the language of armies and strongholds, the rebellion led to death. The rebellion required a greater revolution seeded at the human heart.

Fearful Rejection to Loss. Finally, with such great messages of doom and gloom for Israel (Ezek 1:24-24:27), the first half of the Book of Ezekiel describes the devastating effects of Israel’s resistance which moved to rejection, rebellion, and loss. Israel withdraws from God rather than drawing close to him (Ezek 1:28). For fear of consequences, Israel reacts in defiance and denial rather than taking ownership of their past failures and accepting individual accountability for their actions, “For everyone belongs to me, the parents as well as the child-both alike belong to me” (Ezek 18:4a). Block (1998) argued that the population of Israel would have diminished through their exile and so evoking the Abrahamic (Gen. 17:2) and Mosaic covenants (Lev. 26:9) is God’s evidence that the covenant will continue despite the people falling victim to Babylon and the neighbouring nations (p. 365). Scattered Israel pushed itself to the edge of chaos leading to its ruin (Ezek 35:15). Israel’s rejection of God signals a complete and utter loss of identity, relationship, and agency. Israel has assumed its own ultimate authority of being God without God.

The movement of Ezekiel chapter 34 through chapter 35 and into chapter 36 marks a turning point: Fear has moved from refusal through deception, loss of identity, blind, political, and ideological rebellion, and self-deification to rejection. Israel has become the hard hearted, deceived, obstinate, rigid, maladaptive, entrenched community of refusal and rejection. The people of Israel are not only a people of ruin and rebellion, but they have become a people deceived and conditioned by comfort, fear, loss, confusion, disorientation, diaspora, blindness, stubbornness, refusal, rejection, rebellion, and utter ruin.

God's Counter Resistance Movement. Through Ezekiel's prophetic actions and messages, God reveals that he is going to use Israel's resistance as a means of showing them the type of relationship he desires with rebellious Israel. Ezekiel 36 reveals that, from utter moral ruin in resistance and rebellion, God will renew the people of refusal and rejection. According to Block (1998), centuries later, Jesus will raise concern for Israel's rebellion towards God (Matt 15:17-20) and be concerned with the heart, internal emotions, will, and thought patterns that localize the problem around the "hardness, coldness, insensitivity, incorrigibility, and even lifelessness" towards God requiring a full removal and replacement (cf. 1 Sam 25:37; Deut 30:6-8, p. 355). Within the descriptions of a heart transplant, God will put in his Spirit *rûah* and heart *leb* into a nation that has abandoned its true leader (v. 27).

Ezekiel 36:1-32 is set within a chiasmic structure with A parts referring to the House of Israel, B parts contrasting Israel's morality from that of God's character, C parts decreeing the holiness of God, D parts concerning land and nationhood, E parts on the acts of the Spirit's necessary ordering and cleansing, and the X central piece concerning the heart transformation and change that Israel requires is in Ezekiel 36:26 where God resists the human heart's deception, misplaced identity, hard hearted forgetfulness, apathetic rebellion, and fearful

rejection (Figure 3.1). Central to the chiastic structure of Ezekiel 36:24-32 is the statement that describes the communal transformation and change that God will do in Israel: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (v. 26).

Within the hope of Ezekiel 36:26 of a “fossilized heart” being replaced with “a sensitive fleshly organ” is a description of God renewing relationship with the people of Israel (Block, 1998, p. 355). God’s renewal emerges out of the strongly bonded resistance. Contextually, the language evokes Israel’s agrarian epoch. Modern readers are called to read the description of God putting in a new heart and new spirit in terms of “rooting” and “planting” in the ground. The Genesis 3:17-18 “thorns and thistles” curse is reversed (Jenson, 2009, p. 325). Regeneration of space takes place as the fields, the temple, and the people are renewed. From spaces of desolation and resistance, God produces hope, healing, protection, care, prospering, leadership, and a communal people with a renewed identity. God, yet again, fulfills his covenantal promises, echoing back to Abraham in Genesis 15 where God passes through the heart-sacrifice, upholding in legal terms both sides of the contract, and performing a transformation of the heart. Israel will be a people where God repurposes resistance for his purposes and reconnects the people of Israel, leaders and rebels included, to his source of energy and life. Ezekiel 36:26 is a culminating, catalytic, and communal moment when the Lord says he will do the work of change now by his own resistance movement at the heart.

The chiastic structure in Figure 3.1 serves as a guide to remind leaders that resistance, rebellion, and loss of relationship reside at the heart, requiring God’s energy and agency for change.

Figure 3.1

Chiastic Structure of Ezekiel 36:22-32

“Therefore, say to the Israelites, (v. 22a)

A ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone’ (v. 22b).

B “I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them” (v. 23a).

C Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes” (v. 23b).

D “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land” (v. 24).

E “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols” (v. 25).

X “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (v. 26).

E’ “And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (v. 27).

D’ “Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God” (v. 28).

C’ “I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine” (vv. 29-30).

B’ “Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices” (v. 31).

A’ “I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!” (v. 32).

Ezekiel’s repeated appeal to the heart as the seat of resistance reframes change as something deeper than systems or structures. The problem is not merely external opposition but an internal posture, but a calcified centre.

The Prophet Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel's message calling Israel to change was met with resistance by the people of Israel, but it was dismissed by the elders of Israel (Ezek 14, 20, the exiles there in Babylon (Ezek 2:3-7, 3:7), the leaders and people back in Jerusalem (Ezek 11), and the House of Israel (Ezek 3:4-9, 12:1-2) as he prophesized about the current state of Israel's hard hearts and need for spiritual restoration (Ezek 3:25-26). Ezekiel would share messages in hope of renewal, but Israel would reject him as they did with Moses because of the hardness of their hearts (Deut 30:1-10; Ezek 2:3-7, 3:4-11). In a conversation with Dr. Michael Arena about the Book of Ezekiel, he argued that God was not only using Ezekiel to mirror Israel's current state, but he was "desensitizing" and "sensitizing" Ezekiel as a prophet and change leader to the new covenantal vision (Personal communication, February 17, 2025).

The prophet Ezekiel's leadership points to several ways that God partners with leaders of communities to enact change. The partnership reflects a sort of change that takes place top-down, bottom-up, from the middle, and also from within the interiority of the leader and community as leaders resist the hardness of their community's hearts: (1) Casting vision: Ezekiel's authority as a prophet is established in his vision of God's *kevod* (glory) leaving and Israel descending into exile (Ezek 1:4-28). God uses the spiritual vision to communicate the severed and departed relational bonds, the need for God's relational presence, and the need for a watchman or social conscience (Ezek 3:17); (2) Visualizing a reality: Ezekiel constructs a model to interrogate reality and make an abstract concept concrete. He conveys the divine judgment by enacting the siege to describe Jerusalem's imminent trajectory (Ezek 4:1-3); (3) Symbolic practices: Ezekiel performs and endures Israel's prolonged disobedience, stomaching the divine warnings by eating a scroll of lament, mourning, and woe (Ezek 2:9-10 & 3:1-3). He calls Israel to repent for past failures and for them to atone for the seriousness of their actions (Ezek 4:4-6).

Ezekiel transforms his whole life into the drama of Israel's disobedience by lying on his side (Ezek 4:4-6) and shaving his hair to portray Israel as a scattered people (Ezek 5:1-6). He creates discrepant events and provocative learning experiences where Israel must hold up a mirror to its own practices; (4) Prophetic lament: Ezekiel grieves the feelings with loss of community, loss of relationship, and past failures (Ezek 7:1-16). He deals directly with the feelings of distress and localizes the dire state affairs on the leaders:

They will go searching for a vision from a prophet, priestly instruction in the law will cease, the counsel of the elders will come to an end. The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with despair, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble.
(Ez. 7: 26b—27a, NIV)

(5) Imposing limitations: Ezekiel received and patiently endured the restrictions that God imposed upon his prophetic work. For example, he was mute (Ezek 3:26-27) and was not able to mourn his wife's death (Ezek 24:15-27). Personal sacrifice was how God sensitized Ezekiel to depend on God while being commissioned to do the work of change; (6) Promoting hope, resilience, and renewal: Ezekiel continuously shifted his approach in response to God's directives, making him an important case study for adaptive leadership. From the initial vision and strong authority he speaks from, to the message of judgment, the symbolic activities, the hopeful messages, the shock, pastoral, inspirational, disheartened, rebuking, future-oriented blueprinted descriptions of community, to the reinstitutionalization of Israel's practices, Ezekiel lives in the state of constantly adapting his message to a people that were in instability, unrest, turbulence, and social upheaval. Ezekiel holds in tension that God's glory has departed and is a direct consequence of disobedience but also holds the promise of repentance and renewal (Ezek 10:18-19).

Taken together, Ezekiel models the dynamic process of God changing the change leader within a community of resistance through the process of visioning, modeling, practicing,

communicating, lamenting, and promoting hopeful possibilities of aligning hearts with God's vision of change. An integrative dialogue can help apply some practical wisdom for the partnership of change leadership between God and humanity.

Integrative Dialogue: How Christian Educational Leaders Embrace Resistance to Change

A key goal in this chapter is to present and examine Biblical and theological claims and integrate them with social science claims. A radical reframing is needed about how Christian educational leaders use resistance as a force for positive disruption and enhanced collective agility. Network-facilitated change, leveraging Arena's (2018) notion of adaptive space can harness the energy of resistance to lead communities towards greater adaptability and positively disrupt educational reforms. This framework enhances social interconnectivity, promoting the exchange and movement of ideas and practices.

Arena (2018) proposed the following adaptive space practices: (i) engaging the edges to discover more expansive ways towards innovation built through bridged relationships to new entrepreneurial pockets; (ii) finding friends that help "create a scrum team—a small, tight-knit group of friends who force rapid iteration into the development process" (p. 169); (iii) following the energy of contagious individuals that enable diffusion of ideas so they spread quickly; (iv) embracing the conflict by using resistance to "pressure-test" with the power of passionate dissent (pp. 199-201); and (v) closing the network by seeking to positively disrupt before disrupted (p. 238). In contrast, the exilic people of Israel are a reminder of the need for social expansiveness to open up minds, hearts, and social connections, leading to communal change.

Adaptive spaces are about using someone else's force or their momentum, energy, and strength as a positive force for change. It is about shifting weight by using tactical social leadership strategies. Most importantly, it is about being calm under pressure and being resolute

when in uncomfortable situations, while taking time to think through solutions so that the leader does not crumble under the intensity.

In 18 unique future imperative statements between Ez. 36:10-38, God speaks his reversal of the curse and counter resistance movement in a spirit of mutuality. God will cause Israel to flourish as they rediscover who he is (discovery), develop a new system of saving and Israel will put God at the center of their communal practices (development), cause more people to return to the restored land and more will go out from the lands (diffusion), and resettle the towns so their connections will be rebirthed (disruption). The removal of the heart of stone is about God using the force of Israel's resistance to create a new adaptive space that he himself fills and invites Israel into (36:26).

An Alternative to the Dannemiller et al. (2000) Resistance Formula

Chapter Two, Domain One, provided an assessment of key seminal theorists concerning resistance to organizational change. Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) proposal of the whole system was built around the conceptual formula to guide organizational transformation: $C = [DVF] > R$, whereby C (change) is a function of D (dissatisfaction with current circumstances), V (vision of what is possible), F (first steps taken towards vision) factors that must be greater than R (resistance). While Dannemiller et al. (2000) forwarded how positive change could be promoted by generating commitment and excitement to shared goals, a key concern with the assessment is that resistance was defined as something to overcome. In other words, Dannemiller et al. (2000) was arguing that when the push factors are greater than the pull factors, change occurs. Upon critical assessment, there are some missing components that network and complex adaptive system approaches (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002) expand upon that may be more consistent with what we know about how ideas and behaviors spread (Arena, 2018; Gladwell, 2024).

Furthermore, resistance is on the wrong side of the equation and not something necessarily to be overcome but to be engaged with through social interconnectivity (p. 24).

Healthy resistance practices can be positive factors for catalyzing critical organizational change events, accelerating social interconnectivity, bridging new perspectives, and adopting new resilient ways of being that lead to greater capabilities (empathy, adaptability, agility, relationships, and spirituality within organizations). Thus, an alternative leadership change resistance formula is proposed: $C = [D \times V \times L \times S \times R]$, whereby change endures as a function of the dissatisfaction (D), the alignment of vision with Christian mission or purpose (V), the learning leader's character, capabilities, and connections (L), the change process, practices, and supports (S), and the communal networked change efforts through discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption connections (Arena, 2018) leading to adaptive capabilities (R), which has a multiplied effect. Each of these components inform the research questions and design in Chapter Four.

Resistance Due to Lack of Adaptive Space

According to Arena (2018), organizations need Adaptive Spaces, which are physical, social, relational, and emotional places for people to “freely explore, exchange, and debate ideas” to enhance organizational agility, positive disruption, and control (p. 9). In other words, organizations need to create traction by brokering new social bridges to transport ideas between entrepreneurial groups across the organization, broker new ideas from other systems into their own, and engage in entrepreneurial activities to support innovative change. A key area of concern is under the imposed limitations of educational systems how members of educational communities might participate in these different networked activities leading to change.

Arena's (2018) assessment of what has distinguished good organizations from great organizations lies in the "ability to be agile, positively disrupting before being disrupted by others—that is, taking an iterative approach and acting swiftly to proactively change the game" (p. 6). As Christian schools create adaptive space in the dance between different forms of social capital making, they can leverage interconnectivity to move innovative ideas from entrepreneurial pockets through adaptive spaces into the operational system (learning community) and adapt. Supported by the development of human and decisional capital, the whole system can thus continuously improve (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Discovery connections flow from brokers that access diverse reaches of a network to connect silos, access new knowledge, control how knowledge is used in localized environments, and connect the entrepreneurial pockets across network clusters (Arena, 2018, p. 19). Ezekiel's vision of God's throne departing from Jerusalem serves as a powerful discovery connection, brokering Israel's future into the hands of the Babylonian empire (Ez. 1:4-28). Ezekiel 4:1-3 also describes the implications of the siege of Jerusalem with Israel's social bonds being disrupted by Babylon, echoing Arena's (2018), "disrupt or be disrupted" (p. 6; 238). Ezekiel is called to his feet, invited by God to take up courage and speak when he will not be heard: "Whether they listen or fail to listen . . . they will know that a prophet has been among them" (Ezek 2:5). Ezekiel is called to broker Israel back to their past in Egypt, the wilderness, and to the laws that were established with their parents (Ezek 20) to bridge future hope.

Counter resistance can manifest as discovery connections are built on curiosity interactions, which link diverse groups and introduce innovativeness, creating an expansiveness in knowledge exchange. In addition, Burke (2024) described a series of different individual and group reactions to change: (i) "Turf" protection and competition involves the fight for survival;

(ii) Closing ranks involves doubling down on an identity to preserve a function; (iii) Changing allegiances or ownership involves formally departing from or joining another division to avoid having to deal with conflict or the change; (iv) Demand for new leadership involves expectations to revolt or aver that the leader is not competent (pp. 100-101). Facilitating discovery activities can enhance learning by teams as they explore the educational practices of other schools. These other schools may not necessarily need to be Christian but could also share similar educational philosophies. Such activities help bridge new ideas about organizational behavior, design, and dynamics, reducing pressure on leaders to introduce new concepts and increasing member engagement in self and group brokerage (Arena, 2018, p. 48).

Development connections nurture cohesive group relationships as connectors. Connectors can rapidly develop and refine ideas for localized adoption because their work is built on mutuality and trust (pp. 20-21, 73). Identifying the contagious influencers and utilizing their capabilities with discernment to support teacher collaboration on curriculum development initiatives can prevent silos and resist tendencies to default on previous behaviors (p. 147). Ezekiel tried to enlarge and extend the community's collective capacity for enduring change by lying on his side for 390 days (Ez. 4:4-6). The conversation that God had with Ezekiel about what food he was permitted to eat (Ez. 4:9-14) reflects a rapid iteration of God's message to a people who have been defiled and cut off from the source of life.

Resistance can be a positive catalytic force when reinforced by Dannemiller et al.'s (1992) process-oriented change approach: (1) Data collection: getting a "finger on the pulse" of the organization helps to distinguish facts from judgments or interpretations; (2) Purpose: clarifying the reason to bring members of an organization together and interact with its own data; (3) Plan: cycle through appropriate risk levels so that expectations are clarified about how each member

works towards the goal, to form the group, and accomplish the group's goal; (4) Evaluate: the "road testing" of the plan is explored outside the lead team so that the group is responsive to emergent needs. In addition, Dannemiller et al. (1992) argued that the next frontier of change would be shifting from using a small group of enthusiastic early adopters to harnessing the total system's power for change as all members work collaboratively to build commitment and take ownership of change initiatives. The "how to" is discussed in the diffusion connections.

Diffusion connections move localized adaptations and innovations to the broader system (p. 21). Energizers use their social capital to contagiously spread ideas for organization-wide adoption. Where fear stifles relationships, energizers positively attach people to purpose and a shared sense of thriving. Energizers break down silos and positively help others to see alternative possibilities or participate in a shared vision. Ezekiel shares his message through the community by positioning himself dramatically in the public space (Ezek 5:1-4). The tone of Ezekiel's message evolves, leading up to Ez. 33:1-6 when Ezekiel's call as the "watchman" to call others to awaken to the social cause.

Sutton (2024) described this aspect as "friction fixing . . . baked into the norms, role, rules, rituals, and incentives" (p. 19). Friction fixers focus on challenging aspects of complexity to simplify solutions, are preoccupied with designing healthy working organizations that value peoples' time and treat them with dignity, and they help others learn, practice, and spread skills so they avoid the key traps that lead to organizational ruin: Oblivious leadership, addiction sickness, broken connections, jargon monoxide, and fast and frenzied people and teams (pp. 25-26). Leveraging digital forms of communication amongst members, highlighting stories of change, learning, and alignment with school vision serves to diversify the excitement in different pockets across a system. Contagious individuals can help reach groups that may be siloed.

Disruptor connections interrupt tightly-knit bonds by introducing dissenting perspectives that challenge bureaucratic structures (p. 120). Challengers and disruptors interrupt existing structures to promote the reconsideration of new ideas (p. 23). Disruptors can consume an enormous number of human resources, but they are particularly helpful when, in an organization's lifespan, they are mobilized to provide critical feedback on what is not working to constructively harness resistance.

Israel certainly rejected Ezekiel and its disruptors. Ezekiel disrupts and challenges the existing social norms and the status quo. He performs discrepant symbolic acts that were seen as detestable by the people of Israel such as cooking his food over cow dung (Ezek 4:12-15). He directly confronts harsh realities of leaders deceiving the people (Ezek 13:8-16; 22:23-31). Ezekiel shares vivid descriptions about spaces where the people are formed, particularly concerning the land and temple being defiled (Ezek 8-11) and renewed (Ezek 40-48). Ezekiel introduced symbolic challenges and his teaching provoked awareness about break down in the old paradigms and new way to think about right relationship, behavior, belonging, and practice. Ezekiel's messages against the leaders of Israel aimed to dismantle power structures preventing people from experiencing justice and freedom (Ezek 13:1-16). God said to Ezekiel to set his face against the ones who falsely prophesy, and he would dismantle the systems and structures that were leading to snares by challenging both the people in those positions and their practices (Ezek 13:20-23). Practically, the scriptures are scarce when it comes to examples of the "What if?" questions that Israel would ask about itself; only the prophets appear to engage in these activities. Israel sought to be for itself its own discovery, development, and diffusion connections with other nations without allowing itself to be disrupted from within. To positively disrupt, learning

communities must embrace the experimentation from individuals and teach norms for healthy conflict, facilitating critical moments.

Lindstedt (2022) and Hoffman (2017) described how “red teams” or “contrarian teams,” comprising members that “identify and play out potentially devastating scenarios” help to “consider possible outcomes and alternatives, then mak[e] recommendations for adaptation” which is a powerful tool to counteract “groupthink and the inertia of the status quo” (p. 35). Red teams can help disrupt the status quo and prepare organizations to adapt by intentionally mobilizing a group of divergent thinkers to engage in contrarian thinking. According to Lindstedt (2022), it helps to create a new nucleus or archetype of innovation (p. 36), challenge complacency and group think, diversify new ideas, and challenge social inertia by asking, “What if?” (Lindstedt, 2022, pp. 35-36), “Why should we not?” and Gladwell’s (2024) “What’s wrong with this idea?” sorts of questions. Lindstedt (2022) argued that cynics, dissidents, iconoclasts, and mavericks are all welcome as long as they follow the “proper bounds of their role” and practice the necessary humility within the system of values and beliefs of their community (p. 37). Psychologically safe environments that resist fear-based efforts for change are a prerequisite for encouraging dissenting practices that are well-supported in research (Clifton & Vigers, 2025; Edmondson, 1999, 2018; Gibaldi & Cusack, 2019; Hord et al., 2014; Oreg, 2003).

Israel is a case study of being so socially cohesive and entrenched that it lost its capacity to be disrupted from within. It needed both a counter resistance from the outside (God as discovery and development connector in Christ) and from the inside (God as diffusion and disruption connector in the Holy Spirit) to facilitate the transformative work of collective change in Israel. Each aspect of the 4Ds discussed earlier in this chapter involves some element of removal as God “removed” the heart of stone and put in a new spirit. Within an organization’s lifespan, each

of the 4Ds become important, but, overall, no single practice is more important than all the others.

The Character, Capabilities, and Connections of the Christian Change Leader

Leaders need to prioritize building diverse networks internally and leverage external networks to support faith integrative and communal change efforts. Brown and Eisenhardt's (1998), "the edge of chaos" metaphor characterizing too much structure and rigidity as one boarder of impending doom from too little structure in self-organizing behaviors (pp. 29-30) stifles both communal faith integration, formation, and adaptive leadership; resistance can be a positive force to generate the initial momentum needed for leaders to help members of their teams become aware, acknowledge, embrace, and take action towards dissatisfaction with the system. Ezekiel 34 describes the shepherd redeemer of the flock. Firm but gentle, humble, and yet adaptive reflects the leader's character. As the shepherd searches and discerns, the shepherd is curious; in the protection and saving, the shepherd is capable; in the care and saving, the shepherd is connected.

Ezekiel 34 describes the decree against the shepherd leaders of Israel who have desolated the land and scattered the flock. Israel's leaders will be replaced by God himself, the Shepherd Redeemer. In Appendix D, Table D.1, theological discussion of the change practitioner's forwards how God's character is a requisite for resisting the resistors. A key theme developed across the Book of Ezekiel is the need for whole community spiritual change by reforming leadership. The true shepherd of the flock cares, protects, self-sacrificially saves, discerns, and searches. In the searching and discerning, the shepherd is curious; in the protection and saving, the shepherd is competent; in the care and saving, the shepherd is connected. In Appendix D, Table D.2, the change leader's cognitive, social, psychological, and spiritual leadership

capabilities are explored providing practical guidance for leaders to develop their adaptive capacity for change.

Practically, developing capabilities involves leaders facilitating social integrative activities leading to interconnectivity that may include the following: (i) hosting idea exchanges of collaborative teams between leaders in job-alike positions, teachers, and administrative staff to work on ideas together (discovery); (ii) establishing pilot testing teams to support the rapid iteration of ideas before implementation can support quality early adoption (development); (iii) focusing on spreading ideas through critical training moments and external communication to gain visibility; and (iv) teaching communal risk-taking practices that challenge the status-quo and invest in one key disruption task force each year. Leaders can adopt these practices within themselves, internally within their school communities to intentionally construct their own leadership development pipeline, and forge coalitions with fellow Christian school leaders to promote greater interconnectivity and adaptability with the Christian school educational profession as a whole (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Synthesizing Leadership Resistance Practices from the Case Study

Returning to reevaluate the process of the initial case study on a curriculum initiative within a BC Christian school, the application of Arena's (2018) 4D's framework (discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption) provides a comprehensive framework to understand how networks and resistance can be a positive force for facilitating adaptive change in BC K-12 Christian learning communities.

Discovery. The initial discovery phase of the Bible curriculum was inadequately conceptualized, too broad, and ambitious, which led to missed opportunities for engaging in meaningful conversations about each member's team's localized needs. In practice, this phase

should have involved more roundtable discussions where each member could have identified gaps in their various Bible instruction content backgrounds, network connections to other Bible educators internally and externally, resources, and experiences. Such experiences could have helped frame a discovery activity whereby the whole team could have visited another Christian school that was thriving in their Bible curriculum journey and increased our brokerage interactions into new entrepreneurial pockets (Arena, 2018, p. 48). I alone built the curriculum *for* the elementary school, rather than more closely *with* each of the elementary teams. The team needed to take one more additional step and build the training for the rest of the school together. The review team could have also identified gaps in the team's composition to better unleash the power of the microcosm with a larger representational group of "all the 'voices' of the organization" in what Dannemiller et al. (2000) calls "getting the whole system in the room" (p. 7). The review could have assessed gaps in our own social capital and recruited other members to fill the void of social interconnectivity across the learning community, other connections outside our community in the province of BC, and internationally to support the efforts.

Development. The development phase could have involved recognizing through socio-cultural audits where the high levels of trust pockets existed in the organization and what were the seismic spots of activity where localized application and experimentation should have arisen from first (Arena, 2018, p. 57). Freedom and safety to experiment with the curriculum was provided in the middle and high school contexts, because the team members were able to walk closely with one another and were given time in their schedules to rapidly iterate. However, with the elementary team, the grade teams were expected to work together horizontally, across grade teams (siloe), rather than quickly establishing cross-grade or divisional team huddles to enhance cohesion (Arena, 2018, p. 72). I could have led the review early in the process to create

elementary specific unit plans and descriptive case studies that described instructional scenarios that would be valued so that teachers could elaborate on those practical examples instead of starting at the theoretical or abstract level and working towards the practical.

Diffusion. The diffusion of the new curriculum at the elementary school was hamstrung by not having the energizers work in the initial phase with the developers, so by the time the energizers became aware of the initiative, they had already reoriented their focus towards the numeracy and literacy initiatives. Cross-campus integration with more structured membership of the middle and high school team supporting the training of the elementary teachers is still a possibility today and appears to be a vital next step to see the initiative better reflect the strength of a Christian community that is expansive in its own internal network. There would also be much about good pedagogy that our middle and high school teachers could learn in a spirit of mutuality in the forthcoming interactions with our elementary teachers, promoting collegiality. Energizers are contagious and need to be encouraged to attract new members of the team to merge quickly into the organization's ethos and practices; leveraging the energizers in our new teacher mentorship program would build leadership capacity and attach new members to our relational learning community's adaptive network approach. Multiple catalytic moments of change, not just one or two, within an educational community's lifespan of a change initiative positively impact the sustainability (Dannemiller et al., 2000). Dannemiller et al. (1992 & 2000) argued for critical moments of whole-system interaction in an organization's lifespan to overcome resistance. Critical communal moments designed to inculcate safety, care, connections, and relationship that lead to members of one's community being willing to share their feelings of fear, loss, and hopes and being attached to a network that transforms their performance in the work that they do individually and with others.

Disruption. Many aspects of disruption outside the review team's practices were avoided, neglected, and absent in the early stages of the elementary process. Failure to create a critical moment of active communal dissention prior to the launch of the curriculum was highly detrimental. For example, the review team would have been able to identify organizational structures to disrupt, such as the schedule of collaboration time to enable teachers to work together during the school day. Disruption might have allowed for the community to more fully explore the curriculum at a content level but express the deeper uncertainties, fears, feelings of loss, and silences that were held tightly. In terms of next steps, challengers would need to be invited "to disrupt existing structures to enable the ongoing consideration of new ideas" (p. 23) and positively facilitating the next adaptive response for where the curriculum development plans need to continue to be operationalized.

By embedding these practices emerging from the 4D's framework (Arena, 2018), change leaders might develop more adaptive Christian leadership practices that positively transform and redistribute the energy of resistance towards continuous improvement.

Biblical Integration for Research Study

There are two areas in which the theological perspectives and dialogue with the social sciences informs my study: (1) Research design and (2) Interview questions. The research design employs a phenomenological methodology to better understand the lived experiences of Christian educational change leaders. It seeks to investigate the feelings, critical interpretations, perceptions, and meaning making of participants as they have or are facilitating educational change in their British Columbia K-12 Christian learning communities. With specific attentiveness to the leader's developmental experiences and the community's context, the study explores the social dynamics of resistance to change. As with in-depth phenomenological

inquiry, the study does not seek to measure the effectiveness of change but describe the essence of change leadership in K-12 Christian schools as experienced by Christian leaders (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2016; Seidman, 2019). The research design is also structured for participants to share narratives about change in their own lives, reflect on their work, and make meaning about experiences relating educational change leadership. For that reason, a more integrated approach is employed to avoid setting up an anthropologically dualistic perspective (Naugle, 2012) by instead examining change as a collective phenomenon emerging from individual experiences.

Phenomenological Interview on Life History, Work Experience, Change Leadership Practices, and Meaning Making

This study will employ semi-structured interviews using an adapted version of Seidman's (2019) qualitative phenomenological inquiry. By examining the variables embedded in the resistance to change formula proposed ($C = [D \times V \times L \times S \times R]$) within educational communities, how leaders respond to educational change in ways that reflect their character, capabilities, and connections, and the meaning of how their Christian faith interacts with their practices detailed in transformative Christian ways of being and doing that lead to sustained educational change.

The following questions are integrated into the interview guide (Appendix H):

Interview Question # 4: Can you share any specific examples or experiences where your social connections might have influenced your educational leadership of a change initiative? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question seeks to explore the social dynamics that are involved with organizational networks. It connects to brokerage, social network, and complex adaptive organizational theories as well as the importance of understanding social capabilities of a system. Uhl-

Bien et al. (2007) described when researching complex adaptive systems, it is necessary to understand how contextual factors of structural, organizational, ideational, and behavioral components inform the backdrop in which interactions and processes occur. Complexity leadership theory as examined in Chapter Two forwarded how adaptive social responses are needed to solve complex problems (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007), connecting to Chapter Three's discussion of how to respond to the contextual dynamics when leading educational change initiatives.

Interview Question # 5: In what ways, if any, have you encountered resistance to change throughout an educational initiative? What was that like for you as the change leader? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question explores how leaders experience different forms of resistance, allowing for new definitions to emerge by detailing what resistance looks like within localized components of British Columbian, Christian, educational, and K-12 schools.
- It seeks to examine how participants reflect on resistance as not only something to overcome but how participants interact with resistance as a spiritual tension, which is critical for the Biblical, theological, and social science discussion, without introducing any preconceived judgment.

Interview Question # 6: What practices, if any, have been significant for you in leading educational change within your Christian learning community? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question focuses on participants' critical details that describe the essence of Christian practices leading to educational change.
- It examines how participants can contribute to forwarding a practical educational and theological outlook on the essence of leading Christian faith-informed educational

change, connecting to Chapter Three's discussion particularly of the character and capabilities that leaders need to facilitate change.

Interview Question # 7: What, if any, are distinct characteristics of a Christian educational change leader? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question is designed to forward a clearer synthesis of what, if anything, is uniquely understood as the relationship between Christian faith-informed practice and educational change leadership describing the character and capabilities of educational leaders.
- The question is designed to address a critical gap in the study about Christian faith-informed ways of leading educational change.

Interview Question # 8: Are there ways your Christian faith has informed your change leadership practices? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question invites participants to validate experiences with additional details if there is a relationship between educational practices and Christian faith. The question enables leaders to articulate how or in what ways, if any, participants apply their faith.

Interview Question # 12: What does it mean to you that faith informs educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question involves participant meaning making and description about the essence of Christian faith-informed leadership connecting the school context to the change leader.

Interview Question # 14: How then would you envision the preparation and development of Christian school leaders for leading educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools (Chapters Two and Three)

- This question brings together Christian faith-informed experiences, practices, and meaning to the character, capabilities, and connections involved with complex adaptive system approaches (Arena, 2018; Uh-Bien et al., 2007).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an integrative discussion between Biblical and theological perspectives concerning the people of Israel in Ezekiel 36:1-38 with theories of educational change and organizational dynamics. It has offered a way in which Christian educational leaders can positively enact communal change using change resistance practices to support greater social interconnectivity and adaptability. Christian leaders need to develop awareness in their community's patterns of resistance, as well as refine their character, capabilities, and connections to help their communities develop curricular, organizational, and theological initiatives. Ezekiel 36:26 describes the deep-seeded heart change only takes place with the work of the Spirit.

The dialogue has renewed and reaffirmed the vital role that leaders play in helping their learning communities persist through destabilization, entropy, fear, threats, loss, and disorientation. Practical insights and actionable practices have been offered using Arena's (2018) 4D framework of adaptive spaces to facilitate discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption connections. For leaders that may be disparaging about resistance, recovering from feelings of foreclosure, or thinking about the next change initiative their community must navigate, complex adaptive approaches involving the whole system in change open up a new possible set of practices for engaging with one's community in more Christian ways aligned with God's counter resistance movement towards change. It is possible to derive the positive catalytic force and momentum from resistance to change when people work with one another and with others.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Chapter Two reviewed key gaps in current discourse concerning the two major domains of educational change leadership and the integration of faith in leadership. It also reviewed theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature in the minor domain concerning the context of Canadian educational leadership development. Developmental, faith-integrative, and practical contextual concerns were explored. Chapter Three discussed the major Biblical and theological considerations for Christian learning communities, integrating Biblical, theological, and social science perspectives to address resistance at individual, group, organizational, and systemic levels. Through analysis of Ezekiel 36:11-38 and theological exploration that educational leaders might apply to address resistance to change within their communities and initiatives, insights were offered for how leaders can navigate and repurpose resistance so that it works as a formative force in the process of educational change leadership. Together, Chapters Two and Three identified that current research examining the experiences of educational change leaders is needed to address a major challenge for the preparation, sustainability, and lifelong development of leadership in British Columbia (BC) K-12 Christian schools. Beckman et al.'s (2012) frustration concerning the overreliance on leadership models from the public sector that do not "explicate the unique attributes of leadership or the theological aspects of the vocation" (p. 105) helped frame the study around Christian organizational leadership change processes and practices.

This chapter aimed to develop a methodological framework for conducting research on how Christian school leaders experience, navigate, and practice educational change in ways that align with their Christian faith and organizational contexts. It frames questions concerning a leader's lived experience, a Christian school community's socio-cultural context and history, and perceived dynamics with faith as it pertains to the phenomenon of change leadership. The epistemological curiosities are discussed later in the chapter. The nature of resistance in change leadership and how leaders express perceived feelings about the presence of resistance during the change process is a central aspect to detail the phenomenon of educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools. Emerging from both Chapter Two and Three, participants were invited to reflect on the relationship between faith and educational change leadership practice. Leaders' insights might lead to envisioning greater preparation as future change leadership development efforts serve to direct the goals of the dissertation study.

Research on K-12 Christian educational leadership required closer analysis of issues pertaining to the formation of identity and practice for Christian school leaders (Martin, 2018; Lee & Cheng, 2021). The dissertation examined the intersection of faith in leadership development and organizational change theory and its prevalence in the phenomenon of Christian educational change leadership. Bridging conceptual and practical dimensions to understand K-12 Christian educational leadership contributes to the dissertation's purposefulness.

In Chapter Two, Domain One, the main task was to review the theoretical and conceptual perspectives of complex adaptive systems (Fidan & Balci, 2017; Lissack & Gunz, 1999; Balci, 2014; Holland, 1992; Davis & Sumara, 2008), brokerage and middle leadership theories (Burt, 1992, 2005; Rechsteiner et al., 2024; Lipscombe et al., 2023; Spillane, 2005; Wang, 2010), social

network theories, (Burt, 1992, 2005; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden, 1982; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Weick, 1976), and system-wide educational change theories (Fullan, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al, 2008; Sackney, 2007; Stoll, 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

Chapter Two, Domain Two concerned how participants conceive of faith integration, with the theoretical framework emerging from theories of workplace spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Daniel, 2015; Fenwick & Lange, 1998; Illes & Zsolani, 2015; Khasawneh, 2011; Mitroff & Denton, 1999), theories of religious leadership (Babyak, 2018; Bekker, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977; Miller, 2003; Niewold, 2007), theories on the integration of faith, teaching, and learning (Badley, 1994; Dockery, 2008; Gabelein, 1954/1985; Glanzer, 2008; Holmes, 1987; Langer, 2012; Palmer, 1997), theories of Biblical integration (Chewning, 2001; Curtis, 1986; MacCullough, 2016), practitioner theories of faith integration (D. I. Smith, 2018; Springer, 2017; Wolterstorff, 2004), and theories of faith integration in Christian leadership practice (Frank, 2006; Gratton & Cockerham, 2024; Wallace, 2021).

Chapter Two, Domain Three was a minor domain concerning literature on Canadian educational leadership development. It reviewed literature in Canada on the preparation, sustaining, and lifelong formation of leaders to thrive in their work of facilitating educational change, improvement, transformation, or reform. Theories in the Canadian educational context pertaining to leadership development needs in training, networks, capacity-building, and knowledge mobilization were discussed (Kutsyuruba et al., 2024a). The theoretical framework included analysis of distributive leadership (Leithwood et al., 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), instructional leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004), school

improvement leadership (Fullan, 2005, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008, 2019), and learning leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Senge, 1999). The landscape of Canadian educational leadership provided understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the dissertation study is framed.

The lack of phenomenological description in the field of educational change research emerged as a key gap in the literature from Chapter Two. Current research has lacked descriptions about how Christian leaders lead change processes, how those processes impact the leaders themselves, and what their perceptions might be able to reveal about change practically, relationally, developmentally, and theologically within Christian faith-based learning communities. Current discourse as critically examined in the literature review (Chapter Two) has not yet compared and contrasted the phenomenon of being a *change leader* from the experiences of *one who leads their community through change*. This chapter explains the research procedures and design that were used in the study.

Statement of the Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools by exploring the lived experiences of Christian educational leaders. The qualitative phenomenological research study involving interviews investigated how leaders detailed change in their own lives and their BC K-12 Christian educational communities and the meaning they ascribed to their experiences of facilitating organizational change curricularly, communally, developmentally, and theologically. The research questions addressed were as follows:

1. What is the current discourse concerning educational change leadership (Chapter Two, Domain One), the integration of faith in educational leadership practice (Chapter Two,

Domain Two), and the context of leadership development in Canada (Chapter Two, Domain Three)?

2. What are the critical gaps in understanding for Christian leaders facilitating educational change initiatives with their faith-informed practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Two)
3. How do biblical and theological perspectives of Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 interact with educational change and organizational dynamics theories to inform change leadership practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Three)

To support the main research question in Chapter Three, two subsidiary questions were also explored:

- a. How can Christian educational leaders reframe resistance in the processes and practices of educational change with their BC K-12 Christian learning communities? (Chapter Three)
 - b. What practical guidance can be shared with educational leaders that might be struggling with different forms of resistance to change with their curricular, organizational, or theological initiatives? (Chapter Three)
4. What developmental experiences have led participants to becoming educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools? (Chapters Four, Five, and Six)
5. What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia? (Chapters Four, Five, and Six)
6. In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices? (Chapters Four, Five, and Six)

7. How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia? (Chapters Four, Five, and Six)

Research Design

This research study identified descriptive phenomenology as the most suitable methodology to understand the research questions and phenomenon as experienced by British Columbia K-12 Christian school leaders. The research methodology and design are discussed next.

With descriptive phenomenology, researchers aim to construct thick descriptions about the *whatness* and *howness* of participants' experiences (Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 8). Descriptive phenomenology was a way to gain perspective on "pressing issues that people face in this late modern world" (Landridge, 2008, pp. 1126-1127) and within "the context of the embodied and situated subject" (p. 1128). Smith and Osborn (2003) provided more in-depth discussion of the core interpretive approaches involved in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (p. 54), which draws from hermeneutics, linking rich descriptions to interpretive analysis (Landridge, 2008, p. 1134) and Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) (pp. 1138). The approach in IPA was used to convey the descriptive elements of Chapter Five and CNA will be utilized to examine the analytic themes in Chapter Six. However, within CNA, the methodology is grounded in critical social theory, implying that there is an applied hermeneutical approach that is "teleological rather than archaeological" and thus the researcher is able to take both the descriptions seriously (IPA) and also rigorously engage with the data (CNA) (p. 1139).

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were the primary means of exploring the phenomenon of educational change leadership (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015; van Manen, 2016). Seidman (2019) forwarded that the goal of qualitative

research inquiry is to understand how participants make meaning concerning the phenomenon. The purpose of the dissertation's empirical phenomenological approach was to investigate "what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14). According to Vagle (2024), phenomenological studies are not interested in getting into the research participants' minds, nor trying to find more precise explanations (p. 22). Instead, phenomenologists are interested in studying the participants' lived experiences of "being and becoming" (Vagle, 2024, p. 22). Further, phenomenologists do not study the individual, instead, how a particular phenomenon manifests in the world. As such, in this study, the subject was the phenomenon of change and what learning leaders ascribe as meaning making intellectually, emotionally, socially, organizationally, and spiritually about educational change leadership within the context of British Columbia's K-12 Christian schools.

The work of descriptive phenomenology seeks to explore the participants' experiences by asking specific questions about the phenomenon and creating composite descriptions about the nature of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A main intent of the work was to hear the voices of BC K-12 Christian school leaders, their experiences, feelings, thought-processes, and concerns for development, as well as applied principles and practices for Christian faith integration in leadership. As such, CNA was utilized to work with a broader sample size and also promote greater possibility of invitation for the intended audience of BC K-12 Christian educational leaders to orientate themselves towards the narrative descriptions of leaders in their communities. CNA might be a more charitable or hospitable perspective as it aims to draw others who might not presently be experiencing the phenomenon into the experiences with its form of evaluative interpretation (Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2024; van Manen, 2016, p. 34). CNA's

approach as a goal was to create a productive mechanism to facilitate discourse sharing within the wider ecology of Christian schools to move discourse around organizational dynamics and change leadership forward.

The research was conducted online over the google meet video conference platform to access participants across a variety of regions in the province of British Columbia including those close in proximity for participant convenience. With online research, Salmons (2022) described how research investigators operate between the etic-emic continuum (p. 129). For example, I, the researcher, am also a K-12 Christian school learning leader in British Columbia and have some degree of inside knowledge by being familiar with the communities and settings making online interviews a viable option (Salmons, 2022, p. 129). While I share characteristics with participants that have experienced the phenomenon, I have also not experienced the histories, traditions, expectations, patterns of belief, and practices that exist within their respective school's socio-cultural context. However, I am able to draw on scholarship and experience as one loosely connected to other diversified clusters and networks (Weick, 1976) in order to generate the research problem and questions for the dissertation study.

To conduct the study and to ensure ethicality and mutuality, Moustakas' (1994) process of epoché and bracketing was used to help mitigate potential biases from an emic perspective (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015; van Manen, 2016). Landridge (2008) argued that it is important to address the limitations of epoché within a research study by naming preconceptions. In the data collection section, there are two member-checking practices that emerge from the research paradigm and the importance of designing a process that promotes a high degree of mutuality and trustworthiness with participants and data collection. Holstein and Gubrium (2011) argued that both critical consciousness and analytic bracketing are needed to walk the tightrope of

documenting social meaning and reality and also not assume that descriptions are the whole story (p. 352), shaping the research posture. Chapter Three presented a case study of change leadership, which was a personal memoir detailing one of my first whole-scale change initiatives, where I engaged in stating some of the prior assumptions I came to the work with. Considering the limitations identified, reflexivity was rigorously practiced in Chapter Three where I, the researcher, outlined my own experiences with educational change and bracketed them from the interpretations. Personal views were also bracketed off by including participant vignettes that co-represent and validate the participants' voices through participatory forms of building trustworthiness. After the data collection phase and prior to coding, I engaged in extensive memoing by documenting what participants shared. A third form of bracketing is detailed further on in this chapter and involved presenting participants with both the full interview transcript and the Composite Vignette Profile for their review of accuracy and resonance with the phenomenon of change leadership.

To support the dissertation's data analysis and ensure an accurate reflection of the entire data set, both a comprehensive description of the data as a whole and an account of critical components linked to INA are provided (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 83). According to Braun and Clarke (2021), one of the "benefits of thematic analysis is flexibility" (p. 78), so thematic analysis was used to generate analytic themes and ensure reflexivity without seeking to "fit the [data] into a preexisting coding frame or [my] analytic preconceptions" (p. 83). Thematic analysis served to support interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003) by yielding detailed and complex accounts of the data through the researcher's reflexivity. Furthermore, the data analysis phase involved first becoming familiar with the data after transcription, generating initial codes, working iteratively through the data by organizing

phenomenological categories and themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2021, pp. 87-93). By doing so, the findings are validated by being both flexible and rigorous with the qualitative analysis.

A critical aim was to fully represent the experiences of the participants in Chapter Five before formulating critical interpretations in Chapter Six. In doing so, personal lived experience underwent a process of being set aside until returning to it in Chapter Six.

Development of Interview and Demographic Questions

To gather data that addressed the dissertation's fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh qualitative research questions, this study used semi-structured interviews and a participant demographic questionnaire. The methods are detailed further in the next section.

Semi-Structured Interviews

This study uses semi-structured interviews to gather data that addresses the dissertation's qualitative research questions. Semi-structured interviews were congruent with the research questions as they aligned with the eight guiding values that were forwarded in Chapter One to provide the basis for phenomenological inquiry into the relationship between theory, practice, faith, and community (authenticity, trustworthiness, context, coherence, integrity, resonance, groundedness, and precision). Semi-structured interviews support mutual exploration of the phenomenon (Seidman, 2019). They offer enough structure to keep the inquiry coherent, while creating space for participants to articulate their experiences in their own terms. This format enables the researcher to explore examples, clarify meaning, and invite participants to expand on emerging insights. In doing so, semi-structured interviews generate rich, layered accounts that prioritize meaning over data extraction. These questions are displayed in Table 4.1 and structured into an interview protocol in Appendix H with the Interview Guide.

Table 4.1*Interview Questions Alignment with Research Questions*

Category & Concepts	Interview Questions
Part I: Introduction and Background Information (~5-10 minutes) Understanding personal leadership and socio-cultural context of BC K-12 Christian school(s) (RQs 1, 2, and 4)	1. Please help me to get to know you better. What are 1-2 formative experiences that have developed and prepared you for leadership in a BC K-12 Christian school? a. Probe: Are there any ways those experiences have prepared you for leading educational change in the BC K-12 Christian school context? b. Probe: <i>Who</i> or <i>what</i> has been influential for you becoming who you are today? c. Probe: What were your thoughts/feelings/emotions/perceptions/actions, and conceptions in those experiences?
Part II: Work Context, Experience, and Process of Change (~15-20 minutes) Describing the context and lived experiences of educational change and complexity leadership (RQs 1, 2, and 5)	2. What is your current role, and could you tell me as much as possible about the details of your experience at work related to educational change leadership? 3. Can you share with me some examples of educational change initiatives you have been involved in and can you detail for me their change process? (2-3 experiences). a. Probe: Are there any other <i>stories, examples, or details</i> that might help describe the work of educational change you are engaged with and your experiences? b. Probe: How would you describe the socio-cultural context/environment/or ethos of your community during the experience? c. Probe: Can you describe your feelings associated with the experience? d. Probe: Can you elaborate on what you mean by (<i>specific word or phrase</i>)? e. Probe: Are there any other examples you could tell me about?
Experiences of educational change, relational network theories and interactions between members of complex adaptive systems (RQs 1, 5)	4. Can you share any specific examples or experiences where your social connections might have influenced your educational leadership of a change initiative? (Chapters Two and Three) a. Probe: Were there any moments of clarity for you about how you wanted your community to build relationships leading to educational change? b. Probe: Are there any examples detailing the influence of relationships within your school community that have contributed to educational change? c. Probe: What would your learning community say about how they experienced the change initiative?

(table continues)

Table 4.1 (continued)*Interview Questions Alignment with Research Questions*

Experiences of educational change (RQ 5) Experiences of resistance to change (RQs 1, 2, 3a, b)	5. In what ways, if any, have you encountered resistance to change throughout an educational initiative? What was that like for you as the change leader? (Chapters Two and Three) a. Probe: What was that like for members of your educational community? b. Probe: Could you describe any tensions that existed within your community as you led the change initiative?
Part III- Educational Change Leadership Practices (~15-20 minutes) Change leadership practices in complex adaptive systems (RQs 2, 3, 6)	6. What practices, if any, have been significant for you in leading educational change within your Christian learning community? (Chapters Two and Three) a. Probe: Could you share an example of what that practice has looked like in your educational community? b. Probe: Are there any practices in your leadership that you found to be significant when encountering resistance to change? c. Probe: How have others around you reacted to the practices you mentioned? d. Probe: Have you had any moments of delight in the midst of a change initiative? e. Probe: Can you describe how members of your community have learned new practices that supported the adoption of the educational change initiative?
Change leadership character and capabilities in complex adaptive systems (RQs 2, 3b, 6)	7. What, if any, are distinct characteristics of a Christian educational change leader? (Chapter Two and Three) a. Probe: Could you tell me more about that? b. Probe: What do you mean by (<i>specific word or phrase participant used</i>)? c. Probe: Could you share with me an example of where you have seen (<i>the specific characteristic mentioned</i>) practiced within an educational change initiative?
Change leadership practices and faith integration in complex adaptive systems (RQs 3b, 6)	8. Are there ways your Christian faith has informed your change leadership practices? (Chapters Two and Three) a. Probe: Can you walk me through your example of what happened, step-by-step including what you saw, felt, heard, or experienced? b. Probe: What do you mean by (<i>specific word or phrase participant used</i>)?

(table continues)

Table 4.1 (continued)*Interview Questions Alignment with Research Questions*

Integration of faith in educational change leadership (RQs 3a; 5)	9.	Can you detail any other examples of the processes and practices of facilitating educational change with your BC K-12 Christian school context that we have not yet talked about? a. Probe: Are there any other experiences you would like to revisit? b. Probe: Have you had similar or different experiences than what you have shared?
Returning to educational experiences of change (RQs 3b, 5) Experiences of change and enduring communal change variable	10.	Do you have any examples you could share of when you have experienced educational changes sustained over many years? (Chapter Two and Three) a. Probe: Could you detail how this has shaped your Christian learning community?
Part IV: Meaning Making of Educational Change Leadership (~5-10 minutes) Returning to educational experiences of change (RQ 5)	11.	What does it mean to lead educational change within the context of your current K-12 Christian learning community? a. Probe: What dimensions/incidents/people intimately connected with the experience of facilitating organizational change stand out to you as meaningful? b. Probe: What is critical for communities to understand when journeying through educational change in a BC K-12 Christian school?
Personal meaning of educational change, role of social connections, and resistance to change with faith-informed change (RQs 3a, 3b, 6, 7)	12.	What does it mean to you that faith informs educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapters Two and Three) a. Probe: Is there anything more you can share with me about the role of faith in navigating social connections with educational change initiatives? b. Probe: Is there anything more you can share with me about the role of faith in navigating resistance to change?
Collective phenomenological meaning of educational change for BC K-12 Christian schools (RQs 1 and 7)	13.	How do you see yourself directing future efforts with educational change processes? a. Probe: What does it mean for your future self? b. Probe: What would this mean for a future curricular, theological, or organizational change initiative you are leading?

(table continues)

Table 4.1 (continued)*Interview Questions Alignment with Research Questions*

Closing Questions	14. Is there anything else you might share with me that is significant with reference to the experience, practice, or meaning of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools? 15. Is there anything we have not discussed that would help contribute to my research study concerning educational change leadership?

Researcher Preparation

Given the methodological assumptions that knowledge can be both independent of mind and dependent on mind from a critical interpretivist perspective (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015; Gubba & Lincoln, 1994), there was no explicit goal to generate a theory of Christian educational change leadership. Mittwede (2012, p. 32), citing both Naugle (2002) and A. Wright (1998) argued for a spiraling path of dialogue between knower and the things known. In alignment with other Christian phenomenological research that supports the blend of the tentative and personal nature of knowledge within a real world, it was necessary to not place too much or too little confidence in human capabilities and instead pursue “epistemic humility” (Mittwede, 2012, pp. 32-33). Some of the quality control practices were mitigated by keeping a field journal and reviewing the transcripts with extensive memoing to engage in the practices of bracketing, member checking, and reflexivity (Moustaskas, 1994; Saldaña, 2021, pp. 32-33).

My background as a K-12 Christian educational leader prepared me to understand how to access different research sites and participants in a respectful way and support the trustworthiness of the dissertation research study. Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) notion of *professional capital* accounts for three critical aspects of my preparation as the principal investigator of the dissertation research study: *Human capital*, pertaining the talent and

qualifications: I have taken master's and doctoral level courses in qualitative research involving practice with interviews and focus groups. I have conducted several qualitative phenomenological research studies online and published the findings. *Social capital*, the collaborative power of networks and connections: I also have a teacher education background working in elementary, middle, and secondary contexts and I teach courses in education and leadership in Christian higher education. The relationships I have formed from different professional cohort and network initiatives, involvement in leadership professional development across BC K-12 Christian schools, and my professional contributions as a BC Christian school leader have positioned me well as a broker of change to understand other leaders' experiences and bracket my own biases from within my network. *Decisional capital*, the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments cultivated over many years: Knowledge of factors relevant to the study has prepared me to explore research questions and dialogue with participants in ways that elicit relevant data. With respect to technical knowledge and practice that supported the qualitative data collection, I have training throughout my doctoral studies for using qualitative analysis tools such as NVivo, completed research ethics training through Biola's partnership with CITI research ethics to maintain confidentiality, and have written professional articles on ethical research built on professional partnership, mutuality, and relationships with participants.

To conduct the dissertation's phenomenological research approach, it was important to be cautious so as not set out to generate some broader deductive theory or generalize to all contexts in BC but instead to seek to provoke the borders of possible hypotheses of what the phenomena of change leadership might mean contextually in BC. Furthermore, what might work in one leader's context might not be applicable or generalizable in another Christian school context. However, the dissertation research question evoked consideration about what Christian school

leaders experience as they themselves not only facilitate but participate in the change they are facilitating. In this way, knowledge, epistemologically speaking, was understood to be provisional, heterogeneous, and partial in terms of explanations of social reality (Gubba & Lincoln, 1994; O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 11). A phenomenological approach was employed to understand the participants' worlds from their point of view and the meaning they ascribed to the phenomena in rich, complex descriptive ways (Seidman, 2019; van Manen, 2016).

As the study involved working to create a comprehensive phenomenological description that intersected with practical philosophy, theology, and organizational leadership, it was anticipated that participants would positively describe aspects about working in collaborative teams in ways that are distinctly Christian in both implicit and explicit ways. Going into the data collection phase I had some expectations that leaders would engage in their own stories of faith as related to change leadership and describe Christian ways of being for educational change; I prioritized inviting narratives and examples so that different dimensions of change leadership could emerge during the interviews. At the same time, I set aside enthusiasm for particular outcomes, remaining open to what the present lived experiences of Christian school leaders might reveal, including alternative perspectives and manifestations in the participants' lives and communities, which proved to be a strength of this study. An assumption was that the participants' ontology would create a comprehensive description of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Philosophically, participants' meaning making provided the hermeneutical basis for exploration about contextual experiences and the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Sample Selection Procedures

As part of the selection criteria (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 56), participants were current BC K-12 Christian educational leaders in their school communities serving in formal

senior leadership capacities as Heads of School/Superintendents, Directors of Learning, or Principals. Participants were purposefully selected (Patton, 2014; Gall et al., 2007, p. 243) as they met the initial predetermined set of criteria: (1) are currently serving in formal senior leadership roles as BC K-12 Christian Principals, Directors of Learning/Educational Directors, or Superintendents/Heads of School/Executive Directors; (2) have experiences or involvement in shaping educational change at a school-based level; (3) have facilitated, implemented, or managed school reform at organizational, theological, or curricular levels; (4) have a minimum of two years of leadership experience in a BC K-12 Christian school; and (5) can speak to how they understand their Christian faith in their educational change leadership practice. At the same time, participants needed to self-identify as change-agents of Christian school reforms (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1996; Trybus, 2011). Participants were “critical cases” (Salmons, 2022) that had experienced the phenomenon of educational change leadership.

Interview participants were contacted individually by email to (i) explain the purpose and scope of the study, (ii) invite participation, and (iii) ensure informed voluntary consent prior to the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 128-129). Participant recruitment included a short, individual 15–20-minute phone call/Google Meet to go through the Informed Consent Form. Participants then signed the Informed Consent Form electronically and proceeded to complete a short Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F). However, to ensure voluntary consent, participants needed to have completed the consent and demographic questionnaire following the initial 15-20 minute phone/Google Meet meeting and prior to conducting the Google Meet interview. To assist with scheduling the participant interviews, a secure calendar through my Biola google account was also shared, enabling participants to indicate their availability.

Participants also had access to the researcher's overview document to guide them through the process.

Within the second level of purposive sampling, as leaders consented to participate in the study, they indicated that they had experience with the phenomenon of educational change leadership and fully met the selection criteria. Participants were not selected based on a particular Christian denominational affiliation, cultural background, or gender, though attempts to diversify participants on the part of the researcher was implicit to ensure maximum variation (Patton, 2014). The dissertation study aimed to balance male and female participants and representation from different regions, sizes of schools, and Christian denominational contexts across the province of BC. One of the key areas of integrity within the study that required intentionality with sample selection was due to the researcher's own familiarity with the research context and connections to the different possible Christian educational leaders in BC who were participants for the study. The study did not include any participants employed at the researcher's place of work, ensuring independence and minimizing potential conflicts of interest.

Theoretical saturation needed to be achieved (Braun & Clark, 2006), as it is a hallmark of qualitative data validity to have redundancy occur (Braun & Clark, 2021, p. 203). Braun and Clark (2006) argued that a sample size of 12 should be sufficient for thematic analysis (p. 7). However, the framework used to guide the research design emerged from Hennink et al. (2017), who defined saturation in three ways, code (no additional codes are emerging), theme (cogent analytic conception of data), and meaning (no further insights) are originating from the data (p. 15). With more homogenous samples, Hennink et al. (2017) argued that code saturation could be accomplished starting with five interviews but increasing in meaning with more interviews. Given that the sample had some more diverse characteristics including geographic region, years

of experience, leadership experiences, and theological background, pursuit of code, theme, and meaning saturation took place supported by efforts to dialogue with the 28 participants. Data saturation took place when no new data or themes emerge in the data collection process. To mitigate against potential issues of bias and power dynamics, participants were Christian school leaders that the researcher was not currently employed with. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the report. All participants were contacted individually by email following IRB approval.

No monetary incentive was offered; however, to encourage mutuality, the researcher will work with participants to share some of the research findings with participants' school communities or leadership teams following completion of the research. The opportunity for participants to advance the field of research in Christian education will encourage the dissertation study to share valued insights that have been gained from the process with participants, their communities, and other affiliate Christian educational partners that support leadership development.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process began with approval from Biola University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Furthermore, the data collection procedures are outlined in the next section.

Interview Participants' Demographic Questionnaire

The Interview Participants' Questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information about the research participants' leadership context and experiences (Appendix F). To understand the developmental, experiential, and practical expressions related to the phenomenon of educational change, it was necessary to examine the leader's socio-cultural context and

educational community. The sampling paradigm was derived from Patton's (2014) different forms of purposive sample, specifically typical case and critical case sampling (p. 236). Typical case does not target "poor" or "excellent" research sites, which aligns with the dissertation's phenomenological study's goals of examining how participants in the BC Christian educational context, in their roles, make meaning of educational change leadership. Participant selection parameters were critical to the case, as participants' experiences provided insights necessary to understand the phenomenon in its complexity (Patton, 2014, p. 237).

Some of the details gathered from the demographic questionnaire were changed in the Composite Vignettes to ensure confidentiality, but this information was collected to ensure accurate understanding of participants' work experiences. In Appendix F, the demographic questionnaire collected information in a Google form securely connected to my Biola University account to help accurately situate the participants in their lived experiences and socio-cultural contexts. The demographic questionnaire was available for participant completion following consent to participate in the research study. Participants were encouraged to answer all the questions but also free to skip any questions that they may have felt uncomfortable responding to. Descriptive data organized was reported anonymously (see Chapter Five, Figure 5.1 and 5.2 and Table 5.1).

However, given the number of potential participants working as BC K-12 Christian school leaders, some possible limitations emerged particularly regarding the breadth of demographic representation. While intentionally seeking diversity in participant characteristics, contrastively from some phenomenological research that intentionally seeks intensity sampling by leaving out possible extreme cases (Moustaskas, 1994; Patton, 2014), a more homogenous sampling criteria was not pursued. Instead, different forms of representation, such as years of experience, years at

current school, sex, denominational affiliation, and geographic region, are presented to provide an accurate understanding of participants' context (see Appendix F, Electronic Demographic Questionnaire). According to Mohamad et al., 2019, complex manifestations of “context, factors, antecedents, process, work-related outcomes, reactions and consequences,” require further research exploring the relationship between leader, communities, and socio-cultural interactions, beliefs, structures, and processes (p. 85); such work would need to be well-documented to illuminate participants' context and enable attentiveness towards developmental experiences and practices.

In-Depth Interviews

The study utilized in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Initial communication was shared to invite participation in the research study (Appendix E, Communication with Interview Participants). Once participants expressed interest in the study, the electronic consent form was shared through a secure Google form and a 15-20-minute initial conversation on the phone or by Google Meet was set up to go through the participant electronic consent. Participants completed the form following the initial conversation on their own time, ensuring full voluntary participation. Furthermore, the electronic consent form outlined the scope of the research, the Biola Institutional Review Board approval, and the key elements of the data collection phases as outlined in this chapter.

To ensure that the process was streamlined and well-organized, the secure Google form that included the Informed Consent Form had a space for participants to sign if they wished to participate. The same form, if signed, then prompted participants to proceed to complete the demographic questionnaire (Appendix F, Electronic Participants' Demographic Questionnaire). The Interview Guide was shared with participants 48 hours prior to interview (Appendix H,

Interview Guide). The interview questions, without probing questions, were shared, so participants clearly understood how the research questions were driving the scope of the phenomenological inquiry. The scope of the interview is outlined as follows:

- Part I: Life Histories; Part II: Work Experience, Context, and Change Processes; Part III: Change Leadership Practices; and Part IV: Meaning Making:** This study explored the phenomenon by engaging participants in detailing their experiences of change, reform, and transformation that have shaped their work in BC K-12 Christian schools. Narrative examples were invited to capture participants' developmental, leadership, and work-context experiences with the phenomenon of educational change. Participants reflected on their experiences and the meaning of leading organizational change within a BC K-12 Christian school, considering their feelings, perceptions, and impressions of educational change processes and practices. Participants were encouraged to share formative experiences of change within their own biographical history as well as the history of their Christian learning community, creating a sense of convergence of context. The final part of the interview followed Seidman's (2019) phenomenological inquiry approach to deepen understanding of what these experiences meant for participants, their practices, faith, and communities of change.

Interview Procedures

Once participants signed the Informed Consent Form electronically through a Google form and the Electronic Demographic Questionnaire through the second section of the same google form (Appendix F), each participant was contacted by email to schedule a Google Meet interview at a mutually agreed time. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized (Appendix H). Participants received an email reminder before the interview to ensure that the signed copy of

the Informed Consent was received. The Interview Guide without the probing questions (Appendix H) was provided approximately 48 hours in advance of the interview to allow for participants to prepare in advance if they needed time to collect their thoughts. The total time for the interviews all took place between 75-90 minutes as anticipated. Each interview was conducted on the Google Meet conference platform, providing confidentiality to the participants. The following data collection procedures were followed:

1. At the beginning of the interviews, the researcher read the affirmation of intent and consent, the purpose of the study, and explained that participants' confidentiality would be protected in the report (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 48; Appendix G, Verbatim Interview Instructions).
2. An interview guide was used to facilitate the semi-structured phenomenological inquiry (Appendix H, Interview Guide).
3. Audio and video were recorded for full analysis of verbal and non-verbal cues.
4. Full verbatim transcripts were generated for the interviews using the Google Meet platform's transcription service, supported by the Otter.ai application for additional transcript accuracy. This was to ensure accurate documentation of the conversation for review by participants and use as the data was being analyzed by the researcher.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to practice a trial run of all the procedures outlined in the study including communication with participants, consent, arranging interviews, conducting interviews using the protocols outlined in the study, and conducting preliminary data analysis (Seidman, 2019). The pilot study served to clarify if the instrument and interview guides were clear and if questions required further adjustment for the rest of the sample (Seidman, 2019, p.

43). A minor set of amendments were submitted to the IRB and approved following the proposal defense meeting. As there were no adjustments following the pilot study, data from the pilot study was used in the main research analysis and dataset being generated.

Data Collection Through In-Depth Interviewing

At the start of the participant interviews, following the initial explanation of the research scope, purpose, and consent forms, the following procedures were used:

1. The Verbatim Interview Instructions were read (Appendix G).
2. If participants agreed to proceed, the settings to generate a transcript of the interview and record the interview commenced.
3. Next, the researcher followed the Interview Guide for the interview (Appendix H).
4. In the interview, the researcher sought to understand how participants experienced the phenomenon of change, reform, and transformation in their own lives and in the work that they do. Starting with the introductory questions, the researcher built rapport with the participants by asking questions to get to know them, defining understanding of the phenomenon, and exploring their context (Seidman, 2019).
5. Throughout the interview, the researcher listened for how participants understood the meaning of their experiences with respect to the phenomenon of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools.
6. To close the interviews, the researcher invited participants to share anything else that would contribute to the research study that had not been addressed in the conversation (Seidman, 2019).
7. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw up until two weeks after the Respondent Feedback Form was shared with the researcher.

8. Participants received a copy of the full transcript to review for member checking purposes and to ensure accuracy. Details of the process of receiving the Respondent Feedback form (Appendix I) and the Composite Vignette were provided so participants could review for accuracy. Participants were invited to share any revisions, additions, or clarifications with the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018) through the form (Seidman, 2019, p. 128; see Appendix I); four participants used the Respondent Feedback Form to make minor adjustments. Three revisions included additional masking to protect confidentiality, and one made an adjustment in wording for accuracy.
9. After the interview, follow-up communication with the participants was shared to express gratitude for participation and the expected timeline to review documentation (Appendix E).
10. In the follow-up communication, participants received a thank you note, a copy of the transcript, a link to the Electronic Respondent Feedback Form provided through a secure Google forms link, and the Composite Vignette profile (Appendix E and I).
 - a. Follow up took place within 5-10 days of each interview.
 - b. In the Respondent Feedback Form (Appendix I), participants were invited to share, clarify, or revise any information on the transcript and review accuracy.
 - c. Any additional data from the Respondent Feedback form was able to be used for data analysis and in reporting.
 - d. The Composite Vignette description of each participant was in the form of a one-two page description or composite profile (Seidman, 2019) using the data and was shared with participants for feedback and validation through Appendix I.

- e. The Respondent Feedback section highlighted the following questions: (1) Does the transcript in its current form accurately reflect the discussion: (Yes/No; if no, please include revisions, additions, or clarifications). (2) Does the composite description accurately reflect the participants' lived experiences with the research phenomenon? (Yes/No; if no, please include revisions, additions, or clarifications). (3) Would you like to have a follow up conversation to discuss any further details of the interview? (Yes – Click here to see my availability to meet with you by phone/google meet; No).

Data Transcription

I reviewed the verbatim transcript data through Google Meet and supplemented by Otter.ai. Participants received the transcript and composite vignettes back on almost all occasions within the 5-7 day allocation, except on two accounts that were shared within 10 days to ensure timely interaction and review. Participants had the ability to verify the reviewed transcript with 26 out of 28 participants completing the Respondent Feedback form (Appendix I).

To protect participant confidentiality and reduce the risk of deductive disclosure in the analysis and reporting (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 55), I applied masking procedures during the transcription phase. I used pseudonyms, reported geographic locations at a regional level, and employed disguises that preserved the integrity of participants' accounts without distorting their meaning. Throughout this process, I treated participant dignity as a primary ethical concern (Seidman, 2019, p. 131).

Relationality and mutuality were key values undergirding the researcher's paradigm. Four participants shared minor feedback on the Composite Vignette Profiles that were taken forward to the final copy and the feedback was valued. In terms of integrity with reporting on the

findings, the report followed the procedures outlined in the Data Analysis section. Axial codes, categories, and themes were generated to organize the report. As the study was phenomenological in scope, participant voices were shared extensively to reconstruct experiences about the phenomenon.

Data Verification

As the researcher, I was immersed in the interview transcripts prior to analysis and as such, reviewed the accuracy of the transcripts myself. This practice enabled me to become more familiar with the data and to engage with participants about whether the transcript accurately reflects our conversation. During the immersive listening, reflection on the research questions and significant statements that participants used to describe the phenomenon guided the critical process (Moustakas, 1994). The criteria for what counted as significant included the following: reconstructed narratives, self-reflexivity, changes in ways of knowing, doing, and being, descriptions and perceptions of feelings, understanding about the experience of the research phenomenon, and participant meaning making (Seidman, 2019, p. 136).

Specifically, within phenomenological inquiry, there were three main practices for ensuring validity: (1) Participant composite vignettes were developed for member checking purposes (Seidman, 2019, p. 128). According to Seidman (2019), vignettes are ways of presenting participants “in context, to clarify their intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time” (p. 128). (2) Composite profiles were presented to the participants for their review and add to the integrity of the data that it reflected the complexity of the phenomenon in a coherent way (p. 129; Appendix I). A key concern with the creation of a Composite Vignette for each person was how the researcher protected the identity of the participant (Seidman, 2019, p. 130). Pseudonyms and more general geographic location were used based on regions, and details of

the participants' work to employ disguises while not distorting what the participants have said in the interviews; participants' dignity will be a chief concern (Seidman, 2019, p. 131).

Pseudonyms and masking occurred post-data transcription. I personally reviewed all verbatim transcripts generated through Google Meet and supplemented by Otter.ai to ensure participant confidentiality from deductive disclosure in the analysis and reporting (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 55). Participants received and verified the reviewed transcript with pseudonyms and masking embedded.

Participants reconstructed their own experiences and their educational community's context before detailing their processes, practices, experiences of resistance, faith and the meaning they ascribe to the phenomenon of educational change leadership. I employed probing questions to elicit rich, descriptive examples of educational change leadership. At the end of the interview, returning to meaning making questions invited better understanding of what the experiences meant to participants now as it pertained to the research questions and phenomenon (Seidman, 2019, p. 28) by attending to issues of validity, credibility, and trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, pp. 289). By doing so, participants confirmed what was said in the first part of the interview or better clarified what they intended to convey by expressing how they made meaning of their experiences with change leadership (Seidman, 2019, p. 29).

Using NVivo 15 and the constant comparison method (Patton, 2014), main categories and themes were generated through an iterative process (Saldaña, 2021). Word frequency analysis was used on several accounts and reported in Chapter Five as part of determining what might be common concepts explored in each of the participant interviews. Significant statements arising in the voice of participants were included in the findings to accurately reflect the key assertions that participants made throughout the interviews.

As a result of the journaling and reflecting throughout the data collection process, the analysis technique of identifying significant statements was a primary way first of deriving meaning and reporting about the phenomenon in the voice of the participants (Seidman, 2019). A recursive process to generate the initial codes guided the analysis, before moving to categories and themes that emerged. To answer the research question, thematic analysis generated through the iterative internally verifying and inductive processes in the constant comparison method was used (Patton, 2014). Initial codes were generated from the data to make sense of the phenomenon of educational change leadership.

According to O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015), there are five criteria for conducting qualitative research (transparency, reflexivity, transferability, ethicality, and integrity; p. 40). Transparency, ethicality, and transferability in the data validation procedures are addressed as follows: **Transparency.** Data collection and analysis processes are reported in a clear and repeatable manner. Participants received a copy of the full interview transcript and provided feedback on its accuracy. This was to promote mutuality and sharing so that participants were not only seen as informants, but as co-constructors in the research. The Composite Vignette was reviewed by participants for accuracy (Appendix I). **Ethicality.** For the interviews, a verbatim transcript was generated using Google Meet conferencing services supported by the Otter.ai transcription application to generate accurate transcriptions. The Otter.ai application is a supplemental tool that supplemented or augmented the Google Meet transcription. It enabled the researcher to attend more to *what* participants were sharing and also *how* they were sharing.

I reviewed all transcripts for accuracy before sharing them with participants for verification. Pseudonyms were assigned. Neither participant names nor identifiable descriptions of the research site are to be included in the reports. Masking occurred for research sites so any

details cannot be connected back to the participants (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 55). The transcript shared with participants highlighted where masking occurred.

Reflexivity. Because of researcher positionality as a K-12 Christian school leader, detaching personal experiences from the context by not trying to discover reasons why, or motivations for the descriptions participants share was critical. Instead, the focus was on what it meant to lead change in terms of the participants' voices. Braun and Clarke (2023) described the practice of thematic analysis as a family of methods related to conceptualizing themes (p. 2). In their discussion of reflexivity, they identified how researchers need to become aware of positivism creep and how meaning cannot be generated in advance of analysis (p. 3). To mitigate against researcher bias and promote reflexivity, I went beyond simply outlining personal and professional positionality and experience. I actively utilized member checking to explore possible gaps and contradictions in their own understanding around language and meaning-based interpretations (p. 4). As such, the Composite Vignettes enabled participants to share feedback on whether the meaning derived from the interviews accurately represented participant lived experiences with the phenomenon through the researcher's reflexivity.

Transferability. While the qualitative process is outlined and detailed for greater repeatability, a key methodological assumption was non-generalizability to other contexts (Seidman, 2019, p. 30). Qualitative researchers cannot assume that what is true for the participants and phenomenon in this study's context is also true of other populations. However, to encourage trustworthiness and thus transferability, the interview process was developed to have participants, in the first half of the interview, share their experiences and then, in the second half of the interview, return to what they have shared to promote internal consistency and

confirmability through meaning making about their experiences with the phenomenon (Seidman, 2019, p. 30).

From Transcribing to Coding

Once the transcripts were generated, they were edited for readability and crosschecked for accuracy by listening to the audio files several times to build familiarity with the participants' experiences and engage in several rounds of reflexivity. The data analysis process began as soon as each interview transcript has been transcribed and reviewed. The Composite Vignettes were generated as a means of encouraging mutuality, reciprocity, and shared learning. Data was coded to generate analytic categories and themes that corresponded with the research phenomenon (Seidman, 2019; Saldaña, 2021).

NVivo 15, a qualitative software tool for organizing data into pockets of meaning was utilized to assist with the data analysis. Participant questionnaires, interviews, and respondent feedback forms were inputted into NVivo and codes were linked to the data, organized into categories, and themes generated. There were two main reasons for using NVivo 15: (1) For efficiency with organizing the data for notetaking, memoing, and generating a codebook that can be used for creating a data analysis trail and (2) for transparency, not only in product, but also in process. With transparency of process, there is opportunity for greater repeatability and trustworthiness (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). The next section outlines how the codes, categories, and emerging themes were generated in the data analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2014; Saldaña, 2021; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Coding, Categorizing, and Theming

The first step was to winnow down the data by engaging in the analytic open coding process that enabled the researcher to determine what was pertinent for the research phenomena

(O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). Open coding took place in multiple rounds (Saldaña, 2021) as the researcher worked both systematically and iteratively to understand the participants' sense making of their experiences (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 70). Axial codes were generated to determine possible relationships between the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using descriptive phenomenological analysis and interpretive phenomenological analysis, data was organized around carefully ascertained key themes that were prominent in the data. A table overview of the frequency of the codes and the number of sources corresponding to each code were provided to assist with retracing of categories and organization under themes for greater repeatability (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hein, & Austin, 2001; Landridge, 2008; Smith & Osborn, 2003; see Table 5.2). Primary data analysis was completed using NVivo 15 tools. Although the original plan included the possible supplemental use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to conduct discourse and sentiment analysis, generate basic social network maps to identify central brokers, developers, energizers, and disruptors (Arena, 2018), align theological constructs with participants' experiences, I chose not to use AI. This decision was made upon further consideration to preserve the integrity of context-specific data, as it proved difficult to separate contextual information from narrative descriptions and inputting data into AI tools may have longer term compromising effects that are yet unknown. While the inherent purposes in phenomenological inquiry was not necessarily to generate a large generalizable hypothesis, some conceptions of phenomenological inquiry attempt to create comprehensive descriptions around more homogenous groups and thus validate the themes as legitimate explorations of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14).

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research procedures and design for this descriptive phenomenological inquiry involving online interviews. The main procedures for the study identified details for the statement of research, the research design, theoretical framework, sample selection procedures, data collection, data validation, and data analysis. The purpose of the study was to explore British Columbia K-12 Christian school leaders' experiences of leading organizational change in their educational communities.

Convenient, purposeful sampling was obtained by the researcher inviting participant involvement in the research study. The sample was convenient because I as the researcher have access to participants through my own networked and lived experiences in the context of British Columbia K-12 Christian schools. The sample was purposeful as participants were selected based on holding current formal educational leadership roles in BC K-12 Christian school leaders and also self-identifying as change agents in their school communities. Only participants who had experience leading different curricular, communal, and theological change initiatives in their organizations were included in the sample. Data was collected through in-depth interviews involving a semi-structured interview protocol, with audio and video recorded over the Google Meet conference platform.

Practices to encourage O'Reilly and Kiyimba's (2015) criteria of high-quality qualitative research (transparency, reflexivity, transferability, ethicality, and integrity) were employed in the research design. Data analysis used NVivo 15 to code transcripts, carefully engage with the organization of the data, and their relevance to each of the research questions and phenomena. Supplemental use of artificial intelligence tools in the data analysis phase did not transpire as the researcher prioritized more detailed narrative reporting and better understood the implications

that might compromise the integrity of the study by including context specific data into artificial intelligence language tools. Emergent themes were drawn to focus the findings on the research problem and discussed further next in Chapter Five. Following the findings in Chapter Five, the discussion in Chapter Six will explore a Christian theologically integrative analysis concerning educational change leadership. Implications and recommendations are applied to the context of K-12 Christian educational leadership. Limitations and further recommendations are discussed in terms of procedures and findings to ensure greater transparency and opportunity to further scholarly discourse specifically with Christian school leadership development in the province of British Columbia.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to explore how BC K-12 Christian school leaders experience educational change leadership. This chapter presents the results of the empirical research study from the phenomenological in-depth analysis. As described in Chapter Four, online interviews using the google meet platform were used to gather data. The first section describes details related to the research participants' demographics. The second section details the Findings organized as themes, categories, and dimensions that emerged from the interview analysis. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the important findings from the phenomenological interviews.

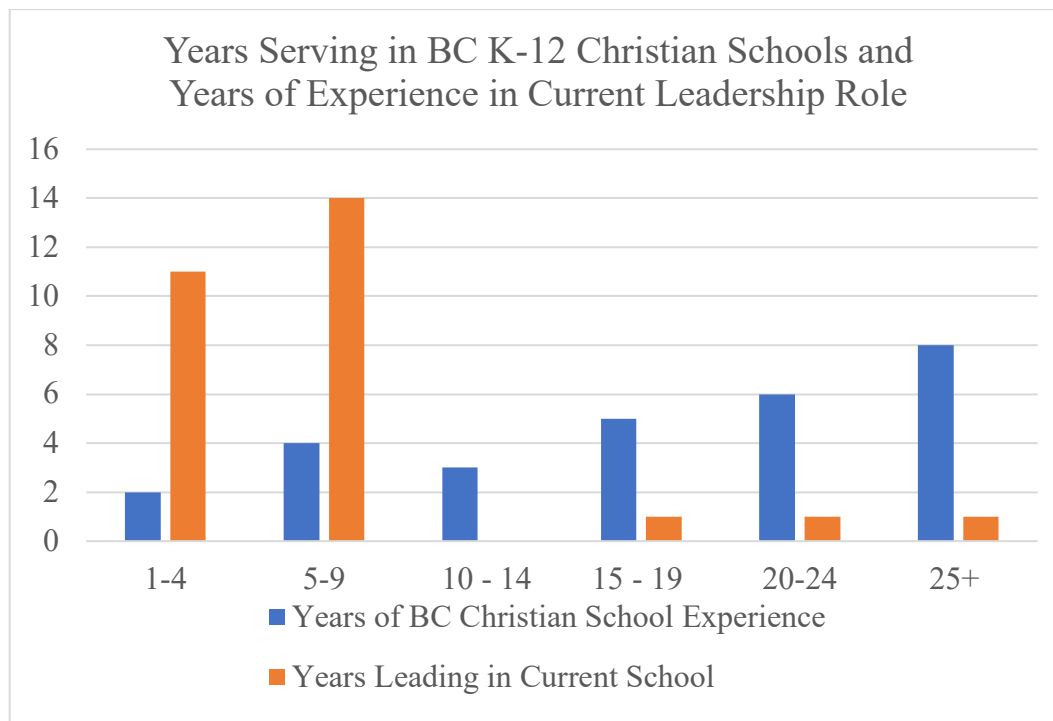
Participant Demographics

As a result of participant recruitment, 30 initial participants serving as Christian school leaders (Heads of School/Superintendents, Directors of Learning/Education, and both K-12 and Campus Principals) responded by initially engaging in discussion about participating in the research study. From the initial invitations, 28 participants moved forward with the interviews. Participants resided in the province of British Columbia at the time of the study. There were 14 female and 14 male participants. From the sample, 14 were presently serving in Head of School or Superintendent positions (grouped throughout as Heads of School/Superintendents to protect confidentiality as the sample size for each is small), six were in Director of Learning positions, and eight were Principals, serving either as a Campus Principal or as a K-12 Principal (not

broken down further to protect confidentiality). Heads of School/Superintendents were at the top level of senior leadership, sometimes overseeing Campus Principals of larger schools. The K-12 Principal was at the top of the organizational structure in smaller schools. More specific distinctions within the positions are reflected throughout this chapter. Within the sample, two participants described their Principal roles as effectively Heads of School positions and two different participants explained that in their Principal roles, they also shared Head of School/Superintendent or Director of Learning responsibilities, so there is an understanding of some overlap across formal job titles. In contrast, their current leadership tenure was unevenly distributed, with certain tenure categories disproportionately represented compared to others (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Participants' Years of Service



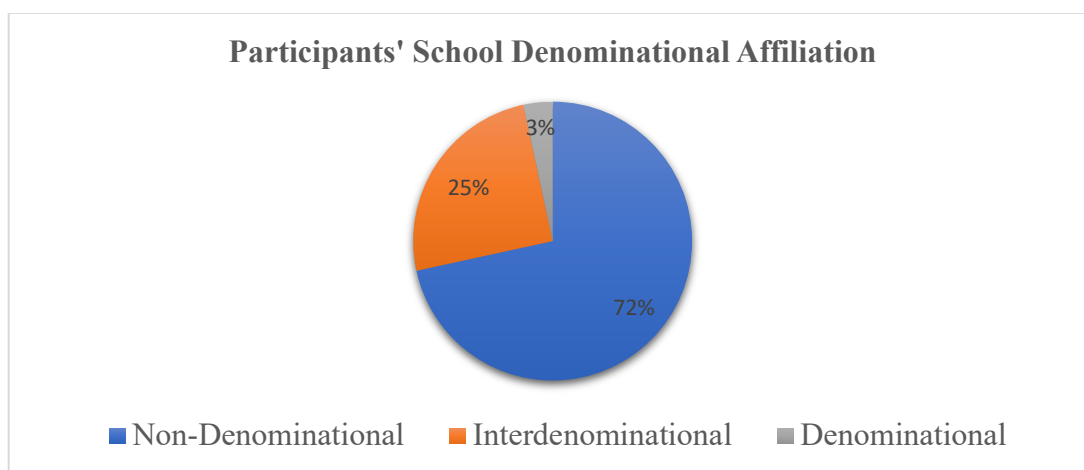
Note. Ranges used to protect anonymity of participants.

Due to the possibility of participant identification, multiple identifiers were not reported together. This measure was taken to protect participant confidentiality. The group's total years of professional experience reflects relatively low variation, indicating a representational sample of experience between participant groups.

Approximately 72% of participants were working in what they identified as a non-denominational school and 25% described their Christian learning community as interdenominational. While the scope of the study did not intend to contrast participant experiences of their community's theological affiliations (interdenominational, multi-denominational, non-denominational), the analysis notes that some theological tensions surfaced differently in interdenominational settings compared to non-denominational ones. The remaining 3% approximation from the sample work in a denominational school context. Figure 5.2 presents the denominations represented by the sample and the corresponding percentage amongst the 28 participants.

Figure 5.2

Participants' School Demographic Affiliation



Next, Table 5.1 provides general demographic information. To preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms were applied to each participant.

Table 5.1*General Participant Demographic Information*

Participant	Pseudonym	Sex	Location
1	Alan	M	Interior
2	Alexandra	F	Interior
3	Amy	F	Metro Vancouver
4	Anna	F	Interior
5	Debra	F	Interior
6	Derek	M	Metro Vancouver
7	Elise	F	Fraser Valley
8	Erica	F	Metro Vancouver
9	Ezra	M	Fraser Valley
10	Grant	M	Interior
11	Gerald	M	Fraser Valley
12	Jacob	M	Metro Vancouver
13	Janice	F	Fraser Valley
14	Jillian	F	Interior
15	Jordan	M	Main Island
16	Joshua	M	Fraser Valley
17	Leon	M	Metro Vancouver
18	Logan	F	Interior
19	Lisa	F	Main Island
20	Locke	F	Fraser Valley
21	Lydia	F	Main Island
22	Marcus	M	Metro Vancouver
23	Mary	F	Fraser Valley
24	Melody	F	Main Island
25	Monica	F	Metro Vancouver
26	Paul	M	Metro Vancouver
27	Sarah	F	Fraser Valley
28	Warren	M	Fraser Valley

Although pseudonyms will be used throughout the findings, at times, the participants' context reported has been adapted or modified while still attempting to preserve the integrity of their reflections. Slight modifications were also presented in the Composite Vignette profiles shared

with and approved by participants for confidentiality and reporting purposes. Within the province of British Columbia, there were seven participants that worked in Interior regions, eight participants that worked in the Metro Vancouver area, nine in the Fraser Valley region, and four on the Main Island. Ethnic data was not collected as the study needed to be delimited to maintain a tight focus on the research constructs under investigation. All but two participants described having completed a master's degree. All of the participant interviews took place in the final third of the school year, with four out of the 28 interviews taking place over the summer months.

Discussion of the Findings from Thematic Analysis

For the analysis, I created full transcripts of each interview (Seidman, 2019, p. 124), ensuring that the frame of reference was not introduced too early. Prior to formal analysis, I read through the transcripts, my field notes, and Composite Vignettes each three times, memoing my interactions with the data as recommended by Seidman (2019) and then moved to data analysis in NVivo 15. Using NVivo 15, I engaged in the iterative process of generating codes. I started with 55 initial codes initially, then distilled the list to 25 axial codes where there was considerable redundancy or overlap. In phenomenological terms, the codes or meaning units represent the constituent dimensions referred to within each category and theme (Moustaskas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Following Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis approach, I organized codes (dimensions and sub-dimensions used throughout) into broader categories and themes capturing the essence of change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools. I verified that the themes, categories, dimensions, and sub-dimensions accurately reflected the data including statements that appeared distinct, outlier, or exceptional.

The data analysis generated three major themes describing the essence of change leadership within BC K-12 Christian schools. The themes are the following: (1) Becoming and

Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader; (2) Communal Adaptive Faithfulness; and (3) The Meaning and Essence of Being a Change Leader: God's Mission and Kingdom Network Expansion. Table 5.2 below presents an overview of these themes along with the categories associated with each theme. The table also includes the number of participants (n) that referred to each theme and category, along with the frequency (f) that each theme and category were mentioned across the interviews. Table 5.3a, b, and c present a conceptual overview of the relationship between the categories, dimensions, and sub-dimensions within each theme.

Table 5.2

Interview Themes and Categories

Theme	Category
Theme One: Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader ($n = 28, f = 554$)	- Experiences of becoming a change leader ($n = 28, f = 103$) - Experiences of being a change leader ($n = 28, f = 169$) - Experiences of context and community through change ($n = 28, f = 116$) - Experiences of connections through change ($n = 28, f = 154$)
Theme Two: Communal Adaptive Faithfulness ($n = 28, f = 502$)	- Experiences of change processes ($n = 28, f = 312$) - Experiences of resistance to change ($n = 24, f = 92$) - Experiences of faith integration in practice ($n = 28, f = 124$)
Theme Three: The Meaning and Essence of Being a Change Leader: God's Mission and Kingdom Network Expansion ($n = 28, f = 199$)	- Leading as the changed leader ($n = 28, f = 96$) - God accomplishes his purposes through community ($n = 16, f = 21$) - Future experiences of becoming change leaders ($n = 26, f = 82$)

Note. n = number of different participants referenced in each theme or category.

f = total frequency of references that a theme or category is mentioned across all interviews.

The remainder of Chapter Five delves into the themes, supported by personal quotes and narrative connections that compare and contrast participants' experiences of educational change leadership. Participant interviews ranged from 70-90 minutes. The purpose of including

timestamps in the parenthetical references was to help the reader locate where in the conversation the quoted narrative excerpt emerged, providing context for understanding the discourse and its contribution to the unfolding narrative insights in Chapter Six.

Theme One: Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader

The first theme was generated from how participants detailed their experiences of becoming and leading as the called, connected, and changed leader. This theme has four categories that were constructed by following the logical flow of participant reflections: (1) Becoming the change leader ($n = 28, f = 103$); (2) Being the change leader ($n = 28, f = 169$); (3) Context and community through change ($n = 28, f = 116$); and (4) Supportive network connections ($n = 28, f = 154$). Each of the participants detailed formative experiences that developed or prepared them for leading educational change. Participants also reported what it is like to be a Christian school leader in their Head of School/Superintendent, Director, or Principal role. They also explored the context and conditions of their BC K-12 Christian independent school throughout the change initiatives they led and experienced. Participants described how they experienced their network connections internally and externally in their roles.

Overall, the first theme situates participants within a past and present context and reveals who Christian school leaders are and what their communities are like as they lead their communities, while maintaining a level of confidentiality and integrity in the reporting. Table 5.3a represents the first theme's categories, dimensions, and sub-dimensions. The table is represented this way to show a narrative of how participants reconstructed their becoming a change leader, leading to what it means to be a change leader, how they experience their context and community, and how their connections impact their change leadership practice.

Table 5.3a*Theme One: Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader*

Theme	Category	Dimension	Sub-Dimension
Theme One: Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader ($n = 28, f = 554$)			
	Experiences of <i>becoming</i> a change leader ($n = 28, f = 103$)		
		Called into change leadership ($n = 24, f = 41$)	
		Stumbled into or did not want to pursue change leadership ($n = 9, f = 11$)	
		Guided into change leadership ($n = 7, f = 8$)	
		Invited into change leadership ($n = 6, f = 7$)	
		Interrupted into change leadership ($n = 6, f = 7$)	
		Become and are equipped for leading change ($n = 22, f = 54$)	
		Changed for leading change ($n = 6, f = 8$)	
		Experiences that prepared for leading change ($n = 20, f = 33$)	
		Came through the ranks at their school ($n = 9, f = 12$)	
		Equipped by changed people ($n = 7, f = 9$)	
		Made for leading change ($n = 6, f = 8$)	
		Predispositions and wiring for leading change ($n = 6, f = 8$)	
	Experiences of <i>being</i> a change leader ($n = 28, f = 169$)		
		Role identity and affinity ($n = 22, f = 75$)	
		Mission, calling, and purpose ($n = 14, f = 24$)	
		Feelings of doing the work with others ($n = 14, f = 29$)	
		Vulnerabilities ($n = 14, f = 22$)	
		Distinct experiences related to workload ($n = 27, f = 90$)	
		Principals ($n = 9, f = 15$)	
		Directors of Learning ($n = 9, f = 21$)	
		Heads of Schools/Superintendents ($n = 14, f = 36$)	
		Age/Career ($n = 4, f = 6$)	
		Gender ($n = 10, f = 14$)	

Table 5.3a (continued)*Theme One: Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader*

Theme	Category	Dimension	Sub-Dimension
	Experiences of context and community through change ($n = 28, f = 116$)		
		Readiness for change ($n = 24, f = 66$)	
			School realities and reforms ($n = 21, f = 41$)
			Social dynamics ($n = 14, f = 25$)
		Reactions to change ($n = 19, f = 50$)	
			Faith identity tensions ($n = 7, f = 11$)
			Edge of chaos and states of crisis ($n = 11, f = 15$)
			Patterns of behavior in community ($n = 16, f = 24$)
	Experiences of connections through change ($n = 28, f = 154$)		
		Network influences and exchange ($n = 26, f = 61$)	
			Road trips ($n = 6, f = 12$)
			Initiating informal partnerships ($n = 7, f = 16$)
			Participating in leadership cohorts ($n = 16, f = 18$)
		Capacity building ($n = 19, f = 27$)	
		Spiritual, professional, and relational grounding ($n = 22, f = 33$)	
		Social connections revealing gaps ($n = 16, f = 32$)	

Experiences of Becoming a Change Leader

Across the data, there were no reported formal markers or credentials that signaled when an individual became a change leader of a BC K-12 Christian school. The majority of the participant-leaders ($n = 24, f = 41$) described being invited and called into the work, some concurrently explored a discrepant event awakening awareness of their becoming ($n = 22, f = 54$), and still others, not represented in the former (invited and called or became groups) envisaged predispositions in their wiring as change leaders ($n = 6, f = 8$). Anna's narrative helps situate the first category around both individual and collective calling into change leadership:

So when I was working at one of my former Christian schools, just being invited to do that; you know, that 10% curriculum kind of administrative role, and then, what's next, what's next then, and what's next, right? I did my masters . . . really just making those opportunities available to me and just really encouraging me to step into leadership. It's interesting. When you look at that time, you look at all the people that are now administrators from there. There's a lot of people. This school (name omitted) has had a really important history of encouraging teachers to step into leadership. (Anna, 00:13)

Called for Leading Change. As participants recounted their own journeys into educational change leadership, twelve participants identified that they were called, invited, or guided into leadership during significant transition moments that their BC K-12 Christian school were experiencing. Monica never imagined herself becoming a campus principal, but when she sat down with some of her former school leaders, they developed a new middle leadership position with her, "I was so surprised that they valued my thoughts" (02:39). Recognition and empowerment to step into the work in a curriculum leadership role started a calling for Monica. Melody, Paul, and Debra reconstructed the experience of being approached by members of their community while their confidence was still growing. Many described the calling taking place from a young age, within Christian households, in Christian schools, and within the church, with

each of the respective community units providing a supportive foundation for self-exploration, failure, faith-formation, and increasing responsibility with people.

In some cases, mentor figures identified the participant as an emerging leader during their formative years and saw the “capacity in them” (Ezra, 03:54). Participants were encouraged *by*, invested *in*, and called *into* communities that were experiencing change, sometimes during turbulent moments. When participants described times of lost confidence, direction, and of discouragement, mentor figures, often senior leaders at their schools, helped pick up the participant leaders, leading to identify forged out of resilience. Debra, while still on the upward trajectory in her growth as a campus principal reconstructed an experience of significant turmoil that her community experienced. Her narrative account described what it meant for leaders to help pick her up when she felt like “roadkill” (20:02); Debra explained that, during a period of drastic decline at her school, she expressed her dismay to the board about the near collapse of the school community: “I remember saying to the board, ‘Don’t just build a tomb for this school to die in.’” Furthermore, Debra explained the experiences prior to being picked up by her leaders as follows:

When my leaders first approached me about the school. . . I’m in palliative care. I’m a dead leader. I am not able to do anything. I can’t put a thought together. I’m exhausted. I’m like, it’s awful. This is not what you and I just felt. All of the passion I had for education was gone. I lost sight of my confidence massively, like a very shattered sense of direction; you believed in something, and you felt like it was going to turn around and God had something for you here. And then you see, literally everything fall apart, and all the people that were going to work with you leave. It was horrible. It was absolutely devastating. Then to consider starting over again was terrifying . . . because you’re so tired. (Debra, 17:27)

Debra went on to describe that it was “a really healing experience in [her] life to start working with [her new leadership team]” (20:53). The team aided in her rehabilitation and calling back into leadership.

Some participants explained that they were reluctant to lead, uncertain about whether they were fit to lead because of their personality, and others experienced disruptions that led to them responding by seeking opportunities to lead. “I didn’t want this job” and “I never imagined I would be a leader” in some variations of that statement were shared by Monica, Debra, Marcus, Lydia, Alexandra, Mary, and Melody, with the majority of the statements being expressed by female leaders serving in campus principal roles. Paul shared how he was asked to mentor another staff member early in his career that accelerated his capabilities. In many ways, participants shared in the experience of Christ’s calling in their lives through their mentors, guides, wise people, senior leaders, and those that noticed them. It will be discussed further in Chapter Six how leaders might discern calling of future emerging leaders. The next category explores participants’ descriptions of what it has felt like to become and be equipped for leading change throughout their journeys into change leadership.

Become and Are Equipped for Leading Change. The formative experiences leading to change leaders taking on the mantle of formal leadership roles was varied. Some describe working in other industries and field of expertise outside the education context including business, social services, pastoral ministry, and raising children, before stepping more formally into their positions. Participants expressed a range of feelings about their master’s programs, particularly whether their programs provided real practical experience that prepared them for leading change. Erica acknowledged that there was some value in her graduate studies program, “I think my master’s program contributed to learning, at least theoretically about change, not as much practically” (00:48). Lydia too appreciated how her master’s program, with its focus on implementing change and occurring aptly during BC’s curriculum shift, made curricular

theorist's insights feel immediately relevant and actionable (03:40), yet she credited leaders in other schools for mentoring her and helping her make the practical connections.

In contrast, five participants expressed positive sentiments about various leadership development cohorts they had participated in compared to the overall sentiment about master's programs. Leon's exploration emphasized how he felt like he was "equipped with a whole set of skills that [his] master's just didn't prepare [him] for" (00:14). There were 10 other participants that specifically referenced the leadership development cohort model as a formative place where job-embedded learning experiences connecting Christian school leaders across the province or internationally equipped them specifically for leading change. Elise's reflections on a grassroots initiative connecting leaders across BC enabled her to hear about the way that other schools were implementing change and she valued the opportunity to explore ideas and receive feedback from colleagues in job-alike positions (23:52). Grant examined his own experiences in an international cohort of leaders that imparted strength as he "had his eyes open to that big picture family of similar missions and challenges" and found it "inspiring - kind of fueling for [him], especially toward what it means to lead through difficult seasons" (01:59). Participants' equipping for leading change was not always something they were conscious or intentional about. At times, participants described being "thrown in the fire" and having to figure out what to do (Leon, 01:14; Mary, 05:41). For Melody, this was healthy, because she believes that if leaders knew the full extent of what change leadership is like, they might "run screaming and not want to do it" (1:07:43).

The intrapersonal and spiritual experiences that have occurred in participants' lives also impacted their readiness for change leadership. Anna explained that after a challenging medical circumstance in her family's life, she thinks back "having gone through what was, for [her], the

most difficult time of her life . . . but God saw [her] through something that was much harder” than the change she was leading (00:13). Furthermore, God’s protection over her family through the situation reminded Anna of her ongoing dependence on him, a truth she continues to draw strength from when her community experiences disruption. Similarly, Alan became aware of the need to be better equipped as a Christian leader after taking courses in Christian perspective for contractual obligations (00:16). He found his imagination being stretched further into different Christian denominational thinking that expanded his faith and practice. The spiritual comfort and equipping that participants received was not the result of a formal or intentional system but rather was passed on informally through leaders who had themselves undergone personal change. This reveals a key limitation that is explored further in Chapter Six that the development of leaders is heavily dependent on relational proximity to changed leaders, rather than a consistent or systematic approach, thus leaving an uneven vulnerability within communities to prepare leaders from within their communities and also contribute outwardly across the network to future leadership capacity building.

Participants such as Logan and Grant conveyed experiences of being called out of roles and into new roles. Other participants such as Lisa and Lydia felt that they incidentally, by God’s gentle guidance, arrived in their current roles. Logan and Grant, after moving through the leadership ranks within their respective school communities, relayed how they were specifically asked to apply for their senior leadership positions because they had particular skills that were needed for the school. It appears from the conversations that most participants feel called and equipped in their calling, but few felt that they had been made to do this work as if designed in such a way that predisposed them for leading change. Thus, if most leaders do not inherently see themselves as made for leading change, but instead grow into change leadership through

experiences, the opportunity is in designing environments that allow for greater practice ensuring leaders are not left to carry the mantle alone. Recommendations in this area are shared in Chapter Six.

Made for Leading Change. Not all have what Gerald classified as the personality type, “openness to change” or a predisposition and default towards continuous improvement (00:18). Gerald, who served in a superintendent role, reflected that there are many psychological layers to “why someone is open to change” whether they are quick learners, or do not like routine, or some other reason (02:19). However, Gerald has experienced what it is like to work in different educational contexts and that has created an affinity for change. Derek’s exploration of his predisposition to change varied slightly. He described how early exposure to educational renewal and God always placing him in different positions where organizations were in “states of change and transition” have led him to thrive (00:16). Unstable environments and communities in transition seem to be what Gerald and Derek describe as a gravity towards them. Anna felt the pull towards leadership having had a close family member serve as a Christian school leader (00:13). For Lisa, because leaders had believed in her, she was encouraged to not be afraid of change and take more risks in her leadership development. Elise entered into the BC education context during one of the early years of the new BC curriculum rollout. The experience prompted her to consider whether her openness emerged from not being attached to previous practice or from a “deep belief in the change,” which made engagement with change easier (01:14).

The essence of becoming a change leader encompassed multiple pathways: feeling equipped and then called; called and then equipped; reluctantly called while not yet equipped; simultaneously called and equipped; resisting the call before equipping; and gradually evolving as the calling also evolved. This first category has explored what was being configured in

participants as they became change leaders. Together, participants conveyed that it was the equipping of identity, skills, and connections that led to their becoming. Chapter Six formalizes these insights, articulating how there are human, social, and decisional capabilities within a Christian foundation that converge to shape the change leader. The next category explores present experiences of what it means to lead change.

Experiences of Being a Change Leader

The previous category explored participant Christian school leaders' experiences of becoming a change leader. This category explores the dimensions of what it means to be a change leader in terms of role identity and affinity ($n = 22, f = 75$), broken into sub-dimensions of the feelings associated with the work, distinct roles, and the purpose leaders experience while facilitating change. In the second dimension, the distinct experiences related to workload, role, and positionality ($n = 22, f = 90$) are broken into sub-dimensions of positions, gender, and age/career; each grouping is compared and contrasted, and additional considerations are reported surrounding distinctive experiences for what it means to be a change leader.

Role Identity and Affinity. Alan, a K-12 principal, at one point explained how he thought about becoming a pastor earlier in his career but then found himself in the predicament of having to lead his school pastorally. He reconstructed the following sketch from his experiences:

I think the other part I have joked about, especially during covid, but you feel sometimes you're a bit of a confessional, like a priest, where people are just feeling like they have to come share something with you. It's precious. It can be a bit overwhelming at times, because people come and share early on, before they've even told other people that they're having a baby or that they had a miscarriage, or that their marriage is not going well, that they have a significant health concern, or that their kids are not – like they've messed up in this way, or in disciplinary situations where you're seeing the raw, or a parent saying that their kid said this online to another kid, or is stuck in pornography. . . and you're privy to it. And so, you do feel like a pastor, priest, confessional booth sometimes. (27:27)

Alan rendered the compassionate attentiveness of his janitor, who often comes by at the end of the week, gauging the amount of Kleenex in the garbage, and laments the rough days that Alan has had. In this way, Alan's Christian ministry comes alive in the pastoral role he and others hold as educational leaders. This next section discusses the purpose, feelings of leading change with others, and the vulnerabilities associated with change leadership.

Mission, Calling, and Purpose. Feelings of calling into the work continued while participant leaders described the work that they do ($n = 14, f = 24$). Participants serving in Heads of School/Superintendent roles predominantly understood their role as visionaries and transformative leaders responsible for casting, keeping vision, and moving their organization forward in alignment with their core mission and purpose. Many participants "went into education to be with kids" and teach as Logan emphasized, lamenting about moving into a leadership position further removed from working directly with the students (23:00). However, participants articulated that it was no longer sufficient to be a good teacher. The skills they developed as educators needed to expand as their community needed them in different ways.

The major shift from teacher to community visionary was the first hurdle to cross as a change leader. Locke's reflection captured the sentiment, "We have a very clear and articulated mission. I think one of the approaches that I take is making sure we all know it and that it's easily swallowed in terms of it being tangible to all" (07:49). Jacob found it necessary to distill the mission and vision down into something bite sized and accessible by members of the learning community, so the impact diffuses down to the classroom level. The participants' experiences showed the need for strength to cast vision and lead members of the community forward together, yet social capabilities were needed to sustain mission through change and disruption.

Derek described his strengths in casting vision as needing to be paired with relational capabilities for leading his learning community, “One of my strengths is strategic leadership and vision, but the other part that consistently comes out is high empathy as well” (55:10) and he went on to describe that if he just had strategy and ideas, he would have lost some people. Understanding how to help others find their calling and their role in the shared mission has been critical. Jacob has experienced practices in which his entire community participates in structured learning protocols designed to diffuse the mission, allowing members to embrace the Christian vision that sustains their school (04:17). Fourteen participants emphasized that regular crucial, critical, and hard conversations were essential for mission alignment and values-driven change leadership. Derek elaborated on this by describing how hard conversations help members of his community see their own path forward within the organization:

Helping people realize whether this is a change that they want to be a part of or not ... that was one of the more complex parts. And so having people choose to maybe move on to a different place or position, that, for me, was probably the most challenging part within all this. (07:52)

Janice expressed a similar sentiment that one cannot lead change as a Christian leader with vision alone, but strong relationships are needed: “It doesn’t matter how brilliant of an idea . . . if there’s not rapport and trust- that my heart is aligned with the school’s vision and mission . . . I don’t feel like that’s a healthy pace to be and is going to be as effective” (06:53). Participants sensed God’s calling for their lives and their communities, “. . . Is that actually who we feel God is calling us to be?” (Leon, 04:47). A calling towards “unity in purpose” is what Leon felt was needed for his community as they experience the disruptive aspects of change (04:47). From the 28 participants interviews, 18 participants described either sharing the “why,” aligning the change with the mission, and providing a clear rationale and vision as the most essential component of being a change leader.

Feelings of Doing the Work with Other Members. In doing the work with others, participants experienced an intertwining of emotions, joy and distress, co-arising in the same moments of doing the work with members of their community ($n = 14, f = 22$). “I’m tired of carrying everyone else’s well-being and juggling the 25,000 things all at once,” Monica yielded as she reflected on the reality of doing the work with other members of her community that report to her, not as a criticism, but in acknowledgement of the weight of change leadership (10:10). It revealed the complex relational dynamics of desiring more collaborative forms of leadership, with the implications of more collisions and complexity around social dynamics. In contrast, Erica shared that sees other members in her community with influence as leaders, “I think influence comes by the way of intention, loving other people in service and sacrifice. I think that leads to influence” (20:03). Erica described the tension of relying on others and being someone who can be relied upon. Monica resigned herself to the reality of how much energy is expended to navigate the diverse responses that emerge, recognizing that change is inherently communal (07:59). Locke, Janice, and Sarah each went into their current leadership positions thinking about the first 90-100 days of leadership; they knew it would be critical to build relationships by structuring protocols and questions to get to know staff.

The work is experienced as requiring a high degree of emotional, social, or relational capabilities. Janice, Elise, and Melody, serving in various leadership roles, each described how important it was to co-design learning experiences with members of their community. Janice argued that co-design is essential for building mutual trust and rapport and has seen evidence in increased contribution when facilitating meetings when people feel confident to share polite, contrasting perspectives (06:53). Jacob found success through informal, ongoing connections that strengthen his understanding of what teachers are doing, enabling him to speak into their

practice with greater perceptiveness, thereby encouraging meaningful personal transformation (09:22). When people feel supported and have both clarity and accountability (Jacob, 10:21), leaders can move from the role of evaluator to position themselves as ones who guide their communities towards greater adaptability.

“Leadership is lonely” lamented several participants including Locke, Jordan, Lydia, Elise, Leon, Joshua, and Anna. Particularly for Heads of School/Superintendents, the expression occurred more frequently. Only one Superintendent, Marcus, challenged the concept:

I’ve heard this from other superintendents . . . and it’s not my experience. It’s a culture of trust within your administrative team, and being able to fail . . . I hear some other superintendents talk a lot about being alone, and I feel very privileged to have people here that I can laugh myself silly . . . we get also what it means to have crazy hard days . . . it’s hard to build culture if you’re alone; it’s kind of an oxymoron. (Marcus, 1:11:43)

Leaders felt like it would be a breach of character and trust to show a full serving of vulnerability. However, a critical tension was palpable in their voices that it also felt un-Christ-like to not express their emotions. Locke reflected on a key practice when experiencing resistance to change that will be explored further and the importance that social connections hold:

Having that safe person or persons when you do face resistance that you can process with, because you can’t when you’re in a leadership role - you need to practice the art of grieving up, not out, because that is death to the soul. If you, as the leader think that you can grieve to the people beneath you, if you’re looking at the org chart- if I’m a principal, I can’t be grieving to my teaching staff. I think that’s an actual discipline that doesn’t come naturally or easily, and I’ve had to learn that you’ve got to grieve up, which can mean that it can be lonely sometimes as well. (44:13)

Locke shared further insights that will be unpacked from this significant passage in both the discussion of resistance to change and how connections are experienced by Christian educational change leaders.

Some of the feelings that leaders hold towards their staff differ based on their campuses. For example, Lisa, Alexandra, Warren, and Lydia each described that change initiatives have been received better by their elementary school campuses, yet their high school teams have presented more pushback because of entrenched cultures. Participants were not saying that all elementary campuses were that way, but that campuses with entrenched cultures were stagnant. A critical issue resides in what Alan described as doing work that could not be done without the team:

If I have something that's going on, we get together and we talk about it and problem solve and troubleshoot . . . That's what makes it possible and enjoyable for me. I laugh every day because we got great people that I'm working closely with and share the burden with, so I don't feel like I'm alone in it, but it's still a lot. (33:52)

While the study did not specifically exemplify leadership team dynamics, it is important to identify that several schools detailed unhealthy dynamics in their leadership teams, previous contexts of mistrust and dysfunction, but also optimism and joy coming from teams as they have done considerable work to strengthen relationships. It appears to be a gap in current research around the nature of collaborative learning teams that will be examined further in Chapter Six when returning to points of application.

Vulnerabilities. Another way of describing vulnerabilities in the experience of being a change leader is leading from limitations ($n = 14, f = 22$). As Erica articulated, “the feeling of being stretched” which is “horrible . . . and the most draining part of my work- the parts of my work that have me thinking about, ‘Do I really need or want this?’” (1:05:49). For Alan, vulnerability surfaced in his example that “random people come up to you and say that they’re praying for you” (26:12). Alan went on to explain that he is not sure if they are praying because they feel sorry for him, or if they want him to change your perspective (26:12). It is the sort of mixed blessing and liability that people really care but that every interaction is also political.

Logan argued that he has had to navigate the precarious relationship between his board and educational community and feels that the tenuous and fragile relationship in his community's past has left several fractures that need to be repaired (08:24). Leading change in a Christian school was experienced as a demanding and often stressful role, requiring navigation of contentious relationships that carry significant political implications.

There was more discussion about the vulnerabilities of the Christian school community in recent challenges participants reconstructed about how they and their communities have navigated policies and practices related to gender and sexuality, financial hardship, impending closures, crises, and political strife; however, being a Christian school change leader in those instances is extremely taxing on leaders and their families, personally and professionally as Ezra put it:

I have felt a lot of personal responsibility in some key difficult situations to make them happen, or to support them, or to step in and fill the gap in a lot of different scenarios over the last number of years. And that came at a significant personal cost to myself, I would say. (11:34)

Leaders describe that their faith often experiences pressures, even when they are not making the decisions in isolation.

When you're the leader, you're kind of the sound board, and you're also the go to person for the whole range of beliefs as an interdenominational school with [dozens] of different churches; there's tension and there's different opinions . . . there should be more of this or less of that . . . I find myself tired that my faith can feel like it's on display. Then I have these senses of guilt because I try to build up my faith and I want to be a servant. I want to be a disciple but sometimes I feel like my motivation is maybe misplaced, because I'm questioning, is it because I'm in a leadership role that I want to be good at my job or is it because I'm actually trying to grow in my relationship with Christ? (Lydia, 07:00)

Leaders have moved to other churches, refined different personal theological beliefs while doing the work of leading change, learned new disciplines in finance, business, human resources, pastoral ministry, theological studies, and opened their lives to people curious about their

communities. At times, as Jacob shared, “By and large, it’s good. There’s times of course, that there’s super stressful things” (17:13). Despite the formidable cost to the leader as leaders in small schools manage limited resources and do the heavy lifting while wearing multiple hats, strength is drawn from resting and relying on God’s ultimate faithfulness, revealing how vulnerability leads to feelings of delight, joy, and reward:

Definitely in those bucket filling community moments when you get to celebrate what you see God doing . . . I’m called to be faithful, and that might not look like hugely glorious things to the rest of the world, but that’s what I’m going to do. (Anna, 10:28)

Leon’s reflection on loneliness affirms the tension that has been expressed in many ways:

There’s definitely an element of loneliness. . . People don’t invite their Head of School to the pub on a Friday for a soda . . . But on the other side, the job is so rewarding and fulfilling when you see the labor come to fruition . . . you see the way it impacts people that you care about and students that you feel God has placed in front of us. And so then I get really excited and feel very energized and fulfilled by it too. (09:58)

Further distinctions regarding how participant leaders’ communities experience vulnerabilities, as well as the practices that support both change leaders and their communities, are examined in subsequent categories.

Distinct Experiences Related to Workload, Role, and Positionality. In the earlier section on mission, calling, and purpose, participants in Campus Principal and Director of Learning roles articulated a strong sense of calling in their work. However, the data analysis revealed that they differed in how they understood where they were situated in the organization while being guided by and guiding others in their school’s mission, more like playing a main supportive role within a larger drama. Participants’ perspectives are contrasted in this section, highlighting the distinct experiences related to workload, role, and positionality ($n = 27, f = 90$).

K-12 and Campus Principals. Being a K-12 or campus principal carries a tension between identifying as the instructional leader and navigating issues that emerge across the organization

($n = 9, f = 15$). Alan joked that there is the job description and then there is the endless list of everything else the K-12 Principal does (30:10). Similarly, Warren wryly observed that the Campus Principal role comes with a little asterisk in the job description reading, “any other duties as assigned” (Warren, 04:27). Erica and Sarah underscored that their primary identity was a teacher first, with a strong sense of being an instructional leader. Campus principals described that the essence of the role is balancing operational or technical responsibilities with adaptive responsibilities that emerge (Erica, 5:02). While there may be a typical start time and morning routine, after that, principals are prepared to expect the unexpected with no two days being the same.

Five Principals reconstructed experiences of having held interim Superintendent responsibilities at various times throughout their career and the difficulty of being next in line to navigate unexpected changes within their organizations, and sustaining themselves and their communities through times of loss, disruption, or turbulence.

One of the challenges Campus Principals face is the apparent functional shift to operating more like a “middle manager” (Erica, 03:24). Monica raised concern that it can be hard to share an educational vision for change in a way that excites teachers (21:19). This was distinct as Heads of School and Superintendents conveyed how they communicate the vision to the whole community, but principals felt as though they managed the second order communication with their teaching staff. Visibility and presence amongst their educational staff was another critical concern for Principals. Sarah, a campus principal, explained that most of her time is dedicated to problem solving: navigating team conflicts “amongst staff, amongst leadership team members . . . planning for the future, planning for professional development . . . the nitty gritty stuff like schedules, supervision, and planning coverage . . . takes up a ton of my time . . . it’s endless. You

name it. I'm probably doing it" (05:27). The downshift in power dynamics around the principal's role to more of a middle manager remains an area of silence that could be explored further in relation to how Christian K-12 principals perceive their authority in the workplace. Discussion of the implications with campus principals shifting towards more of a middle leadership role is explored further in Chapter Six.

Directors of Learning. As the learning and development leaders in their organizations, Directors of Learning share a common role of interconnecting the K-12 learning vision across their school communities while helping members align with the school's mission through professional learning ($n = 9, f = 21$). As Janice clarified, the way that the school is structured demands that she builds bridges across the artificial divisions that exist between campuses (05:51). Lydia characterized while previously serving as a Director of Learning that the position is unique "because you end up being the person that's supposed to come alongside folks, but they're not willing to come alongside" (05:54). Alexandra and Janice felt like the roles were customized for them: "I love the work; can't even hide that . . . this just feels like the way I have been wired to serve in this capacity. I really love learning . . . and feel it's a reflection of how I've been made" (Janice, 13:57). Amy characterized the role as developing a "team approach to solving" the learning problems and managing "bigger pieces of transition," which includes managing mandates and "leveraging momentum" to help her community stay on track with their learning goals (07:16). Mentorship and coaching emerged in each of the Director's descriptions about what it is that they do for and with their communities.

One challenge directors face is role ambiguity. Alexandra shared that the intelligent part of her job is that she does not do "summative feedback," which creates a safe place for teachers to take risks and grow a growth mindset towards learning and innovation (42:33); concurrently and

consequentially, she shared how her work would be much easier if she just had the formal authority sometimes to enact change:

You're the one that's doing all the teaching, all of the professional development, all of the encouragement, and so it can feel kind of lonely It's a really creative job. You're in charge of your own time. This is a position that has lots of high highs and low lows, in the sense that it is really difficult sometimes, and frustrating, but also really wonderful and really rewarding. (08:15)

Directors of Learning most often sit at senior leadership tables and make organizational decisions, yet not all feel respected or perceived as having the same degree of authority as Principals. Their years in administrative roles do, however, appear to equip Directors to navigate an evolving identity for themselves and their learning communities (Janice, Lisa, Elise, and Melody). Unlike a principal's role, and in contrast from Alexandra's sentiment about the intelligence in the non-evaluative role she holds, Janice shared that her position is more narrowly defined, enabling her to build capacity in others without the burden of competing responsibilities (13:57). Amy's reflections aligned as she has seen her role as building capacity in others to develop learning leadership at additional levels in the organization. Their influence often resides in the invisible learning design thinking, structures, and systems thinking of their schools. Lydia and Jillian, who previously served in curriculum leadership roles in BC K-12 Christian schools, echoed that the position allowed them to rethink learning structures and prepared them for their current senior leadership positions. The Director of Learning role appears to be in its own dynamic state of change, evolving each year, often reflecting how communities live out their missions adaptively. Chapter Six identifies how this role may be a clue to schools developing greater adaptively faithful dispositions.

Heads of School/Superintendents. This was the largest group, reflecting 14 participants ($f = 36$). "No day is the same, which I love. I love the variety," Gerald depicted as he reflected on the privilege it was for him to serve in different areas of the organization from human resources

issues to maintenance, policy work, and emergency preparedness (07:29). Joshua wittily shared that his family questioned why he would ever become a principal, because the other leaders in the organization at least get to sleep at night (09:49). Leon wistfully examined what it is like to be a Superintendent and explained that there is no typical day, but the work looks much more strategic now than in previous administrative leadership roles:

I can carve out a longer period of time to focus on something. I'm not jumping between fires the way that I did as a principal . . . there's a lot of meetings all the time. But it might be a meeting with a principal discussing how they're going to handle a student who has announced their transgenderism. And how do you support a teacher that's in agreement? How do you support a teacher that's in disagreement? How do you support the messaging that's going out to families? And then I might be in a development meeting talking about strategic goals in fundraising. How are we going to reach there? Who are the donors we want to recruit and retain? And so, I might jump into there. Then I'll meet with our Director of Finance, and we're looking at budgets and creating margin and space. And then dealing with an HR issue. Then, meeting with our Director of Learning and looking at curriculum and learning policies and making sure they are aligned . . . within that unity of purpose. And so, it can be very full. We are also meeting with [developers]. So, the day's fun. Very full. Not frantic, the way that being a principal used to be, but lots of really cool, exciting things. (07:54)

Joshua echoed a similar sentiment that the difference between his former role as a principal to that of a Head of School is "I see less of the day-to-day crises, but the ones I see are bigger" (10:09). Furthermore, he explained that his input matters more now for critical issues, "In the past, I could give input which was, or may or may not have been taken. Now I have a bit more say in what we're doing, so that's been good" (Joshua, 10:46). Perspective across the organization was understood to be vital for leading change. The role was experienced as highly complex and diverse, requiring a broader set of skills than simply being an instructional leader.

Heads of School or Superintendents reported to see themselves as the ones setting the school's mission and vision as previously explored, but also the culture. Jillian explained that her placement in the organization gives her a distinctive perspective, ". . . especially sitting from my

seat where I see every arm and wing and seat” (31:21). Heads of School and Superintendents are predominantly represented in the group that described leadership as lonely.

A central challenge repeatedly identified by participant Heads of School/Superintendents was navigating the communication dynamic with their school board of directors. The relationship was characterized in some instances as precarious. Participants recounted episodes where their contracts felt threatened and where trust was eroded between board, leadership, and educational staff. Joshua shared that “If they, [the board], don’t support me, then my tenure probably is going to be pretty short; so, I think I use my time to keep my board chair in the loop of what is happening, not necessarily stuff that the board needs to wrestle with or deal with. I personally, as a leader, don’t like surprises” (37:39). Logan expressed feelings that were guardedly hesitant about his relationship with his board. His perception of failed leadership across BC K-12 Christian schools has made him cautious to the point where, even when the board expresses their approval of his decisions, he has alerted himself to “I’ve heard this before” (08:24).

In contrast, Paul has found his relationship with his board chair to be one where he can share “pretty openly about how things are going, what’s on [his] plate, and what’s causing [him] stress” (10:23). More optimistically from years of dedication to building trust with his board, Derek described the following: “I’m an extension of the board, and their chosen mission and vision for the school and society, which is an extension of the parent community. So I’m entrusted with all of this . . . That’s where it has to be a healthy reciprocal relationship,” he explained after describing the feeling of helping his school community pull in the same direction around their shared mission (Derek, 1:01:50). While boards were often recognized for lending valuable support and expertise to leaders in building and development initiatives, participants

highlighted a structural gap in the relationship. Head of School/Superintendents are simultaneously hired by and accountable to their boards, yet when they seek mentorship or guidance, the power dynamic of the relationship complicates and constraints the relationship. This tension reveals a paradox in governance, that boards may provide insight, but it may take many years for the board to serve as a safe space for leadership growth. Some further recommendations to boards are raised in Chapter Six around what boards might do to support their school leaders.

Overall, there is a shift in expectations for how leaders understand themselves as they hold multiple identities, not just instructional leaders, but also system-thinkers, CEOs, culture-shapers, and community visionaries. They work to combine both an operational skillset with a relational skillset. This shift points to the need for new preparation and support to address the leader's identity and capacity to hold multiple roles. Some tensions also exist around the authority that Directors of Learning have and whether they are embracing their roles as middle leaders, whether the feelings of being restricted are self-imposed, derived from their communities, how they negotiate their roles with other members of their leadership teams, or other considerations in power dynamics within Christian communities.

Age and Career. Although the number of participants and frequency of references was small, it remains important to consider how participants felt about the life stage they were at as it offers meaningful context for understanding how change was experienced. There is a notable progression in how participants described their readiness to lead change, which appears to be linked to their years in the current role, the range of environments they have led change, and their overall leadership experience within the BC K-12 Christian schools' context ($n = 4, f = 6$). As he has gained more experience in different contexts, Gerald argued that he has become more

adept at quickly diagnosing problems and applying more effective strategies (08:11). With some participants expressing that they are nearing the end of their leadership journeys, there are reported differences in how participants feel about their identity and capabilities based on where they find themselves on the career continuum. For example, Monica felt the bittersweetness of getting to the end of the school year after accomplishing much in her time as a change leader, “Mostly, I feel relieved . . . and grateful. I'm tired of carrying everyone else's well-being, and juggling the 25,000 things all at once” (10:10). Logan has seen more of his role in change as helping his community avoid mission drift (32:20). He remarked on what it has felt like to envision the remaining years of change ahead for his community having considered the missteps by other BC K-12 Christian schools:

And so, I want to leave the school in a really good spot where it's solidly and distinctly Christian, and it is on a good financial footing, and it's become a culture of learning for all people. Then it's onto succession plans and things like that, which I've never really seen carried out successfully. (25:34)

Amy reminisced about getting to a place of perspective after years of having to grow, adapt, and figure out new things (09:39). It takes energy in the direction of the goals set out by the leader to inspire the vision over a “long period of time” (1:28:10). She shared what it has meant to her to shift her focus now towards building capacity in others:

Then you get to a place where you've got hindsight . . . I don't feel as individually responsible. I feel more responsible for passing on the processes, passing on information about what's worked, what hasn't worked, sharing those experiences – just being available for people to talk through things so that they actually can step into that role of enabling their own teams to meet their goals and objectives . . . It feels just fine. Actually, it's kind of exciting to watch other people . . . step up and grow and when you can step back and watch other people successfully meet those targets, that's pretty exciting. (Amy, 09:39)

Participants late in their career discussed wanting to leave their schools in a healthy state, markedly Christian, and the culture and mission of their schools was being carried out

successfully. A gap in the discussion was what participants may have felt their teams and learning communities perceived about their age or experience in relation to their effectiveness.

Gender. Only one of the 14 male participants made any sort of reference to possible gender differences across the interviews. In contrast, nine out of the 14 women referenced gender as a consideration for their identity, purpose, or integration in the work of leading in their BC K-12 Christian learning community ($f = 14$). Janice questioned whether her early lack of confidence in articulating direction as a young leader was primarily a matter of personal growth or whether it was shaped by systemic gendered dynamics that may also have disadvantaged other female leaders (1:07:55). Alexandra and Lydia described the interrupted career of taking time off to raise children impacting their leadership progression (06:26; 00:39). As her children have grown older, Anna reflected on how she has been able to work later without feeling the same stress about the competing priorities of balancing time with them (14:33).

Two critical issues emerged for the female Christian school leaders in this study: (1) their past and present experiences with mentorship and (2) their confidence to step into leadership; the issues are closely interrelated. Lisa has felt that there is a double standard for women leading change, particularly around how their communication is perceived. Female leaders face different expectations and interpretations of their behavior in the workplace from that of their male counterparts, which requires them to adapt their communication towards self-preservation in ways that men are less often required to do so (Lisa, 08:59). Sociologically and theologically, nine of the female leaders in the study related their experiences back to a larger systemic concern. For example, Anna attributed the coincidental nature that SCSBC schools do not have female heads of school. Melody unpacked her thinking about the matter:

... in the Christian world, there is still a lot of theology that supports male leadership and that flows into a Christian school setting; that's always been something too that

has played into the confidence of all the families in this school; do the board members believe that a leadership job is something in a Christian school that should be held by a woman? I know we have come up against that a little bit in our school . . . So that's probably something that's also impacted the confidence piece for me.
(03:26)

For Mary, women in Christian school leadership often lack access to formal mentors and the efforts to introduce mentors have been facilitated poorly (08:32). Despite recognizing the value for growth, women, especially those who are mothers, have dedicated their time and nurturing energy towards family responsibilities, leaving collegial supports for peers inside their schools and across their networks a gap rather than forming intentional mentoring relationships. It is not clear as to what may help address this gap, only that the feelings of what it means to be a female change leader of a BC K-12 Christian school bears with it further questions about what equipping and preparation could look like. The implications of this surprising finding around gendered perspectives are explored further in Chapter Six. An area unexplored in this study is around the disproportionate number of women representing the Director of Learning role and the disproportionate number of men representing the Heads of School/Superintendents role within the population. It is possible to estimate but not confirm accurately due to some administrators holding dual roles. In addition, it is not suitable to relate the percentage of the participant sample to the wider population due to confidentiality. In addition, there is an increase in female leaders serving in principal roles, which raises considerations about whether more middle to senior leadership roles are opening up for women and the ways in which glass ceilings still exist for women who serve in the executive director position.

Experiences Related to Context and Community Through Change

This category explores the context in which BC K-12 Christian school leaders facilitate and experience change. Context is a key consideration for detailing phenomenological considerations and of importance for complex adaptive systems theories. Ezra offered up the

consideration that helps frame this section, “I think one thing I’d give for you in your study and context would be change is change, but the communities that the change happened in are very different” (14:42). He went on to explain how his community is set within a larger societal context, with many Christian schools existing in multi-generational communities, different investments and ownership, long memories, and experienced sometimes as a “double-edged sword” (14:42), with the strength and liabilities wielded together. Two categoric distinctions emerged serving to explore the configurations of context: (1) the learning community’s readiness for reform ($n = 24, f = 66$) and (2) the learning community’s reactions to change ($n = 19, f = 50$). They are explored in this next section.

Readiness for Change. Christian school leaders detailed a range of change initiatives that they have led with their communities, and they described states of readiness for change ($n = 24, f = 66$) encompassed in their school’s context related to (i) realities and reforms and (ii) social dynamics.

School Realities and Reforms. Participants recounted launching new curricular and learning initiatives while serving as leaders ($n = 21, f = 41$). Amy, Alexandra, Derek, Erica, Mary, Monica, Leon, and Warren each described curricular and instructional reforms related to literacy, particularly around a shift from balanced literacy approaches to practices emerging from the science of reading. Alexandra, Amy, Derek, Erica, Jillian, Logan, and Monica, representing a heterogeneous cross-section across gender and job roles, worked with their learning communities to support numeracy reforms. The changes initiatives were predominantly initiated by the leaders who identified gaps and needs and triggered the reforms. Mary shared what it was like for herself to be ready before her team arrived at a level of readiness for change:

I landed smack dab in the middle of kind of balanced literacy environment, and ‘If you just put books in the classroom, kids will learn how to read.’ I’m oversimplifying

this, but found that very, very difficult because I didn't have a clear grasp of the, 'Okay, how do I actually do this teaching?' So I found myself going back to the curriculum I had taught previously, and using that. So I never really unlearned the science of reading. So then becoming principal, right at that time, was actually a really beautiful thing. I see a lot of God's hand in that, because it was nice to be able to say, 'This is how I think we need to be teaching reading at our school,' and at the same time find this huge body of research that says this makes a lot of sense. We need to be really structured on how we approach literacy and give kids these tools.

And so, I think for that, it really came down to finding those teachers that saw the same concerns and successes that I had around what works for teaching literacy and empowering them early to do some things differently and to share those successes with our grade level teams; that created kind of this momentum. I think anything that is kind of done inside the classroom grassroots by people who truly believe in the success that they're seeing is much more effective than me coming down and saying, 'I've purchased this curriculum for you that you now all have to use.' So, I think that that across the board has been really helpful.

Mary continued on to articulate the varied responses to changes in how members of her community reacted and responded to her change leadership:

But I think as far as that whole context of change leadership, what shows up again and again and again is different people need different things, right? Some people just need the, 'Okay, guys, we've done a lot of research.' 'This is what we're going to do.' 'It's very easy to use.' 'We're going to give you the pro-d you need to do this. Make a change.' Okay, good, 'Yeah, I'll figure it out. Bring it on. That sounds good. We trust you, Mary.' 'And the last thing you did was really good.' And other teachers are like, 'So can you show me the study?' 'And I'm going to have to have a conversation with you about this, but I really like- and they need just a slower implementation phase.'

And then I think some people really, really resist change, because the idea is, 'Well, if you want me to change, it means that what I was doing was terrible, right?' And so there's that really strong emotional connection to that. I've learned to just really be cautious about introducing that change, not as better, but as different, and what people need now as opposed to what people needed then. And that's been really helpful. And I think also finding that there's no way that my voice can resonate with everybody is recognizing that there are times where I need other people to speak on behalf of that change, for me, because they say things in a different way that makes a lot more sense to some listeners. (24:30; 26:13)

Mary's concern for her community's readiness highlighted the challenges of the leader being solely at the forefront of change; her desire was to help her team recognize the need for reforms and position more change agents to take a leading role. Melody has often tried to position her

learning community as early adopters, so they live at the forefront of new initiatives collectively. She used a strongly cohesive culture to support an attitude of being first to research and try new initiatives (22:39). Yet some communities have established cultures that make them more predisposed to resistance. Resistance to change is explored further on in its own distinct category in the analysis.

In contrast, Amy, Derek, and Warren each articulated how they did not possess the necessary content expertise to facilitate their numeracy initiatives, while Derek and Warren empowered members of their leadership team who were more equipped to lead training with the staff to take the lead. Amy sought external consultation to support STEM training for her community:

So, trying to solve the problem that we didn't have expertise, and how do you keep the momentum up when you're asking people to do something that they haven't been trained to do . . . we did it just a little differently, but you're providing leadership in an area that you haven't explored deeply yourself. (04:12)

Anna, who has served in a smaller to mid-sized school wondered, but was not convinced, that it may be easier to affect change in larger institutions (1:12:21). Participants, though not identified for confidentiality purposes, indicated additional limitations of staffing change initiatives in contrast to leaders of mid-sized to larger organizations. Some distinctions in the recommendations are made in Chapter Six for leading change based on the size of schools.

Social Dynamics. Operationally, school leaders, particularly the Heads of School, with the exception of a campus principal and a K-12 principal from the sample, discussed building projects their schools have been a part of, described the closing down, rebirthing, building of schools, pursuing of ambitious development projects, reconfiguring of admissions and enrolment processes, reforming of financial practices, aligning of communal values with the mission, adapting to growth and population shifts impacting their facilities and staffing, and managing a

variety of different forms of disruption, disappointment, and departures with staff ($n = 14, f = 25$). Participants seemed to share a sense of protectiveness toward the organization's vulnerable state but need for reform: "Our human resource processes [were] horrific. It was like chaos" and our financial practices were a mess (Jordan, 18:52; 24:21). Participants explained distress over inheriting budgets that were already strained when they stepped into their roles (Anna, 15:58) and described having to intervene by cutting or restructuring programs to address the resulting financial shortcomings (Joshua, 17:35). These accounts highlighted how leaders balanced feelings of urgent crisis response with a tentativeness about their respective school's fragile states. It reveals the strain of systemic shortcomings and change leadership related to organizational renewal. Further discussion about the experience is explored in Category and Dimension 2.1a on the experiences related to change process zones.

Many Christian schools are experiencing the blessing of growth while simultaneously bearing the burden of increased complexity as they manage resources wisely, preserve their mission, expand staff capacity, and respond to intensification of social expectations placed on their schools due to being either independent or Christian. Participants discussed cases where members of their community were displaced as a result of building projects and disruptions in facilities (Monica, 28:48) and impending closures in their organization's history (Debra, 09:55 and Derek, 07:52). Participants walked in the shadow of their liabilities, sometimes inherited from predecessors and other times because of seeking to take their communities in different directions. Paul found himself needing to navigate complicated aspects in his school's building project, but has worked to reframe his own and his community's perspective:

Part of my role was to help our community see how God was potentially working through this situation and take a risk for His kingdom. But part of my role was also to lead smart and strategically and think about and anticipate the logistical and practical challenges . . . I'm a trained educator with a master's degree. . . We had to

look at all those different areas, from policy to course offerings, to behavioral supports to curricular supports, to the buy in, to God's kingdom, and the challenge of it all that had to be considered together in order for that change to go well. (28:35)

Paul, as with several other leaders in the study, described how some forms of communal change were all consuming, requiring the entire educational community to mobilize. At times, particularly in moments of crisis, communities were paralyzed and unable to dedicate themselves to other initiatives while navigating new realities. The next dimension examines leaders' communication and the range of responses they received. It highlights how cultural entrenchment shapes leaders' experiences of internal and external change and influences how they interpret and respond to feedback from their communities.

Reactions to Change. Christian school leaders have faced “contentious and challenging” changes within their communities (Grant, 6:00). They detailed a range of reactions while leading change within their communities and how individuals and groups react to change ($n = 19, f = 50$). There are three sub-dimensions within the reactions to change dimension: (i) Faith identity tensions; (ii) Edge of chaos and states of crisis; and (iii) Patterns of behavior in community response to change.

Faith Identity Tensions. With all but one of the 28 participants either reporting that they serve interdenominational or non-denominational contexts, participants reflected on their community's theological contexts implicitly, while others spoke more explicitly ($n = 7, f = 11$). Jordan acknowledged that the role of Head of School/Superintendent and Principal is “one of the hardest jobs that exist” because it holds “all the difficulty of a regular organization in school” and you then also “throw in theological alignment and a bunch of other things that if you were in the public system, you wouldn't even worry about” (1:25:43). Jillian argued that Christian organizations can be some of the slowest to change and often “view change as a potential shifting towards ungodliness” (43:50). As participants described reforms, there were two areas

that were discussed next, which stood out in the analysis as having created the most frenzy and disruption to communities.

Participants reconstructed how they formed task forces to address gender and sexuality policies and navigate Indigenous relations while pursuing truth and reconciliation amid stakeholder pushbacks. Gender and sexuality policies were discussed in 12 interviews ($f = 16$), evenly represented by Heads of Schools/Superintendents, Directors, and Principals who highlighted faith identity tensions between educational teams and community stakeholders, such as parents or members of their boards. Nine participants reflected on Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum and with community relationships. Elise noted the compounded nature of introducing back-to-back critical changes in her community, where a less contentious but more integral change initiative related to the school's Christian identity received little recognition compared to one tied to gender and sexuality, thus diminishing the former's importance (42:07). Such changes have evoked feelings of fear and distress from community stakeholders who questioned the school's Christian identity and identity.

Ezra, Mary, Grant, Sarah, Elise, and Jillian each detailed how post-COVID shifts in worldview and political ideology have made work more divisive, sometimes splintering parent populations into two divided camps. Mary recognized that the impact of the issues on another campus at her K-12 school presented implications for her campus (30:20). Grant identified that, for more contentious issues, he needs full consensus on his core leadership team to move forward before bringing anything to his community (08:07). Debates over gender and sexuality were exacerbated by increased mistrust in the office of leadership and not necessarily the leader themselves (Ezra, 31:58). By extension of the category discussing leaders' experiences of being

called to facilitate change, the struggle to preserve unity often overshadows their deeper callings to embody unity within their communities.

For Sarah, there have been differences in the perspectives her teaching staff has held towards Indigenous perspectives compared to that of her board and community's understanding. Similar tensions explored by the participants were not always reported to have been solved in a way that felt redemptive. For Elise, with increasing plurality and diversity of societal thought, for her community, it is important that that they focus on "the things that they can agree on" and not "make the minors the majors" (43:16). Jillian's perspective for keeping Christian organizations Christian and "change friendly" was to hold in tension the following:

What's the big things that are core things that are unshakeable . . . such as, 'There is a God. Jesus is our Savior. Our mission is that kids grow into who designed them to be. Those things matter. Does it matter if a child in their home is going through gender dysphoria - we love the student; we want them to grow into who God has designed them to be. We want to serve this family with love and compassion and care, because the family is broken and hurting, trust me, if they're going through those kinds of hard things. So that's given us a lot of space as a Christian organization to say this is what we believe. However, we agree to partner with wherever you are in your journey towards God's best for your life. So, the goal is that we're all moving towards what God's best design is for our life, but we understand that people have all sorts of human experiences along that journey. So that's been the most challenging part of staying a Christian school- absolutely first and foremost. (43:50)

Christian school leaders are seeking a different expression of partnership with families. It is only years later that Leon looks back and recognized that families that were welcomed to the school came to faith in Christ (20:00). This next section sets up further discussion on the second theme and Chapter Six for how communities go into states of instability.

Edge of Chaos and States of Crisis. Participants reconstructed major shifts in their communities that brought their schools through cycles of rapid growth, sharp decline, and community displacement ($n = 11, f = 15$). "Honestly, if you actually listed all the things we've been through . . . you would probably laugh quite a bit actually. My joke is always, what could

go wrong?” Ezra explained how his community has weathered all sorts of crises (15:58). Four participants described moments that their communities were on the brink of shutdowns. “You’ve got two years to fix it, or we’re shutting it down” explained Leon as he was mandated to make some drastic changes for his educational community (11:59). Debra recalled past seasons of failure, enabled in part by leaders who gave her latitude to pursue change but offered little guidance or support in establishing healthy boundaries, so she would roll out an initiative and then the plans would fall through; this pattern that she experienced individually as “discouraging and damaging” (07:43) helped situate the context for the eventual collapse of Debra’s school community. Debra reconstructed the events that unfolded in her community’s story:

After spending a year doing outbreak tracing and contacting families and no curriculum at all. One of our senior leader’s contract was terminated. We had undergone a significant facilities project. The whole system went through this whiplash tornado, like an onslaught of negative things all at the same time . . . I was doing crisis response because people were super unhappy. There was so much loss, like mixed messaging, coping with change . . . The school was sinking so fast. . .

It was very difficult and horrible, because the school culture was struggling. Kids were not doing well. Education was tanking. Good staff were leaving . . . tons of toxicity. We had been struggling with our facilities. So, all of this was extremely tumultuous.

Every board meeting, I was super stressed. Like are they gonna close us? The board made some drastic decisions in leadership that significantly changed the operations within the school. (09:55)

Debra went on to depict what the chaotic decline of her school community felt like to her personally:

What did that experience feel like? In some ways, it was a relief, because it had just felt like . . . at that point like being a car crash victim in the ER that is bleeding out; the school was on its deathbed for years and it had just felt like they were keeping it on life support. You can’t do anything. You can’t launch an initiative. You’re just trying to hold on. And in the meantime, we’re financially bottomed out . . . bleeding out money. (15:56)

From looming financial collapse to board takeovers, Christian school leaders carry both distant and recent memories of their communities standing at the edge of chaos. It is a space where

survival eclipsed the possibility of innovation and where the fabric of community was frayed by disruption, toxicity, duress, or lack of health.

Schools have absorbed the impact of disruption in a variety of ways. Those experiencing significant demographic shifts have faced sharp changes in their school populations, leading to periods of growth that have proved “much bigger than anticipated” (Monica, 07:59). Rather than thinking that people need always to thrive through change, Gerald argued that it is about coping with interrupted realities (29:21). Similarly, Derek detailed the feelings for how communities descend into the state of disorder:

I think when we've seen things fall apart is when we don't understand the people and the culture of which we're asking people towards the change. If they're not understanding the 'why' then that complicates things. If they're only changing because they were told to do so, that change doesn't last. So how do we create lasting change – change that endures? (03:12)

During crises or gaps in leadership continuity, five leaders described stepping into interim roles as principals or Head of School/Superintendent, sometimes to cover colleagues on leave, and other times to guide their communities while their boards worked to confirm long-term leadership succession. Some participants described the mergers and acquisitions of different populations and facilities that have caused major disruption or raised questions about the school's identity with their stakeholders. “Rapid growth over just a handful of years,” Paul explained, capturing a sentiment shared by some of the other participants that reflected on building projects and facilities improvements (10:23). As new facilities opened, there was an immediate recognition that some communities could not keep pace with capacity and demand from the outset. Only one participant dared venture into exploration of the normalcy of chaotic states occurring in an organization's lifespan: “Resilience to change, I think that's key” Gerald argued that, in moments of disruption, with chaos theory offering the best insights into why communities descend into states of disturbance (29:21). What participants might do practically to

embody an adaptive faithfulness is explored further in Chapter Six. The following section examines patterns of community response, exploring what constitutes normal behavior and what reflects abnormal reactions that communities experience through change.

It was striking to hear participants despair in moments of crisis and how the magnanimity of God's favor felt distant. Chapter Six examines how leaders can endure such seasons of leading by deepening their dependence on God through spiritual practices that widen their vision of God's kingdom work being done in their communities through an adaptive faithfulness.

Patterns of Behavior in Community Response to Change. Descriptions about patterns of behavior throughout a change initiative were linked to concepts of power and conflict ($n = 16, f = 24$). Loss of culture and agency, unhappiness, breakdown in systems, a hard year for everyone, staff departures, and daily struggle to cope were all negative feelings and implications emerging in Monica's reflection though her community had the hope of a new facility on the horizon (28:48). The disapproval and negativity abound in silence, according to Gerald (36:05). In contexts marked by smaller power distances, educational staff are more likely to voice disapproval informally and in the company of trusted colleagues. These concerns often surface only after formal meetings have concluded, resulting in the leader encountering dissent indirectly and second-hand rather than in the moment of shared deliberation. The effect is subtle but significant: resistance circulates relationally before it is addressed structurally. Joshua experienced the "cold room" when he was new to his position and tried to implement a new educational framework with his teaching staff (20:02). He spoke with one of the teachers who had a strong reaction in the meeting: "She basically told [him] the story . . . from the year before" and that helped him understand "where they had been" and what they needed to "make sure they were ready or that [he] gave them the support that they needed," which was high collaboration

(20:02). Ezra commented on he found that his community reacted differently when the change was driven by external uncontrollable factors compared to antecedents emerging internally:

Your people respond to those differently. Some go, 'Yeah, this is outside of our control, so let's just make the best of it,' and they actually respond that way because there's no arguing; it's coming from on high. Whereas, if it's an internal change, that's something that I'm identifying as the leader of the campus, there's an element for some staff members, that this is still up for debate then, versus some ministry mandate. So that's why I think, you definitely need to handle them differently, but also people respond to them differently. (1:09:55)

Everyone wants to be an "armchair principal" he went on to describe in jest, "They all don't want my job, but they can all do it, right?" (Ezra, 30:48). The social roles that participants characterize members of their community embodying throughout the change process are raised in the discussion of the second theme.

Overall, in this dimension, communication was often the site of tension, which is explored further in the discussion about resistance to change. How the leader described what they felt when they unpacked their communication with their staff revealed the way that participants' learning communities reacted to the clarity, expectations, relational support, Christian response, and values held by their leaders. Also discussed further on in the analysis is how leadership team members reacted to change. One aspect that emerged in two interview was that boring programs, gaps in human connection, or complicated systems were often the catalysts for leaders to spark innovation. In these respective scenarios, communities respond positively by mobilizing together to generate collaborative solutions (Melody, 51:44; Jillian, 03:26), leaving this an area for further exploration in the discussion about change processes and also the meaning participants ascribe to their experiences of change leadership.

This category examined the context in which change leadership is experienced, particularly within the dynamics of social relationships and the faith identity held by community members. The beliefs held by members of Christian learning communities drive collective responses to

change. This next category explores how leaders derive knowledge, skills, supports, influence, inspiration, and agency to enact change with members of their community. It is the fourth category within the theme of the Connected, Called, and Changed Leader.

Experiences of Connections

This section maps the social dynamics and relationships that leaders have within their schools and across their networks. However, participants were specifically asked in what ways their connections with other schools, educational leaders, and organizations have influenced their understanding and practices with change. Thus, participants reconstructed moments where the influence of people in their lives contributed to specific change initiatives and is not fully encompassing of a full network analysis of the participants' social connections, only those deemed considerable in how they experience change leadership. First, the dimension of network influence and exchange are explored ($n = 26, f = 61$) with sub-dimensions of road trips, initiating informal partnerships, and participating in leadership cohorts explored further.

Networks Influence and Exchange. Christian school leaders in larger schools reported holding more diverse access and connections to other schools and leaders within BC's Christian school network compared to that of the leaders of smaller schools; however, the limitations do diminish from the parallel desire to be connected within and across their networks. Some leaders, mostly Heads of School/Superintendents, serve on boards of other non-profits where they draw knowledge of governance (Locke, 20:09), others have served as elders on their church boards (Grant, 00:13), while some participate in other initiatives with the Ministry of Education, Federation of Independent Schools in British Columbia (FISA), and the Society of Christian Schools, which enable the exchange of perspective and process, and encourage the inspiration of new ideas. Participants identified opportunities for face-to-face, hybrid, job-alike, regional,

cross-province, and international connections as highly beneficial. These connections enabled them to diffuse new ideas into their communities. They learned new managerial practices such as budgeting and navigating societal pressures, particularly regarding the anxious generation, technology usage, as well as practices and policies related to gender and sexuality. There were four main network efforts that strengthened leaders' understanding of facilitating educational change with their communities: (i) Taking teams on road trips; (ii) Initiating informal partnerships; (iii) Bringing external voices in consultatively; and (iv) Participating in cohort learning initiatives, each carrying with it a different experience of becoming more equipped to lead change.

Road Trips. Six participants described taking their teams on international road trips to different learning organizations to catch a vision of education that their community was aspiring towards. Most of the participants who had done this were in the Heads of School/Superintendents and Campus Principal group ($f = 12$). Derek, Jillian, Marcus, Melody, Leon, Lisa, and Lydia all had experiences to share where the teams they brought with them to other contexts were strengthened, and the ideas they brought back were inspiring. However, Sarah explained how she became aware of the social capabilities and giftings of emerging leaders that she brought with her only after seeing their potential unlocked more while participating in the network learning initiative (11:55).

In contrast, Lydia explained the fallout from taking a team to another learning context as some of her team members came back having formed a negative perception of the change initiative they were exploring (27:00). It was surprising that only one participant described how a team visiting other schools can disrupt existing entrenchment but can also have the opposite effect. Most participants described that the experience was often used in a catalytic sense, yet

Joshua described how the support his school received from a school-to-school partnership led to a second generation level of support with his school reciprocating the care and support to another school that was exploring how to implement their Christian teaching and learning framework; Joshua shared the following opportunity that schools have when they form fuller partnerships along their journeys of change:

We've been able to talk about our best practices, talk about our epic fails, talk about struggles that we're having, talk about directions that we want to go in next, but that networking is really important to have . . . There's some tenets of change that are the same across any type of organization . . . I think the biggest thing for me is to hear that some of these situations are not unique to me. (30:08)

Thoughtful composition of exploratory teams was an area not addressed by participants, but a critical consideration for how to effectively implement the change. Sarah noted that observing another school's Christian formation programming, culture, spiritual practices and organizational systems was eye-opening, even though the context differences and ideas were not always easily transferable. She explained that some practices can be positively adopted regardless of context, others rejected despite similar contexts, and some neutral with little or no applicability. Most network exchanges across the participant interviews were reported as positive, some negative, and none fell into a net zero category of transfer.

Initiating Informal Partnerships. Initiative by the participant leaders to form networks were reported in Alan, Anna, Grant, Joshua, Leon, Lisa, and Paul's interviews ($f = 16$) as the means in which informal and formal connections bridged gaps in limited resources and knowledge. The group represented members across different job roles. From the Northern school connections to frequent gatherings between schools of similar Christian curricular frameworks, participants argued that they need other people who they can connect with to ensure they do not experience the echo chamber effect: "Because sometimes, we're like, is it just us that are experiencing this challenge?" Derek remarked as he has found it valuable while serving as a

Head of School/Superintendent to not only have connections with other Heads/Superintendents, but senior leaders in other Christian schools facilitating change initiatives (29:20). Informal partnerships were reported to take time, a precious commodity in the leader's life. "Give me your outside perspective on what I need to be careful of" because we can become "too insular from each other" was Joshua's insight into the value of informal relationships adding another layer of wisdom as he has facilitated changes in his school's Christian identity and curricular distinctives (1:09:37).

In the absence of important thinkers' physical presence in leaders' lives, "If there's one person that I'd love to sit down and have coffee with, he's right at the top of the list" (Leon, 03:43), leaders pursue other experts who can help speak into their community's next adaptive challenge. Alan, Gerald, Jillian, Joshua, Jordan, Logan, and Marcus, all serving in Head of School/Superintendent roles, explained that they brought in coaches and mentors for their senior leadership team members to help them navigate personal aspects of change leadership, or for curricular and school culture related initiatives. The implications of this were twofold: Some leaders appear to see this as a way of creating a collective sense of efficacy (Marcus, 26:31) and others see it as a way to bridge a gap in understanding (Logan, 44:08). It was noteworthy that leading with too much familiarity to a context only surfaced in one of the interviews: "It's kind of why Jesus had the hardest time in His own hometown. I think sometimes for me, I know that it's easier for me to initiate some big changes, through professional development I do outside my school, because I'm an external voice" (59:51) offered Alexandra as a possible explanation surrounding her feelings of where she has seen change take root in other communities but not in her own. It remains unclear whether the leader is wrestling with their own gaps in content

knowledge or sensing that the community's longstanding behavioral patterns constrain what is perceived as possible.

Participating in Leadership Cohorts. One of the most positively reported aspects in network connections for leaders themselves that help leaders leverage connections for change leadership was the involvement in both local and international leadership cohorts ($n = 16, f = 18$). Elise valued the informal and grassroots group that emerged, bringing together leaders in job-alike positions as “just hearing about the way other people are implementing their perspectives . . . and give feedback, to talk through ideas and issues in your school is so helpful towards deciding how to approach change and if it's necessary” (23:52). For Elise and others, it was not necessarily a practical tool that they took back, but the feeling of participating in a larger kingdom vision of change that inspired and equipped them in their work.

Of critical concern was the reflection on the Emerging Leaders Development Institute and Van Lunen program. Participants valued the opportunity to connect with American mentors and leaders and six participants reflected positively on not only their experience with the Van Lunen leadership cohorts but also with other network learning opportunities within Christian schools they have experienced; however, the scale and America-centricity reported by participants felt distant and incongruent, incommensurable, or dissimilar to that of the Canadian social and political landscape (Jordan, 1:24:17; Erica, 1:11:43). There is an optimism around a more pan-Canadian leadership that appears to be in its infancy, yet participants feel uncertain of their role in strengthening its emergence and unclear what that means for relationships in other Christian school network associations across Canada in the Prairies and in Ontario. Recommendations for a pan-Canadian approach to leadership development are raised in Chapter Six.

The topic of how participants feel about their networks is explored further in the final category concerning the future of preparation for change leadership. Most leaders spoke of the Emerging Leaders Development Institute (ELDI) with clear appreciation, framing it as a meaningful catalyst for leadership discernment. Warren, however, insisted that genuine preparation for change leadership remains a significant gap, even if the program is inching in the right direction. Formal leadership programs like a master's degree, as reported by participants (Warren, 1:11:42; Erica, 00:48) provided more of a theoretical than practical equipping, leaving leaders unprepared for different dimensions of change leadership. Warren emphasized the need for leaders to intentionally coach emerging leaders through real projects to build capacity and prevent burnout (1:11:42); this is discussed in the next section. What seems to be unspoken in the tensions and silences is that participant network connections appear to prepare leaders more for the non-linear aspects of change and there is latent potential for non-linear aspects of change. This dimension in the phenomenon of change leadership is explored in the section on change processes.

Capacity Building Through Supportive Change Connections. This next section discusses how participants experienced capacity building ($n = 19, f = 27$). Capacity was experienced as more than the sum of energy and skill. “You have to have energy left over for that,” Amy explained as she reflected on how she devoted her energy to her community and was left with minimal reserves to expend with others across the Christian school network (1:06:12). She argued that educational leaders ought to be working towards helping members of their learning community to find out “who your support people are outside your organization” (1:06:12). Becoming aware of oneself and helping other members of one's team to cultivate self-awareness of how they are experienced by others was critical for Jillian (39:52). Organizational

diagnostic tools such as the Birkman Method, Working Genius, Enneagram, and Clifton Strength Finders were all referenced as helpful tools that leaders used to cultivate shared awareness of strengths and liabilities in the workplace. Logan, Gerald, and Jillian, each serving as Heads of School/Superintendents, have found it critical to ensure their principals and directors are mentored, positioning external consultants to coach their leadership team members. In contrast, Anna, Marcus, and Logan argued that there were gaps in their community's previous practices that demanded they had better capabilities in finances and more specifically, from Marcus' interview, how financial practices relates to school culture and Christian non-profit charity identity (1:09:08). Mentorship and team retreats were described as key aspects that built individual and collective capacity.

For establishing team learning and collaborative environments, retreats served to introduce and reinforce expected norms and behaviors that expanded the relationships between team members. Jacob brought his team back to their shared mission by taking time to unpack their school's vision together each year as they practiced retreat (09:22). Jillian has brought her senior leadership team together to establish a school wide focus for the whole year and create a "unified thing that [her] team can all work together on that helps to provide alignment" with her mission (06:02). The annual Christian school educational leaders retreat has also been a source of strength and encouragement to leaders, cited by Grant and Monica as one of the most lifegiving parts of their year. Chapter Six discusses the implications in how there is a gap in energizers at system-wide levels and how informal friendship may drive more willingness for engagement in system-wide solutions and not only school-based solutions. At the individual level, mentorship, if not formally pursued, as in Janice's case (02:48), was reported as lacking. For others, the lack of mentorship reveals a particular gap in their formation as change leaders. As discussed

previously by female Christian school leaders, the disproportionate access to female mentors reported by participants is of concern. However, the male leaders noted that their professional connections that support understanding of change are more general connections and largely limited, with their most mutual relationships existing outside Christian schools. In addition, participants described that their leadership teams continue to work through different power dynamics and lingering conflicts, which is an area that would require further investigation outside the scope of the study.

Spiritual, Professional, and Relational Grounding. A third dimension with spiritual, professional, and relational grounding ($n = 22, f = 33$) accounts for the support that participants received to thrive in their work of leading change. Grant explained how, safe, trust-filled relationships within leadership teams and critical friends “totally unconnected to the school who, just at a very personal level, can get stuff off [his] chest with, get encouragement, put ideas confidentially out there, and get support there too” felt like refuges (02:58). Amy described how there have been many times in network learning initiatives with other Christian school leaders, she engaged in “nourishing conversations” that “fortified [her] for what she needed to do” (42:48). Strength derived from leadership team members brought with it spiritual encounters and hope, as Erica shared, “You don’t have to sell it. Just tell the story. Just speak from your heart” and “just to have that mirrored back to me in those moments of vulnerability. . . I can hold onto their words” (1:00:46). In the same way, to keep her grounded, Locke wanted to ensure her board would support her (Locke) with an external consultant so she could get timely feedback (47:47). Marcus argued that faith leaders need mentors that can “challenge and affirm,” and one who has “deep pockets of love, grace, and mercy” (47:46). There are days that leaders need to mourn loss throughout change and experience Christ’s compassion, so being able to reach out to

people of care was vital. Marcus explored the role that critical friends have played in his work as a change leader as they have replayed words of wisdom and affirmation back to him:

I hear you. This is so hard. This is so difficult. Let me remind you of the things that you said to me a year ago or six months ago, or two weeks ago . . . because right now you're so foggy, you can't see it anymore. . . You said it to me. This is what you said. This is who you are. (49:13)

Alan's consideration of a spiritual director and Locke's insight into an education consultant on retainer may serve as a possible recommendation for education boards of Christian schools. It is unclear whether participants are communicating their needs in relation to how their positions are contractually defined and what formal supports are needed to address the current realities of leader wellbeing and the capacity to sustain change.

Critical Challenges, Gaps, and Shifts in Network Connections and Relationships.

What participants did not explore in their social connections revealed critical challenges, gaps, and shifts that need discussion about the implications for complex adaptive change and network science ($n = 16, f = 32$).

There are several "What if?" questions that were raised in the findings that are explored in the Implications section within Chapter Six. However, they are summarized here: participants report uneven access to mentorship, limitations in network personnel dedicated to coaching and mentoring leaders, further training required to equip emerging leaders, current leaders through change, and aspiring leaders for system-wide change, generational differences in network engagement with emerging leaders more inclined towards collaborative forms of development, and the broader expansion of Canadian forms of leadership. There are possible risks around network exclusion, insularity concerns raised with Christian schools creating echo chamber effects around how their communities navigated issues related to cultural shifts in demographics, as well as gender and sexuality policies and practices.

Summary of Theme One

This section has explored how the called change leader is also a connected change leader. Leaders that leverage and expand their networks, initiate partnerships, participate in leadership cohorts, and build capacity in others support the continued capacity building for change across the profession. Some of the surprising findings included how few participants described robust, formal structures that their Boards have put in place to support their spiritual and pastoral wellbeing; much of what was described is all initiated by the leaders themselves. Chapter Six offers some recommendations for Boards as they shape their hiring policies. Representative across each group of leaders, leaders carry heavy burdens when their communities go into crisis, with the strength of strongly bonded relationships tested during critical moments in their organization's lifespan.

There is a power dynamic shift taking place with campus principals being compressed into a middle leadership role in large organizations that will be explored in Chapter Six. Heads of School/Superintendents shared how they feel isolated, with few describing how loose connections are leveraged; this merits further exploration in Chapter Six, indicating a gap in social interconnectivity. Overall, this theme has described the experience of being, becoming, leading, and connecting as the change leader. The next theme explores critical dimensions related to processes and practices with Christian educational change leadership. Different aspects of the change initiatives mentioned will be examined for how participants experience the essence of change leadership in their BC K-12 Christian schools.

Theme Two: Communal Adaptive Faithfulness

The second theme emerged from *how* participants experienced change leadership of educational reforms and initiatives with their communities. It aims to capture the essence of

leaders' feelings of powerlessness without communal renewal, a poverty of change without communal adaptability, faith practiced as a community adapts and changes, and a renewal and transformation that happens at the heart of communal change, bringing unexpected moments of joy amidst disruption. Table 5.3b organizes the theme, categories, dimensions, and sub-dimensions in a way that reflects the relationship of the data within the theme. Data under the three categories was organized to communicate the logical flow between participants' experiences of change processes, resistance to change, and faith integration in practice. Within each category, the dimensions and sub-dimensions reconstruct the essence of how Christian school Adaptive Faithfulness.

Change processes in Christian schools ranged from linear and planned to non-linear and adaptive. These processes can be mapped across multiple dimensions, such as the mandated versus grassroots dynamics, internal versus external, revolutionary versus evolutionary, top-down, bottom-up, or from the middle. Using an inductive approach and an iterative process to generate the codes and categories, the first category classified the process zones of change. The second category examined different frameworks of change detailed by participants, including non-linear change, ongoing aspects, disruption, and tensions. The second category explores leaders' experiences of resistance to change as well as four critical dimensions: (i) the manifestations (drivers, actors, signals, and impact) in Christian learning communities ($n = 14, f = 18$); (ii) adaptive responses to resistance ($n = 13, f = 24$); (iii) systems thinking and supportive practices for change ($n = 18, f = 45$). Finally, the third category in this theme is around how leaders experience the integration of faith in change leadership practice including, (a) faith as a source and sustainer of the leader through change ($n = 23, f = 41$); (b) the formation of communities of change ($n = 19, f = 37$); (c) practical theological response to change leadership (n

= 16, $f = 28$); and (d) gaps and silences concerning faith integration ($n = 11, f = 18$). Overall, the second theme returns to many of the change initiatives participants described to better understand how change is experienced, and capacity for change is cultivated from participants attending to the presence of their faith.

It is important to acknowledge that participants reconstructed different types of change spanning four interconnected areas of Christian school leadership that are discussed within the Change Process Zone's phenomenological descriptions: ***Curricular changes*** involved redesigning academic programs (mathematics, reading, Biblical studies, STEM), shifting assessment practices, moving towards competency-based learning with the BC mandated curriculum. ***Organizational changes*** centered on restructuring formal positions, encouraging collaboration across campuses and departments, redesigning enrolment processes, clarifying values alignment with communication, introducing new positions, refining systems and policies, and implementing school strategic plans to strengthen accountability. ***Christian formation changes*** emphasized the embedding of Christian purpose, identity, and belonging into teaching and communal practices, development of common language concerning faith formation, alignment with mission and vision, and denominational dynamics. ***Cultural changes*** focused on integrating Indigenous perspectives, creating professional learning communities, shaping collaborative environments of trust, healthy environments encompassed in humility and responsiveness, support for mental health and wellbeing, and addressing contentious communal issues such as gender and sexuality policies and practices, and onboarding staff within a Christian communal identity. This section focuses on the first main category concerning participants' experiences of change processes, highlighting how participants reconstructed the social and psychological architecture and essence of change leadership.

Table 5.3b*Theme Two: Communal Adaptive Faithfulness*

Theme	Category	Dimension	Sub-Dimension
Theme Two: Communal Adaptive Faithfulness ($n = 28, f = 502$)			
	Experiences of change processes ($n = 28, f = 312$)		
		Change process zones ($n = 28, f = 253$)	
			Pre-change zone ($n = 14, f = 30$)
			Initiating/triggering zone ($n = 22, f = 54$)
			Integrating/navigating zone ($n = 27, f = 64$)
			Threshold/disruptive zone ($n = 19, f = 39$)
			Unsettled/transitioning zone ($n = 19, f = 32$)
			Coping/thriving zone ($n = 17, f = 34$)
			Surprising findings ($n = 21, f = 60$)
	Experiences of resistance to change ($n = 22, f = 54$)		
		Manifestations of resistance to change ($n = 14, f = 18$)	
			Actors ($n = 5, f = 5$)
			Drivers ($n = 4, f = 6$)
			Signals ($n = 8, f = 9$)
			Impacts ($n = 7, f = 7$)
		System thinking and supportive practices with resistance to change ($n = 18, f = 46$)	
			Mistake making and engagement ($n = 7, f = 15$)
			Leaders' response to resistance ($n = 14, f = 21$)
			Supportive practices ($n = 4, f = 6$)
			Accountability practices ($n = 4, f = 7$)
			Collective wisdom practices ($n = 7, f = 8$)
	Experiences of faith integration ($n = 28, f = 169$)		
		Faith as a source and sustainer ($n = 22, f = 41$)	
		Formation of communities of change ($n = 14, f = 22$)	
		Practical theological response ($n = 14, f = 24$)	
		Gaps and silences in faith integration ($n = 14, f = 22$)	

Experiences of Change Processes

This section synthesizes how participants' phenomenological experiences with the process of change in their BC K-12 Christian learning communities.

Change Process Zones. From the inductive analysis, the following process zones of change were generated to account for different dimensions of how the change process is experienced: (i) Pre-Change Zone ($n = 14, f = 30$); (ii) Initiating/Triggering Zone ($n = 22, f = 54$); (iii) Integrating/Navigating Zone ($n = 27, f = 64$); (iv) Unsettled/Transition Zone ($n = 19, f = 32$); (v) Threshold/Disruption Zone ($n = 19, f = 39$); and (vi) Coping to Thriving Zone ($n = 17, f = 34$). Each zone is discussed for how participants experienced the state in which their communities implemented and processed the change.

Pre-Change Zone. In the Pre-Change Zone, there are several different indicators that awake awareness of discontentment: priorities may be unclear, systems absent or ineffective, practices present as problematic, and attitudes become disruptive. Another indicator referenced is the leader's initial diagnosis of the problem, evidence they gather that is discrepant, or identifies a gap that reveals the need for change. At times, early mobilization occurs through learning, input gathering, or research that sparks new insights. Participants described moments where their imaginations were drawn to a God-given vision, opening fresh possibilities for their communities. Finally, some formal mandates emerging from strategic plans, new hires, and organizational expectations drive conditions that prefigure change strategy.

At the time of the interview, Erica had started her summer reading books in preparation for learning she would be facilitating with her educational team in the fall, doing what she called "getting the right input" (1:07:21). Monica recalled attending summer courses with colleagues and speaking with members of the Christian network association before she set the direction for

her team to develop a school culture initiative (22:21). Gerald's skills at diagnosing problems have grown with his experience to assess his community's readiness for different change initiatives (9:04). For new administrators, Gerald recommended that it might be beneficial to administer a readiness to change instrument to diagnose the school's propensity for change (24:38). Some leaders were hired by their boards with a clear mandate of what to lead and implement, even without full contextual knowledge; while they had clarity of purpose, they awoke a calling that would guide their teams to adopt the necessary pre-conditions for change (Joshua, 20:02). Janice described that the pre-change zone involved "identifying what wasn't working . . . and what's not as it could be" (15:26) or listening for "problems and what people wanted to change" (Sarah, 10:25). To expand imagination and vision, Janice suggested that asking good questions helped focus her team's efforts (17:13). Christian school leaders emphasized that they listened to members of their community before they built their rationales to initiate change. Participants are consistently careful to distinguish between change for its own sake and change that actually moves the work forward; prioritizing the right sort of change is seen as vital for their communities (Alan, 1:08:56; Erica, 54:15; Ezra, 1:02:31; Jacob, 02:11; Joshua, 58:27; Locke, 5:54; Lydia, 12:49).

Depending on the scope of impact and who the change bears implications for, some changes may be as small and involve one or two people or scale out to the whole organization. To gain perspective, some participants access connections within their networks. For example, Gerald inquired about other schools' timetables (13:48). Marcus' rule was to start with an understanding of the community's culture and reach out to influential members to ensure that the leader can see the social dynamics clearly. Oftentimes, someone from the outside "reminded [them] of who [they] were and what [they] look[ed] like from somebody who's outside looking

at [them]” (15:31). The Pre-Change Process Zone felt full of anticipation, and was often when leaders had time to plan their course of implementation or think deeply about the content and social dynamics. Of the four mid-change zones, the Initiating/Triggering Zone and the Integrating/Navigating zones appear to be experienced by leaders in a more structured, predictable, and premeditated way, operating linearly. The other two zones, including the Threshold/Disruption and Unsettled/Transitioning, emerge rapidly and function in volatile, fluctuating, unstable, and constantly evolving states. There does not seem to be any indication from participants that their communities move linearly through each of these zones, yet there is some overlap between experiences detailed in each of the zones.

Initiating/Triggering Zone. When participants can initiate or trigger change, they move into a zone that they feel a sense of traction and control over. For Alan, it has been easy to have the goals in mind but forget to account for people (1:12:15). Alan, Elise, Grant, Locke, and Warren used those feelings of control to mobilize their teams. Rapid acceleration of change, explored in each of the participants’ experiences is summarized well in Locke’s reflection about the initial catalytic moments of change:

What I have learned is that change comes when people have a sense of identity and purpose. You can have a purpose, but if you don’t also have identity, then maybe there’s a disconnect. [One of our teams we mobilized] has a name . . . it’s basic teaming. I have seen it now repeatedly happen and be successful in schools . . . People are so willing to go the distance when they believe in both the team and the destination . . . (14:11)

We are continually getting in front of staff saying, ‘This is where we’re at. We know that to get from here to here, this is what’s going to need to happen.’ . . . so we get them in front of people time and time again, so that the rest of the crew feel like they’re part of the process. . . . Ultimately, you have to empower others to take hold of the reins of whatever it is they’ve got on their plates, to be able to do the same. I think you can go further and be stronger when you do that. (16:16)

The key component is handing the keys over to others and the engine starts when leaders and members move to a sense of co-ownership. Janice argued that people want to co-create solutions

and be supported (17:23). By extension, in discussions of starting with early adopters, Alexandra, Anna, Amy, Ezra, Grant, Leon, Logan, Lydia, Melody, and Paul all reinforced that the least burdensome part of their job is starting with the courageous individuals that need no further motivation to support change initiatives. It was surprising to observe that, even with such a dominant group of 24 out of 28 participants arguing about the importance of feeling strongly about vision and purpose to drive change, participants exhibited a cautiousness when implementing the vision due to the social dynamics within their communities; they did not have strong mental models outside language used to describe early adopters. This tentativeness in how leaders work with their late adopters or resistant members of their community through change is explored further on in the discussion of resistance to change.

During the Initiating/Triggering Zone, as Gerald argued, it is important for leaders to understand the linear change models because “it gives a good starting point for “griev[ing] the loss and bringing in the new” (1:04:09). The Initiating/Triggering phase was uniquely shaped by leaders’ coordinated efforts to overcome siloed mindsets and promote early engagement, consultation, consensus building, and collaborative co-design. Leaders strategically use their own influence and other influential members of their team to build the critical mass needed to adopt new processes and practices that drive change. Change that is facilitated and experienced as top-down also fits within this zone as members of a community enter into a conversation already started, often with predefined actions or strategies in place. When the leader loses control, change is imposed or foisted upon the leader, communities must adapt to new unexpected realities.

Integrating/Navigating Process Zone. Participants in this process zone described how the goal remains the goal, but the way in which the goal is accomplished encounters adaptations and

flexibility in how the goal is pursued. “You’ve got to be adaptable, because you’re involving people and peoples’ ideas . . .” Amy acknowledged as she has had to let go of some control in this phase even when the goal is not up for negotiation, “[eventually] you’re going to realize that your [idea] was just a little too lofty, and you’re going to settle for something a little more practical and reasonable. So, you’re going to adapt” (32:43). Erica called this process zone the “messy middle,” and a key indicator while she has made operational changes in her annual budget has been peoples’ amnesia for forgetting the “why” and rationale (38:59). Some participants strengthened their culture and commitment to the change by making the communication ubiquitous, putting up posters, constantly communicating expectations, celebrating students when they model the desired practices of change, and embedding common language that is accessible by members at every level of the organization (Monica, 22:21). The essence of the integrating/navigating process zone is leaders keeping the goal the priority when other competing interests, insecurities, fears, discontentment, loss of sight, or failures threaten the vitality of the change initiative.

Critical to this process zone was participant experiences of what they defined as “engagement” with their staff, families, students, and leadership teams. The notion of engagement was prominently reflected in the interviews and occurred explicitly in Alexandra, Lydia, Debra, Gerald, Derek, Jordan, Grant, Ezra, Leon, Anna, Elise, Jillian, and Logan’s reflections most often when recognizing that the implications of change would reach beyond and affect other members of their community, requiring greater inclusion and contribution. Gerald unpacked what engagement has felt like in his community. In a strategic planning process, after having explained the goals and where they came from, he worked in a series of meetings

dedicated to mission alignment; staff had time to respond, vocalize their perspectives, ask questions, and feel the importance of their voice and contributions (19:20).

Engagement with members took shape through shared learning and ownership due to meaningful opportunities for interaction. There were notable differences across gender. For example, Alexandra, Erica, and Lydia gathered feedback, sometimes in multiple rounds, to help their teams navigate budget cuts, build their K-12 learning plans, and draft curricular goals for new programs they were developing (34:43; 18:49; 17:21). Involvement in decision making, feeling a part of something greater than oneself, contributing voice, and being able to fully mobilize as a member of a team within a team felt empowering for the female leaders (Anna, Debra, Jillian, and Mary). In contrast, the male Heads of School/Superintendents that reflected on how they navigated change described engagement happening too early, leading to confusion and mistrust (Grant, 08:07), but early engagement in some forms led to greater feelings of collective ownership of the change initiative (Ezra, 00:38). Logan argued that better norms led to his team feeling being able to share in a common vision while Leon found it an important aspect that shifted the social dynamics around power and working relationships. This process zone, particularly while bordering the edge of chaos, was experienced as demanding and formative phase, with possibilities of aligning new practices and developing a sense of shared ownership being threatened by uncertainty around whether the leader would be embraced or the community would need to weather another disruption.

Threshold/Disruption Zone. There are three critical indicators of the Threshold/Disruption Zone: (i) after leaders have gathered feedback, they find themselves reaching a point of needing to make a decision about what and how their community will adapt; (ii) a new reality inserted into their community context; or (iii) the place of discernment where they boarder chaos, return

to mission, or as Amy put it, “Being aware of what it means not to get stuck in the past, but some things are actually worth holding onto. So, you need to discern between what requires change and what should be enduring and lasting” (1:04:30). The Threshold/Disruption Process Zone experiences are explored in this next section.

When participants reached critical points of stagnation or pressure in the realities of what they were faced with financially, socially and politically, in what they felt God leading them into with building projects, and direction, they most often struck task forces and working groups to address concerns that surfaced within their communities. Experiences of the Threshold Process Zone occurs when there has been sufficient input and a critical mass of feedback has been gathered, with the leaders reaching a point of needing to make decisions: “And so my job is to discern what is appropriate for this context, Gerald explained as he has felt pummeled by external drivers of change, “So part of that is discerning what is needed here. What is the extent? Do we make this change? When do we make that change?” (05:22). Discerning the path ahead, in faith, and for her community was packaged in Anna’s feelings for questioning “where does God want us to move forward?” (1:10:23).

Gathering feedback for the purpose of engaging with the voices and perspectives of stakeholders to create buy-in only took leaders so far. As Elise examined, gathering feedback was valuable prior to initiating a professional learning initiative as it helped her “actually understand what’s going on, and then understanding why that was the case, why the gap was there” (06:53). Jillian detailed, informed by her understanding of organizational life cycles theories, that when visionary leaders get people to share a common mission, move in the same direction, and rapidly generate momentum, the organization reaches a point where one might feel, “‘Woah, we’re moving. We need to manage.’ So, management is where you pause and you

look at all your processes, structures, policies, and procedures” (06:02) and become aware of how the organization is moving towards monument, the state of stagnation, loss of creativity, and institutionalism (19:13). When she has observed members of her team struggling to keep up with the pace of change, by presenting a defensiveness towards continuous innovation, “That’s ours. Back off. We don’t want to change,” Jillian explained how monument provides a false sense of ease for the leader and often the early signs of death to an organization (19:13). She, like many other participants, understood her work as change leader as disrupting before being disrupted. For Amy, identifying where the energy for the change comes from in others was also part of the feedback process (Amy, 1:03:35). When a new reality is imposed on a community by an externally driven source societally or from stakeholders, participants frequently described this state as what is described in the Disruptive Process Zone. Some of these respective concerns were discussed in the category concerning faith-identity tensions and communal reactions to change.

The pandemic, the rapid growth that Christian schools have experienced, population demographic shifts, and navigating community responses to Christian schools’ work around gender and sexuality were reported as the most disruptive for leaders and their communities. Although many leaders felt that they could hold in tension different perspectives, their communities struggled to do the same. For example, Derek shared for his community, what it has meant to endure the “hard times together” (47:19). Having hard conversations with members of the community was often a daily occurrence with feelings of no end. It was about not becoming discouraged, Derek acknowledged (49:19). In anticipation of the Threshold/Disruptive Process Zone, Debra shared that she recited to her team how they would make sense of forthcoming disruptions:

What are we going to feel? We're going to feel embarrassed. We're going to feel like I want to back away from this thing. I don't want to put my name on it, because it's starting to look like it's going to fail. I don't want to be associated with something that's failing. What if it's my fault, and we're going to feel shame and all those things. And then preparing the team with answers in an aligned way. (28:53)

Going back to mission, the purpose, and “why” during difficult times emerged in 24 of the participant interviews. A theology of pain and suffering was raised by Debra, Erica, Ezra, and Marcus. The implications will be explored further in the category concerning faith-informed practices. However, their insights raise consideration that communities need leaders that embody Jesus' humility and integrity during such tumultuous moments.

Unsettled/Transitioning Process Zone. Silence spoke loudly in this phase, having emerged from what participants experienced but did not have words for with non-linear and chaotic moments in the change process. The Unsettled/Transitioning Process Zone is experienced as the slow organizational erosion demanding change, missional drift, the off-footing that follows from mandated changes, the moments where personnel gaps occur and members fill interim roles, the acute awareness of a need that must be addressed, the discord that is felt with not enough communication, efforts to create buy-in or consensus, feelings of lack of trust, a God-given vision that is still only in its infancy. Mary explained, “If we have students in our school that identified as struggling with their gender, then what do we do with that?” (30:12). Alexandra recalled that, when she came into her school community, “They were used to terrible pro-d. They didn't have a lot of it. They were lagging in external supports” (09:47) and unaware of their misfortune. This process zone helps clarify participants' processes through instability or when something unexpected happens in their community. Debra described the liminal space in between decline, closure, and uncertainty of what was next that sets up analysis of this process zone:

Even in the decline of the campus Christian school, I remember saying to one of my team members at that point: ‘The things God plans and the flame that’s in this place that God put here, that never dies. It can’t. It never dies. Maybe it goes over there and flourishes there, or maybe something happens with His Spirit in this place. I had a sense, a kind of confidence and peace that even if it all closes down, something will live on in some way, in the kids, in the staff. [The school] blossomed, then it got crushed down, like under the embers. It’s hot still and just got crushed. Now, it’s a new expression, and a new school, but some of the depth of heart in the community, is pulling on the roots of love, stewardship, and care that so many other people tended to; so kind of like a rebirth, or a rekindling, or a restoring, and allowing that thing that God does through a place, giving it the nutrients it needs to grow, has been a big part of us, bringing healing to the whole community.

Debra questioned what God could be doing in the disruption. Others raised similar questions.

According to Derek, the leader’s response to God’s disruption is about “tapping into peoples’ motivations and helping them grow in their journey” (17:41). The process zone of “not yet” is a phase that participants experience as their communities settling into new realities (Jacob, 20:49).

Leon argued that members of his community become more observant of the leader, “questioning whether or not to buy in” (51:10). Furthermore, the leader needs to “stay the course, be committed to it, persevere through it,” even when they start to feel as though they are losing people (52:47). It is a zone about adapting plans and rapidly iterating through failed attempts.

Change fails when leaders constantly pivot without clarity, leading to disengagement. The points at which committed strategy must integrate emerging strategy tests a leader’s ability to guide their community in adapting effectively (Leon, 54:57).

To inspire leaders to guide their communities through this process zone, Ezra reflected back on the importance of communication:

What could I have done differently as a leader to make that not as a shock or an uncertainty or surprise? I think is just managing the communication well. You can communicate the facts, but you have to communicate the vision . . . I knew all those things, but I think in a pandemic world where I was literally sending out all those letters of contact and all that stuff regularly, it got lost. I communicated facts and timelines and practical stuff, but I did not communicate the vision. I underestimated the impact of the covid experience on teachers and their survival mode and lack of

actual understanding of the vision of what this [change initiative] was to accomplish.
(21:21)

Communicate well, identify the needs that must be addressed, set clear expectations, hold people accountable, and mobilize teams emerged as key aspects that participants found were necessary in this process zone.

Grant argued that sometimes the unsettledness started with his leadership team and only when resolved by establishing a sense of trust leading to collective wisdom could he see the change reach the wider educational staff (12:07). Participants representing Heads of School/Superintendents, Principals, and Directors of Learning reported that establishing norms and expectations served to clarify shared values with their teams (Logan, 16:19; Lydia, 1:07:16; Janice, 06:53). While this process is a fragile space where old behavioral patterns no longer suffice, leaders must navigate ambiguity even as new practices have yet to take hold. How leaders navigate the unsettledness appears to be a factor for whether members of their community disengage or actively work towards participating in the new reality. This next zone explores what it feels like to find joy and delight in the midst of a change in the Coping to Thriving zone.

Coping to Thriving Zone. The call to find joy amid challenge was a welcome surprise for participants. Debra spoke of moments her staff happily “jump[in] in, no complaining” and the transformation evident was “profound, honestly phenomenal” (35:04). The following list is a litany of the feelings that well-up when participants as they paused to consider moments of surprise, joy, or delight throughout a change initiative: Through practices of naming the fears and doubts, members of Debra’s community supported one another in a ways that were personally disadvantaging leading to feeling of abundance (Debra, 35:04); greater acceptance of collective identity, commitment to serve, acknowledgement of “room to grow” (Derek, 20:58);

reciprocated practices from leaders whose capacity has been built leading to empowerment of others (Locke, 16:16); creative solutions after extended periods of strain and road blocks being moved (Janice, 42:23); development projects where generous donors' blessings make visions of school programs realities (Jordan, 57:04); graduation celebrations where student faith formation lead to celebrating God's faithfulness (Jordan, 59:33; Anna, 1:03:39); the introduction of new programs that serve families' in the current developmental ways their children need support (Jacob, 42:38); little wins with teachers displaying learning for their community (Lydia, 1:06:17); taking a school languishing financially on the brink of closure due to enrolment and having the opposite challenge of lengthy waitlists from significant growth (Derek, 07:52); completing building projects (Ezra, 18:18); fully formed visions of Christian education lived out after disruption to buildings and shifts in demographics (Paul, 48:07); helping staff learn how to contribute to one another's formation by sharing feedback with one another (Erica, 11:50); rethinking what it means for the Christian school to serve the cultural demographics of their local populations and embrace the challenges felt beautiful and rewarding (Paul, 21:53); pride for the shared work to share with other members across their network their accomplishments (Lisa, 24:36); greater feelings of freedoms to do meaningful work (Melody, 15:29); greater trust and relationships as well as improvement in teaching practice (Warren, 08:47); the joy from seeing people acknowledged for good work (Amy, 52:26); and feeling of flourishing when people say, "I have felt like this has been a place of healing for me. I've restored my faith in Christian organizations . . . I'm allowed to be me. I don't have to be perfect. I've learned to be brave here. That I've learned resilience" (Jillian, 15:23). "This is how far we have come" Anna celebrated, "What we are doing that we see as common is actually exceptional. In a moment, if I was to feel bold, I would say, I know I'm a big part of that . . . it was a huge win, even though it was so

hard” (43:56). These are the expressions of the Thriving Process Zone, at times experienced as a fleeting state, the end of the journey before the next iteration or adaptive challenge (Erica, 05:02), and the hope of God’s intervening in Christian school leaders and their communities’ unfolding stories of change.

Managing change, coping with change, and living in the tensions of change faithfully were also critical dimensions explored by Gerald, Jillian, Marcus, Monica, and Warren. There was joy when participants experienced change enduring through organizational transitions (Amy, 51:16). Gerald’s reflection helped critically examine and situate expectations for how individuals and communities respond to externally driven change. He highlighted that perhaps openness to change can be an important predisposition that influences coping, resilience, and thriving in uncertain contexts:

I would say, people who have coped really well, the character, anecdotally, looking at the predispositions of individuals in your community – I would say the openness to change of individuals in your organization is a key variable that contributes to successful change, or coping with change, or resilience to change.

Christian school leaders that had experiences with working and leading internationally also found that expatriates were the most adaptive members of their communities because they could take authority and direction but also build community and relationships quickly with others through change. In the moments of coping, Marcus argued for the presence of faith when people have “diametrically opposed” perspectives backed up by sound, Jesus-centered reasons (52:02). The only thing to do is to manage the change and grow from experience with change leadership.

Surprising Findings. Some of the unexpected findings revolved around when to introduce top-down change processes ($n = 21, f = 60$). Leaders who attempted to introduce proactive practices such as community engagement were not innocuous to pushback from parents or board members (Anna, 21:53). Some of Gerald’s sense-making stood out as distinct in the discussion

around power and top-down authority. For example, he argued that textbooks often caution new leaders to delay actions related to change in place of focusing on relationship and trust building activities. Yet Gerald experienced moments of chaos and disruption that demanded top-down situational leadership (27:29). He described his approach as involving a deep respect for authority, seeing God as having placed leaders in positions for purpose. In moments when he has disagreed with a directive, his understanding of top-down authority has been stable ground through moments of chaos and disruption: “The Bible’s clear about saying God has placed people in positions for certain times, and for people who are under leaders to honor them, whether you agree with them or not” (40:54). The theological implications for top-down leadership in the change process cannot be neglected. They are revealed most clearly when members of a learning community openly respond with resistance. Few described how loose connections are leveraged beyond the Pre-Change and linear change process zones. How participants detailed both implicit and explicit forms of resistance is explored in the next section.

Experiences of Resistance to Change

Within the phenomenon of change leadership, resistance to change emerged as an integral dimension, encompassing multiple interrelated components that detail how leaders experience change ($n = 24, f = 92$). Alexandra shared the analogy of the flag and the new island, which helps frame experiences of resistance around the social dynamics rather than only the ideological dimensions:

There are the early adopters of a change initiative that swim to discover the new island immediately. You've got the people who are going to immediately start swimming—let's say the change is the new island. They're immediately going to start swimming to the new island. They're in. They're going with you. They're your early adopters; they're fine.

Then there's the ones that are going to be sitting in a boat watching for sharks. They're like, 'I'm going to see what's going to go wrong first, and then I will paddle over.'

Then you have those that are staying on the island, holding desperately to the flag that used to be there. And I think in in that sense, in a mandated change, there still is the ones that are holding desperately to the flag, but it's the ministry that's saying, too bad you have to (taking the flag away- boop) and you have to eventually—the line that I was told by a mentor is—eventually you just have to pull the flag. Eventually you're just saying to them, 'The flag is not there. Come on. We're going.' The ministry did that for us. So that made it way simpler when it was something that was a shift . . .

What complicated some of the professional learning initiatives Alexandra has led with her community was that staff wanted to hold onto the flag, symbolic of the previous way of changing:

I had half of my staff say, Alexandra, 'I would just prefer you to stand at the front and tell us something good.' They're very used to there being moments where I'm going to give them information about assessment, or we're going to work on it together, and I'm going to lead them through the process. Very much, they're a recipient, a passive recipient of professional development. I'm now having to push them all and say, 'You're now on the other island, and you're now responsible yourself.' And they're reluctant, right? So, I think that's the difference. (22:39)

Her change process includes ongoing support and the recognition that change unfolds over time, requiring persistent support to resistant individuals and groups.

The essence of resistance is revealed in the sub-dimensions by looking at both visible and invisible drivers, actors, signals, and impacts that together provide a fuller description of how change leadership is experienced by leaders and their communities. Participants highlighted how resistance manifests within systems and identified supportive practices that address the underlying patterns and behaviors associated with resistance to change. Adaptive practices move beyond static, two-dimensional, often bluntly negative perceptions of resistance, to more three-dimensional textured perspectives that consider how leaders respond situationally in their lived

narratives. This section explores the manifestations, systems thinking and supportive practices, and adaptive response to resistance to change.

Manifestations of Resistance to Change: Actors, Drivers, Signals, Impact. Resistance was a critical dimension explored with participants invited to share stories or examples of how they experienced resistance ($n = 14, f = 18$). Participants were also able to share about positive and negative outcomes that emerged from resistance and any moments of surprise, joy, or delight. The sub-dimensions around how resistance manifests is broken into discussion of the actors, drivers, signals, and impact of resistance to change that leaders and their communities experienced.

Actors. Participants described resistant members of their community as squeaky wheels and vocal individuals (Derek, 14:11), late adopters, defensive and reluctant individuals and the slow descent into monument (Jillian, 19:13), external pressures, mandates, stubborn, obstinate, stuck-in-the-past, traditional, dissenting voices, super toxic staff persons who love kids but make terrible colleagues (Debra, 37:41), openly oppositional (Paul, 28:35), the sentinels of theological truth (49:38), the critics (Mary, 26:13), the armchair principals (Ezra, 30:48), and more implicitly the nostalgic, silent or passive resisters, the pragmatic, the cynics, the burned-out, and the undercurrent whisperer: these are some of the actors and agents that complicate change. Leaders described feeling derailed by resistant members of their learning communities earlier in their career as obstructing the change process; however, leaders also recognized the dormant potential for these individuals within the change process as they reflected back on their experiences. Other social roles not mentioned by participants were those that identified more as martyrs or those that loyally support the mission but oppose the means or the leader. Participants observed that the

“reluctance to ever move people on” (Jillian, 27:13) marks a form of inherited resistance that leaders must continue to navigate when implementing change.

Drivers. The strong undercurrent of external pressures that permeate the organization shows up in innovation meetings when team members are “rigid in their thinking” (Monica, 38:36), bringing initiatives to a dead end or halt. People may “love the idea” but “don’t really love it happening in practice” (Monica, 49:11). As Leon put it, drivers are forces that can derail, direct, and detract from the committed strategy (54:57). For Lydia, the signal was an inclination towards refusal: “I’m still dealing with some resisters [for] specific things that we want [our learning plan] to look like. . . [yet] I still have people who refuse to do it. They want to do it their way” (17:33). Drivers both initiate the need for change and shape the response to it; this dimension is examined more fully within the descriptions of the change process zones.

Signals. Participants indicated that the language people who signal resistance use is, “We’ve always done it in this way, so why would we change it, because change is hard,” Joshua remarked while walking his educational staff through a new pedagogic and curricular approach (02:16). “Well, if you want me to change, it means that what I was doing was terrible, right?” Mary recollected with frustration as the strong emotional reactions (26:13). Most challengingly, Christian school leaders have felt the weight of revolt with staff and community members up in arms about decisions, students expressing disapproval, extreme negativity, and opposition towards the leader. A former colleague used to say, “They signed up to play Monopoly, but didn’t realize that the game we were playing was Risk.” Awareness of new realities creates insecurity, which is why resistance typically occurred in the Threshold and Unsettled Process Zones discussed further on in this chapter.

Impacts. The impact is soul-wearing and debilitating to leaders primarily, who constantly self-reflect on how they can improve, particularly when experiencing resistance to change. Ezra lamented after the completion of a facilities project experiencing “non-stop negativity” that he looked back at it being “probably one of the hardest days in leadership” and it was the “day [he] almost quit his job” because of so many unmet expectations for Christian community (21:21). At the same time, resistance stretches the leader and the community: “It challenged my ego at times and my sense of leadership . . . In all of those, it was really important in terms of leadership, growth, and development, and seeing change development from within” (Ezra, 14:11). There were moments of surprise, delight, and joy emerging from resistant members testing the change leader, which produced narratives where some of the most resistant community members became the leaders’ strongest supports or key contributors to the success of a change initiative. When transformed individuals guide others towards inner renewal and help resistant colleagues work through resistance, leaders facilitate with systems-thinking practices that turn detractors into supporters and stagnant systems into adaptive communities.

Systems Thinking and Supportive Practices. In response to resistance they experienced, participants ($n = 18, f = 46$) discussed how they thought about the school system-wide effect of resistance and the practices that enabled themselves and their communities to persist despite the presence of resistance.

Mistake Making and Engagement. Sarah’s reflection on mistake making reveals that there are healthy practices for processing and growing from resistance. She shared the following example:

I had everyone on board with me and now was the time to implement the program with students. I underestimated how big the change would be for the students and how I communicated the change. I was seeing all the positive and not spending much time addressing the negatives, but the students saw the negatives.

The first mistake was that determined that a whole group meeting was the best way to disseminate the information about the change. I had a great presentation prepared. Here are all the problems we are going to solve. But it turned into lots of vocal feedback from upset students who did not want to hear about it. I had to do some damage control after by connecting with students one group at a time. (29:46)

Sarah's example characterizes the fact that early engagement with dissenting voices was seen as critical to participants' successful implementation of change initiatives, "Having a voice in it, just literally hearing the people, who the change is going to happen to . . . Because even if there's nothing they can do about it, at least they felt heard" (57:57). However, at the same time, Sarah explained a beautiful moment of teachers becoming change agents to help address the students' questions, which emerged as something unexpected and a turning tide for processing resistance, "I think the teachers maybe would have missed out on that opportunity to realize that they too are a big part of [facilitating change]," as she resurfaced how it would have been beneficial to include more voices of those to be represented and impacted by the change in the pre-change process zone; yet, the support she received in the aftermath revealed something necessary for shared change agency when resistance emerged, "They're [(the teachers are)] holding my hands in this journey and we're going it together, rather than it just being [my] thing" (40:15). Getting the right members on task forces, working groups, or change initiative teams was highlighted in Ezra's interview (1:02:31) and in Gerald and Elise's reflections as they each explored the multiple rounds of feedback to expose blind spots that their communities would perceive in the curricular (Gerald, 17:21) and logistical changes (Elise, 14:36). So, as members of communities write letters to the board when they should be practicing healthy conflict (Grant, 27:53), these were understood as learning opportunities to restore relationships in the systematic breakdown and strain of relationships through change initiatives.

Leaders' Responses to Resistance. Some of the key practices participants identified when they experience resistance to change included the following: listening and discerning first by having resistant individuals and groups share their “why” or reasons for resistance (Alan, Elise, Ezra, Jordan, Locke, Logan, Marcus, Paul, Sarah), with Janice arguing that the rationale needs to evoke both the head (reasons and data) and heart (social and emotional; 26:10); acknowledging and validating emotional distress; clarifying the why (Erica, Gerald, Jacob, Joshua, Jillian, Leon, Melody, and Warren); having others share the “why;” embracing some forms of healthy resistance as strengthening the process; shifting their own perspectives towards resisters as partners rather than enemies; leveraging influential individuals and involving resisters earlier; breaking the change into smaller manageable steps (Joshua, 22:32); increasing the frequency of meaningful informal communication that addresses barriers to change (Debra, 46:26); creating psychological safety for protecting individuals as important members of the community (Monica, 46:00); being consistent and staying the course with the goal but providing flexible means (Erica, 21:45); and maintaining grace and integrity by eliciting feedback to ensure leaders remain accountable to their team, thereby preventing inaction and mitigating change fatigue (33:38). Locke argued that communication and connections sustain change through resistance. For example, their school’s survey response rate went up 25% because it is not “survey fatigue,” it is “lack of feedback fatigue” that people resist, so it’s important for people to “hear that you’re doing something about what they’re telling you” (33:38).

Supportive Practices. Some of the general guiding practices leaders employed when encountering resistance to change are organized into the following sub-dimensions: Supportive practices ($n = 4, f = 6$), accountability practices ($n = 4, f = 7$), and collective wisdom practices (n

= 7, $f = 8$). Elise's discussion summarized here situates the analysis for three types of practices that leaders can apply when engaging with resistance to change:

We noticed that teachers were not able to provide feedback to one another or handle receiving good feedback, so we spent some time shaping culture around feedback. We used structured learning protocols such as, 'I appreciate, I am curious about, and I wonder if you have considered.' We worked our way from providing feedback in non-threatening ways to providing feedback to one another. Feedback now happens in groups and is targeted towards the outcome rather than the person. (11:50)

Culture appears to be both caught and taught. However, resistance revealed where school culture could be better taught and reinforced. As such, supportive practices were primarily related to nurturing the relational and spiritual capabilities with individuals (Monica, 41:19, 46:00; Sarah, 57:1:00:00). Provision of alternative solutions and more agency to explore flexible pathways in a change initiative became options once individuals presented more open to the possibility of change (Erica, 21:45). Celebration, sharing a common faith, and offering care and encouragement, (Debra, 46:26; Joshua, 26:55) were all ways that participants found members of their community letting guards down and experiencing what they needed for themselves or from others to persist through change initiatives. Additional practices included improving communication by adopting mantras that shape expectations in cultural norms and ways of being (Monica, 49:00). Critical for participants was that communication was honesty and that deep and communal listening was taught and practiced when relationships were strained.

Accountability Practices. Jacob had much to share about facilitating accountability in different ways. Some dimensions of accountability pertained to leaders having hard conversations despite discomfort (Jacob, 41:01). Embedded in structures was clarification about expectations, visibility, and follow up with members that struggle to enact change, "Listen, I noticed that you haven't done this, and I'm disappointed and we need to do it better" (Jacob, 44:23). Consequently, holding people accountable can be hard because being liked is also part of

effective change management (Jacob, 41:01). There are alternative forms of accountability that involve encouraging shared storytelling, where peoples' contributions or lack of them are made evident to peers without punitive measures; instead of making formal demands, the process creates a positive social pressure that encourages resistant individuals to use their agency (Jacob, 48:48).

Collective Wisdom Practices. “Having a voice,” (Sarah, 57:57), invitations for “staff members to share at staff meetings” about what they are experiencing (Lydia, 1:00:29), and both formal and informal efforts for connection were helpful for both vocal critics and quiet resisters respectively (Erica, 21:45; Jacob, 53:35). Invitations for resistant members to clarify the barriers impeding their work and positioning them as change agents diffused power dynamics. As he helped his community navigate tensions around the integration of the First Peoples Principles of Learning and Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum, Grant described that it was good practice to invite different and sometimes critical voices and perspectives to working group conversations (43:46). Instead of “trying to sidestep [different perspectives], incorporating ideas for “efficiency or consensus” may take change initiatives down roads where the product is not as good and lead to friction further down the road (43:46). Grant found ways to find congruence between Indigenous perspectives and Biblical principles, adapting language so that his community “ultimately lands in a place where they have something that is better” (43:46).

Community events that elicit feedback from members are summarized in Gerald's assessment of change impact framework: Who-Why, How Much- Then Engage: First consider who is impacted and their social role, then reflect on how many people are impacted from the community. Second, consider why the change is needed, why it has not already been done, what history or context explains the current realities, then consider if there are good reasons to

maintain the default position. Third, consider the impact in terms of depth and breadth, for how much the change alters peoples' experiences, if the change is surface-level or deeper, and whether the change affects more core identity related concerns or if more day-to-day rhythms. Finally, engagement is determined by matching the level of involvement with scale of impact on community, for with small and few people impacted, there is limited consultation, and with broader and deeper impact, there is a more robust representational level of engagement. The relationship between Impact and Engagement is presented here in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Change Impact-Engagement Matrix

Deep Impact	Targeted or Structured Dialogue (Few & Deep) Collaborate, co-design, co-facilitate solutions	Limited Awareness of Impact (Many & Deep) Full-scale engagement Collaborative design of process, collaborative input, collaborative output
Shallow Impact	Informal (Few & Shallow) Simple, clear communication Quick consultation	Broad Awareness (Many & Shallow) Brief input or collaborative touchpoints
	Few Engaged	Many Engaged

Adaptive Responses to Resistance. Participants portrayed the experience of having to continually stretch and contract their leadership stance, expanding to engage, listen, and build trust, but constraining to refocus, set boundaries and recalibrate as they encountered resistance ($n = 13, f = 24$). Structured opportunities in response to resistance presented the most affirmative outlook and productive dispositions in the form of the following: feedback through surveys and informal conversations (Erica, 21:01); leaders articulating the “why” or the vision in a clear and palatable way (Erica, 21:01); resourcing resistant members, particularly when resistance emerges from technical barriers (33:01); cognitive coaching through high pressure situations particularly

when leaders give language and meaning to experiences such as how to remain emotionally grounded when parents express complaints (Debra, 28:53); spiritual disciplines related to prayer, discussed further in the section on faith-informed practices, asking members in meetings questions directly, instead of saying, “Are there any questions?” and there being blank stares, asking, “Kevin, what do you think?” or inviting contrarian thought, “Why should we not do this?” (Gerald, 38:15). Janice raised the psychological consideration of finding common ground with resistant individuals (43:30), and Anna, the importance of leading from an ethical decision-making framework that helped ground decisions in values, for example, with decisions of when to terminate a contract if someone is not a good fit for the mission or the position (39:18). Much of the leaders’ adaptive skillset involve harnessing the force of resistance through intentional and strategic organizational communication.

Erica has used flexible means while maintaining the goal, informed by principles of universal design for learning (21:45). Jacob summarized the first two components in “Hold people accountable and take care of them like crazy . . . I don’t know if it’s that complicated” (41:01). However, when it gets complicated, participants described what appears to be a gap that supports are not always perceived as supports and accountability feels punitive, so a third dimension is needed for people to participate more fully in the integration of support and accountability through what is identified as collective wisdom. Collective wisdom is summarized in the envisioning of different reflective and learning protocols, particularly in larger group settings and structured environments (Debra, 28:53, Elise, 11:50, Ezra, 1:01:41, Locke, 23:45). It was surprising to not hear more about resistance to change protocols designed by leaders, as they were fairly underdeveloped at the proactive level in participant descriptions, with most discussions situated at a reactive level, leaving a gap for further design that addresses how to

process difficult feedback and how to work productively with individuals that detract from a change initiative pre-emptively.

A critical area around terminating contracts and ensuring staff are clear about the shared expectations and commitment to the mission, because “not everyone is a fit” and “not everyone has to stay forever” in the organization (Jillian, 19:13) will be explored in Chapter Six. One of the key systematic practices that appears to develop the leader’s adaptive capabilities are summarized in Warren’s discussion of the staff liaison committee, where members from his team representing different roles meet with their leadership team and set the agenda, not the other way around, as Warren expressed, in contrast to how the initiative is often perceived, “Does that not just get you down and upset you and make you want to sit in a fetal position in the corner and just cry? Because sometimes it can be pretty direct” (41:49); for Warren, it has been a positive force of support, accountability, and collective wisdom:

We sit down once every few weeks and [the committee] sets the agenda. I sit not quite on the hot seat, but I listen and ask clarifying questions. I hear a lot of feedback in terms of what’s going on around the building . . . I tell those people, I would rather know where people are at on the ground in terms of what’s going on, because if they haven’t fully bought into what you’re trying to do, you’re never going to get there anyway.

So I find this group and this feedback loop that is regular throughout the school year so crucial for the change, whether it’s small changes . . . or whether it’s bigger initiatives. But that feedback loop that’s kind of a bit of a cross-section, is the folks who aren’t afraid to speak their minds. I love it. It’s one of my favourite meetings of the year whenever I have them. (42:56)

It’s better to be “stabbed from the front than from the back,” (36:23) Jillian would concur with Warren’s reflection about training teams to provide feedback and to surface resistance so that the best thinking takes place in collective spaces. Taking time to pause, acknowledge the tension in the room, and win the loudest resisters over so they become champions was understood by Jillian and many others as one of the joys that comes when their communities engage in healthy resistance practices.

The essence of an adaptive response to resistance to change is that resistance is not a barrier to overcome, but a signal to interpret and engage with. “Bringing in voices of disagreement” captured some of what participants resigned in enduring some level of disagreement that is necessary because it strengthens the process, but not too much that it detracts from the goal (Ezra, 43:46). There are relational practices that build trust and create spaces for staff to voice concerns, while the leader models humility, transparency, and vulnerability in communication as they hold clear expectations and accountability towards their school’s mission. Casting and recalibrating to vision by evoking the head and heart, shifting towards the use of collective language such as “co-ownership,” “co-design,” and “collaboration” frame norms, while repeated mantras reinforce the culture of respect when resistance occurs.

Adaptive practices and collective engagement bring resistance into public spaces so that silent resisters can express their concerns in a way that helps others through change. Adaptive responses can be slow. Resistance reframing practices position the change leader and their organization to grow in resilience and build capacity, through better dialogue, and shared ownership. It transposes the Christian learning community from a technical community that demands compliance to adaptive communities that create enduring change with all its members, despite how disadvantaged one might feel. This next section explores the role of faith-informed practices, extending discussion of what enables leaders to persist in their Christian learning communities, how they understand and experience their faith, and what they detail about their community’s expression of faith.

Experiences of Faith Integration in Practice

The final category within the second theme examines how participants describe their experiences of faith informing change leadership practices. The most prominently represented

category was that faith was the source and sustainer, reflected in 22 participant interviews ($f = 41$), encapsulating each of the different job roles, and being evenly distributed between male and female participants. The second category, representing 19 participant interviews ($f = 37$), reflects participants' experiences with the formation of communities of change. The third category explores participants' ($n = 16, f = 28$) practical responses for how faith informs the discipline of change leadership in K-12 Christian schools. And a fourth category ($n = 11, f = 18$), identifies critical gaps and silences from what was not clear or apparent in the data. These categories are presented in the following sections.

Faith as Source and Sustainer. The notion that faith was “foundational” or “essential” for leading change was represented in six of the participant interviews (Anna, 1:18:05; Erica, 1:01:51; Locke, 30:38; Janice, 58:51; Paul, 1:00:54; Amy, 56:10). Participants contrasted their own power and strength against the unparalleled forces of resistance, recognizing instead the need to submit to God, who is an even greater source of strength, dependence, and reliance in the work of leading change. Erica's reflection aided in the formation of this dimension:

So, when I talk about source of strength, I think that in environments where you're not a Christian leader; I wonder if there's more reliance on self and achievement and less reliance on something bigger and more powerful. John 15:4 talks about abiding like that. If you are not abiding, there will be no fruit. (42:09)

Erica went on to explain that God is the source, but his work with the Israelites emphasized how he was also the sustainer:

I think a lot about how God led the Israelites, and I think that in change initiatives, when the going gets hard and there's a lot of resistance, I try to remember that I will have shade when I need it, and can hide behind this rock until God says, 'Okay, time to move here.' (Erica, 43:39)

For others, faith gave “hope and the ability to keep going at the hard times” (Monica, 1:09:01); provided “assurance” that change can rest on God's “ultimate faithfulness to his people” lifting

the pressure of the change leader (Debra, 52:25); authorized peace that God provides the right people (Ezra, 55:41); enabled leaders and communities to endure through hard times as they “have those difficult conversations that we hold onto this hope that we have in Christ, the he sustains us, he provides for us, and things work for his purposes and glory” (Derek, 47:19); directed in a “mission critical” way, “If you don’t go with us. We cannot go from here” (Locke, 49:08); shaped posture by inspiring what leaders read; helped them align with their calling as disciples, invited them to pursue unity with members of their teams (Janice, 53:41); bestowed an “instinct for wisdom and an instinct for what the actual priorities are” for the community that shape students like a “rudder at the bottom of the boat” (Amy, 58:46); and equipped leaders with a sense of calling to do the work despite often divisiveness that emerges throughout difficult seasons socio-politically to do change leadership (Alexandra, 48:14, Anna, 1:18:05). It is “Not I, but Christ in me,” Anna explained the posture of humble submission required to be sustained in short term frustrations for long term impact in the kingdom. Elise, Gerald, and Jillian all framed change within a larger expression of God’s kingdom purposes taking place when leaders pursue change with their communities.

The temptation to measure the success of a change initiative based solely on the outcome, rather than the formation of people and relationships, was something Alan was critical about (1:06:19). While faith-informed change practice could easily be reduced to strategy and technique, Alan insisted that change leadership must be framed within the broader theological story unfolding within scripture. He explained that longer change processes are complicated, affecting multiple dimensions of character and practice. Leadership in such contexts can grow from discipleship as changed leaders have the model of Jesus that they are growing into (Alan, 1:01:10). Other participants affirmed how change is embedded within God’s story, “It needs to

be seen as part of the restoration of all humanity. Courage, strength, relationship, and wisdom in change is born out of the same God who led the Israelites” (Erica, 1:00:37).

However, the most prominent faith-informed practice cited by participants was team prayer, followed by staff devotions, with only one reference to worship music directing moments for teams to inspire change (Erica, 45:18). Alexandra, Amy, Anna, Debra, Elise, Erica, Ezra, Gerald, Grant, Janice, Jillian, Joshua, Leon, Lisa, Locke, Melody, and Sarah, representing 17 of the participants, explained how prayers of discernment were the key formational practice for change leadership. For Gerald, prayer evolved from being solely a personal conversation with God to a communal practice of asking God-centered questions. Gerald guided his community to engage in dialogue with God together, discerning how their efforts to create a shared, collective mission aligned with God’s intentions for communal change (1:01:55). Prayers of surrender, discernment, and intercession at critical times of need guided teams through exoduses, opposition, crises, uncertainty, vision casting moments, and ordinary daily rhythms. Anna’s two-fold curiosity about how to engage with the tension of prayer in the change process evoked feelings of its practice throughout a change initiative:

In taking time to pray together at whatever level, I do sometimes struggle with prayer, so I’m curious to see if any of your research deals with this. As a team, we do spend time together in prayer. I don’t believe every meeting has to start with prayer. Maybe it should, because it’s obviously foundational. But there’s a point too that is a piece that I’m trying to figure out. Even as a leader in a Christian school there’s a point, we trust God. We know his vision. We know we have to be faithful. There are things that we have to get done. There is accountability and there’s things that I expect you to do. And we’re not, ‘We’re relying on God.’ But there’s a sense that I get pushback, and we need to spend more time in prayer. And I’m like, ‘No, actually we just need to do this.’ (1:07:36)

When the leader knows it is God’s vision and the community is not yet there, Anna’s honest reflection signaled her feelings about the threshold moment when her community is faced with what it is called to do, to disrupt existing systems and structures, to trust in God, to rely and

depend on his provision, and to discern the plans God has for leading communities to become changed communities. This next section deals with how faith informs the formation of Christian school commitment to being and becoming changed communities.

Formation of Change Communities. As leaders experienced not only many types of change initiatives, whether organizational, curricular, or cultural, but also multiple cycles of change within their organizations over many years, they expressed what it looks like for their communities to become change agents as whole units leading to thriving. “It’s such a gift to journey with other people through hard things and then work together to heal those things,” Debra shared jubilantly about what it has meant to pull in the same direction with other senior members of her leadership team, strengthened by their shared faith, after her debilitating experiences (58:40). Participants expressed how important it was to become clearer about how their school’s mission fits into God’s expanding kingdom vision, shaping their school’s identity as different teams were mobilized to work together. Trust and safety emerging from practices that promoted a high degree of grace and truth positioned Christian schools as places of unity where the church has been divided by polarization and strong opinions that have disrupted relationships (Locke, 18:09). Locke went on to argue that calling her community into their identity as transformed people has been mission-critical (56:10). Erica called the dynamic community of interdependence moving together the “body of Christ - I need them, and they need me . . . It gives way to things like collaboration [and] feedback with more depth in other settings” (41:12). The key practice has been to not ignore hard conversations but learn how to speak with members of the community, shifting from monologue to dialogue with high conviction and care. Leon argued for how to hold in tension differences of perspectives which is inevitable, but how faith bears with it the possibility of aligning in common interest:

I think Christ honored people in every interaction he had, even people that we might not like, people that we disagree with, people that we find annoying or frustrating . . . I know for sure that Christ experienced those people all the time, but he honored them in his conversations and in his relationships with them in every way possible. So, we have to honor people.

With servant leadership, there is also accountability for us in the work that we do and how we conduct our lives and that is biblical. Part of our role as leaders is to provide that for the people we lead. Accountability is not discipline. Accountability is clarity, expectations, gentle nudging, empowerment, and encouragement. It is what I would describe as the sort of way Jesus modelled his leadership. (42:18)

Jesus' way of communal leadership encouraged leaders, particularly the Heads of Schools, to expand their business leadership practices. Leon identified once more, "It's out of my faith of wanting to love people well, to honor people well, to not be a stumbling block for people in their own relationship with Christ because of the interactions that they've had with me" (1:01:23) that communities can form in healthy ways. Building high levels of trust and feelings of connection were seen as the necessary components for communal readiness for change (Melody, 55:40, 1:04:21). Another unresolved tension raised by Alan, Marcus, Melody, Leon, Logan, and Paul was that they wanted excellent programs but not at the expense of their Christian identity. Alan argued, citing Dallas Willard, that communities need to practice their faith development, so it translates into performance as an athlete or performer moves from rehearsal to concert (1:01:10). Communal change can be practiced, and the character, skills, dispositions, processes, habits, and expressions of change in Christian faith learning communities was understood to be both a technical and adaptive challenge of continuous growth. This next section explores the relationship between practices and theological formation.

Practical Theological Formation. When teams felt stuck throughout change initiatives, they responded by praying and framing their response as part of larger theological constructs such as restoration (Erica, 52:27); flourishing (Erica, 52:27); God's story and kingdom mission (Janice, 56:28); becoming like Jesus in character (Debra, 52:25; Elise, 49:03; Grant, 49:54; Leon,

41:48, 47:56); trust, dependence, and obedience in God (Gerald, 51:19; Joshua, 1:05:32; Leon, 1:02:36; Lydia, 51:24); or their identity as changed people for who they are in Christ affecting their ways of being (Jacob, 1:09:54; Locke, 39:30; Mary, 50:31). This meant that both prayer and theological reframing served as the adaptive practices that reoriented leaders and their communities towards the purpose of change. For change leadership, this also meant that change was not only a technical effort depending on strategies but about the cultivation of shared practices of interdependence, formation, learning, and transformation. While much was said about change, there were also aspects that could be learned from what was not discussed about the relationship between faith and change leadership.

Gaps and Silences Surrounding Faith-Informed Practice. There are three main gaps to underscore within the discussion of faith informed change practice: (1) The content informing faith, (2) The authority informing faith-informed change leadership, and (3) The pursuit of unity in faith across different expressions of faith. First, leaders ($n = 20, f = 24$) predominantly described prayer and discernment as the prototypical change leadership practices and more implicitly embedded as part of team or communal learning structures and protocols. Grant found his faith informing his reading choices around theological topics and shaping protocols that he has his community practice so more members absorb and engage with the learning (38:42).

Other isolated occurrences in the discussion of faith informing change leadership included the following: Jacob was a lone voice that described that there was nothing particularly distinct about how faith-informs change leadership in a practical sense, only the “why” or the ends that leaders pursue: “What’s the difference between leading educational change in BC versus another non-Christian context?” or “what’s the difference [of faith] if I work at a siding company, or cabinet making company; what are the change truths?” (1:13:07). He contended that because

faith is simple and not complicated, it affects how the leader views people “as image bearers” and how to help people to become fully alive as themselves (1:14:24). Lisa and Paul argued that whatever and wherever they are learning, they have become hardwired to put their learning into practice and distill it back to their community in bite-sized, accessible ways (Lisa, 54:04; Paul, 55:47). Discussion of God’s involvement in the Old Testament was isolated to Erica’s aforementioned notion of the Israelite peoples’ dependence on God (47:47; 1:00:37) and Leon’s brief reference to the prophetic ministry of Joel in the Old Testament. He argued that God spoke into the context of using people for His change purposes (1:27:11); the prophetic ministry of change will be explored further to link findings from Chapter Three in the discussion of Chapter Six.

Participants did not explicate specific Biblical examples or models, align their perspectives with specific theologies, denominational frameworks, or politicize certain Christian perspectives that were seen as combative or divisive within change processes, only naming that polarization exists on both sides and the only parties innocuous were changed individuals and communities. However, Grant was the exception in his theological rendering, describing how Jesus’ model of cruciformity, somewhat martyrological, was essential for “doubling down on faithful practice,” by loving others and resisting resistors with Christ’s servant way of leading, paraphrased here:

I’m impacted by my recent reading about a cruciform posture towards how we struggle and engage with the darkness in the world. Change leaders are going to encounter struggle in conflict. I think about all the things that create pain and suffering. I’m impacted by Jesus’ example when I encounter opposition, darkness, struggle, ignorance, pride. Jesus modelled that the only way is to go through it. We respond by being cruciform or martyrological, essentially turning the other cheek.

When we encounter it, we are not just a doormat by letting it happen or not acknowledging that it is wrong. We don’t resist it by opposition. We resist it by doubling down on faithful practice, by loving, serving, in faith, counterintuitively, that we trust in God’s economy that there will be a path to life. There’s going to be restoration and hope through the path of willing suffering based on our convictions of hope and trust in God. It is hard to know how to do that except circumstantially.

Grant connected the theological foundations to his organizational leadership practice by continuing to describe Jesus' way of living in the tension:

Organizational change leadership is hard because we have to defend the dignity of people and their safety, their professionalism. We have to find the line of being assertive and call out what is unjust. We have to follow recourse because of our positional authority, power, and responsibility to protect what's good and true, yet there is a caution for how we assert power by not using worldly power or force in a way that betrays Jesus' example. I wish I could have seen Jesus in action as an organizational leader. How would he strike? that balance? I am deeply compelled and inspired in Jesus' self-giving and he calls me to this path he laid out. (49:54)

Grant's feelings bring together and set up discussion of what it means to be the change leader, given all the circumstances of communal context, resistance, the processes employed, the calling to see change take place in community, the role of authority, the presence of faith informing practice, and the vision that Christian learning communities would realize the kingdom and mission-driven purposes that God has placed on them to change.

Summary of Theme Two

This second theme on Communal Adaptive Faithfulness has presented how participant leaders experienced change within their communities. In contrast to studies designed to present best practices around organizational processes, participants revealed that they experienced change differently based on the linear and non-linear social dynamics that were at play in their communities while change was being facilitated. Six Change Process Zones were detailed by participants, each carrying implications for the response and readiness that participants experienced while their communities navigated educational changes of curricular, Christian identity, culture, and organizational systems. Resistance was both implicit and explicit as the second category explored four critical dimensions: (i) the manifestations (drivers, actors, signals, and impact) in Christian learning communities ($n = 14, f = 18$); (ii) adaptive responses to resistance ($n = 13, f = 24$); and (iii) systems thinking and supportive practices for change ($n = 18$,

$f = 46$). Finally, the third category in this theme detailed the integration of faith in change leadership practice including (a) faith as a source and sustainer of the leader through change ($n = 23, f = 41$); (b) the formation of communities of change ($n = 19, f = 37$); (c) practical theological response to change leadership ($n = 16, f = 28$); and (d) gaps and silences concerning faith integration ($n = 11, f = 18$).

Overall, the second theme found that collective capacity for change was strengthened when leaders identified the social tendencies of members in their community and guided their members through Christian practices that promoted adaptive responses to shifting realities. Prayer, the dominant practice participants described, was the entry point into a world of organizational spirituality that is discussed further in Chapter Six. Participants described their faith as both the sustainer of leading change and an area filled with gaps and silences that are explored critically in Chapter Six.

Theme Three: Meaning of Educational Change Leadership: God's Kingdom Network Expansion

The third and final theme emerged from how participants detailed the meaning they ascribe to their experiences and the understanding they derive about the essence of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools: how it feels, what it is like, and how they now understand the contours and realities of change leadership. This theme explores three main categories: (1) Leading change as the changed leader ($n = 28, f = 90$); (2) God accomplishes his purposes through communal change ($n = 16, f = 21$); and (3) Future envisioning about the preparation for change leadership ($n = 26, f = 82$). Overall, the third theme captures salient moments from the interviews where participants reflected back on who they are as Christian school change leaders and what it is like to lead BC K-12 Christian learning communities

through change. Table 5.3c organizes how the theme, categories, dimensions, and sub-dimensions relate to one another. The categories include the meaning of educational change leadership, God accomplishes his purposes through communal change, and future experiences of becoming change leaders.

Meaning of Educational Change Leadership

Leading Change as the Changed Leader. Marcus reflected on what it has meant for him to lead a Christian learning community through change, articulating that upon recognizing “who you are and what you do is no longer your own” the change leader is “now following someone else’s story, the meta story, and that the means that who you interact with, the offices you build, the structures you create, the systems you work with, are subservient to that” (1:01:27). He shared retrospectively about the essence of leading change in BC K-12 Christian schools as a homecoming of purpose (1:01:27). For Melody, change leaders have experienced what it means to belong to the kingdom, so their work extends to helping others in their belonging through excellent efforts curricularly (1:02:14). Alexandra argued that the change leader has received grace that they need to make a withdrawal from, “[G]ive yourself grace. . . Change takes time, even though you don’t want it to. . . My whole idea of what the future is, is not always God’s idea of what the future is. Having space for things to shift from what I can originally see. Be open to being wrong. That’s what has shifted in who I am” (1:01:33). Leading change begins with the leader’s own awareness of personal transformation that took place because of the grace-filled agent of change in the Holy Spirit’s regenerate work. God uses fallible human beings who are in essence the change project.

Table 5.3c*Theme Three: Meaning and Essence of Educational Change Leadership*

Theme	Category	Dimension	Sub-Dimension
Theme Three: Meaning and Essence of Educational Change Leadership: God’s Kingdom Network Expansion ($n = 28, f = 149$)			
	Meaning of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools ($n = 28, f = 149$)		
		Leading as the changed leader ($n = 28, f = 46$)	
		Foundations of faith ($n = 9, f = 12$)	
		Leader self-awareness ($n = 9, f = 10$)	
		Equipped to lead change in context ($n = 15, f = 24$)	
		God accomplishes his purposes through communal change ($n = 16, f = 21$)	
		Transformative work of the Holy Spirit ($n = 16, f = 21$)	
		Future experiences of becoming change leaders ($n = 26, f = 86$)	
		Developing change leaders’ faith and identity ($n = 13, f = 23$)	
		Developing change leaders’ content knowledge and skills ($n = 19, f = 34$)	
		Developing change leaders’ collaborative capabilities ($n = 15, f = 25$)	

Foundations of Faith. There is a clear tension between the hard, task-driven posture leaders often adopt to survive, perhaps one they have picked up over many years, helping them to persist in their roles from the “soft,” permeable stance that enables lasting, heart-level change in others (Debra, 1:07:01; Elise, 56:15, 58:33). For Elise, who has seen the conflict arise in these seemingly opposing dispositions, it has exposed a contradiction in Christian leadership where leaders are celebrated for vision, drive, charisma, possibly stamina, but are often “othered” or penalized when they empathize humbly by listening to members of their community (59:04), typically to those resistant or struggling with change, even though those very practices build the necessary trust for sustainable transformation.

Grant argued that his leadership effectiveness depends on remaining attentive to societal shifts while anticipating the challenges most relevant to his community: “I need to be constantly reflecting on the changing needs and trends within our school and within the culture around us, and what are the implications for our mission” (55:46). As change leaders participate in their own humble submission and risk taking, ground themselves in Christian ways of being for facilitating change by managing emotions and expectations, and develop greater self-awareness, collaborative vision, they lead from limitations and enable leaders to lead in their weaknesses. Chapter Six unpacks further what participants revealed about both an emotional and social cost to leading change in Christian educational contexts. The implications of how to lead from both strength and gentleness, confidence but not ego, attentiveness but not weakness, relationality and also strategic outlook, attentiveness but self-aware enough not to be depleted, are synthesized into Chapter Six’s discussion of the faith identity foundations of change leaders.

Leader Self-Awareness. Warren summarized what he was presently feeling about the types of change he sees today, leaving him feeling holy discontentment: “You can lead towards change

out of compliance, or you can lead towards long term change” (1:18:10). Changed leaders, equipped for their calling, described the formation of their identity, skills, and connections. Being equipped for leading change meant growing in courage (Alan, 1:21:47) and learning not only through formal training but also through God’s ongoing equipping in lived experiences across different contexts, where leaders cultivate the capacity to see, sense, and respond to people (Paul, 1:02:25); Change leaders actively pursue leadership of chaotic arrangements in a state of disequilibrium, static or stuck systems, complicated and disruptive issues that require pushing into complexity, and engage with intricate societal and external changes that force their communities to speak into issues around the use of artificial intelligence, gender and sexuality policies and practices, curriculum development supporting their schools’ Christian identity, new pedagogies and models of assessment in the areas of STEM, literacy, numeracy, and social emotional development. As changed leaders, they experience the limitations of their networks, are dependent on initiatives that their network associations provide them with, rather than feeling like they have the bandwidth to always initiate professional connections that help them to be inspired, bring in new ideas, assist members of their team to design systems and procedures, or disrupt from within declining programs.

Equipped to Lead Change in Context. Change leaders recognized that the initiative is only half the change opportunity, and the interruptions, social dynamics, and reactions are where participants situated reflections on their lived experiences, making it critical for this study. Once they become aware of their change and calling, participants learned to communicate in ways that help their team’s response to change and spent more time with some members of their teams and less times with others, “Some people need almost daily check ins to be responsive, some so they don’t feel isolated” Ezra explained, “Others you check in for the opposite reason, otherwise

they've changed to somewhere you don't need or want to be . . . ” and some others will be just fine (28:19). Learning to live with disappointment and disapproval was critical for self-awareness, particularly leaders that identified as people pleasers.

Change leaders recognized that they are not called to lead alone but to form teams, notice and build other leaders, and identify new and emerging voices that can facilitate change.

Imposter syndrome is what Mary called the feeling of slowly moving into her identity as a change leader:

The more I realize that it's not about me as a person and how great and super duper I am, but it's about God putting me somewhere because I've had experiences, or I have this skill that was taught to me that is useful for such a time as this . . . when I forget, [then] it becomes about imposter syndrome. (1:21:09).

Christian school leaders understood that the essence of change leadership is about developing other agents of change and not being threatened by members of their teams stepping into leading roles. Change leaders collaborate intergenerationally, communicate clearly, set expectations, hold members of the team accountable, and draw from the collective wisdom by designing protocols that help them and their communities navigate change initiatives.

As participant leaders reflected back on how their faith has sustained them, they reconstructed how they were once resistant but now called to more excellent ways to serve their communities (Logan, 1:26:41). The second category extends what it means to be the change leader into both the theological reality of God's agency and the meaning of change within Christian learning communities.

God Accomplishes His Purposes through Communal Change. A mysterious partnership between God's agency and human participation in God's agency expressed through a host of questions sums up the feelings of God “being the one who governs the change process, and actually God calls people into change who aren't in charge and who understand that ultimately,

our sovereign God is in charge” so holding that “tension” of being skilled but also dependent on God (Jordan, 1:07:59). What is God calling us to and “what is the work we’re being asked to partner in?” followed Jordan’s reflection on five critical aspects of Christian school change leadership: value people, trust people, trust God, keep it simple, and the right people in the right place (1:07:59). Locke characterized the importance of holding the posture, “Lord surprise me today. Let me be open to surprise” (53:03) as critical for the partnership on the human agency side. Logan raised questions such as, “Why should we change?” and “Are we changing out of a crisis of culture? Is it out of a negative or positive?” and “Why is this change necessary?” as failure to answer such questions positions the continuous improvement moment in more secular humanistic terms. He argued that we are not only called “from something” not just to be more of what we are to avoid something, but we’re actually called, from a Christian perspective to the most excellent way (Logan, 1:26:41) whereby God accomplishes his purposes in BC K-12 Christian learning communities.

In a moment that Alan narrated when a member of his educational staff pitched an idea that he (Alan) had previously pitched and it was then embraced by the team, he described the timing and influence that God’s faithfulness reveals that he has always been changing the hearts of people in spite of phases of not wanting to be changed. Alan marvelled at this moment in his community as he looked back on the service initiatives that have followed for over a decade as a result of that work (1:14:55).

Your old ways were not wasted years, and God can use flawed people to lead communities through change, is a paraphrase of Logan’s reflection on the huge responsibility placed on change leaders for change grounded in God’s purposes (1:27:11). The essence of Christian school change leadership is neither change for change’s sake, nor “mov[ing] a bigger agenda at

the cost of individuals,” but dealing with the unintended outcomes of organizing people in ways to work together for the kingdom benefit (Alan, 1:08:56). The leader’s inner life is central to understanding the essence of change leadership. Participants emphasized how their experiences are entangled within the inner life of their learning community. The essence that holds it together in unity is shared vision and practices, learning, resilience, management of resistance, and discernment. Rather, change leaders acting prophetically and apostolically, calling organizations much like the early church did to God’s revelation for the following faith informed purposes: (1) Discern God’s purposes; (2) Remind one another of the transformative work God has done to change people and communities; (3) Share leadership; and (4) Walk together through times of interruption.

Future Envisioning for Change Leadership. Participants reflected on what it might mean to envision the future preparation of change leadership in the BC K-12 Christian school context. Some of the discussion is geared towards supporting current change leaders in their efforts and other aspects are articulated to envisage what it might mean for future emerging leaders. Their discussion is organized into three interlocking movements: (1) Developing change leaders’ content knowledge and skills; (2) Developing change leaders’ faith and identity; and (3) Developing change leaders’ collaborative capabilities. These dimensions of future preparation for change leadership are explored next.

Developing Leaders’ Faith and Identity. Preparing BC K-12 Christian school change leaders in faith and identity was found to require support for both character and spiritual formation, grounding the leader as they put on and wear their two-fold identity as Christian and change leader (Alan, 1:04:52; Janice, 1:03:08; Lydia, 51:24); at the same time, Mary explained “in every situation where [she] started, the idea was never as good as where [they] ended with

the idea. But it has to come with this flexibility and reflexiveness” (37:01). Furthermore, she encouraged a disentanglement of the leader’s identity from the actual change because some initiatives are failure bound and need the hope of a new day (Mary, 38:52). Leaders need unshakeable sources of joy and perspective in their lives that remind them of who they are. They value cohorts with members of other Christian schools that facilitate intrapersonal dialogue and awareness of the inner life and spiritual well-being. Practically, Alan argued for leaders learning to sit with their emotions and be present with God. His reflection captured how important it was for him to focus not only on continuous improvement but continuous discipleship:

I have been meeting with a spiritual director, which is a new experience for me. His big phrase is, ‘Invite those emotions to the table. Sit down with them and explore them.’ How am I bringing resentment to the table? (Laughter). But I think it’s more of that posture. You experience those feelings in your work and in your life relationships. There’s no bad or negative feelings. There’s just feelings that you have in those moments. ‘And what are they teaching? How is God using those things to guide you?’

I grew up in a family of origin where you were only able to have happy feelings and if you had negative feelings, you prayed that those feelings would go away. I think for me, learning that those negative emotions, hard emotions, have a place, right? They tell you something going on inside you, and not that you sit in them, but inviting them to the table so they can have something to say to you.

I think having some of those guides outside of school, whether it’s a spiritual direction or counseling, have been really important. I think as I’ve had more experiences in my older years, I felt more free to actually encourage others to do the same. And being able to freely share that . . . and the importance of having people talk through that the inner life is really important to nurture and tend to, because out of that is where the rest of life comes. And so those disciplines of talking through and exploring those things that God’s given us and not discounting them is really important. (45:49)

Alan’s discussion here for the importance of developing collaborative capabilities will be explored in the next section, yet his discussion of developing the leader’s faith and identity cannot be overlooked as part of the spiritual struggle that change leaders endure. Leaning on God’s direction has required both people within the context who are aware of the related content

issues leaders face and those highly capable leading outside the context, from whom strength is drawn. Grant argued that leaders need a snowball effect of being invited, valued, and called, so emerging leaders are permitted to discern their readiness for change. Once they are early in their career as change leaders, they need mentors with deep pockets of grace (Marcus, 47:46). Yet a critical silence in the study was that the languishing leaders also need an out.

Erica was not yet satisfied with the type of Christian influence in graduate studies programs or cohorts, arguing that we need “better models to ensure that Christian school leaders in BC are better equipped” (1:11:43). Debra and Erica both waded into the waters of Christian change leadership awakening organizational theology around suffering, failure in leadership, exhaustion, and the persistent call to have energy to run the race of continuous improvement (Debra, 23:10; Erica, 56:32) in contrast to secular change leadership. Christian change leadership requires making meaning out of loss and disruption, the Romans 5:1-5 change paradigm way, “suffering produces perseverance” and “things not going as well as part of the continued sanctification” of leaders and communities (Erica, 56:32). Leaders needing to grow in collaborative connections was the third dimension of equipping future change leaders.

Developing Change Leaders’ Content Knowledge and Skills. Preparing the next generation of Christian school change leaders in BC requires the formation of content knowledge by knowing the linear change models such as Kotter, Lewin, and Fullan (Elise, 1:02:04, Erica, 1:11:43; Gerald, 1:04:09; Lydia, 49:42). The main gaps in content knowledge are that both current and emerging leaders do not have descriptions of “strong exemplars” and vivid narratives in the BC K-12 Christian educational context for how faith guided their efforts (Erica, 1:11:43). Elise’s graduate studies courses on change leadership were formative in shaping her understanding of different approaches to implementing change. However, she identified several

gaps. What was missing or lacking were “positive outlets and strategies to celebrate good markers along the way,” clearer ways her network connections could support her change efforts, and, given that change leaders are often “bombarded with what’s not working,” structured reflection protocols. Such protocols, she suggested, could help her team remain anchored in the why and clarify the progress made at various points within different states of change (1:02:04). Erica’s recommendation was that a gap in socio-political and contextual knowledge was around the historical interaction of the Christian church with society and “how we might enter this current climate in a way that we can bring unity in organizations with a lot of diversity, even around theology and faith practices” (1:04:35). At the same time, participants stressed that effective preparation moves beyond theories of change into concrete leadership and management skills that are underexplored in some masters programs, “calendars, task flows, project management, timelines, managing conflicting priorities . . . how do you project manage, task delegate, action, construct . . . the business skills” (Debra, 1:15:03), and a “crash course for superintendents . . . on how varying schools approach finance” from their Christian and cultural, mission-driven approaches would have accelerated preparation (Marcus, 1:09:08).

Specifically for emerging leaders, conflict engagement was like iron sharpening iron for their preparation: “to run after the conflicts, rather than run away from them . . . [but] with kindness, compassion, and empathy” (Monica, 1:10:49). It was critical for leaders to recognize their limitations in building social capital and developing emotional intelligence; as Paul put it, “to intuit” how others are feeling (1:02:25) and recognize how the barriers implicit in one’s leadership approach (Alan, 1:13:23) changed from liabilities to superpowers when leading change. Change leaders are attempting to innovate around middle leadership structures by using grade level teams and lead teachers to facilitate collaborative initiatives chaired by other

members (Amy, 1:03:35; Monica, 1:05:53) or appoint instructional coaches and curricular leaders as a first step into more formal leadership positions (Mary, 1:15:35). Leaders starting with “small changes” that “don[‘t] need to be big” (Ezra, 1:14:29) may reveal what God has been developing in educational staff, expose weaknesses, prepare for the work, provide discernment, and direct invitations for more opportunities for leading change. To develop the content knowledge and skills at a school-based level, schools benefit from reflecting on what apprenticeship for change leadership structures could already align with what their schools are already doing.

Developing Leaders’ Collaborative Capabilities and Networked-Responses for Change.

Further to Erica’s insight that there is a dearth of narrative examples of Christian school change leader’s experiences, there needs to be preparation emerging from exemplars describing “what went wrong and where it went right, and some solid reflective practices, before, during, and after change initiatives” (1:11:43). Leaders desired living examples to learn from lived experiences, have people available to connect with, see an opportunity to enter into formal mentorship connections, and build stronger connections in group learning environments. While several participants offered mentorship as a practical structure that the network association could support, some were hesitant to be able to step into mentoring others due to time and capacity related issues as they focus their efforts on school-based leadership development (Amy, 1:06:12). Still others felt limited by their own time to develop other leaders across the network, scarcely able to attend leadership meetings with job-alike leaders once or twice a year. Some leaders were optimistic about current opportunities with the Emerging Leaders Development Institute and Van Lunen Fellowship; yet there are some critical voices amongst the participants that do not feel as

though leaders have developed awareness and agency to expand their networks and leverage for change initiatives, which is a first step.

An overall sentiment analysis recommends formal opportunities for leaders to provisionally discern leadership, revealing that relatively few are both able and willing to take up the responsibility of building a robust internal system that equips emerging leaders for Christian school leadership. There were exceptions that the four leaders with predispositions towards leading change were also some of the ones with interest in moving from only school-based to system-wide intervention. Derek, one of those predisposed to change, shared how he personally would see himself contributing:

I hope for my future self . . . it would be a strong desire in the next coming years to really invest in others, start truly investing in the leadership capacity of others, encouraging others to not be threatened by others, but to really lean into giving back.

I don't know what that looks like right now, whether it's here at this school, or whether I can step into some different types of roles to make that happen, or whether I can do that on the side, or it's just a natural part of who I am, not necessarily defined by role. It is my desire to contribute back to others. I am not concerned about my own legacy, but I just think of making the best use of the resources God has given me is to provide feedback into other people and help them grow and take the experiences that I've had and share that back with other people. (1:20:51)

An overall assessment of the participants' visioning of systematic approaches to preparing leadership expressed a disposition of hope for more intentional and systematic leadership preparation; however, participants often viewed solutions as something external to be brought into their context rather than recognizing their own role in shaping system-wide change. This reveals a gap between the desire for transformation extended to the willingness or capacity to see oneself as an agent of change within the broader network of Christian schools learning, collaboration, and shared change leadership formation. Chapter Six will explore what it looks like to cultivate habits of shared responsibility and structures that enable leaders to co-create the developmental system they long for.

Taken together, what it means to envision the future of change leadership includes the following components: team learning environments function as the foundational conditions, adaptive systems as the channels through which organizational energy transforms, healthy conflict as the requisite stimulus, spiritual grounding as the stabilizing structure, and collaborative discernment as the directional force are all needed together to create the conditions that call, made, guide, and sustain current and emerging leaders to the work of change leadership. However, a key limitation is that the network appears to be sustained primarily by a few support programs, without a localized effort to engage members in informal, precursory conversations about school leadership beyond Principal, Head of School/Superintendent, or Director of Learning roles. These implications are discussed further in Chapter Six.

Summary of Theme Three

In this theme, participants reflected back on what it has meant to be called into leading change and how change leadership grows when reciprocated: making more informal invitations to invite members of their teams to the leadership decision-making tables, discerning different forms of formal and informal leadership, and helping emerging leaders build their networks. What was not evident in the discussion was whether leaders understood how to help others build their network connections that lead to professional development and readiness for change. There were some contradictions in that participants argued that they wanted a bigger kingdom vision of change, but most effectively felt powerless to contribute to a wider collective sense of change leadership preparation outside what they might be able to accomplish at a school level. With any extra reserves of energy leaders may have had leftover, they could use it to strengthen network connections for their schools. Chapter Six offers a practical model for how to help leaders move from school-based levels of preparation for change leadership to systematic and networked

approaches, addressing types of change processes using a model conceptualized around the change process zones, dispositional responses to resistance, practices that enable communal adaptive faithfulness, and the integration of faith in change leadership practice.

Chapter Summary

This chapter on the essence of change leadership explored how leaders in BC K-12 Christian learning communities experience and enact change. It began by presenting the participant demographics from the phenomenological interviews and then detailed three key themes emerging from the data analysis. The first theme, *Becoming and Leading as the Called, Connected, and Changed Leader*, highlighted that effective change leadership is grounded in self-awareness, spiritual discernment, and the capacity to hold the community together through shared vision and values. Leaders' personal growth and reflective practices directly influence organizational culture, enabling them to discern God's direction while modeling integrity, empathy, and resilience in the presence of their community's contexts.

The second theme, *Communal Adaptive Faithfulness*, emphasized the importance of relational dynamics and influence. Leaders examined the process zones they experience phenomenologically through change, whether internally driven or externally imposed upon them. Participants described how their connections sustained them through the resistance they experienced throughout change initiatives and supportive practices that enabled them to positively use the force of resistance to facilitate change.

The third theme, *The Meaning of Educational Change Leadership: God's Mission and Kingdom Vision Expands*, focused on what it has been like to be a changed leader and experience God's faithfulness through change, emerging from leaders' reflexive intentionality and retrospection. Discussion of how to equip future emerging leaders captured participants' sense-

making of their own journeys, especially as they looked back on what they wished they would have known, the mistakes they made, ambiguity they experienced, and what they drew from their experiential reservoir of strength and wisdom to share with others. By reflecting on and reconstructing their lived experiences, participants detailed how their capacity for leading change and their community's identity as changed communities revealed God's agency and more dimensions of change leadership that carry further implications for policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and members of the BC K-12 Christian schools' context. Chapter Six next discusses the Implications and Conclusions for educational practice.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Research Design and Sample

This study explored how BC K-12 Christian independent school Heads of Schools/Superintendents, Directors of Learning, and Principals experience educational change leadership. Chapter One of the study introduced the dissertation research purpose, problems, and questions to help frame the dissertation's scope. Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature pertaining to two major domains and one minor domain: (i) Domain One: organizational change leadership; (ii) Domain Two: the integration of faith in educational leadership; and (iii) Domain Three: British Columbia's (BC) K-12 independent Christian school leadership context. It identified the need for empirical research that would explore how BC K-12 Christian school leaders experience the relationship between educational change, faith-informed leadership practice, and contextual narratives situated within lived experiences and organizational complexity. Chapter Three examined resistance to change in the Book of Ezekiel that helped frame the theologically integrative dialogue and approach to the research design. It offered practical recommendations for harnessing the disruptive energy and potential in resistance to change and directing it towards productive outcomes and dispositions. Chapter Four explored the qualitative phenomenological research study's methodology and Institutional Research Board ethics protocols. The research design involved semi-structured interviews of 28 Christian school

leaders, a participant demographic questionnaire, and participant review of the full transcript and individual Composite Profile to validate the interviews.

Chapter Five presented comprehensive findings using thematic analysis. It investigated the experiences that have led Christian school Heads of School/Superintendents, Directors of Learning, and Principals to become equipped for leading educational change (organizational, cultural, and curricular), the context in which change leadership is situated, the experiences of change leaders, how resistance to change has manifested, ways in which faith informs change leadership practice, and how leaders make meaning from their experiences to describe the essence of change leadership. This final section, Chapter Six, reiterates the research design, discusses and concludes on key components and findings from the study, identifies implications and limitations, and sets forth recommendations for future research in the field of educational change leadership with K-12 Christian schools. In summary, from studying the experiences of Christian school change leaders, the essence of change leadership is about enabling people to bring their whole self into change processes while exercising agency and contributing freely with the collective transformation in purpose, identity, and adaptations.

Change leadership is not narrowly defined by perfectly executed implementation plans, overcoming resistance, or managing turnover and membership, though, in part, these make up important dimensions for how communities are to be transformed. The study reveals how the essence of change leadership is about cultivating a network dependency that reframes implementation plans as the best current thinking, resistance as relational data, honoring peoples' freedoms and mobility by ensuring they have agency, as distinct from autonomy, in both leadership and followership, and leveraging social capabilities, particularly in moments of crisis and chaos, while envisioning and mapping networks to create the new social reality of how

schools are to grow in their communal adaptive faithfulness. Change leadership is about something more than informing and clear communication, it is about community, relationships, social infrastructure, and networks that position teams within the utter dependency on God and others in complexity. If leaders desire to see change for their communities, it is about cultivating discernment, relational, kingdom-oriented, and transformational hope mindsets. These notions will be explored in the discussion of the implications. A critical proposal emerging from the dissertation is to design and implement a Christian Leadership Change Institute based on the recommendations from the study.

Summary of Conclusions to Research Questions

Chapter Six is organized in an interwoven structure that reflects the dissertation's logical progression and the central arguments emerging from its purpose and problem. The theoretical components of Research Questions 1 and 2 were established in Chapter Two and the theoretical and theological components of Research Questions 3, 3a, and 3b were explored in Chapter Three that justified the dissertation study. Preliminary practical considerations were introduced in Chapters Two and Three, which are more fully explored here in Chapter Six. The practical dimensions were yet to be explored in Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 3a, and 3b and surface at different points next in Chapter Six by interacting in a more integrative approach.

Furthermore, because the findings do not divide neatly by question, the discussion interacts with multiple research questions at the same time. Chapter Six therefore adopts an integrative approach and is structured as a two-part road map that mirrors how the study unfolded and how the research questions logically relate to one another. **Part One:** Practical conclusions from the empirical findings (Research Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7). The focus is on synthesizing the practical conclusions that arise directly from the empirical analysis and relating back to the literature.

These four respective questions employ an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach (Smith & Osborn, 2003) to draw conclusions from the sample about leaders' lived experiences and observable patterns in the data, so their conclusions provide the most natural entry point into outlining what the study contributes to leadership practice in BC K-12 Christian schools.

Addressing Research Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 first provides a grounded understanding of the actions, tensions, and dispositions that emerged from the field research. **Part Two:** This part returns to an integrative discussion of Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 3a, and 3b, weaving together the literature from Chapters Two and Three and the interview data. Clear signposts indicate where each question is being advanced to show how the conceptual insights developed earlier emerge again with practical consideration and for application. Research Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 were explored through the phenomenological interviews:

4. What developmental experiences have led participants to become educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools?
5. What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia?
6. In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices?
7. How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia?

RQ4: What developmental experiences have led participants to become educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools?

Respondents reported that there were three critical dimensions related to their becoming change leaders: (1) called into leading change; (2) become and are thusly equipped for leading

change; or (3) made for leading change. Within these respective dimensions, there were multiple pathways to becoming a change leader: feeling equipped and then called; called and then equipped; reluctantly called while not yet equipped; simultaneously called and equipped; resisting the call before becoming equipped; and gradually evolving into their equipping as the calling also evolved.

Participants understood their calling and equipping to mostly be interconnected to multiple moments rather than singular sequences. It was both formal and informal developmental experiences that equipped for leading change. Participants started from different dispositions and motivations towards change, including a sense of calling, readiness, reluctance, or expectation. While many participants described the calling taking place within schools, network relationships with educators, leaders, and schools, particularly when occurring in a professional development context, strengthened the equipping for change leadership. The multiple stories and pathways participants reconstructed demonstrates that there is not a one size fits all origin story of becoming a change leader. However, a key contributing factor was the productive disposition to see change at their schools that leaders brought shaped by invitations from God and other mentor figures, which enabled them to make meaning from initial disruption to self or community.

However, it was both surprising and contradictory to identify with the participant sample that the trajectory into change leadership was both nonlinear and individualized. Initial reluctance and internal dissonance felt by participants ($n = 9, f = 11$) appears to be necessary for discerning calling and should not be too quickly dismissed when assessing the longer arc of educators becoming change leaders. Participants detailed how their identity evolved over time, largely through experiences of making mistakes and figuring out what works for their

communities and what does not. Yet participants emphasized that what it means to be a change leader is embracing a changed identity that reflects more fully who they were created to be.

Implications. The key implications are that current leaders must actively discern, intentionally identify, and personally invite emerging leaders into a journey of formation to become people who lead from changed and connected lives. Across 24 participant interviews, leaders consistently signaled being shaped by the invitation of one or two catalytic individuals who recognized and affirmed the change leader's potential before the change leader was ready. Therefore, sustaining leadership development requires that leaders remain attentive to the Holy Spirit's prompting to discern the calling of others while remembering that though many are called, few are willing to respond without intentional accompaniment and care.

Extending more invitations for emerging leaders to consider middle-leadership roles in ways that welcome leaders into the real risks and responsibilities of change leadership will strengthen network capacity. While large schools may naturally create more formalized roles, they could benefit from having more informal opportunities that enable emerging leaders to catch the leadership culture experientially. By cultivating deliberate and structured environments that are psychologically safe-to-fail, emerging leaders can practice leading without fear of permanent repercussions in more co-designed apprenticeship change initiatives between senior change leader and junior change leader in shared change initiatives.

The on ramp into leadership must be made less steep through localized solutions. Sending emerging leaders to network initiatives must continue. However, creating unconventional middle-leadership roles that enable conditions for small schools to create emergence and contextualized adaptations is critical for sustaining leadership in regions isolated geographically. Small schools need to make bold moves in formalizing roles for particular purposes to

accomplish change and increase authorization of mid-level leaders as part of team and system-wide change efforts. Additionally, schools need measurable objectives, set within their strategic goals, for sending leaders into the wider network of Christian leadership preparation, recognizing that outsourcing the responsibility for leadership development to programs comes with some liabilities. Programs such as the Emerging Leaders Development Institute (ELDI) cannot replace the responsibility to form change leadership from within the schools. A key indicator would be over the next five years if new leaders are identified and there is greater mobility and sending of teacher-leaders within BC to other K-12 Christian schools.

Participants reported delaying their mentoring role until they had enough experience, skill, or availability, yet participants indicated that early engagement in mentorship is one of the most critical inroads for addressing the fear of emerging leaders stepping into leadership. Leaders admitted on several accounts leading from their leftover reserves rather than their first fruits. As such, leaders are called to embrace their mentoring identity by identifying two or three individuals, both from within and beyond their schools, that they can lead in spiritual direction, capacity building, and coaching. Current leaders serving in BC K-12 Christian schools need assistance with these connections from those positioned in the organization as discoverers and diffusers (Arena, 2018). As school leaders initiate change and mobilize change initiative teams, their own equipping deepens when they intentionally prioritize capacity building as a primary outcome of the change initiative. By appointing middle leaders to roles that stretch their capabilities and assigning emerging leaders to school improvement projects, leaders create a tension of informal responsibility and structured intentionality that prime conditions for change. Further discussion concerning the future development of change leaders is identified in the practical recommendations.

Stories of different leaders' journeys into leadership need to be shared and celebrated to reduce the self-doubt that is presently overshadowing the call into leadership and increase calling into the leadership discernment zone. God used the participant leaders despite their fears, unpreparedness, weaknesses, and seemingly unproductive dispositions. A narrative profile document has been created from 28 participant Composite Vignette profiles that will be shared with the BC network of Christian schools for the purpose of mutual benefit and shared hope. Thus, the calling into and equipping for change leadership requires structured and informal opportunities that encourage greater understanding of both the responsibilities and the transformative potential of realizing one's Christian identity as not only called and connected but changed for leading change.

RQ5: What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia?

Educational change leadership was experienced as the costly shouldering of a community's hopes and vulnerabilities as it seeks to adapt faithfully. For example, participants such as Alan identified the pastoral responsibilities and soul care for the community with his office operating as somewhat of a confessional and safe pasture to process some of life's most disruptive experiences. Monica confessed her fatigue with carrying myriads of impossible tasks while having to attend to everyone else's wellbeing. The experience of educational change leadership for leaders revealed the need to lead one's own change and to help one's learning community embrace greater dependence on God through disruption.

Change leaders were interdisciplinary leaders, requiring skills in a wide range of areas from finance to human resources, conflict management, and instructional leadership; most participants articulated that decisional change in real time supported by their social connections

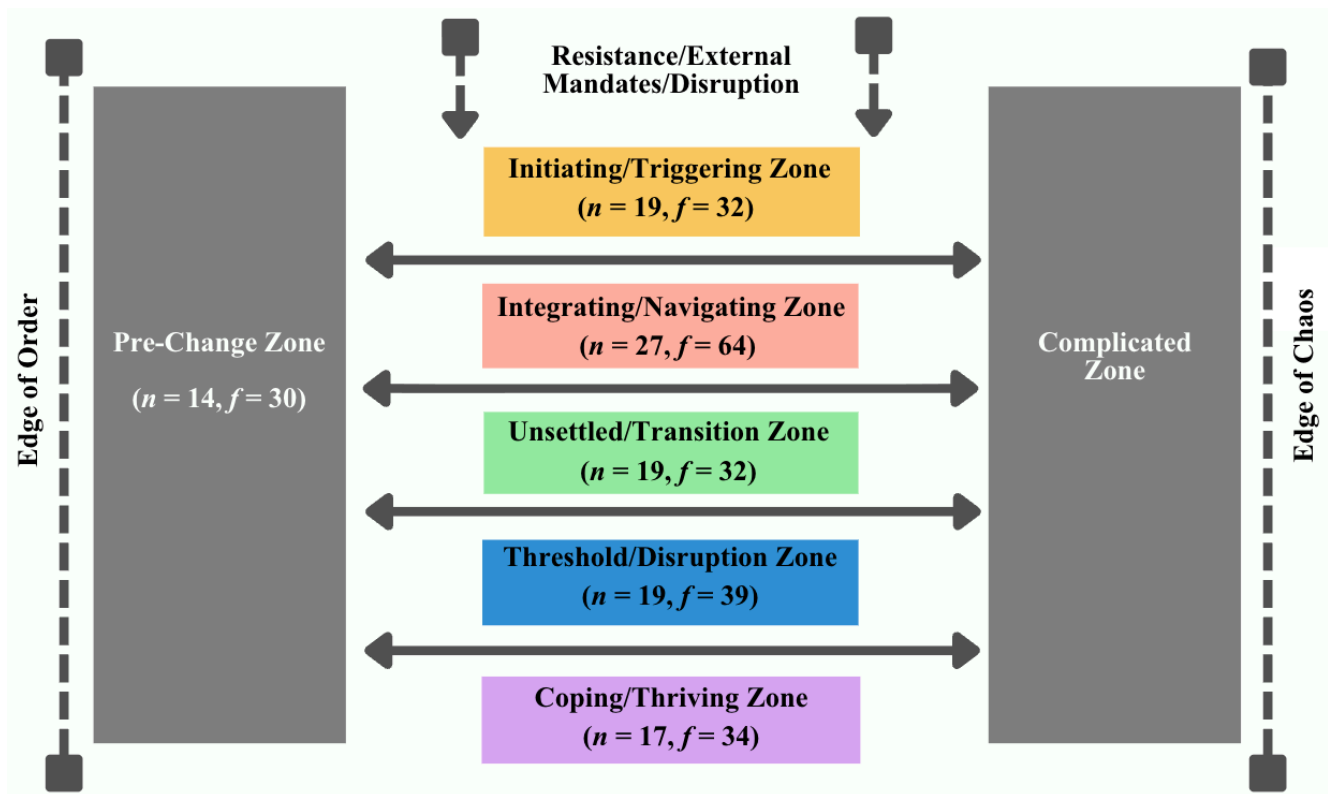
helped them close their knowledge gaps and prime the conditions for change within their communities. This was critical as it rarely was human capital training that was embedded within the narrative descriptions and examples leaders reconstructed that led to change.

There were many distinct and shared dimensions of change leadership amongst the participant Christian school Heads of School/Superintendents, Directors of Learning, and Principals that are captured in Chapter Five, including the compression of principals towards more middle leadership roles, the social mobility of Directors of Learning, and the need to increase critical friendships for Heads of School/Superintendents. Notably, change leadership requires both strong and weak social ties, because no matter how brilliant the idea is, a healthy community can absorb change better than one that is unwell (Janice, 06:53). Leon captured what many participants expressed as the spiritual implications of educational change interfaced with spiritual call to change, “Is that actually who we feel God is calling us to be?” (04:47). Leaders from each of the respective job-related groupings articulated how change impacts collective purpose, identity, belonging, and growth markers in their communities.

Experiences of Resistance to Change. All 28 participants detailed narratives and examples of how resistance occurred within their communities. At the same time, some of the distinct dimensions of change leadership informed by complex adaptive systems theories were related to the leader’s context, explaining in part how participants react or respond to change and what supports their readiness. “Change is change, but the communities that the change happen in are very different” argued Ezra as he explained that the societal and generational context is a strong undercurrent driving the social and cultural dynamics at play within an organization (14:42). There were social, personal, theological, and political reasons for resistance. Change leaders needed to understand their organization’s story of change, where the organization was in its life

cycle (Jillian, 06:02, 19:13), and also engage in understanding the social dynamics of actors, drivers, signals, and impact with resistance as discussed in Chapter Five. The interpersonal, faith formational, and practice response to resistance around a change initiative is training that leaders of BC K-12 Christian schools need as they learn from lived experiences and not only from mainstream popular culture literature as faith and spirituality have been absent from the dialogue. The practical implications and opportunities are explored in the provisional recommendation to design and facilitate a change leadership institute built on complexity and network theory.

Identifying Change Process Zones. Six process zones emerged in Chapter Five from participants' lived experiences, capturing moments of continuity, discontinuity, disruption, and adaptive challenge: (i) Pre-Change Zone; (ii) Initiating/Triggering; (iii) Integrating/Navigating Zone; (iv) Unsettled/Transition Zone; (v) Threshold/Disruption Zone; (vi) and the Coping/Thriving Zone. Figure 6.1 aims to conceptualize the Change Process Zones by integrating established theories of complex adaptive systems and social networks with empirical findings from Chapter Five on leading educational change within BC K-12 Christian schools. Its purpose as a sense-making tool is to guide practitioners to discern the conservation of energy needed for change and where their community is within the change process to respond with contextual actions. It encourages leaders to lead with wisdom and attentiveness to those experiencing change and interpret relational, cultural, and systemic dynamics shaping change by acting adaptively rather than reactively. The relationship between linear and non-linear models in Christian educational contexts has not yet been fully explored.

Figure 6.1*Change Process Zones*

To synthesize the best thinking from complex adaptive theories, phenomenological sense-making, and the findings of Chapter Five, the following proto-experiential matrix is proposed in Figure 6.1.

Twenty-Two Practices When Encountering Resistance to Change. Practices that enable leaders and their communities to adapt also made up some of the descriptions of how leaders experience change. The list compiled across all 28 participants' reflections was exhaustive, despite them feeling stretched and drained by resistance within their communities: (i) Listen and build trust; (ii) Set healthy boundaries around conversations; (iii) Communicate and clarify the why in a simple and repeatable way; (iv) Use the resistant as a resource; (v) Address technical or capacity barriers to those resistant; (vi) Coach resistant members to find meaning in the work of change; (vii) Engage in spiritual practices together to build relationships; (viii) Replace general

questions with more personal and direct invitations to share; (ix) Invite dissent and have a posture of openness to dissenting voices that surface; (x) Find common ground at a value and interest-based level when perspectives hold different; (xi) Lead from a place of integrity and ethical discernment for tough decisions; (xii) Provide regular feedback loops; (xiii) Surface resistance early through group sharing protocols; (xiv) Reframe resistance as a signal to be interpreted rather than a wall to break through; (xv) Cast and recast vision through co-ownership, co-design, and collaboration; (xvi) Pause and acknowledge tensions and unmet expectations; (xvii) Turn critics into champions with humble persistence; (xviii) Lead with consistent transparency; (xix) Combine high support and high accountability to create collective wisdom; (xx) Repeat mantras that reinforce ways of being, culture, and mutual respect; (xxi) Bring resistance into open spaces to build shared ownership; and (xxii) Reframe resistance as a gift that births resilience, refines communication, or deepens communal adaptive faithfulness. The purpose of listing 22 practices is that there are many implicit responses leaders can have when they face resistance; however, there are ways to harness the energy of resistance in productive ways around five critical habits of practice that could form elements of the Change Institute: (a) communicating clearly; (b) building trust; (c) establishing mutually beneficial structures; (d) designing reflection protocols; and (e) practicing faith for the purpose of sustaining change that is more adaptive and faithful.

In phenomenological studies, researchers create gestalts by weaving together discrete experiences into coherent, perceptual wholes, where meaning emerges from the interplay of shared events, relationships, and context, rather than isolated dimensions (van Manen, 2016). This gestalt or matrix in the Change Process Zones (Figure 6.1) captures the essence of change

leadership experiences, offering a provisional framework through which patterns, tensions of faith and practice, and insights can be explored and discerned.

RQ6: In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices?

The most frequently referenced way that faith was expressed and integrated into leadership practice was as a measure and guide through the process change zones of Unsettledness/Transition and Threshold/Disruption. Participants reconstructed narratives of needing Israelite-like faith (Erica, 1:00:37) and becoming dependent on God's ultimate faithfulness (Anna, 1:07:36; Debra, 52:25) during moments of leading change.

In Chapter Two, Table 2.3 summarized different dimensions localized in recent literature concerning Biblical integration. Figure 2.1 presented a model of educational leadership for faith integration of worldview, concepts, communal practices, skills, character, content, and context. The findings of Chapter Five support that at the core of the model (Figure 2.1), an awareness that Christian educational change comes out of the transformative change that God has done in their lives, is the catalyst for the Holy Spirit's change agency. Participants were most explicit about worldview, character, and content when discussing how faith is integrated into their practices ($n = 26$). In contrast, participants spoke less about theological concepts ($n = 2, f = 4$), the ways their community's faith integratively formed through new partnerships with other schools that led towards change, or the specific practices they adopted from network learning experiences. This gap reveals that faith integrative practice can operate more easily in isolation from dimensions that demand more explicit and shared practice rather than a performatory expression. Thus, more interpersonal coaching and models that connect spiritual formation into both dispositional formation and the learning practices of an adaptive organization are needed.

To move the dialogue forward, Christian school leaders would benefit from exploring content around complex adaptive and networked approaches to leading change. More guidance on leading change given the different social roles that they, members of their leadership teams, organization, and networks are gifted in, is needed. Analysis of different leadership models throughout the change process, such as adaptive leadership, instructional leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership, needs to be considered for their possible outcomes as leaders design change in team learning environments. It is clear that leaders would benefit from practices that involve their networks in discernment protocols, guiding communities of practice to allow for the Holy Spirit to lead shared discernment, shape theological frameworks, and reveal how to react and respond to change within the distinctives of a community's unique liturgies and history of faith formation.

The dialogue about faith integration from the phenomenological interviews predominantly gravitated towards the leader's personal identity, their community's values, the formation of a shared identity and belonging, or the nurturing of Christian relationality within an organization. Less attention was given to non-integrative practice (Langer, 2012) and assessing the extent to which faith was formed as part of a change initiative. Prayer was the predominant practice reflected in 20 participants' interviews ($f = 24$). Some participants described prayers of lament, conversation, surrender, discernment, and petition as part of the change process. On the surface, it appears that participants are only engaged in prayer as a collective spiritual discipline. Other interpretations would recognize that prayer was the entry point into making meaning of change within a community before, during, or after the process. However, expressions of embodying faith revealed that Christian schools need both an ordinary awareness of workplace spirituality that shapes daily formation and an extraordinary attentiveness that refines collective practice for

specific efforts with change. By ordinary, their spirituality towards change operates across the ABC's: A – Appreciate and affirm the good; B – Build supportive teams; C – Create sustainable cultures; D –Design learning experiences that activate different social roles; E – Encourage formation and not just information; F – Facilitative posture to find purpose; G – Great mission and greater purpose. By extraordinary, change leaders might explore how different spiritual disciplines across the Christian tradition, including fasting, worship, solitude, and service, among others, as well as more emergent spiritual disciplines in recent literature, may guide communal learning; gratitude, conflict, conversation, retreat, celebration, coaching, discipleship may lead to greater formation. Furthermore, the main “What if?” question raised in this section is what if there was a greater integration between communal network connections, spiritual disciplines and practices, theological frameworks, and organizational leadership practice?

While the articulation of a clear and inspiring vision remains central to driving change, this approach can unintentionally imply that leaders can engineer outcomes and perpetuate illusions of a savior complex rooted in the transformative leadership tradition. Faith integrative change practice was found to hinge on habits that (i) deepen dependence on the Holy Spirit, (ii) harness the strength of one's community network in times of chaos, and (iii) build bonded and bridged relationships that sustain organizations to adapt during disruption, crisis, and moments when everything feels like it is falling apart. Three notable habits of practice with their respective questions were found to be significant for change leaders: (1) ***Discernment***: Who is God calling us to be or become? (2) ***Adaptability***: Who are we missing that should be a part of this? and (3) ***Multiplication***: Who needs to be connected or equipped as part of our efforts? When plans unfolded differently than anticipated, it was leaders' reliance on God that directed their

community's dependence towards God's purposes rather than merely the leader's strategic intentions.

RQ7: How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia?

Leading change is about guiding communities to patiently endure as they sit in their discontentment, loss, eager anticipation of future alternative realities, and chaotic states of disequilibrium, actively participating in the Holy Spirit's work of change that is both mysterious and indispensably what makes transformation possible (Ezek 36:26; Acts 1:8; Rom 8:14). The essence of change leadership is about leaders, whose lives have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, sometimes unsure of what it is that God is doing in and through them or their communities, adopting a facilitative, adaptive, and faithful posture to guide individuals, teams, and communities to co-create spiritually formative experiences that navigate disruption and align with God's purposes, calling the community to become what He intends. In other words, change brings people into the work of becoming who they are meant to be, even when they would rather stay put. At the same time, change leadership pulls people and communities into God's kingdom network vision, which involves localized adaptations towards ways they do not exactly ask for but still somehow need.

Participants conceive of their learning communities in organizational lifecycles. Some organizations get stuck and move towards monument (Erica, 19:13); their communities need their leaders to mobilize teams of ordinary teachers to work together to reflect on the implications for their school's mission in all parts of their organizational teams. Some organizations lose their identity and go through moments of stagnation, seasons of mission drift, institutional winters, and missional obscurity. During such moments, Christian learning

communities need leaders that look to their school's mission and vision, which points them back even further to the great commission (Matt 28:18-20). While external structures such as ministry inspections and external reviews from supporting network associations can help stimulate change, this study highlighted that leaders and their communities move towards thriving through change by having their supports, accountability, and collective wisdom generated in different pockets, from their boards, their leadership teams, grass roots employee working groups, and not only external mandates.

For the participants that were not yet clear about how to mobilize their communities around a shared mission and generate the momentum that they need to become more resilient and agile organizations, they are encouraged to start by mapping their networks in terms of actors, signals, drivers, and impact, categorizing by influence, expertise, and potential to contribute to future change initiatives. When organizations experience disruption, leadership and the greater mission beyond an organization's mission is needed. Then, leaders are encouraged to reflect on their emerging leaders and describe either the gap between the leaders at human, social, or decisional capital levels (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), to find who can help get those leaders there to grow in faith, knowledge, and connections.

Ultimately, leaders' experiential accounts suggest that, when organizations feel as those they are operating within a perceived linear environment, people change through structured formation, whereas in non-linear moments of disruption and chaos, change depends on levels of dependency rather than merely on information. In these contexts, leaders must intentionally practice a collective dependency on God, on others across their networks, and on members already positioned in waiting within their community.

Change was experienced as the unravelling of God's work of sanctification, restoration, and renewal through learning communities. There are some assertions to be derived from what participants reflected back on the essence and meaning of leading change in a BC K-12 Christian school: (i) living systems grow, change, and adapt; (ii) communal change is part of a collective sanctification where systems help people to become more like Jesus; (iii) change is both strategic and relational, moving towards God's intentions and design for his kingdom network vision; (iv) embracing change is hard, but it's the story God has lived from when he created the world to what he will accomplish one day in the restoration; (v) change requires perseverance and resilience to patiently endure; (vi) hardships such as pain and suffering are part of God's transformative work, and Christian schools can take this to be a part of a progression of becoming more Christ-like; (vii) faith provides the sustenance for patient endurance needed to sustain long, slow, difficult processes; and (viii) following Jesus means embracing change through disruption and unintended outcomes, because God uses mistakes, failures, and successes for his purposes. Taken together, in a changing world, Christian schools need faithful and adaptive leaders and communities to develop dispositions and cultures that are adaptively faithful. In other words, when change does not go the way it was intended, this study examined how to have faith.

God's Spirit is the change agent, directing the cadence, pace, purpose, and ends for change. Christian change leadership is not merely about tactics but about making way for the Holy Spirit to grow a desire for communities to embrace priorities that shape them. Reframing change as growth and recognizing God's ongoing revelation through change situates independent school missions within the wider mission of the kingdom set by Jesus over 2000 years ago. Leaders must discern the difference between changing for improvement's sake as well as change *from* in

contrast to their calling *to* something more excellent, holding together a tension between continuity of mission from continuously adapting in their context. Change shapes Christian ways of being in terms of social dynamics, where people becoming more like Jesus cultivate a healthy spirituality that drives cultural norms as much as strategy for change. The meaning of leading change takes place before, in the clarity of purpose, during, in the midst of interruptions and disruption, and after in adaptability. To lead change is to grow in one's capabilities while guiding others, equipping them to develop their agency and contribute effectively to the initiative. In some cases, this begets the multiplication and equipping of more change leaders. This process serves to position leaders within networks of influence, adapting, connecting, and expanding the capacity of the system to respond to disruption and emergent challenges.

Discussion of Key Findings and Relation to the Literature in Chapter Two

The themes identified within the Findings of Chapter Five revealed many shared considerations between the theoretical and empirical literature explored in Chapter 2. Two major domains were addressed (organizational change theory and the integration of faith in leadership practice) and a minor domain (British Columbia's educational leadership context) within Chapter 2, with each one explicitly evident within the findings and woven throughout participant narratives. Preliminary conclusions for Research Question 1 were provided at the end of Chapter Two. Practical conclusions for Research Questions 1 and 2 accounting for the empirical research are forwarded here as part of the discussion. Analysis of organizational and educational change theory with the findings is presented in the next section.

Organizational and Educational Change Theory

The literature discussed in Chapter Two analyzed the relationship between complex adaptive systems, brokerage theories, and system-wide educational change theories. As argued in

Chapter Two, system-wide change theories challenged the predominant ontology in organizations (Fenwick, 2010), which is an antecedent to this study on building organizational theory with more robust empirical basis supported by leaders' experiences of social dynamics. Complex adaptive systems theories framed notably by Heifetz (1994), Kauffman (1993), and Uhl-Bien (2017) served as guiding interpretive lenses with the data analysis. As such, participants in the study were found to understand the linear change models (Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1994, 1947). However, when disruption and resistance occurred, participant reflections provided less evidence of a conceptual framework for navigating adaptive change (Burt, 1992, 2005; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden, 1982; McKelvey, 1999; Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990; Prigogine, 1955; Putnam, 2000; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Weick, 1976) and chaos theories (Burt, 1992; Holland, 1992; Kauffman, 1993; Nicolis & Prigogine, 1977; Simon, 1962; Weaver, 1948). It means that leaders primarily leverage their networks when navigating linear and non-disruptive states in the change process.

Research Questions 1, 2, and 5 raise consideration for the current discourse of educational change leadership: A critical gap remains: when strong relational bonds are tested, leaders frequently lack the relational and structural conditions needed to navigate the strain. Attempts to activate and mobilize teams have sometimes destabilized communities, led to the departure of leaders and members, deepened discouragement, and extended recovery timelines. Leaders are not always sure who to turn to because, as they become more successful, they become more known for what they do rather than who they are in faith and identity; critical friendship is needed to guide the leader in moments of uncertainty. Some have sources of courage, hope, and equipping; failure to have sources of support delays leadership bounce back and has left some leaders wounded. There was not yet a sense that deeper pockets of grace was ubiquitous. To

break down the walls and build bridges, leaders need to resist the urge towards self-preservation that leads them to initial success and instead find significance by forming critical friendships, supportive mentors, and places to grieve up and out (Locke, 44:13). The work of change leadership cannot be done alone.

With the exception of Derek, Elise, Erica, Gerald, Jillian, Leon, and Lydia, there were no other instances of explicit references to change theorists, theories, or conceptual frameworks guiding participants' reconstruction of change in their learning communities. Such references most often occurred when participants cited more often *how* their change practice was informed rather than the ways in which it was guided through network-facilitated change during disruption. Instead, participants often relied on intuition, experience, and ad hoc problem solving to help their organizations respond with resilience when change initiatives were met with resistance or did not go as planned initially.

Social network theories (Weick, 1976) and discussion of influence in strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) provided the theoretical framework for analyzing participants' sentiments about their critical friendships, experiences of mentorship, cohort learning groups, and supportive relations leading to change. Some participants spoke of the connections they previously held that were beneficial for leading them into change but were not the same leaders sustaining them in their work today. Network connections grounded in mentorship relationships that supported school change initiatives often teetered between informal exchange and relational depth: connections built on information lacked a strong formational connection, and connections built on formation had insufficient contextual knowledge to promote mutual growth. By extension, Marcus, with his network of professionals across four different disciplines, revealed that he had people who were experts in different fields outside education leading to both his

formation and information, yet they did not have the unique experience of leading schools (49:13). A critical question arose here as to whether network connections are desired, beneficial, and who would be responsible for forging such relationships. The following recommendations are made: Boards are responsible for embedding this critical focus within contracts and establishing annual accountability processes to include complexity and network dynamics. Academic institutions need to provide explicit training in network development skills. Supporting educational associations and advocacy groups must prime conditions for emergence by responding to what leaders identify as their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and spiritual needs as these interface with the complex responsibilities inherent within change leadership.

Network Practices. Four main network practices were identified in Chapter Five's findings section that provide practical conclusions for Research Questions 1, 2, and 5: (i) Taking teams on road trips; (ii) Initiating informal partnerships; (iii) Bringing external voices in consultatively; and (iv) Participating in cohort learning initiatives. Within these respective distinctions, discovery or brokerage connections (Area, 2018) were cited most often, with the most frequent discussion thread related to leaders taking members of their teams to different schools or establishing new connections to mobilize new knowledge into their communities. Discovery and disruption connections were the most frequently embedded within narrative descriptions of the change process, with some underdeveloped descriptions of development and diffusion efforts within the change process localized in discussions of team mandates. It is reasonable to conclude that change leaders primarily position themselves to discover new ideas and bring them back to their teams to develop further; some leaders with specialized knowledge were themselves the developers, but more often, they outsourced the development connections to external consultants or internal experts, and the mid-level leaders became responsible for the diffusion. A key

consideration is whether leaders creating more opportunity for disruption connections may support greater adaptability at earlier stages of linear change phases and ready conditions for non-linear phases of change concurrently, to support more agility during states of disruption.

It is important to note that participants did not discuss their processes for identifying members of their teams to participate in different initiatives. This may signal the need for more robust social capital frameworks to better identify hidden talent that can otherwise be left dormant due to personal bias or lack of formational opportunities to draw out what may not yet be awakened. The gap in further descriptions about leaders better understanding social capital and leveraging the social capabilities within their organizations is explored in the preliminary idea about forming a network learning experience in the Change Leadership Institute.

A New Era of Whole-Scale Change. There is a new era of whole-scale change emerging. It is one that builds on Dannemiller et al. (2000) and Bunker and Alban's (2000) notion of the microcosm. However, this emerging type of system-change is also a highly contextualized, co-designed, and a differentiated expression. Schools working in greater decentralized partnerships with one another may be a key to solving context-based, expertise-required challenges built on mutuality and long-term collaboration. Arena's (2018) theory of social interconnectivity, moving from individual leader-driven brokerage to team based social interconnectivity, may be a key to Christian schools leveraging the human resources that may be limited within small schools and finding novel solutions to their problems. For example, Grant argued that sharing personnel across schools and working on initiatives together around instructional coaching may be mutually beneficial for his school and another one located close to prevent isolation and silos (16:03). This does not negate that Christian schools should continue to operate independently to some extent from one another due to legislation or that there is any argument for a Christian

school system. Yet the continuous improvement of one school has both a mutually beneficial and mutually litigious potential for schools that make them cautious about being too overly tied into the network but acutely aware that what it means to be a part of the network is that some elements of BC K-12 Christian schools' trajectories are mutually intertwined. This is part of seeing the mission to make disciples cast by Christ 2000 years ago in the most practical sense.

Professional Capital Perspectives. Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) work on professional capital leading to system-wide change, comprised of human, social, and decisional capital, was written for public school district audiences. Christian schools in BC operate as their own districts; how a district networks with other districts may be a key to addressing some of the key constraints in personnel, specialized knowledge and access, and leadership preparation. Still further, educational change theory for leaders has been predominantly related to questions of how to lead system change without using narrative and localized descriptions to help the leader in their formation, rather than only informing the leader. Christian school leaders need ontologically congruent theory that links the organization's health and spirituality to the leader's experience. Practices from the findings are explored in the implications section.

Networks and Complexity from 2D to 3D. Christian school leaders continue to see their schools operate in linear hierarchies and, thus, see their networks that way. Yet, what they shared about the power of negative resistance and positive forward moving resistance leads to the consideration that change leaders and network participants must move from 2D to 3D vision of operating within adaptive webs of relational and spiritual interdependence. Change is most mutually beneficial when it emerges from a dependent interconnectivity, enabling shared purpose to more freely circulate within traditional hierarchical organizational structures and beyond to more informal structures. What remains underdeveloped in practice is intentional

network formation and training where leaders (i) are formed theologically for network perspectives and mutually interdependent interconnectivity; (ii) can map their networks based on influence and not only formal roles; (iii) interpret their relational system as living systems of renewal rather than only seeing change for the purpose of intended outcomes, and instead measuring dispositional change. New metrics for change are needed. Complex adaptive and network theories move the metrics for change. This may help people experience more agency, freedom, purpose, reconciliation, healing, practical formation.

The Integration of Faith in Leadership Practice

The literature discussed in Chapter Two analyzed the relationship between theories of workplace spirituality, religious leadership, the integration of faith, teaching, and learning and the integration of faith in leadership practice. Conclusions in this section address Research Question 1's exploration of the current discourse related to the integration of faith in educational leadership practice, Research Question 2's exploration of critical gaps, and Research Question 3, 3a, and 3b's application of practical strategies that leaders can adopt to positively harness the energy of resistance.

Wright's (2022) operational definition of the integration of faith as "the process by which Christian theology, practical ministry skills, and character are combined and developed in a person for the goal of exercising ministry" (p. 4) was utilized throughout the data analysis phase. Theories of workplace spirituality have a wide range of definitions oriented around purpose, identity, growth, and belonging: (a) self-discovery (Illes & Zsolnai, 2015); (b) individual development (Khasawneh, 2011); (c) workplace culture (Pawar, 2009); (d) trust (Rahman et al., 2015); (e) purpose (Mitroff and Denton, 1999); and (f) reducing stress (Daniel, 2015). Yet, Fenwick and Lange's (1998) critique raised questions about the appropriation of spirituality in

the workplace. They argued that there were several tensions, including organizational spirituality for the purpose of leading to communal growth versus the purpose of market-driven improvement (p. 74). They critiqued organizational leaders who operate from a place of “enlightenment” rather than from a place of being “fellow spiritual sojourners” (p. 75). Fenwick and Lange (1998) argued that it is easy to overlook human struggle, despair, pain, and unmet expectations that provide real meaning to life and spiritual growth. From the study, a critical conclusion was that organizations need to continue to define themselves in their unchanging missional faithfulness but also need an adaptively faithful definition that communicates identity and purpose that is concurrently not fixed.

Christian Purposes of Change. Participants in the study spoke loudly about creating shared purpose leading to change ($n = 24, f = 36$), yet they spoke with an indoor voice when it came to how they were positioning themselves within the ongoing work of complexity and ambiguity fellow members of their teams experienced ($n = 14, f = 21$), particularly around resistance to change, but they whispered when it came to spiritual struggle, despair, and pain ($n = 4, f = 6$). In particular, Erica, Ezra, and Mary added to a theology of struggle with change leadership. Erica argued that there is plenty of discussion around flourishing through change, but she argued, what if the Biblical vision of transformation is much more about suffering, or when change is not going perfectly well, how does the leader look towards what God may be teaching the leader and their community; that, in essence, is what Erica and Ezra describe as the substance of Christian educational change as part of a non-linear sanctification process. While recent workplace theories challenged the predominant ontology in organizations of monolithic and heroic leadership, leading with the “why” and clear vision on its own appears to miss the importance of understanding and navigating informal networks, social influence, and emergent

dynamics that shift communities in their adaptive, non-static identity and purpose tectonically as change unfolds. Fenwick's (2010) work was an antecedent to this study on building organizational theory based on leaders' experiences of social dynamics in the parts of organizational spirituality that are constantly adapting but remaining faithful.

Faith Integration in Practice. While faith integration models have continued to develop from focusing on character, content, and concepts (Table 2.3, Synthesis of Biblical Integration in Learning Models), recent efforts have increasingly emphasized relational, experiential, and contextual dimensions that give meaning to complex educational practices (Figure 2.1). It was argued in Chapter Two for an even more comprehensive and integrative framework that was supported by narrative descriptions about practice. The key gaps from the empirical literature on faith integration, and Research Question 6 was that faith integration has been studied largely conceptually and predominantly related to worldview formation, thus leaving gaps in practitioner theories due to the lack of descriptions about leaders' interiority and how they make meaning their experiences of faith integration within shared transformation environments. Exploring with participants how their faith informed their change leadership practice revealed how the presence of faith animated what participants understood about how they experienced change leadership.

As discussed in Chapter Five, faith was experienced as a source and sustainer of sustenance throughout change. It formed communities of change, and it provided practical theological responses that leaders operationalized; yet there were several silences about the role of faith in change leadership practice that are explored here: (i) the content informing faith; (ii) the authority shaping faith-informed change leadership; (iii) the pursuit of unity across diverse expressions of faith. Leaders consistently highlighted the importance of prayer and discernment as foundational practices, often embedded within the rhythms of their teams and professional

learning structures, with some participants explaining formalized protocols. Concrete Biblical examples were sporadic, with Erica emphasizing Israel's dependence on God (47:47; 1:00:37), and Leon highlighting the prophetic ministry as a model for change (1:27:11). Grant shared the most robust theological basis for his view of Jesus' cruciformity and martyrological approach to change leadership in complexity. However, collectively, what is critical and missing was concrete articulation of faith causing leaders to be adaptive or reflect on the collision of Biblical principles concurrently with the organizational and systemic pressures they would have been experiencing. These absences leave a practical void: while leaders articulated the "why" of their faith, the "how," when it was challenging to integrate their faith, remains largely circumstantial, intuitive, and individual, highlighting the need for further structured reflection that could render more theories of faith-informed leadership in communal contexts to be more visible, traceable, and translucent, enabling others to inquire more into the inner decision-making lives of leaders.

Social and Spiritual Interconnectivity. In her study of workplace spirituality, Fenwick (2001) identified four spiritual tensions shaping the dominant discourse of Christian distinctiveness in educational communities: (i) church and state separation, (ii) cultivation of a contemplative inner life, (iii) differentiation between spirituality and religious faith in meaning construction, and (iv) the mobilization of diverse spiritualities in problem-solving. Across these tensions, the discourse consistently centered on sustaining Christian distinctiveness and attending to the wellbeing of change leaders. Fenwick and Lange's (1999) theoretical contribution to discussion about workplace spirituality and Hoven et al.'s (2024) call to reexamine prophetic voices in the Catholic Albertan diocesan research raise questions about the different spiritual roles that leaders play. Furthermore, Langer (2012) argued that both non-integrative and integrative postures matter. The findings of Chapter Five suggest that leaders are predominantly

taking integrative postures, that is, they see themselves as creating meaningful work leading to collective efforts for sanctification with their communities. The ongoing challenge remains with helping change processes to be facilitated by a leader with the partnership of members. To do so, there needs to be greater bridging between social science and theologically integrative expressions of communal roles from social capital perspectives. This discussion continues in the implications section to bring in Ephesians 4:11-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 to complement the four roles of social interconnectivity in Arena's (2018) "Adaptive Spaces" work to the different spiritual roles forwarded in the different spiritual giftings of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and healers.

Discussion of Key Findings and Relation to the Theological Discussion in Chapter 3

Chapter Three offered a theologically integrative dialogue between Biblical, theological, and social sciences perspectives on resistance to change in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Conclusions for Research Question 3, 3a, and 3b are provided here to examine the interaction between Biblical and theological perspectives and organizational dynamics, while considering resistance to change. Lindstedt (2022) defined resistance as a component of how leaders create resilience with their organizations to challenge groupthink and complacency (p. 34). Practices that created organizational resilience included risky dissention, challenging the status quo, going against prevailing wisdom and standard operational procedures, and introducing agile and antifragile practices (Lindstedt, 2022, pp. 14-15). However, in Chapter Three, from personal case study analysis, resistance to change was understood interpersonally and intrapersonally as a series of missed opportunities to walk with members of a community through their faith formation, content knowledge, fears, concerns, and unmet expectations, leading to greater social interconnectivity, which is made up of both bonded and bridged social connections (Arena,

2018). Resistance, a finite and non-renewable source, is part of the dissipated energy that can easily be lost within the change process.

Redeeming Resistance. Chapter Three analyzed Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) change resistance formula which has guided whole-scale organizational change efforts in the corporate context: $C = [DVF] > R$, whereby C (change) is a function of D (dissatisfaction with current context), V (vision of what is possible), F (first steps taken towards vision), with factors that must be greater than R (resistance). A key concern with Dannemiller et al.'s (2000) assessment was that resistance was defined as something to overcome. Chapter Three proposed an alternative equation to encompass more recent theory from organizational dynamics and Christian theological integration: $C = [D \times V \times L \times S \times R]$, whereby change endures as a function of the dissatisfaction (D), the alignment of vision with Christian mission or purpose (V), the leader's character, capabilities, and connections (L), the change process, practices, and supports (S), and the communal networked change efforts through discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption connections (Arena, 2018), leading to adaptive capabilities (R). Each of the respective components was embedded within the participant interview guide; reports of the frequency of these variables were discussed further in Chapter Five.

The findings of Chapter Five suggest that participants have a strong conceptual understanding of what their communities need with respect to the dissatisfaction (D) and general understanding of the importance of driving change in alignment with Christian mission or vision (V) as reflected in 24 out of 28 participant discussions ($f = 36$). There were no explicit references articulating that resistance was entirely negative for a community, so one conclusion is that healthy "grace sustaining" resistance (Marcus, 37:31) is beneficial for a community. Yet some participants ($n = 4, f = 6$) argued that resistance was still something to overcome, a main sort of

antagonist to change, rather than social signals to be interpreted that could bring greater understanding of how change was being experienced. Furthermore, only Gerald and Erica (27:29 & 56:32) examined how non-linear processes in suffering and chaos theory may actually better reflect what it means to lead organizational change from a Christian perspective.

Conclusions for Research Question 2 and analysis in Chapter Two revealed a critical gap in organizational theory that was bridged in Chapter Three: how leaders experience resistance to change from members of their community and the meaning they ascribe to those experiences was a dimension largely absent from phenomenological descriptions of educational change leadership. For example, Cherkowski et al.'s (2020) study of K-12 school leaders in British Columbia using a positive psychology lens studied flourishing, yet resistance was unexamined in the study despite the framework of looking at strong and weak ties supporting leaders' flourishing. How leaders leverage their supportive networks when they encounter resistance was also a critical area with only a handful of references to leaders drawing psychological and spiritual strength from their networks, or moving out of their network to seek better perspective, before mobilizing knowledge back into their network; almost all instances of leaders resolving resistance involved discussion of better engagement internally, members of their teams leaving, or practices that leaders themselves did; it raised questions about the potential isolation that leaders may be experiencing or the pressure to manage different types of actors in a heroic sense.

Resistance as Training in Renewal. Arena's (2018) model of the 4D's of social interconnectivity leading to change was one of the starting points for thinking about calling Christian schools into greater awareness of the different social roles and their transformative potential within structured environments. Every participant had a story and experience about resistance, "In what ways have you not experienced [resistance]?" explained Marcus facetiously

(37:31). To that, Marcus distinguished between the “positive, forward moving, grace-giving opposition” that comes from integrity and a shared commitment to improvement: “it’s iron sharpening iron” (37:31). In some instances, participants recognized that God would need to do the work of change, aligning with an overall motive in the Prophet Ezekiel’s experiences with resistant Israel; God would need to do the work of heart transformation (Ez. 36:26). In Chapter Three, there were several different social descriptions that were raised about Israel’s open opposition to change. Some parallels can be drawn to compare and contrast the feeling of resistance detailed in Chapter Five, drawing practical conclusions from Research Question 3c, which are highlighted in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Synthesis Comparison of Social Descriptions of Actors, Signals, Drivers, and Impacts from the Book of Ezekiel and Participant Interviews in Chapter Five

Ezekiel and Descriptions from Chapter Two	Change Actors from Chapter Five	Practices to Repurpose Resistance
Israel is deceived (Ezek. 35)	Squeaky wheels and vocal individuals (Derek, 14:11)	Engage in structured, dialogue aligned with organizational goals
Israel’s identity is misplaced (Ezek. 8:9-13)	Late adopters (Jillian, 19:13)	Provide purpose and rationales in small actionable steps
Israel’s hard-hearted forgetfulness (Ezek. 12:2, 20)	External pressures, mandates, stubborn, stuck in the past, traditional, dissenting voices, super toxic (Debra, 37:41)	Shape structured reflection to resurface past lessons, clarify values, learn from narratives of change
Israel’s refusal to repent (Ezek. 22; 33:30-32)	Openly oppositional (Paul, 28:35); sentinels of theological truth (Paul, 49:38); critics (Mary, 26:13); armchair principals (30:48)	Invite co-design, collaboration, and co-facilitated solutions

(table continues)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Synthesis Comparison of Social Descriptions of Actors, Signals, Drivers, and Impacts from the Book of Ezekiel and Participant Interviews in Chapter Five

Ezekiel and Descriptions from Chapter Two	Change Actors from Chapter Five	Practices to Repurpose Resistance
Israel's fearful rejection and loss (Ezek. 20:33-38)	Nostalgic, silent/passive resisters; pragmatic folks, cynics, the burned out, the undercurrent whisperers	Normalize change by building relationships and then share stories of resilience and faith
Israel's complicated obedience and only conditional loyalty (from Ezek. 1-36:26)	Martyrs, loyal mission supporters who oppose the means or the leader	Clarify values by distinguishing the non-negotiable goals from the flexible pathways
Israel's blind, ideological mistrust (Ezek. 36:17-23)	Signal: "We've always done it this way..."	Explore and surface feelings and assumptions and work towards writing a new shared narrative about the path forward
Israel's entrenched obstinance (Ezek. 12:2; 33:30-32)	Drivers: External pressures, refusal to adopt change, extreme rigidity (Monica, 38:36)	Design scenarios and case studies to anticipate entrenchment
Israel's prolonged rebellion and ruin (Ezek. 35, 37)	Impact: Soul-wearing, debilitating, edge of chaos and quitting (Debra, 17:27; Jillian, 19:13; Monica, 28:48)	Care for members, connect members across networks, learn together to expand stamina for change, continue to remind one another of school's mission as part of greater kingdom vision cast by Christ 2000 years ago

Resistance Training. Do leaders retain or lose a vision of Jesus' power in Philippians 2:3-11 when they encounter resistance? Teaching how to engage in positive, grace-filled resistance to ideas and constructively help people to get better at the work is of chief concern for this study on change leadership. There are five areas of practice that the study recommends for change leaders: (1) Structuring Resistance Dialogues; (2) Practicing the Disruptor Role; (3) Co-Designing Feedback Protocols Before Change Initiatives; (4) Facilitating Storytelling Circles Designed Around Shared Goals; and (5) Creating Shadow Teams and Rotating Advisory Groups.

1. **Structuring Resistance.** Teaching how to express resistance in a positive, grace-sustaining and forward-moving way is closely set within the same ilk as cultivating healthy Christian conflict transformation. However, teaching healthy resistance goes a step further by communicating that there are distinctly Christian ways of being with one another that should be engrained in the culture and not just related to the competency of the individual. This means that the change leader has a primary role to help others better understand their psycho-social response in stress and how to see that stress response as a healthy stimulant to produce stronger muscles that are exercised in community. While structures and protocols can be used to invite feedback, the deeper purpose of teaching resistance lies in the transformation of peoples' inner lives, part of the continued work of sanctification whereby resistant individuals see the greater kingdom vision coming alive. It encourages individuals to work through their emotions, reflect on their reactions to change, and enable their practices to be refined.
2. **Practicing the Disruptor Role.** As leaders see their communities as increasingly supporting the interaction and development of social dynamics, this practice positions individuals to become aware of their default social tendencies and safe, structured ways to challenge assumptions, ideas, or proposals. By playing the disruptor role, participants can provide critical perspectives that increase resilience and coherence of initiatives throughout both the linear and non-linear Process Change Zones. This approach transforms potential resistance into a more concentrated and collective force that has potential to be unifying. Teaching the disruptor role can take strong facilitation skills as the leader models and invites practice around questioning techniques, norm setting,

guiding mantras to direct healthy dialogue, and holds group members accountable for the expectations, directing teams towards goals rather than obstructing them.

3. **Co-Designing Feedback Protocols.** The next step would be that, once members of teams have an awareness of the social dynamics, self-awareness of their response in change, and have practiced different roles that they may not naturally default or tend towards, they would be mobilized as teams to have different social capabilities. Before launching any change initiative, or when caught in a state of disruption, leaders and community members rally together to identify protocols to solicit the right kind of resistance that might refine the ideas further. Protocols would include how input would be collected, discussed, and integrated into decisions. When protocols are co-designed, feedback becomes transparent and psychologically safe, signaling that participant voices are meaningfully engaged rather than superficially acknowledged. Such practices enable communities to interpret resistance not as a threat, but as a catalyst for collective strengthening, unity, and shared purpose.
4. **Facilitating Storytelling Circles.** At various points, participants need to be free to share personal experiences, insights, or concerns. Given that norms would be set and healthy dialogue designed, structured sessions enable mutuality and allow resistance to be shared in the form of narratives rather than only ideological confrontation. Leaders may link stories to shared goals, reflect on progress, and create constructive dialogue that encourages more flexible pathways to the goals.
5. **Creating Shadow Teams and/or Rotating Advisory Groups.** Establishing teams with clear names, identity, purpose, rules of belonging, representing stakeholders, and measuring growth metrics can be powerful ways of contributing alternative solutions as

they identify risks and propose improvements. It was briefly alluded to in Alan's discussion that most committees operate to check a box; however, he found his Occupational Health and Safety Committee to be a place of learning and a productive structure that staff depend on creating a better work environment. Rotating membership on teams prevents stagnation and shares responsibility. As the change leader models that dissenting voices across different parts of the school organization are valued for the sustainability of initiatives, pockets of innovation and transformation can exist outside of the explicit interaction with change leaders.

Engaging resistance proactively turns potential friction into a source of energy for a learning community. Practices such as the disruptor role, supported by systems and ways of being engrained in school culture, ensure that resistance moves beyond mere expression of feelings to become a constructive force towards new metrics for change in addition to the outcomes. Harnessing diverse perspectives and experiences strength both change initiatives and future collective capacity in the community to persist through disruption. Practical considerations for addressing resistance to change are organized in Table 6.2 for ease of application connecting Ephesians 4:1-16 into the posture/position.

In essence, leaders navigating change in Christian learning communities encounter a wide range of resistant actors whose behavior can derail change initiatives and also cripple leaders' capacity to enact change. These patterns mirror the spiritual struggle of Israel in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Israel's loss of purpose and identity obstructed its communal capacity for growth. Recognizing both the challenges and dormant potential in resistant actors, change leaders that become acutely aware of the source of resistance can transform negative, backward-

moving, harsh life-draining opposition into a source of insight, energy, and growth for faith-informed change leadership.

Table 6.2

Practice, Posture/Position, Perspective, and Protocol

Practice	Posture/Position	Perspective	Protocol
Seek to understand the source of resistance	Pastor/Shepherd: Listen and not solve or fix first; calm, non-anxious presence; the empathizer	Classify the type of resistance (fear, loss of control, lack of trust, discomfort, previous failure)	Create a resistance map like a seismic map where resistance is concentrated around individuals, teams, roles, or experiences to target support
Communicate the rationale	Apostle: Humble, inspirational, data and narrative-driven, with awareness of context; the visionary	Informal and regular check ins alleviate fears and mitigate against rumours	Multiple channels; tailor communication intergenerationally; repeatedly share key messages
Involve those predisposed to be resistant early in the process	Evangelist: Co-design, co-create, and collaborate; relationships built on mutuality; the strategist	Empower the champions, early adopters, or influencers to model desired behaviors	Establish teams with a clear, mission-aligned purpose, identity, and mandate that includes resistant members
Offer flexibility and support	Teacher: Patiently approachable; encourage experimentation without judgment about failure; the advocate	Recognize individual needs and balance accountability and support with collective wisdom practices	Provide training, coaching, mentoring, and resources; differentiate phased adoption or alternative pathways to the same goal
Address the signals and impact	Prophet: Observant, curious, proactive, discerning for noise; willing to surface uncomfortable truths and hold tensions; the disruptor	Monitor reactions, setbacks, and successes, treating it not as the whole story, but partial knowledge	Hold meetings and checkpoints to assess progress overall and with teams mobilized

Implications for Educational Practice

Despite ongoing change initiatives in Christian schools, empirical study serves to expand understanding of where productive energy for change resides and what is distinct about how that energy is generated theologically, mobilized relationally, and shared communally. Such understanding can reverse energy and momentum that often dissipates rather than sustains faithful and adaptive transformation in Christian communities and support greater leader and community resilience towards change in disruption. Research Question 7 on the meaning of educational change within BC K-12 Christian schools led to a key implication from the dissertation study in the provisional framework for designing a Christian Change Leadership Institute that would be facilitated by applying the recommendations and findings from the dissertation study. Several of the recommendations could be taken on within informal practices at school-based, school-to-school, or network supported levels.

Formation of Change Leaders. The results of this study reported on three supporting dimensions of change not previously explored together, including the relationship between resistance to change, network connections, and faith integration in the essence of educational change leadership. Due to the unique demands placed upon Christian school administrators and the multi-faceted expectations, it is important that efforts to equip leaders are informed by leaders' experiences and detailed within context. Not all leaders expressed that they or their communities were thriving through change.

The findings of Chapter Five identified that change is both some of the formative substance of God's process of sanctification and also a process unfolding within leaders' callings. It revealed that the essence of future preparation for change leadership depends on preparing leaders in three critical dimensions that would shape the Change Leadership Institute:

(i) faith and identity; (ii) knowledge and skills, and (iii) network strength. Building network capacity is not possible through solo efforts and heroic strength. It will need to start at the school level with senior leaders inviting emerging and future leaders to develop change leadership dispositions. Support from network associations and academic institutions would be the second layer. Third, the infrastructure for pan-Canadian Christian school connections is needed because independent schools operate in isolation and lack the formalized systems that lead to the dissemination of best practices. This three-tiered approach of school-level, cross-Christian independent schools, and nation-wide infrastructure ensures that change leadership is localized and also amplified. Several implications can be drawn for equipping change leaders to lead change within BC K-12 Christian schools.

The three critical dimensions are unpacked next: Forming the Faith and Identity of Leaders. As leaders step forward to navigate towards their intended goals amid uncertainty, courage and humility emerge as the defining characteristics of the change leader. Change leadership requires the strength to envision transformation, make difficult decisions, and persist through uncertainty, yet it is equally important to be able to listen, learn, and place different voices above personal recognition. The collaboration between courage and humility enables leaders to navigate resistance and complexity, but the listening and learning posture enabled communities to grow in character and faith. For example, Debra reflected on the meaning of faith shaping her work:

Reflecting, trusting, and leaning on God's faithfulness and being present and alert to what God is about in the moment, zooming in and zooming out, kind of cadence that I would see in that practice . . . Just remembering that because I can become so focused on, 'What's God doing in my community? What's God doing in my staff? What's God doing here? What's God doing over here?' And [instead] being like, 'What's he doing in me?' This is all moving back to change who I am. He's using my work to impact this place but actually to impact me. I can forget that I'm being shaped through all of this. I'm being worked on, not just shaping. Someone once told me years ago, it was about choosing the path that

keeps me soft as a person. What's going to help me actually soften more as a person and become softer. (1:05:22)

When asked to explore an example or further description about what it means to be soft, Debra continued to explain the following, which is paraphrased here:

It is about cultivating a personal permeability, remaining soft-hearted and accessible. Some become so overly focused on pushing through and getting things done that they become rigid, meaning they are hard to influence, hard to collaborate, hard to work with. As leaders, we are called to be courageous, energetic, and action-oriented. We are people who move heavy mounds with our strength and courage. But the real courage is whether we will stay open to being moved by others. Will we listen deeply? Will we truly see others in what they experience? Leadership culture has been about the highly driven, competitive, and even aggressive, qualities that can be valuable, but it takes conscious practice not let our own ego, achievement, or busyness take over. The aim is to stay accessible and present; the change leader's strength and vulnerability should be felt. It's tempting to "toughen up" but the harder and braver path is to have one's heart malleable to the work God is doing on all of the change projects in the community. (1:07:01)

Change leaders are not only agents of transformation, but those holding within them narratives of Christ's humility and incarnational change narrative. Ephesians 4:11-16 argued that the equipping is for the purpose of serving. By extension, Philippians 2:1-9 calls members of Christ's body into Christ-like humility by being united with Him in tenderness, compassion, and one-mindedness. The character of change leaders is born out of self-emptying service, costly at times, rather than built on self-promotion.

Practically, this means leading from listening, discerning calling of self and others, creating shared discernment processes, sacrificial care for members, and character demonstrated in strength and permeability. In doing so, change leaders' presence models the transformative agency that is alive in others, through Christ, that they seek to cultivate. Much of what participants detailed were moments of performing change, but there were some interludes where participants reconstructed moments of practice. Change must continue to be practiced by leaders and not only performed.

What helps leaders to have faith and depend more on God's agency in change? Broadening personal and collective interaction with different spiritual disciplines to read scripture around the Old Testament Prophets, mentorship, engaging in training around Christian conflict management, learning from the art of writing compelling stories, and cultivating greater self-awareness were some of the rhythms that formed change leaders. The literature explored in Chapter Two on theories of Biblical integration emphasized the reciprocal relationship between faith being lived out and practice changing inward; however, there was limited discussion about changes in the leader's understandings of personal faith, except some more implicit references to depending on God more through change, rather than a refinement process taking place within a community (Holmes, 2001). Research on faith and leadership models highlight the multidirectional nature of faith integration, where leaders both express their faith in action and are theologically formed through interactions with their communities, creating a feedback loop that strengthens both character and communal capacity for change.

However, a critical gap emerged in participants' reflections. They predominantly described a one-directional model of integration: Biblical values or practices flow outward from themselves and into their communities. Participants rarely articulated the complementary process built on mutuality by which faith was an emergent condition moving from the community into the leader's understanding. This often pointed to examples and evidence leaders saw in others. It suggests that, while the outward expression of Biblical values is prevalent, the reciprocal formation of leaders through their community, central to a more multidirectional integration model, remains underdeveloped in practice and reflection, requiring further description.

Forming the Knowledge and Skills for Change Leadership. Change leaders need an interdisciplinary skill set. Some participants such as Debra and Elise called it the "soft skills"

(Debra, 1:07:01; Elise, 56:15, 58:33). The predominant theoretical framework most evident through the discourse analysis was transformative leadership, which emerged in 24 out of the 28 participant interviews. Participants discussed leading from a clear and bold vision, purpose, or compelling “why” and rationale. In the absence of the vision for change emerging from denominational perspectives, with 27 out of the 28 participants working in either interdenominational or multi-denominational communities, the leader appears to step into the void requiring charisma and clarity of vision. Consequently, vision alone in many circumstances is not enough to generate the energy needed for change. It is important to acknowledge that one can have vision but lack character, skills, or connections to enact vision.

The Connected Change Leader. As identified in the Findings of Chapter Five, the participants that characterized some of their experiences as leading lonely lamented some parts of what it is like to be a change leader, particularly Heads of School/Superintendents that feel the need to embrace a level of discreteness to do the work ($n = 10, f = 12$). The by-product is higher feelings of loneliness as they lead change. There is a cost to being a change leader. While most leaders would love a mentor figure, few step into those roles. What is needed most is for leaders to find professional connections where one can honestly present process and practices and having members in job-alike positions share feedback on the work being done, while having contextual knowledge and knowledge of the change leader’s character. Strong ties don’t prove to be as strong when chaos hits and weak ties proved to be more significant for the leader themselves and their communities.

Informal network analysis across BC Christian independent schools, where the research was primarily conducted, would serve to reveal potential gaps in energizers/diffusers and disruptors; there appears to be many gifted in the area of building bridges and discovering new

knowledge, but whether it is a collective capacity issue or gap in personnel, network analysis may reveal how different roles in Christian community might be embraced.

As such, to increase the emergence of energizers, more informal opportunities for leaders to connect would benefit Christian school leaders and stimulate greater friendship formation. It was surprising not to hear more about leaders bridging connections between other schools; leaders held tightly to their strongly bonded relationships. To increase the emergence of developers and designers, this work needs to be better understood in a collaborative sense and in partnership to some extent with the use of artificial intelligence. Network events for leaders might stimulate the kinds of connections around different change initiatives for emerging leaders who need to be invited into spaces. A key barrier is the cost for covering a teacher's classes. School leaders are invited to look at their marketing budgets and their leadership development budgets and see if those line items reflect a kingdom-network mindset. Leaders must ask whether the cost of teacher coverage is a barrier to the emergence of future change leaders. They also need to identify budgetary barriers that must be removed to make leadership development a strategic, year-to-year priority. This may involve distinguishing daily teacher release or coverage budget line items from network relationships or leadership development line items. It could also involve innovation around a sponsored fund to allow for leaders to be sent to networking events and brought alongside current leaders to practice developing network connections. Addressing the shortage of aspiring leaders requires confronting the sobering reality that many current leaders will need to leave our schools in BC. Some may return, but others will not. The strength of networks will be tested. It should bring schools a great deal of humility, surprise, and joy when God calls people in new ways to make disciples leading to more transformation.

While a formal network analysis has not been conducted and definitive conclusions cannot be drawn, it can be reasonably speculated that school-based solutions for leadership development are the primary means of filling the pipeline but alone are insufficient. Leaders must engage with broader networked approaches to cultivate leadership growth, beginning at the most basic level and moving out into the outer reaches of the network:

Level I: Individually. Why am I present in this particular community and how can I cultivate adaptive faithfulness within my Christian school?

Level II: School-level. What systems can we establish to prepare leaders for guiding change and responding faithfully to adaptive challenges in a way that gets engrained in their ways of being a leader?

Level III: BC and Canadian Network. What is my role in advancing God's mission through developing change leaders and communities of change? How am I called to develop informal friendships, participate in learning cohorts, bridge connections for emerging leaders, seek guidance from a spiritual director, counselor, or consultant, and contribute to greater social interconnectivity across the BC and Canadian network of school leaders? Within my network, am I a discoverer, developer, diffuser, disruptor, or some combination?

Level IV: Deeper in Community. How do I cultivate practices that form a communal dependence on God while leading through change?

Level V: Deeper in the Network. Which system-wide interventions, undertaken with faith and discernment, will strengthen schools' participation in networked solutions and may have both measurable and non-measurable long-term impacts on preparation for current and future change leaders?

Participants identified that it was not sufficient for themselves, members of their leadership teams, or emerging leaders to have only one or two key connections that supported them personally through a change initiative, but multiple levels of strong and weak ties. To facilitate change, moving from the leader's most intimate connections, leaders need (a) Micro: a supportive family members and a stable home context; (b) Meso: courage and capabilities to engage in healthy dialogue and conflict with leadership team members, built on shared trust, mutuality, accountability, norms, expectations, support, and collective wisdom that is taught and learned; (c) Macro: networks and partnerships beyond the immediate team that operationalize Arena's (2018) social interconnectivity through discovery, development, diffusion, and disruption connections. However, the findings suggest that change leaders tend to depend heavily on discovery connections in the Pre-Change Zone, personally lead development teams by communicating a strong vision and rationale for change, and identify key influencers to spread ideas quickly. In practice, this produces a largely one-way approach to discovery networks: leaders take teams to discover, they bring back ideas to implement with their team as an authoritative expression; Joshua highlighted some mutual benefits when his school was able to reciprocate the sharing with other schools as they positioned themselves in such a way to mentor other leaders and schools (30:08). Furthermore, discovery connections would be especially valuable for initiating Christian curricular change by reaching outside one's immediate network into contexts beyond North America. This raises questions about how schools allocate resources to build network relationships that extend beyond individual leaders and include their teams over many years.

Development Connections. Developer connections were the least frequently discussed from Arena's (2018) 4D connections. One possible reason for this is in the general design of the

research interview to hear about how participants led change initiatives. However, very little was discussed about members of the school community stepping out and utilizing skills they had to architect different elements in support of a change initiative. Instead, participants generally described that the work was done together in teams, possibly neglecting a critical aspect that the change leader played the role of the developer, an external consultant was needed in the role of developer, or that part of the change process typically took place rapidly, almost so seamlessly and inconspicuously that the leaders did not draw attention to the innerworkings of those moments. Very little was mentioned about members of teams that played developer roles, and this would be an area that change leaders appear to largely control, with many of the change initiatives shared having impressions of being top down.

Disruption Connections. Disruption connections were highlighted as participants reconstructed surprising moments of joy or delight when invited to consider any positive outcomes that have emerged from resistance to change. Almost invariably, participants described instances in which resistant members of their teams experienced heart and mind conversions or when challenging situations that were going poorly ultimately benefitted the organization, because the resistance revealed something that was overlooked. Participants tend to engage with resistance from a place of obligation because of values related to gaining input from each of their stakeholders, rather than actively pursuing different perspectives that might not be their own within what presents as non-consultative Change Process Zones. A key insight is that inviting disruption perspectives and designing protocols strengthen the outcomes and more dispositional metrics of change. Change leaders need to be gritty and courageous enough during moments of turbulence within the Threshold/Disruption Zone and Unsettled/Transition Zone to tactfully engage with resistance even when off balance. As Warren, a campus principal, suggested,

developing a representational team of members trained to raise concerns with their leaders can be an effective team-oriented practice to harness resistance in a healthy way. The goal is not simply to gather everyone's input for the purpose of being fair and distributive, but to rigorously test ideas, strengthen team members' abilities to surface tensions, clarify expectations, and practice co-ownership, co-design, collaboration, thereby cultivating collective capacity for change. In essence, a gap was that leaders needed to see building capacity or improving teams as the system-wide engine for adaptive change in an age of increasing speed and complexity.

Discovery and Diffusion Connections. Notably, diffusion connections were predominantly discussed in the Initiating/Triggering Process Zone and Integrating/Navigating Zone, rather than in the Threshold/Disruption Zone or Unsettled/Transition Zone. This pattern may suggest several possible interpretations: (i) that leaders struggle to distribute influence through other members of their teams; (ii) leaders need to build capacity and trust with middle and emerging leaders to release control; or (iii) the perceived loss of control drives leaders to retain their power and influence, rather than leverage their network influence or social capital to facilitate adaptive change. Discovery connections could be particularly helpful for some of the initiatives around forming Christian curricular approaches outside one's network or inviting leaders or job-alike leadership teams from other schools sponsored by the network association into change initiatives to provide formative feedback on a team professional learning day for example, rather than only receiving summative feedback from those that experience the outcomes.

The Social and Spiritual Capabilities in Communities of Change. Practically, the “why” for investing in future leadership development should begin with Christian school Boards of Directors, not solely at the Head of School/Superintendent or K-12 Principal level. Education Boards can strengthen the way they design leadership contracts by recognizing that a change

leader's lifelines often extend beyond the school context. Boards might include provisions in the contract that expect leaders to mentor emerging leaders, focusing elements of annual and long-term strategic plans to allocate certain amount of funds to equip and develop change leadership. The mandate for leadership development should then extend to support network associations and academic leadership institutions. Prioritizing the growth of emerging leaders even before leaders have full experience or availability serves both the broader Christian educational community and the greater work of kingdom service.

BC Known for A Culture of Leadership Development. Chapter Three on the Theological Integration detailed what went right and what went wrong in a change initiative I facilitated as a leader of a BC K-12 Christian school. It described the breakdown in process, tools/skills, process, and people relationships. This study mostly focused on people, related to poor cultures around leadership, leaders not modeling or inspiring a case for change, not casting vision, or inadequate team or network collaboration. They are just some of the reasons that leaders revealed from their experiences of why change initiatives fail but also why they are successful in spite of the leaders' best or worst efforts. Process reasons are less about analysis paralysis and more related to disruption, multiple competing projects and methods, and contextual challenges were notable. Skills or practice related areas were not so much under scrutiny, but leaders highlighted how their lack of knowledge, the rewards, inadequate employee coaching and training, and new capabilities not developed, were lacking. Thus, failures occurred either due to the nature of the launch, the design of the change, the scale, or the ability to sustain. However, complex adaptive thinking helped frame an idea that changes also failed because leaders assume linear, controllable pathways rather than adapting to embrace the unpredictable,

emergent nature of system reform. Without space for feedback, adaptation, and re-organization, initiatives stalled when either the conditions, the stakeholders, or unforeseen interactions arose.

Will the Christian educational network I serve be remembered as a place that cultivated the next generation of leaders, practicing meaningful solutions amid today's complexity challenges? Leaders need to train the teams they oversee to identify the social dynamics they perceive and how relationships, influences, context, and informal networks shape how their leadership is experienced. Network skills are needed, including active group listening, conflict resolution, collaborative decision making, and protocols related to feedback loops within shared decision-making and discernment teams. The key practices would be to (1) Earn trust fast: From small, early expressions of character, competency, or connection, trust leads to greater collective risk taking needed for whole-scale change; (2) Leverage influence: Recognizing who shapes opinions and decisions through informal network analysis is a pre-step in planning for change; (3) Persuade with purpose: Provide identity and purpose to connect the "who" ontologically with the "why" epistemologically; (4) Lead together: Harness strengths and resolve conflicts to strengthen teams; and (5) Read the room: Stay aware of hidden dynamics, unwritten assumptions, subtle tensions that are easily overlooked to respond to the adaptive challenges within the change initiatives. Recognizing that control has a cost, it does not mean that leaders have to give up responsibility, there needs to be an understanding from leaders that the law and the old covenant was to be Israel's teacher; however, the new covenant in Christ with the sending of the Spirit is a ministry of freedom, "[We] are being transformed into his image with every increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:7-18). The theological basis for the Change Institute would be set within the Biblical story of change, impacting how leaders think about mission and the inner life. As previously discussed, change

leaders need to hold onto the prophetic promise in Ezekiel 36:26-27 with the reality of 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 that God's Spirit is with them to enact transformation they cannot do on their own, and his strength will be sufficient.

The Holy Spirit's Change Agency. More focused analysis indicated that across 12 interviews, there were 13 unique references to the role of the Holy Spirit that were grouped into six main categories. The Holy Spirit was experienced as (1) An active guiding agent in decision-making, helping leaders and teams discern, test, and confirm whether actions were Spirit-led rather than human driven; (2) Dependable and reliable, emerging through prayer as the One on whom leaders could rely on in the process zones of disruption or unsettledness; (3) A source of interruption and disruption, sometimes prompting, reorienting, and providing unexpected insights and causing communities to enter into disruptive states; (4) The former and transformer, shaping the inner life, comforting, and acting as a close advocate in times of resistance; (5) The unifier in mutuality by bringing together a collective sense of team and shared purpose to operationalize vision; and (6) The empowerer and sustainer, imparting grace, courage, and energy to accomplish what could not be done without God's strength. Taken together, these experiences of the Holy Spirit reveal God's animating presence and agency within change initiatives. Leaders could not always name specific outcomes, but they clearly recognized the Spirit's guiding, interrupting, forming, unifying, and empowering work in and through them. The leaders' participation in God's transforming agency reflected the promise of Ezekiel 36:26, evidenced in the deeper interior awareness that they themselves had been changed for leading change.

The Complicated Labyrinth. And still further, there were experiences that were distinctly related to identity markers. Women felt isolated from mentors. My dissertation supervisor Dr.

Eguizabal helped me recognize that it was not a glass ceiling but a complicated labyrinth that women were experiencing as they sought or conceded to not finding mentors (October 1, 2025). The male leaders appeared to have more clear and linear pathways into leadership. The female leaders articulated non-linear, interrupted, and complicated pathways and stressors in their positions and career pathways. While Mary among other female leaders would have loved to mentor other female leaders, she conceded that it was just too idealistic and not possible for her to actively seek a mentor and be mentored while holding multiple responsibilities personally and professionally.

Harnessing the Energy of Resistance. Leaders did not provide as much discussion in the interviews on how to harness the energy of developers, diffusers, or discoverers to live more fully into their unique social capabilities. For example, Logan, a Head of School/Superintendent, argued that his role is to help his leadership team members become aware of how others experience their leadership. This study was designed around individual experiences, but there would be considerable insight generated from focus groups around leadership team efforts leading to change that may present additional considerations about the relational capacity of teams. Consequently, what might appear as rebellion, can, in some cases, actually be healthy resistance that reflects a deeper need for discernment about faithfulness, identity, and the perceived continuity of God's purposes within a community. Disruptors, challengers, prophets, and contrarians are all part of the body of Christ. It is recommended that leaders become more familiar with Arena's (2018) approach to different social roles, the strengths, liabilities associated, as well as other models of organizational working dynamics. Taking intentional time within teams to identify and practice the 4Ds of social interconnectivity may lead to cultivating

the four productive dispositions. By learning to identify new sources of innovation from within, teams can produce work that reflects excellence and faithful stewardship of giftings.

Contributions from Ephesians 4:1-16. Chapter Three specifically looked at the prophetic and shepherding change leadership roles. From the same Spirit, different gifts are given. Organizationally, Arena's (2018) 4D's of social interconnectivity connect with examples of change leadership in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel as well as Ephesians 4:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, linking social and spiritual roles. I am indebted to Pastor Chris de Monyé of Village Church in Langley, British Columbia for opening up the Scripture passage of Ephesians 4:1-16 at our staff retreat (Personal Communication, October 10, 2025). He reminded our Christian learning community that our equipping is in different roles. To take his model further, the findings from my study reveal that change leaders are not only needing equipping in social interconnectivity but spiritual interconnectivity. Chapter Three discussed the shepherding and pastoring role of the change leader, one who creates safe pastures and tends the flock (Ezek 34). Chapter Two and some of the dimensions from Chapter Five related to the liberating and disruptive dynamic of change leaders in the prophetic work and imagination needed for communities to change. There is also the apostolic role of system leaders that live into a transformative leadership perspective of improving and reforming transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004).

For some context, our school community has come to embrace change over longer, multi-year efforts. It has taken us three years to walk through our Core Values of Connect, Thrive, and Equip and ensure staff know how the core values inform our culture and shared expression of faith. Each year, we design a spiritual retreat to help our staff reflect on and practice our core values. Pastor Chris de Monyé argued that, individually and as an organization, we have

different spiritual roles of Apostle, Teacher, Shepherd (Pastor), Evangelist, and Prophet. On our own, we lack the full agency to minister to others, and, by extension in the thematic language of this study's findings, to experience an adaptive faithfulness. Together, with each of the different roles operating for the benefit of the church and world, we start to look more like the relational network, which is the body of Christ. However, it is Jesus who is the one that perfectly is true Apostle, Teacher, Prophet, Shepherd (Pastor), and Evangelist. By extension, what Pastor Chris revealed was not only a model of spirituality, but a complexity and network science response. Consequentially, when change leaders, equipped with their various social and spiritual capabilities, recognize how God has equipped them in faith and purpose, they can lead from their limitations because there are others positioned within their network to facilitate change.

Pastor Chris took this further and argued that organizations also have tendencies towards Biblical Foundations, the Inner Life, and Mission. Christian learning communities that have a strong Biblical Foundation and Mission need to be aware that their cultures may promote burnout. Strong emphasis on Biblical Foundations and the Inner Life can lead to apathy with no tangible outworking of faith. Over focus on the Inner Life and on Mission, neglecting Biblical Foundations, can lead to a shallow faith. Change leaders and their communities need to protect themselves from the change that they are aspiring towards by becoming aware of the burden they place on members of their community. They need to grow in Christian relationality with God, who wants real relationship with people, not only create connections for the sake of accomplishing change. And the mission of the Christian schools is a participation in God's kingdom mission cast 2000+ years ago, which cannot be divorced from the mission to disciple learner in the current cultural moment. Whether the change leader finds themselves operating from one of the social or spiritual roles, leaders need to cultivate a Biblical foundation, inner life,

and find themselves within the bigger kingdom mission revealed through relational communities and networks.

One practice for leadership teams to develop better awareness, social, and spiritual interconnectivity is to have teams map themselves out on a shared space to see how the body of Christ reflects the unique giftings leading to change. For those struggling to relate to those different roles, we proposed having others identify what they have seen in one another. I wish I would have known this going into the curricular change initiative in Chapter Three, but it brings great hope that I intend to share with others moving forward, knowing what I have learned.

Changing Change Perspectives from Firefighting to Fire kindling. Debra said that the fire in her collapsing school was crushed down, but God can take the embers and restore. Communities, even in states of decline, collapse, impending doom, mission drift, and loss of identity, whether they know it or not, need to harness emotional, social, and relational patterns and energy of resistance; this is a spiritual practice of “gathering” what seems to be broken, burned up in the ash from the fire, and experiencing the Ezekiel 37 vision of dry bones being brought to life. One of the dominant plotlines in education has been about leaders fixing problems, which in essence, has been about fixing communities and people who were operating under broken systems. A more redemptive approach from the monolithic and heroic view of leadership that change leadership is about solving problems but doing so through collaborative partnership. In Lewin (1954), Kotter (1991), and Dannemiller et al. (2000), it is about getting the right people in the room to effect change by getting people unstuck, working together in coalitions, and reflecting the microcosm of the organization. However, a critical finding from this study has been to consider how we measure the strength of the collaborative partnership leading to change. This should be a question that critical friends and network groups are invited

to ask. People are not problems to be fixed. Suffering schools are not fires to be put out. Broken systems are not sinking ships to rescue. Leaders do need to understand the sobering reality of the schools they work in as they see the grave nature of failure in their schools. Yet the fixation on fixing problems can be a distraction to the real goal of leaders focusing on improvement and studying what is working rather than directing change towards what is not working. It is a workplace spirituality and culture discussion that needs to follow. There is an imbalance of despair that leaders may face if they spend their time focused on perceived problems rather than going with their goers.

Personal Implications for a System-Wide Change Initiative Proposal. Finally, God has been placing on my heart as a change leader the opportunity to expand network connections and grow more interdependent linkages across Christian schools for many years. Participants argued that the main structural hole was between Christian school leaders and leaders that operate within similar Christian school contexts in other geographic locations across Canada and internationally (Burt, 1992); participants envisioned what it would be like to experience other Canadian Christian educational contexts and how that may contribute to their wellbeing. I feel a great deal of responsibility to bring leaders together to help new and emerging leaders connect with people across my participant sample in mutually beneficial ways.

As such, I have been designing a Christian school Change Leadership Institute that would guide leaders to plant the seeds of improvement by sharing stories of what has been working in their schools but also by working on faith and identity, content knowledge and competencies, and collaborative capabilities. This work would be done in partnership with network associations, universities, and current leaders serving in BC K-12 Christian schools called into the multiplication of change leaders. Given the phenomenological nature of this study and

proposal for new metrics related to change, the learning targets for the Change Institute are dispositional (Table 6.3). Uhl-Bien's (2023) work was instrumental in framing the Change Institute's direction. Leaders need to be apprenticed to one another through communities of practice. The institute would invite current and emerging leaders to focus on formation driven change rather than only information driven change. Participants would compare and contrast experiences of linear and non-linear change, explore how leaders experience resistance, examine practices that positively use the energy of resistance, map social and theologically integrative discussions of roles, practice unlearning old habits of change and patterns of entrenchment, create conditions for emergence, and receive feedback from one another. The Institute would serve as a space for practical theological and change leadership formation, bringing together Christian educational leaders to draw strength from past failures, advancing the dissertation's aim to strengthen networks and prepare Canadian Christian school leaders for future change efforts with their communities. While I am energized to do this work initially, I recognize that the project must not only fall to me. Support for this work is needed from network associations, academic institutions, and professional development organizations. Some of the work could interface with already existing leadership development efforts across North America. Pan-Canadian connections would need to be established.

Table 6.3*Christian Change Leadership Institute Dispositions*

Uhl-Bien's (2023) Four Complexity Mindsets	Mirchandani's (2025) Change Leadership Dispositions
Adaptive Mindset: From the order mindset to the adaptable <i>Shift:</i> Moving from managing certainty and predictability into embracing uncertainty and adaptation	Discernment Mindset: Outcome-Focused, Adaptative (BE STILL) Change leadership involves recognizing God's call to reflect on social dynamics, adapt responsively, and guide iterative transformation. How to practice this productive disposition: • Engage in structured discernment protocols (pause, reflect, learn together, listen to the Spirit in community). • Embrace differentiated change pathways rather than retreat to defensive-order response. • Practice learning leadership to create adaptive capacity. • Anticipate, normalize, and engage resistance strategically throughout the change process.
Collaboration Mindset: From the top-down authoritative leaders to shared authority <i>Shift:</i> From command and control to mutuality, middle leadership, and followership.	Relational Mindset: Co-Designed, Co-Facilitated, Co-Taught (BE WITH) Change leadership involves cultivating relational influence by creating environments where expectations, support, and collective wisdom are practiced. How to practice this productive disposition: • Navigate the dynamic between leadership and followership, guiding and being guided. • Cultivate self-awareness and invite critical friends to speak into one's practice. • Apprentice to Christ's incarnational model of humility, courage, and self-giving leadership. • Teach and practice different forms of communal conversations to respond to emergent needs.

Table 6.3 (continued)*Christian Change Leadership Dispositions*

Uhl-Bien's (2023) Four Complexity Mindsets	Mirchandani's (2025) Change Leadership Dispositions
Emergence Mindset: From the reductionist mindset to seeing interrelated patterns Shift: Moving from linear views and siloed change to embrace patterns of emergence	Kingdom Mindset: Mission Committed, Seeing Renewal Across a System (FIND OTHERS) Change leadership extends beyond immediate outcomes; envisioning renewal that permeates both internal school structures and external networks transforms the whole system. How to practice this productive disposition: • Recognize moments of systemic tension and leverage the edges of order and chaos for innovation. • Identity and activate different social and spiritual roles and actively engage their strengths (4Ds and Ephesians 4:1-16, 1 Cor 12:17-18) • Channel strength from other pockets of innovation, both within and beyond learning communities. • Envision new, collaborative approaches to sustainable partnerships across global networks.
Outcome Mindset: From narrow, efficiency-driven performance measures with rigid pathways to differentiated pathways Shift: Moving to new holistic metrics of partnership between observable and dispositional outcomes	Transformational Hope Mindset: A Telos of Renewal, Freedom, and Resilience (FIND HOPE) Change leadership is sustained by connecting work to God's redemptive purposes and allowing for cycles of renewal to unfold at different times throughout an organization's lifespan. How to practice this productive disposition: • Focus on measuring meaningful outcomes (faith, relational connections, and mission impact) rather than only compliance metrics. • Invest in leadership resilience and ongoing soul care. • Equip middle leaders to step into complexity and drive adaptive responses. • Combine both narrative and quantitative data to share stories of individual and communal transformation in moments of despair or uncertainty.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations that emerged throughout the research process that are identified. In the data analysis phase, the trustworthiness of the thematic analysis could have been strengthened through intercoder protocols by having additional team members independently code the data and compare the results. However, due to the limited availability of colleagues qualified as qualitative researchers to assist, participants were provided with full transcripts and Composite Vignettes as a form of validation to ensure that their experiences were fairly and accurately represented.

Within the participant selection parameters, Heads of School/Superintendents, Principals, and Directors were all included in the sample. While participants shared many similar characteristics, the findings section in Chapter Five reported several differences in participants' experiences related to the way they understand the scope of their work, their role descriptions, or the way they use their positional authority. The context that they represented was not always able to be provided to add a fuller description of the participants' lived experiences, yet there were more distinctions to be made within groups and across groups. This decision was intended to protect participants' confidentiality. The other factor was that participants in small, mid-sized, and large schools were all represented in the sample. Participants in smaller schools acknowledged how social dynamics would likely look different in a larger school because of access to different members within and across one's community. In essence, they were suggesting that change is experienced differently based on proximity and saturation within one's network; thus, social mobility limitations exist in a greater way for leaders of small schools.

It would have been valuable for participants to construct a network map of their perceived position within the school's organizational structure, focusing on patterns of influence.

Visualizing these relational pathways could have surfaced often-hidden dynamics and comparisons, revealing how human capital and social capital function differently in shaping change leadership. Furthermore, it may have also supported the theoretical foundations to have participants map out how they see themselves positioned within their network of Christian schools. Given the phenomenological nature of the study and natural constraints and delimitations around time, it was not possible to address every dimension related to different roles that participants see themselves in; however, the conclusions suggest that there was sufficient evidence that further research around the way participants understand their social capital and role would be beneficial.

The timing of the interviews within the school year warrants brief discussion. Of the 28 interviews conducted, 24 took place in May and June, which are the concluding months of the BC school year. Four interviews occurred over the summer. The research happened to be situated near the end of the school calendar, which enabled participants to reflect on recent experiences of change. Consequently, there may have been a temporal bias present as the conclusions drawn were limited by the timing of the data collection. Consequentially, examples participants shared, particularly those referring to changes within the school year that were still in progress, may have reflected a sense of closure when further dimensions of change may have continued to unfold, leading to either more positive or negative interpretations over time. It was beyond the scope of this study to collect multiple snapshots of participants' experiences across the school year or over many years when change may be felt or experienced differently based on time differentiation. However, it is important to acknowledge that the timing of data collection can shape phenomenological accounts and a contextual factor for interpreting the findings.

A dimension of organizational change dynamics not explored in the interview protocol was around the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in facilitating change. The decision to not include any questions related to AI was intentional for two reasons: (1) To not unfairly introduce a bias so that participants could raise and discuss their own application of AI in change leadership if relevant during a prescient moment in education; and (2) to maintain the study's focus, which excluded theoretical discussion of AI's role in educational change leadership, which was beyond the scope of the research questions. While it was necessary to delimit the study, only three participants detailed the role of AI in education, without much reference to its potential use in human analytics.

Recommendations for Future Research

The main purpose of this research study was to explore what the experiences of BC K-12 Christian school leaders might reveal about the essence of leading change with critical consideration to complex adaptive theories, the role of resistance to change, how faith is integrated into leadership practice, and the unique contextual dimensions of leading in British Columbia's K-12 independent Christian schools. The following recommendations for future research are provided.

First, participants engaged in semi-structured reflection by reconstructing various change initiatives and making meaning from their personal reflections. Future research would benefit from more descriptive narrative accounts that examine implications related to even more homogenous groups geographically and contextually based in regions, job roles, school sizes, or specific tensions that arise within the type of change, such as theological divisiveness around gender and sexuality, the introduction of artificial intelligence, or efforts to reposition a school's identity to be embedded more within the network infrastructure leading to change.

Second, further research on the role of artificial intelligence and how leaders are using it to lead educational change would be a welcome study for organizations processing how to interact better with human analytics data and structure learning experiences that integrate faithful postures with emerging industry tools. More comparative and contrastive case studies with peoples' experiences of the tools that are also emerging rapidly would be timely. This study would be well positioned to explore complexity theory around emergence given that, in some cases, it would be assumed that the users can rapidly iterate and become more agile than the organization as a whole when using emergent technology.

Third, the inner life of change leaders and the practices that support their spiritual well-being requires more focused exploration. There is recent anecdotal in the Christian school context that leaders' marital relationships, church connections, and long-term friendships fall apart when they enter into senior administrative roles; how network and complex adaptive theories can come together to address these issues would be welcomed as we support calling and sustainable practice for leaders.

Fourth, a case study of how Christian schools measure the narrative arc and efficacy of a change initiative would benefit other schools that may relate to similar population demographics in their context. By chronicling and assessing the relationship between theories of faith development and organizational dynamics, empirical research within context may bring together a closer relationship between experience and outcomes.

Finally, research dedicated to what works in terms of preparation from network associations, academic institutions, and supporting leadership development training efforts is needed for feedback to better equip leaders for leading change. As part of the change leadership institute that was proposed as a result of this research, data collection around participant

experiences might support practice-based data collection around the effectiveness of network learning initiatives as contributing factors to supporting the professional capacity of Christian schools as integrative parts of their network system.

Summary of Chapter Six

The experiences of change leaders are necessary to consider when building theories and detailing outcomes related to educational change leadership practice. Without accounting for the experiences of leaders, organizational theories related to linear and non-linear change may not reflect a more comprehensive description about the essence of change leadership in a K-12 Christian school context. Christian school change leaders' voices have been relatively absent in leadership development literature in British Columbia and need to be heard as they provide insight into organizational dynamics, educational reform, workplace spirituality, theories of faith integration, and what it means to lead change in BC.

To lead change is to lead from change, derive vision and posture from faith and identity, adopt skills and content knowledge, and learn how to facilitate network connections, as well as depend on God through disruption. The stories of current leaders provide greater perspective that the Holy Spirit is the agent of transformation and there are productive dispositions that leaders can continue to be equipped by the Holy Spirit as they and their communities learn to grow in their adaptive faithfulness. There are many roles that leaders can operate from to facilitate change in their Christian learning communities, whether as prophets, apostles, evangelists, teachers, healers, pastors/shepherds, or other roles they are equipped for.

Chapter Six has discussed the conclusions and implications from the findings presented in Chapter 5. These findings were discussed in relation to the social sciences presented in Chapter 2 and Biblical and theological insights from Chapter 3. Taken together, Chapter 6 discussed the

implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research, proposing that the findings be applied most practically in the formation of a Change Leadership Institute with open invitation to current and emerging educational leaders to participate this next year.

Summary of the Study

This dissertation investigated how BC K-12 Christian school leaders experience educational change, with Chapter One articulating the focus of the study on what it is like for leaders to integrate faith into their practice, navigate resistance, strengthen community adaptability, and lead change initiatives in their learning communities. Across the literature and empirical phases, the main problem explored was to understand the inner lives and interiority of Christian educational change leaders and articulate the essence of change leadership within BC's independent Christian school context.

Chapter Two surveyed three domains of scholarship to locate the study's gap. The first major domain reviewed educational change theories and noted that system-level purposes, processes, and outcomes dominate the discourse, while leaders' lived experiences and formative journeys are consistently minimized in existing literature. The second major domain examined faith integration, showing how it has often been reduced to worldview framing rather than concrete, relational, and networked practices grounded in the mutuality of Christian community. The third minor domain linked these bodies of literature within British Columbia's K-12 Christian independent school context, suggesting that distributive and transformational leadership theories need reinterpretation when spirituality, theological commitments, and communal belonging inform practices within Christian learning communities. This chapter established what is known, what remains underdeveloped, and what must be explored to understand how Christian leaders make sense of and lead educational change.

The empirical phase employed phenomenological methods with 28 Heads of School, Superintendents, Directors of Learning, and K-12/Campus Principals. Semi-structured interviews detailed leaders' experiences in the final quarter of the school year and early summer.

Transcriptions were coded in NVivo 15 to identify themes, dimensions, and subdimensions, describing how leaders encountered resistance internally, communally, and organizationally, how they discerned and integrated their faith within moments of uncertainty or disruption, and how their formation shaped the strategies they used to guide their communities through change.

Three themes described the essence of educational change leadership in BC Christian schools. (1) First, leaders understood change as a formative journey of being and becoming: called, connected, and continually changed by God's transforming presence as they lead. (2) Second, leaders described adaptive capacity as a communal act of faithfulness requiring trust, relational coherence, shared theological imagination, and the ability to hold tensions together. (3) Third, leaders framed change leadership as participation in God's mission, where school improvement, spiritual formation, and organizational transformation are inseparable.

Across chapters, the study shows that Christian educational change leadership is not merely technical or strategic, but an interior life that is cultivated around four critical dispositions: (1) The discernment mindset; (2) The relational mindset; (3) The kingdom network mindset; and (4) The transformational hope mindset. The study's main outcome is the design for a Change Leadership Institute, documenting the blueprints for academic institutions and supporting organizations to critically examine the preparation for change leadership, accounting for developmental, theological, social, and organizational formation, shaped by the leader's inner life and expressed through practices that cultivate communal adaptability, resilience, and hope.

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Appendix A

Empirical Studies on Educational Change Experiences and Practices

Table A.1*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Hübner et al. (2021) <i>Who buys into curricular reforms and why?</i>	A quantitative study designed to predict factors (change initiative goals, structures, and implementation) leading to successful school reforms.	German teachers ($n = 1,132$) from lower and upper schools.	A 20-minute online survey analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (five multiple linear regression models) to evaluate curricular reforms.	Teachers' perceptions of goal clarity, school development, teacher motivation, and student benefit were primarily and positively linked to global curriculum reform rating. Professional development, support materials, and leadership were found to be secondary influences.	This study is a helpful contribution to understanding the relationship between members of educational communities and experiences of tailoring curricular reforms for contextual needs.
Mukhtar & Fook (2020) <i>The effects of perceived leadership styles and emotional intelligence on attitude toward organizational change among secondary school teachers.</i>	A quantitative study designed to investigate the relationship between perceived leadership style and emotional intelligence on attitudes towards educational change.	Malaysian teachers ($n = 360$) randomly chosen from five secondary schools in Selangor.	Using Bass and Avolio's (2004) multifactor leadership style questionnaire and Wong and Law's (2002) emotional intelligence scale, two-stage cluster sampling and correlation coefficients were reported.	Teachers reporting higher levels in transformative leadership style and emotional intelligence showed moderate positive correlations with change attitudes ($r = 0.348, p < 0.000$). In contrast, transactional leaders had weak positive correlations ($r = 0.185, p < 0.000$) supporting Lewin's (1947) assessment of leadership and emotions for change.	This study invites consideration of a leaders' social abilities in how leaders adapt interpersonally, intrapersonally, manage stress, and cope with change efforts socio-culturally.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Fisch (2014) <i>Narrative leadership in a quality organization.</i>	A qualitative study aimed to use alternative quality control measures rather than quantitative scientific assumptions to assess system change.	Three coordinators of the seven steering committees who were school administrators.	Data was collected over 10 months and involved interviews, observations, and document analysis.	Reliance on measurement and outcomes limits understanding the meaning that organizations generate through indirect relationships within system change. Measurement does not motivate and cannot explain the web of relationships.	This study evokes the need for greater description about strong and weak connections that emerge throughout organizational change initiatives. It also raises questions about meaning making practices for quality school improvement.
Andreoli et al. (2020) <i>Learning to lead school improvement.</i>	A qualitative study on the impact of a 3-year leadership development initiative dedicated to enhancing school change leader capacities.	Participants ($n = 10$) were from 12 rural high-poverty school districts who had participated in the Leadership Learning Community training.	Data was collected through field notes, audio recordings, site visits, and semi-structured interviews. There was 150 hours of observations and 1300 pages of interview data to evaluate.	Leaders developed knowledge, skills, and attitudes throughout the program that enabled them to participate in shared leadership, use systematic processes, and build a diverse set of attitudes towards educational change that helped them navigate social dynamics.	This study raises questions for the dissertation about how Christian educational leaders develop their social learning practices, clarify purposes, processes, and interact with persons.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
MacNeil et al. (2021)	A case study examining shared responsibility in multi-layered educational change.	Canadian public education district stakeholders ($n = 40$) including teachers, instructional leaders, and administrators from one school district.	Data collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Thematic coding of qualitative data explored the role of professional collaboration.	When teachers, instructional leaders, and administrators distribute responsibility and build trust, the shift from supervision to support led to increased professional learning. Student and improved-focus data was necessary for improving teaching and learning.	Moving from accountability to shared responsibility promotes a culture of continuous improvement and professional trust. Descriptions about <i>how</i> would extend the field of Canadian research.
Lastovska et al. (2023)	A quantitative study that investigated educational practitioners' (teachers') attitudes towards the barriers of implementing the School as Learning Organisation model.	Educators (teachers, leaders, and support staff) from 62 Latvian general institutions ($n = 671$).	A web-based survey that measured attitudes, willingness for innovation, and institutional readiness used Kruskal-Wallis H tests and Spearman's rho tests to explore attitudinal correlations between professional practice and innovation.	Practitioners were open to change, but differences in factors such as seniority, institutional culture, and school size influenced the degree to which practitioners were open to change. Further, higher levels of professional practice linked greater attitudes to beliefs in transformational leadership.	Sustained change adoption relates to leadership, clarity in institutional policies, strategies dedicated to varying levels of resistance, and decentralized approaches.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Jedaman et al.'s (2023)	A mixed-methods case study that explored the key principles of educational change management, sustainable leadership, and strategic planning.	Informants were 43 purposefully sampled Thailand secondary education service offices and 450 school directors.	A quantitative questionnaire was utilized to analyze six factors of strategic organizational management for change including vision, strategy, results, knowledge management, management of personnel, and creating organizational value.	Leading the organization with vision for change had the strongest statistical, direct, positive relationship with the other four main factors ($p < 0.01$). Decentralization of decision-making was also found to be an Important aspect of developing adaptive and agile relationships on teams to support change initiatives.	The study of educational change has been predominantly focused on outcomes. This study contributes to a broader understanding of decentralized change and the importance of social relationships. (table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Salonen-Hakomäki et al. (2024)	A qualitative study that explored the role of participative leadership in Finland's 2014 Core Curriculum Reform.	The Finnish high level leaders ($n = 23$) directly involved in the curriculum development and implementation included six men and 17 women.	In-depth interviews were conducted focusing on the reform's processes, participative leadership roles, and policy implementation. Data analysis underwent several iterative stages of coding and abductive categories supported by narrative analysis.	The reform succeeded in establishing coherence and stakeholder collaboration but came at the cost of leaders relinquishing their control to positively promote trust, shared ownership, and collective-decision making. Decentralized and participatory approaches were reported to create the strongest sense of social cohesion.	A key implication raised in the study was that the intrapersonal voices of change leaders is needed to shift from research on educational change outcomes to educational change experiences.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Holmes et al. (2013)	A case study that examined the complexities of school leadership in	Two Australian school principals, one from a primary school and one from a secondary school, as well as six teachers, five non-participating staff, and two parents.	Data was collected longitudinally over two years from the 15 sources, the steering committee meetings, classroom observations, and school performance data.	Five themes were identified: (i) the development of a shared vision, (ii) social intelligence and the development of relational trust, (iii) flexibility to solve complex problems, (iv) leadership of teaching and learning, and (v) engagement with wider community. Principals experienced challenges in balancing operational demands with building relational trust, sustaining teaching and learning, and engaging in school community.	Complexity occurs while navigating external accountability with inclusive internal decision-making, requiring leaders to develop their social capabilities. Studying how leaders perceive their social capabilities in the process of educational change would be a valued next step.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Benji-Rabinovitz & Berkovich's (2022)	A qualitative study dedicated to examining gaps in change agents' psychological ownership experiences of second order change without top-down direction.	Participants were ($n = 31$) six principals, six counsellors, six sex educational programme coordinators, and 13 teachers from Israeli state-schools.	Semi-structured 60-90 minute interviews, field notes, and case study analysis of psychological ownership were conducted. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis methods and inductive coding to generate themes.	Three themes were identified including active ownership improved engagement, passive ownership led to compliance, and defensive ownership created resistance to change.	Change agents were found to not only drive a type of change ownership, but also create the motivations to actively engage with resistance to change, requiring further definition in future studies.
Kovačević et al.'s (2023)	A mixed-methods study of a large-scale educational reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina examined how change factors such as school leadership, culture, and institutional culture influenced teacher efficacy.	From the ($n = 120$) participants in 12 schools from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 40 were school leaders, 50 were teachers, and 30 were policy makers involved in a large-scale educational reform.	With the qualitative, semi-structured interviews, six participants principal informants were identified using criterion-based sampling concurrently with the quantitative sample. Data was organized using grounded theory.	Leadership and institutional culture were found to have direct correlations between leadership training and the sustainability of a reform. Other socio-cultural and institutional factors were found to influence collective beliefs.	Leadership behavior is not the only indicator of effective school change. Constraints on leaders' autonomy and accountability from system-level leadership have gone unexamined in change research.

(table continues)

Table A.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on Whole System Educational Change*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Miller et al.'s (2022a)	A qualitative study of USA Catholic schools examined an enrollment crisis taking place that required system-wide reform by superintendents.	The sample was ($n = 26$) purposefully sampled system-level superintendents.	The qualitative interviews took approximately 60 minutes and invited participants to describe organizational structures in their educational change leadership. Data was analyzed using grounded theory.	Superintendents reinforced the decentralized approach of a system of schools rather than a school system approach.	Superintendents held authority for leading change, yet decentralized structures limited their ability to implement an intervene with a change initiative. Investigating localized adaptive solutions would support further research.
Meyer & Slater-Brown's (2020)	A qualitative study that assessed how mathematics lead teachers in a national change initiative were supported in their professional development.	The purposively selected sample was ($n = 12$) mathematics lead teachers from six New Zealand primary schools identified as change leaders.	The qualitative, semi-structured interviews were supported by theories-of-action describing relationships between individual, organization, and society.	Lead teacher influenced change when they had been adequately trained. Teacher leadership can be an effective mechanism for facilitating change. Positional authority and leadership expertise was also necessary for change.	Teacher autonomy was expected to enhance change effectiveness, but findings in other studies contradict prior research.

(table continues)

Table A.2

Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Complex Adaptive Systems and Sustaining School Improvement Initiatives

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Kershner & McQuillan (2016)	A multi-participant case study that explored initial school conditions culture, and networked interactions as participants completed the Lynch Leadership Academy.	The sample was over 75 faculty members, school leadership team members, and instructional coaches from two USA schools.	From the over 200 hours of school observations over three years and more than 75 semi-structured interview with school participants, document analysis and network analysis of leadership structures was conducted.	As school functioned as complex adaptive systems with decentralized approaches, responsiveness to change increased due to distributive authority, greater contextual adaptability, and relational trust.	One principal shared power and authority and overcame resistance while the other principal succumbed; relational trust and shared vision were found to be essential when disrupting a status quo.
Koh et al. (2023)	A qualitative study that explored a system's capacity for engaging in the complexities of continuous improvement.	Australian leaders ($n = 12$) from four sites including two primary school leaders, three secondary school leaders, four district-level program coordinators, and three educational consultants.	A total of 70 semi-structured interviews, site observations, document analyses, and policy reviews were conducted longitudinally. Twelve interviews were conducted as extensive narratives.	The study found that certain inputs such as distributed leadership, change culture, and professional culture led to long term sustainable change.	There were some limitations in the research design that did not truly reflect a complex adaptive approach by reporting the data by detailing the essence of the participants' lived experiences well narratively.

(table continues)

Table A.2 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Complex Adaptive Systems and Sustaining School Improvement Initiatives*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Miller et al. (2022b)	A qualitative study investigating complex adaptive change in Catholic schools through the experiences of two principals and their leadership reform efforts in four schools.	Two Catholic elementary school principals in the United States.	A total of 30 leadership interviews, in addition to school observations (totaling over 100 hours), and document analysis that took place over 10 years were used to explore how organizations move through disequilibrium, amplify actions, recombinations, and introduce stabilizing feedback.	Four components of complex adaptive leadership were present: (i) collective processes to replace old with new, (ii) successful reforms depend on shared ownership of school cultural change, (iii) evidence of change must improve teaching and learning conditions, and (iv) there must be an increase in relational trust.	There is a gap in Protestant Christian leadership explored through complex adaptive lenses and to understand how leaders perceive their faith in the presence of facilitating educational change initiatives.

Table A.3*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Catalogo & Doromal (2022) <i>Implementation of results-based performance management system</i>	Reform prevailing management systems to ensure quality management and social change in educational system reform. Performance management and accountability is a more reliable way of ensuring teacher performance following the implementation of continuous improvement programs.	Select schools in the Visaya region in the Philippines. A total sample of 726 teachers, 128 headteachers, and 8 supervisors from small and mid-sized districts.	The quantitative-descriptive study employed descriptive analysis used the <i>Results-Based Performance Management System</i> in Philippine public schools grounded in the <i>Total Quality Management</i> (TQM) theory. The study included four phases: (i) performance planning and commitment, (ii) performance monitoring and coaching, (iii) performance review and evaluation, and (iv) performance rewards and development planning.	Mid-sized school divisions implemented the four phases of the TQM to a greater extent than the small schools. Elementary schools ($M = 2.71$, $sd = 0.37$) showed higher mean scores of implementing TQM compared to that of junior high schools ($M = 2.69$, $sd = 0.35$). Supervisors ($M = 2.79$, $sd = 0.22$) indicated higher mean scores than ratees ($M = 2.70$, $sd = 0.36$) and raters ($M = 2.68$, $sd = 0.35$). Implementation of the <i>Results-Based Performance Management System</i> increased performance, accountability, quality, and behavioral changes. Accountability is the prevailing philosophy to increase performance leading to social change.	A key issue in surveillance or accountability-oriented systems is teacher efficacy. Further correlative reporting on the relationship between teacher experiences and factors of efficacy is needed. Accountability and compliance leading to behavior modification are the primary drivers for continuous improvement contrastive from social network theories leading to change.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Kin and Kareem (2016) <i>Teacher attitudes towards change: A comparison between high- and mediocre-performing secondary schools in Malaysia</i>	From an organizational change perspective, there was a substantial gap in differences between improvement needs of high-performing and mediocre-performing secondary schools in Malaysia. Psychological resilience and control were important factors that impacted participant evaluation towards change initiatives.	The study surveyed 830 teachers from 30 high-performing secondary schools and 30 mediocre-performing schools in five Malaysian states.	The <i>Teacher attitudes towards change scale</i> testing cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to change was utilized (factor loading ratings were 0.67, 0.65, and 0.62 respectively). Each item asked participants to rank on a six-point Likert scale their responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree (p. 111). Data analysis involved descriptives, t-tests, and one-way ANOVAs to determine mean differences in attitudes between demographics (age, academic qualification, and school seniority).	The study looked to quantitatively test differences between teacher mean scores and evaluate theories related to cognitive, affective, and behavioral change. The study found that “contextual factors (such as organizational culture) or individual factors (such as resilience) need to be examined further if these are potential key factors that predict [teacher attitudes towards change]” (p. 121).	A gap in the literature is that descriptive accounts of leadership experiences are needed for theory to be generated based in contextual and attitudinal factors. A limitation addressed in the study is that it would be “beneficial to involve the change agents themselves (i.e., the school principals) and also another third party (the senior assistants) in future studies” (p. 17).

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Hannay et al. (2013) <i>A case study of district leadership using knowledge management for educational change</i>	Senior leaders must transform their roles from operational managers to knowledge leaders for school improvement to occur: “We know disturbingly little about how these changes have an impact on the role of senior administrators and how they contend with the new demands” (p. 77).	The sample involved 90 principals, and 144 teachers representing 12 schools that were purposefully recommended by senior leaders.	Case Study in Ontario, Canada. Focus groups of educators and support personnel were included for triangulation on leadership and school improvement. A naturalistic research paradigm evolving over nine years was employed.	Five core actions encouraged shifts towards knowledge management practices for sustainable change: (i) massaging the vision/setting a school district focus, (ii) connecting the vision with school goals and data-based change/enacting the school district focus for professional practice, (iii) reshaping the role of the supervisory officers/working collectively to support positive change at the local level, (iv) connecting professional development to school district focus/embedding the school district focus into operational norms, and (v) modelling active change leadership/walking the talk. Sustainable change occurs through distributive leadership and professional networks (p. 77).	Leadership for change practices included questioning their own role, trying new approaches, collecting data to identify alternative assessment approaches, and promoting collaborative thinking (p. 76). System-wide or district change appears to be top-down managerial with the appearance of being distributive.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Edwards (2011) <i>Learning communities for curriculum change</i>	Change processes facilitated through the formation of teacher collaboration and networks were tasked to improve student outcomes.	Participants were 160 teachers from New Zealand that participated from nine schools in a two-year professional learning community initiative.	Data was collected over two years from agenda and meetings. The researcher summarized discussions and generated descriptions from artefacts. Data was synthesized retrospectively. Clarification was sought from participants by the researcher to increase validity of the data analysis.	Organizations go through learning stages and a lifecycle (entrepreneurial, collectivity, formation and control, and structural elaboration and adaptation; p. 29). Coordination, collaboration, and structure form the basis for organizational growth and leadership promotes progression through the lifecycle and learning stages within a professional community. Structured implementation that promoted capacity building and tailored professional learning to specific-school related needs that aligned with the New Zealand Ministry of Education's goals promoted greater autonomy. Idiosyncrasies in change processes were found to be most important.	Learning communities established a community's ability to adapt and prepare for future change. Learning communities and networks demonstrate a shift towards communal learning approaches leading to change. Further qualitative research around unique leadership change practices would be warranted.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Pinheiro & Alves (2024) <i>Organizational learning within the context of the functioning of educational teams</i>	Educational change has been defined in terms of restructuring the organization. This study sought to understand whether increased collaboration amongst team members of schools would result in greater performance.	Case Study with a group of schools in northern Portugal involving two questionnaires, analyzed descriptively using structural and semantic interpretation; focus groups and field notes were employed.	The researchers observed 12 classes in eighth and ninth grades. Two questionnaires, including one addressed to all teachers from first to ninth grade ($n = 70$), and the second questionnaire to eighth and ninth grade students ($n = 75$) were provided. Statistical analysis and follow-up semi structured interviews with three educational team coordinators and the school principal on opinions of the senior and middle leaders' efforts towards teacher change practice were elicited.	Teachers working together collaboratively is not sufficient for establishing a culture of learning and change. Deeper learning across the organization by examining actions and thoughts to create a shared vision leads to improvement. Middle leadership has the capacity to change the mentality of teachers and introduce innovations. Without shifting both teacher beliefs and practices, improvement initiatives would not be sustained and rooted in the school culture.	Changes in organizational infrastructure such as increased teacher collaboration and professional learning are important but insufficient for transformative educational reform. Leadership across multiple levels of management needs to promote collaboration and joint professional learning to articulate changes in beliefs. Collaboration is not the same as networks; networks impact deep structures.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Ittner et al. (2019) <i>Swiss principals' emotions, basic needs satisfaction and readiness for change during curriculum reform</i>	The article's purpose was to understand the link between principals' emotions around governance policies, readiness for change, and requirements to implement educational curriculum reforms as determinants of change. Principals' psychological needs were analyzed using equation modeling.	A sample of 359 public school principals (45% female) in the Swiss school inspectorates region of Bernese.	Participants completed a questionnaire (M age = 51.3 years, sd = 8.22; M work = experience of 13.42 years, sd = 8.7; M number of teachers overseeing was 30.2, sd = 20). The instrument assessed social emotional and individual readiness for change. Deci et al.'s (2001) <i>Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work scale</i> was utilized. Emotional experiences of principals were analyzed using an adapted version of the <i>Teacher Emotions Scales</i> (Frenzel et al., 2016).	How teachers "evaluate, emotionally experience and engage in professional development is strongly determined by their organizational framework of personal relationships, especially to their principals" (p. 166). The findings are related to "perceived" social relatedness, autonomy, and competence as reported by principals in the questionnaire.	Some of the key limitations in the study were in the sample size where only 54% of principals that took place in the study returned the questionnaire. Each of the instruments had to be adjusted; for example, the items designed for teachers were adapted for use by principals.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Bezem (2023) <i>Principals' attitudes towards on-site school evaluations: contribution to sustained school reform</i>	The attitude of principals towards school inspections and external accountability offers “relevant information and insights that lead to school improvements. However, the success of this process hinges on principals accepting and acting upon inspection feedback” (p. 559).	The study involved 20 principals (16 from schools inspected and four from non-inspected schools). There was a standard distribution in terms of participants’ years of experience, and the majority held graduate degrees ($n = 12$ masters; $n = 2$ specialist; $n = 2$ PhD/doctorate).	A large US school district utilized a case study approach to evaluate how school inspections influence principals’ attitudes towards sustained educational reform. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Data was analyzed mostly using a deductive coding method with some inductive elements. Independent-coder method was employed for code reliability to reach at least 80% agreement (p. 565).	Organizational diagnosis, appropriateness of feedback, and readiness for change reflecting commitment and belief need to be perceived as appropriate for change to be sustained.	A key limitation In the study is that the organizational change literature referenced as part of the theoretical framework are established from general decontextualized corporate research. One must question whether the assumptions and frameworks derived from corporate environments can be effectively applied to educational institutions.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Weiler & Hinnant-Crawford (2021) <i>School leadership team competence for implementing equity systems change.</i>	School leadership team competence in the Southern City School District (small, urban USA)	The study involved 87 members across ten schools including teachers, principals, parents, and instructional coaches totaling 25 participants.	The mixed-methods study examined 29 competencies of educational change practice around equity-based reforms. Research questions explore the perceived level of leadership team competence, causes of perceived competence, and beliefs needed to increase team levels of competence for equity system change. Descriptives were collected with the quantitative instrument. Qualitative open-ended responses were analyzed using deductive analysis and Saldaña's (2009) three step coding method.	An important study examining the collective role that teams play in facilitating educational change revealing the importance of leadership teams requiring more time to meet to build capacity, reimagine schedules that lead to collaboration for all team members, recruit additional staff with expertise in areas of change, develop professional learning experiences that engage learners, promote ongoing training and learning for the senior leadership team, communicate a shared vision, increase stakeholder "buy-in," generate accountability processes to engage educators, and create a framework to describe the work of equity change (p. 849).	The researchers called this an "inaugural use of the instrument" so validity with the quantitative instrument would thus need to continue improving. Limitations in the study included the small sample size, so inferential statistics were not generated. Collaborative change leadership around teams working together presents a new frontier in research around social dynamics of educational change practice.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Lamb & Branson (2015) <i>Educational change leadership through a new zonal theory lens</i>)	Social learning theories are needed due to the regularity of failures in educational change endeavours (p. 1011). Increasing principal awareness as an exploration of mathematics curriculum change based on the researchers' theory generated around zones of professional learning.	During the exploration stage, the principal and 26 classroom teachers participated in the interviews.	Sequenced qualitative and quantitative data collection occurring in stages rather than concurrently. Qualitative data was used to “develop and validate a theoretically based and construct-specific questionnaire” (p. 1016). Further qualitative and quantitative data collected in stages of interpretation based on the theoretical framework of zonal theory based on Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work.	The findings describe how to address teacher resistance to change, turn around “unsuccessful curriculum change” and generate co-constructed actions (p. 1023). Principals must reduce their own <i>zone of principal illusion</i> by increasing collaboration with teachers. Active principal involvement in the change minimizes teacher resistance and increases awareness leading to expansion in zone of curriculum change.	Limitations in the study include a single research site that was used, so generalizability is low. The quantitative instrument designed also requires further reliability and validity testing.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Loh & Hu (2021) <i>Understanding middle leaders' concerns in curriculum change</i>	Large-scale English language curriculum reform in Singapore. Leadership from within organizational infrastructure.	Sample included eight primary schools. The average middle leader had 19.75 years of teaching experience (range=13-33) and six years of experience on average as middle leaders (range = 2-12).	In-depth interviews of middle leaders' (Head of Departments). Maximum variation in terms of socio-economic status was used in the sampling profile because "research continues to link lower socio-economic status to lower academic achievement. Qualitative coding was employed.	Successful curriculum implementation is related to when leaders adopt a positive attitude towards innovation and encourage feelings of support. The researchers argue that pedagogical practices remain unchanged because the middle leaders are often neglected in organizational change efforts. Hyper-fixation on test scores as key indicators of change get in the way of dispositional change taking place.	Understanding the developmental training and experiences of middle leaders may be a key for successful educational change where low SES is a characteristic in the population.

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Ireh and Bailey (1999) <i>Study of Superintendents' Change leadership styles using the situational leadership model</i>	Leadership practices of adaptability and trust-building. Leadership styles describe and explain organizational response to change using situational leadership and behavior theories of Ohio school superintendents' leadership styles, adaptability, and characteristics of districts contributing to success or failure of school change.	The stratified sampling procedure yielded 200 school superintendents. The Ohio educational superintendents were from city, village, and local school districts were targeted for a proportional representation. Participants would have been in their job for at least two years.	Data collection involved a two-part instrument involving personal and school district characteristics and completion of the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Description (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998), and the Readiness Scale: Manager Rating Scale (Hambleton, Blanchard & Hersey, 1988). Quantitative data was analyzed using Person product-moment correlations, multiple regressions, and ANOVAs to determine differences between groups mean scores.	Years of experience as a superintendent explained stronger tendencies towards participative leadership style. ANOVAs reported no significant differences between superintendent characteristics. The predominant leadership style was participating (56%), selling (42%), then telling (2%); none reported delegating as their primary leadership style. The relationship between leadership adaptability and variables from the district had a small weak correlation to expenditure per pupil ($r = 0.35, p < 0.05$) and district income per pupil ($r = 0.15, p < 0.10$) explaining only 15% of variance for adaptability scores.	Positive trust and shared decision making were significant factors for successful district change. Further research is needed to explore how leaders experience their own efforts with trust-building in their learning communities. Participant styles may correlate with complex adaptive leadership (participating in learning), brokerage models (selling), and sustained educational change in social networks (delegating).

(table continues)

Table A.3 (continued)*Supplemental Studies on the Purpose and Process of Educational Change at School and System Levels*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Mohammad & David (2023) <i>The role and impact of educational leadership in change management to improve the quality of education in a private school in Dubai.</i>	Leadership practices of overcoming resistance through professional learning.	Participant teachers taught a range of different subjects and predominantly had bachelor's degrees (77.1%). Participant leaders were "mostly qualified, experienced, and above 31 years old with different leadership roles" including executive leadership team ($n = 3$), senior leadership team ($n = 5$), and curriculum leadership team ($n = 2$).	Mixed-methods, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in addition to analyzing six school inspection reports from two school authorities. The study's first stage involved 70 teacher participants for the quantitative portion and 10 semi-structured interviews for the qualitative second stage.	Schools face individual resistance to change and "deficiency in evaluating the performance" (p. 131). The study aimed to understand the role of educational leadership to improve education quality as perceived by teachers. It also sought to discover the impact of change leadership practices and suggest a plan to change current change management practices. Key strategies to address resistance to change include feedback measures such as open conversations, performance evaluation, and data collection "measuring performance indicators to evaluate change implementation is being executed at a high-quality level" (p. 158).	The researchers did not go back to describe the extent to which following the theoretical processes increased measures of adoption from change management models (Hiatt, 2006; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1944; Lippitt et al., 1958). The leaders' practices in change management was the main factor that improves performance with change management (p. 159).

Appendix B

Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith

Table B.1

Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in Christian Higher Education Contexts

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Neff et al. (2021)	A mixed-methods program evaluation of student and faculty perspectives of Christian integration training in six explicitly Christian doctoral psychology programs.	Participants were doctoral students ($n = 299$) and faculty ($n = 51$) enrolled in six APA-accredited USA psychology programs.	Data was collected through parallel online surveys consisting of 64 items and both qualitative and quantitative responses. The Daily Spiritual Experiences scale (Underwood, 2011) was used to assess training, spiritual experiences, and clinical work.	Training programs should improve relational and mentorship aspects within the applied learning context, making spiritual formation relate more closely to practitioner experiences. Traditional educational models need to explore more problem-centered approaches that address holistic formation.	Christian faith integration training must evolve as recent andragogical approaches to how adults learn, in relational, dialogic, and contextual spaces has presented problems of practice that require reflection and relationship.
Roso (2022)	A qualitative study of service learning as a means of faith in action integration in a doctoral course on ethical leadership.	Doctoral candidates of which nine were female and one was male who were serving in educational leadership capacities.	Data was collected through multiple written assignments, pre- and post-course reflections, discussions, presentations, end of course surveys, and a focus group with the 10 participants.	Service learning was found to enhance students' ethical leadership application and understanding as well as promote faith and learning in Christian integration. Some reported the need for more deliberate faith integration that not only reflects on faith but how to apply faith.	Integration was treated as an isolated individual experience. The integration of faith within networked interactions would help forward further understanding on the scholarship of integrating faith in teaching and learning.

(table continues)

Table B.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in Christian Higher Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Smith & Monihen (2024)	A comparative qualitative case study of the characteristics and practices of highly rated senior leadership teams in CCCU institutions during the covid-19 crisis.	Two Christian liberal arts institutions (Case 1: suburban northeastern institution with female president and six senior leadership team members; Case 2: mission-driven, interdenominational institution in small southern town, with male president and eight senior leadership team members).	A total of 36 interviews were conducted, three leadership team meetings were observed, and extensive document analysis included.	Four major themes emerged that expressed commitment to the integration of faith in vocation or practice: (a) Designing teams to develop trust, (b) Prioritizing the team mission and institutional values, (c) Affirming strong presidential leadership that empowers others, and (d) Emphasizing clarity through crisis. For senior leadership team members, investing in team relational dynamics was a site of practiced faith. For presidents, hiring a trustworthy team and trusting them enabled faith to be integrated into other aspects in the institutions they served because those values were on display.	While the study contributes to our understanding of how learning communities create healthy spaces for integrating faith starting at the top with the senior leadership team, it mostly treats faith as a psychological factor. The dissertation study questions what specific practices understood and expressed from Christian leaders' faith enables faith to be intentionally formed within a community of learners throughout the change process.

(table continues)

Table B.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in Christian Higher Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Allen & Alleman (2017)	A qualitative study exploring how mid-level student affairs administrators (SAAs) integrate Christian faith into professional roles at CCCU institutions.	CCCU SAAs ($n = 11$) were recommended by senior administrators.	The qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews took between 45-60 minutes. Interviews were transcribed and followed a two-cycle coding process.	The leadership praxis model revealed how faith integration was shaped by factors of personal religious commitment, professional socialization, and institutional expectations. Faith was more easily integrated into students' context than navigated at an institutional change level.	Not only Christians acting out of their faith, but Christians critically reflecting on how their faith changes while working in an organization was found to be a site of tension requiring further research.
B. A. A. White et al. (2017)	A mixed-methods study that investigated qualities in professors that were transformational for faith.	The sample was undergraduate students ($n = 36$) from a Christian higher education institution in religious and non-religious classes.	The quantitative components included rank and yes-no responses. Qualitative, open-ended responses prompted students to confirm some of their comments.	Characteristics of compassion, optimism, encouragement, and openness were the key transformational leadership qualities in faith-based higher education instruction. When professors apply Biblical teachings to real life in any context intentionally, students' were motivated to learn and be transformed.	Christian faith integration has largely been taught from more conceptual and content related approaches, where research indicates that learners and communities adopt new practices through behaviors, relationships, and embodiment.

(table continues)

Table B.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in Christian Higher Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Alleman et al. (2016)	A mixed-methods study of the relationship between theological traditions and teaching practices.	The sample was faculty ($n = 2,309$) from 48 CCCU institutions in the USA.	Qualitative and quantitative data was collected through an online survey. The data reported was from a larger online survey's dataset conducted by the researchers.	There were eight different approaches identified. The authors advocated for multi-strand integration rather than sole reliance on one model of integration. One's theological tradition was found to have shaped practical faith-integration.	Faith integration that is intentional, multidimensional and based in contextual practice creates a strong, holistic framework that supports both course instruction and student learning.

Table B.2

Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in K-12 Christian Education Contexts

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Wiens et al. (2022)	A quantitative study that examined faith integration self-efficacy in PreK-12 Mennonite schools.	Participants were educators ($n = 390$) from 18 Mennonite-affiliated schools across North America.	Quantitative mailed surveys reporting descriptives and correlations from factor loading on faith integration self-efficacy.	Faith integration self-efficacy is influenced by teacher experience, school fit, educational levels; perceived membership in a school community impacted teacher's confidence in integrating faith, raising concern for targeted professional development and institutional support.	The importance of the social dimension and community in which faith integration takes place appears to be a key factor for confidence with integrating faith into practice.

(table continues)

Table B.2 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in K-12 Christian Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Tarrant (2014)	A qualitative single case study of crisis management exploring how a Christian school leader embodied faith in a case study of a tragic school event.	A New Zealand Christian school principal who had experience in church leadership and served as principal.	A single open-ended interview lasting two hours that discussed decision making and issues from the tragic events of a teacher and student that lost their lives in a tragic river canyoning event. Thematic analysis was used.	The principal recounted how the school community practiced spiritual resilience and worked together to collaborate, adapt, care, share in decision making, and meet different contextual needs.	Exploring leadership decision-making through complex adaptive problems within a community would be an area unexamined in K-12 Christian schools.
Chalwell et al. (2024)	A qualitative multi-site case study of how middle leaders navigate personal and institutional dimensions of faith in their roles, career, and calling.	Participants were nine middle leaders, working in three Anglican schools in Melbourne and Sydney.	Data was collected through phenomenological, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Grounded theory coding was utilized to generate themes iteratively.	Middle leaders were found to shape faith culture in Anglican schools through curricular, pedagogic, and pastoral care dimensions. The degree to which middle leaders sustained their faith in practice was found to depend on institutional support, leadership structures, mentoring, and trust from executive leadership.	Understanding the middle brokers within a system persisting through complex adaptive change may present unexamined aspects of educational change linked to faith integration.

(table continues)

Table B.2 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in K-12 Christian Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Shields and Hattingh (2022)	A mixed-methods study of Christian early childhood leaders and how their relational values are embodied in their practice.	Fourteen New South Wales early childhood leaders participants, of which, four were involved with the qualitative in-depth interviews.	The survey questionnaires were completed by the group of 14 early childhood educators and four were identified to participate in the in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Six relational themes were identified. Document analysis and observations were also included. Thematic coding was utilized.	The Christian early childhood leaders prioritized relationship with God first and the components (prayer, reflection, bible reading, worship, feeling of compulsion, values-driven, guidance and sustainment, faith-filling), six relational leadership values (acceptance, welcoming, loving, respecting, empathy, care), and seven relational practices (empowering, supporting, modeling, providing social justice, ministering, helping, and serving).	A leader's relationship with God has two dimensions that shape values and practices, enabling them to lead from their values and embody their faith in their community of practice. Leaders wanted to fully or wholly embody their faith in their programs. Further descriptions of how a leader might detail their whole inner life and self may reveal greater congruence between a leader's values and practices.

(table continues)

Table B.2 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Studies on the Integration of Faith in K-12 Christian Education Contexts*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Witwer (2022)	A quantitative study examining K-12 Christian school teachers' perspectives on faith and learning as well as the influence of academic discipline and theological tradition on the integration of faith in learning.	Teachers ($n = 1,059$) certified by the Association of Christian Schools International from elementary (K- grade 6) and secondary (grades 7-12) years.	The data collection involved an online survey with Likert scale and open-response boxes. Statistical analysis using Kruskal-Wallis and Wilcoxon signed-rank non-parametric tests were used to evaluate differences in faith integration across disciplines and theological traditions.	Theological tradition was reported to have no significant influence on faith integration in practice. However, faith influenced course content choices in contrast to instructional strategies for the secondary teachers. Academic discipline also had a stronger influence on the integration of faith in learning.	It Is easy to suggest that more training may lead to better faith integration in practice especially extending a learning community's understanding beyond content; however, instructional practices were not found to be overly robust with faith integration raising questions about barriers to integration.
Martin (2018)	A mixed-methods study that investigated the instructional leadership qualities of principals in high-performing Christian schools.	The sample included principals ($n = 18$) and teachers ($n = 280$) from Christian schools in the USA.	The surveys used the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger, 2013) and the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Individual interviews and statistical analysis were conducted.	Principals that reported higher levels of servant leadership qualities also exhibited higher levels as instructional leaders. Female leaders reported higher scores in instructional leadership than male principals.	The key contribution from the study is that Christian principals must develop the values and practices that competently develop a school's capacity for improvement and priority of faith integration.

Table B.3

Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Azevedo et al. (2024) <i>Spirituality in organizational leaders</i>	The proposed spiritual development framework highlights that change and transformation emerge from connection and transcendent purpose. There is a relationship between meaning, experience, and practice that is worthy of exploration around integrative leadership spirituality.	The study involved 25 Portuguese corporate organizational leaders. The research questions explored the spiritual practices or organizational leaders as it pertains to the leaders' own and their organization's spiritual development and integration into work.	A qualitative, In-depth phenomenological study explored spiritual meanings, experiences, and practices. Data collection involved content analysis with audio recordings that were used to understand how leaders "feel, think, relate and live their spirituality" (p. 781). Frequency of response and illustrative quotations were used to create a spirituality development framework with high-level categories related to each research question.	There are two gaps the study addresses: (i) the need for empirical research on spirituality of organizational leaders and (ii) the meaning leaders ascribe to their workplace experiences. While spiritual leadership in corporate contexts emerged in the study concerning participant views and meanings about spirituality leading to their spiritual practices, experiences, and development in the workplace, spirituality is not necessarily the same as Christian faith integration. The partnership described how it is possible to have secular beliefs in a higher power and spiritual practices that may not be religious in nature.	Emerging from the high-level categories, the findings reveal that there are two key processes concerning "ways to inner" and "ways to wisdom" that promote a leaders' capacity for transformation and spirituality. Research moving from general spiritual beliefs to specific faith-informed beliefs linked to practices in sociocultural reality would support future research in other disciplinary contexts.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Cui et al. (2024) <i>How spiritual leadership leads to employee followership behavior</i>	Existing theories of spiritual leadership explain the indirect relationship of leadership to followership in causal term; the study sought to evaluate if relational identification meets basic psychological and spiritual needs for autonomous and supportive environments.	The sample included 372 paired leader-employees that submitted data. The participants were from different “enterprises and institutions in China” which included different regions, industries, and organizations diversified to “ensure the external validity of the study” (p. 5733).	A multisource, paired questionnaire survey to mitigate against “homology bias” (p. 5733) and increase validity when comparing Chinese leaders and employees’ scores. The variables analyzed were spiritual leadership, relational identification, and spiritual intelligence. From 523 submitted questionnaires in the population ($N=600$), 372 sets of matching leader and employee data was retained for analysis.	Employees are looking for “material and psychological aspects” and for leaders who attend to their “spiritual needs” to establish “work significance and self-worth” (p. 5738). Spiritual leadership in “employees’ sense of work self-worth and prosocial motivation” (p. 5731) had a strong, positive relationship with employee followership behavior (slope coefficient = 0.71, $p < 0.001$), implying that as spiritual intelligence for leaders increases, employee followership increased. There was an indirect relationship between the leaders’ spiritual behavior and employee followership behavior as spiritual intelligence increased.	The Chinese context in which the research took place, with different mediating values and processes might also explain other possible antecedents of spirituality around followership behavior. Relational identification was studied as a mediating factor between spiritual leadership and followership, thus requiring further description about the factors that contribute to relational identification.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Pawar (2014) <i>Leadership spiritual behaviors towards subordinates</i>	The study examined leaders' individual spirituality and its relationship to organizational spirituality, specifically behaviors directed towards subordinates within the field of workplace spirituality.	Participants included 170 post-graduate management students in India (engineers, managers, leaders) that volunteered to complete the questionnaires while attending an on campus learning module. The average age of participants was 33.74 years, with an average of 10.95 years of work experience.	Using three spirituality scales, the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (Underwood, 2006), Organizational Spiritual Values Scale (Kolodinsky et al., 2008), and the Leadership Spiritual Behaviors (Reave, 2005), with reported reliability coefficients over 0.90. Hypotheses were tested: (i) leader's individual spirituality towards subordinates; (ii) organizational spirituality and subordinates; and (iii) leaders' individual spirituality behaviors moderated by the organizational spirituality.	Spiritual leadership is an "observable phenomenon" that occurs when a leader "embodies spiritual values" (p. 441). A leader's individual spirituality had a statistically significant positive effect on leaders' spiritual behavior in the workplace directed towards subordinates; in contrast, organizational spirituality did not have a statistically significant effect. A leader's individual spirituality was found to have an "inside-out" effect on inducing spiritual transformation in employees' behaviors.	The researchers identify the saliency of the scales to describe leadership spiritual behaviors as the scale was newly introduced for this specific study "in the nascent stage of development" (p. 448) and needed further reliability and validity testing. Religious spirituality was not ruled out as a possible distinguishing factor within the data. Descriptions distinguishing direct effects from indirect spirituality would help delineate which practices have greater impact.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Riasudeen and Singh (2020) <i>Leadership effectiveness and psychological well-being</i>	The purpose was to (i) examine the relationship between leadership effectiveness, psychological well- being, and work spirituality on the dependent variables (<i>work outcomes</i>) including intention to quit, job involvement, and organization-based self-esteem and (ii) explore whether spirituality outcomes were directly, indirectly, or mediated in relation to flourishing individuals and workplaces.	The study obtained data from 630 information technology leaders in India. However, limited information about the participants’ backgrounds was reported.	The survey Instruments measured leadership effectiveness using Wood and Winston’s (2007) scale, Ryff’s (1995) psychological well-being scale, and Milliman et al.’s (2003) workplace spirituality scale. The instruments had internal consistency scores that were greater than 0.82 and Cronbach’s alphas ranging from 0.75 to 0.93. Confirmatory factor analyses were performed and structural models indicated the mediating effect of workplace spirituality on work outcomes.	There were direct mediating effects as workplace spirituality, leadership effectiveness, and psychological well-being of the leader increased, and work outcomes (intention to quit, job involvement, and organization-based self- esteem) grew smaller. Workplace spirituality explained intention to quit (27%), job involvement (30%), and organization- based self-esteem (24%). Given the effective practice of leadership spirituality, “[s]uch practices will also augment organizational change and development through greater worker involvement, as they tend to improve employees’ participation” (p. 121).	The conclusions about providing “training programs” that “highlight the spiritual quotient for improving abilities and alignment with others and organizational vision” (p. 121) is underdeveloped. The authors could detail what a leadership training program might entail for example.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Soha et al. (2016) <i>The relationship of work influence, sense of community and individual spirituality towards organizational performance</i>	A key concern the researchers bring is whether meaningful work leads to increased performance. The literature review identified that spirituality enhances the workplace and brings meaning to work which includes (i) work influence, (ii) sense of community, (iii) individual spirituality, and (iv) a relationship between individual spirituality and organizational performance.	Participants were secondary school teachers from ten Northern State of Malaysia schools. The participants appear to be working under the Malaysia's Ministry of Education, though specific demographic information is not provided.	A quantitative questionnaire from 300 randomly selected teachers was utilized (287 questionnaires were returned completed). Descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, and multiple regression was used to understand the factors that influence organizational performance. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha ranged between 0.664 and 0.732.	Using regression analysis, the findings indicated that participants' reported sense of community had no significant influence on organizational performance. This means that "teamwork does not affect [reported] work performance [and] employees tend to do their jobs individually rather than in a group or team" (p. 594). Variables of work influence, sense of community, and individual spirituality explain 54.5% of R^2 variation related to employee job satisfaction.	Some concerns raised about the lower levels of reliability ($\alpha < 0.8$), whether the data could be generalized outside of Malaysian context that has "planned to standardize the mission and vision of education . . . [where] all of the schools will be centralized with the same goals and they share the same purpose" (p. 592). Differences in demographics for school teachers were not reported. The self-reported scores for organizational performance raise concern about validity. (table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Low & Ayoko (2020) <i>The emergence of spiritual leader and leadership in religion-based organizations</i>	The main research questions include how to recognize a spiritual leader, and the process involved in the development of spiritual leader/leadership. Spiritual leaders are called into work by interest and by others.	A purposive sample of 26 participant leaders from three Australian religion-based organizations. Organization A has 2000 people and spiritual leaders of 10-15 year youth. Organization B has about 700 members and leaders leading groups of people between 5—30 years old. And Organization C had its leaders “leading at various organizational levels” (p. 516).	In-depth interviews lasting about 50 minutes on average were conducted with each of the 26 leaders. Participants described developmental factors impacting their spiritual leadership. Data analysis involved a pilot study, and interviews. It utilized open, axial, and selective coding resulting in two themes that were supported by NVivo 10 theming: Emergence of spiritual leader/leadership and Outcomes of spiritual leader/leadership.	Spiritual leadership literature is “relatively quiet in religion-based organizations” (p. 513), the study found that spiritual leaders embodied characteristics of faith and a sense of authority over their lives. Self-reflection on positive and negative experiences in social environments was found to be vital to leadership development in religious-based organizations. A process model of spiritual leadership development is proposed: Phase I: Awareness of interest and calling; Phase 2: Learning processes; Phase 3a: Characteristics of spiritual leadership; and Phase 3b: Outcomes of spiritual leader/leadership.	The researchers identified that there could have been more variation and distinction between demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and positions of leadership. According to the researchers, “a high percentage of our sample came from eastern culture but practiced a western style of spirituality” (p. 528), which requires further unpacking about possible implications for workplace spirituality research.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Aslam et al. (2022) <i>Effects of teachers' demographic factors towards workplace spirituality at secondary school level</i>	The study sought to “investigate the status of workplace spirituality in secondary schools” (p. 3) and the relationship between demographic factors (gender, age, nature of job, academic qualification, marital status, designation, teaching experience, and district) on workplace spirituality in secondary schools.	A sample of 3,050 schoolteachers (79% response rate) from the Punjab province in Pakistan using stratified proportionate random sampling was used. Ten teachers from each of the 386 schools from nine districts were selected.	The Instrument used was Petchsawang and Duchon's (2009) Workplace spirituality scale that had participants rank 22 statements. Data analysis involved <i>t</i> -tests, descriptives, one-way ANOVA, post hocs, and factor analysis to confirm Petchswang and Duchon's (2009) reliability and validity with the Workplace spirituality scale.	Reported scores for workplace spirituality differed based on demographic factors. The district, number of years of experience, and years of experience all accounted for variance in post hoc analysis between reported mean scores for the groups. Reported differences were absent about “workplace spirituality related to their demographic variables in terms of compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work and transcendence” (p. 7). The workplace itself accounted for the differences and recommend that school administration share and create the experiences and practices of workplace spirituality (p. 7).	The dimensions of compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence appear to all be loaded into the workplace spirituality variables; however, the researchers could represent the cross-tabulation between demographic factors and the individual dimensions for greater clarity and transparency in their reporting. Thus, further research concerning how different schools report would be warranted.

(table continues)

Table B.3 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Workplace Spirituality*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Kim et al. (2022) <i>Management and leadership competencies among spiritual care managers</i>	Leadership is necessary for helping organizations to achieve their missions and navigate changing environments. With both the health care and religious landscapes changing, the researchers sought to understand the experiences of spiritual managers (chaplains) and their spiritual care leadership competencies.	The mixed-methods study involving both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was conducted in the United States with 12 managers from eight healthcare organizations.	Two phases of interviews were conducted. Participants were first asked about how they navigated critical illnesses. Second, in the quantitative analysis, behavioral descriptions were coded for word frequency. The qualitative data analysis generated a code book using intercoder agreement and organization of major categories and themes. Data were linked to 27 out of the 28 domains from the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL) competencies. The only missing domain not represented in the statements was <i>speaking/facilitating skills</i> from the <i>execution</i> domain.	There were four themes from the qualitative analysis; (i) execution: taking initiative and critical thinking led to achieving goals; (ii) relations: collaboration and leadership were essential to work with a range of individuals; (iii) transformation: relating to change leadership and decision-making in processes and practices; and (iv) boundary spanning: related to the need to sustain relationships across their teams.	Spiritual integration was present through behavioral descriptions, but “[i]t is less clear how chaplaincy training or practice may have helped managers develop competencies in Human Resource Management and initiative” (p. 136); there are possible gaps in professional training for spiritual leaders. Some of the behavioral statements related to social responsibility and self-awareness were rated quite low (2% and 3% occurrence respectively).

Table B.4*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
MacLean et al. (2016) <i>Bridges over troubled water</i>	The researchers investigated understandings of faith that could “integrate the interior orientation of the person with its external manifestation” thus capturing the relationship between maturity of faith and capacity for justice (p. p. 98). The study investigated the partnership, key events, outcomes, and concepts of relationship, trust, and accountability.	A comparative case study of two faith-based community partnerships from a larger purposive sample of five community development projects. The two cases consist of a mix of faith groups from public and non-profit, led by church leaders.	Ten individual and group interviews were conducted in addition to follow-up telephone interviews a year later. Qualitative analysis sought to understand motivation, faith, and assumptions leading to greater health of the larger community. The researchers utilized Fowler’s stages of faith as a “guiding framework to analyze the personal faith of the individuals in the partnerships” (p. 98).	Faith development stages identified progressed along the following trajectory: (i) Finding God through understanding people, (ii) Striving for appreciation for the faith and humanity of others, (iii) Capacity for vulnerability, learning, and growth, (iv) Attraction to multi-faith ventures, (v) Preferring a common humanity across sectarian loyalties, and (vi) According to MacLean et al. (2016), personal and institutional faith, which enabled leaders “to be effective bridging and bonding forces (p. 112 and 114) and “create new social capital” which is vital for social transformation and addressing barriers to create new community (pp. 114-115).	The researchers pursue causal relationship, rather than thick descriptions, fitting findings into Fowler’s (1981) stages of faith development. Further research concerning how leaders’ faith impacts community development in educational spaces is necessary for practical organizational theology.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Carradus et al. (2019) <i>Exploring a faith-led open-systems perspective of stewardship in family business</i>	The main research question was how faith-led practices in family firms affect organizational stewardship. The researchers were concerned with understanding the relationship of Biblical principles with “diverse yet interconnected [business] organizational practices . . . ” (p. 703).	Six, purposefully sampled Christian business owners from different denominational backgrounds that were publicly open about their faith were selected.	In-depth autobiographies of leaders’ vocation, organizational practices, successes and failures were collected to shed light on the relationship between Biblical principles and family business practices. Data was analyzed into three phases: explication, explanation, and exploration. A key finding from the study is that leaders are “able to transform organizational practices with an understanding of what God expects from them as part of an extended spiritual family and as stewards of a family business” (p. 712).	Discussion of faith-led family, open-systems models describing the implications of religious stewardship in the family business context identified four categories of subsystems where faith was integrated: (i) business subsystem, which focused on excellence in tasks and doing God’s work, (ii) management subsystem, which focused on recruiting and retaining employees while prioritizing faith and care holistically, (iii) family subsystem, where members were treated equally across different levels and power dynamics, and (iv) ownership subsystem, where there is autonomy and Biblical discernment with decision-making.	Implications about how leaders “are able to transform organizational practices” (p. 712) through relationship with God raise questions about transforming educational organization practices. There may be possible links between how religion influences ethical and moral decision making in both family and school networks; however, their contexts differ, thus limiting generalizability.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Zigan et al. (2021) <i>Analyzing leadership attributes in faith-based organizations</i>	There is an emergence of requirement for clergy to “supplement their established spiritual and pastoral responsibilities with organizational and effective leadership skills” (p. 743). Current research focuses on explicit leadership behaviors and very few studies acknowledge implicit leadership theories (ILTs).	Six Church of England parishes were the research site. The researchers used purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants. A total of 32 in-depth, semi-structured interviews of clergy in recognized roles ($n=7$), lay leaders in subsidiary roles ($n=15$) and ordinary members ($n=10$) were conducted.	A qualitative, in-depth research approach was utilized. A pilot study was built to increase validity and refine the interview questions. Each interview lasted roughly 80 minutes. Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis approach and Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) approach to comparing intra- and inter-case differences and similarities. The study’s main concern is whether a leader’s ideal personal attributes are relevant and actual in a faith-based organization and if honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and ethical decision-making are all elements of ILT.	The study highlighted three themes: (i) Clergy did not emphasize the importance of helping others to flourish as an attribute as much as the lay leaders; (ii) Perceived group differences in spiritual leadership attributes from ILT differed in the areas of open-mindedness, spiritual-mindedness and relational skills, with differences existing across contextual factors (societal, theological, organizational, and personal); (iii) There was a need for clergy to develop their delegation and shared leadership skills as they navigate expectations with the laity. Professional development is needed to integrate ILTs to improve the leader-follower dynamic.	The study investigated a plethora of variables limiting a more unified coherent phenomenological account of leadership practice related to the three levels of clergy experiences. The research design attempted to evaluate whether ILT attributes were present and pertinent to leadership in faith-based organizations. Greater homogeneity in the contextual factors (theological, social and societal, organizational, and personal) would have increased validity and generalizability related to the ILT factors.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Kaul et al. (2017) <i>Predicting faculty integration of faith and learning</i>	The purpose was to understand how faculty and university related variables (perspectives, practices, predictive factors, denominations, institutions, and academic disciplines) account for the integration of faith in learning at Christian colleges. Hypotheses about commitments to integrating faith and learning encouraging the sustainability of Christian higher education are proposed.	A three-stage convenience sampling with 2,500 faculty participants from 55 Council of Christian Colleges and University (CCCCU) institutions from 15 denominational backgrounds. Sample size was compared to data from the US Department of Education's (2015) integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which included 121 CCCC member institutions and 12,228 instructional staff.	Phase one investigated institutional denominational affiliation. Phase two investigated faculty levels of faith integration in learning. Phase three investigated student levels. The instrument was taken from Glanzer et al., 2013 and Rine et al., 2013). Data analysis utilized descriptives and regression models to understand predictive values.	The post hoc analysis revealed that institution's denominational characteristics may influence a faculty's propensity towards faith-learning integration. Professors with full rank, or obtained degree from their current employer were "approximately two times the odds of integrating faith and learning than when their personal denomination differs from their employing institution" (p. 181). Faculty are more likely to be integrationists at nondenominational institutions; the reasons are unclear, but speculation suggests that integrationist faculty might be drawn to nondenominational schools (p. 182).	Limitations in the study include placing faculty into either integrationist or separatist categories, creating a false dichotomy in reporting. Other factors such as length of employment, commitment to religious affiliation, or departmental leadership may be predictors of faith integration. Collecting demographic information to delimit and identify criteria for a more homogenous sample would be important for describing the phenomenon of faith integration within a smaller context.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Davis (2018) <i>Strategic indicators of mission fulfillment at Assemblies of God colleges</i>	The purpose of the study was to “identify strategic indicators” of what makes up the distinctive mission of Christian higher education: the integration of faith and learning and the spiritual formation of students (p. 251). The researchers focused on the integration of faith at an organizational level	A Delphi panel, composed of academic leaders (serving in president, chief business officer, and chief academic offer roles) from five Assemblies of God colleges, treated the research problem as a whole. There were six participants, each from five participating institutions (p. 254). Panel members included senior faculty members with terminal degrees making up a total of 30 experts.	Using the Delphi method, three rounds of questionnaires to collect data from the panel. In the first round, participants rated 60 indicators generated from literature and the researcher. Round two involved refining the list down to 32 indicators and round three focused the indicators on achieving 70% consensus, resulting in 28 indicators for monitoring institutional strategy concerning areas of academic excellence, spiritual formation, and financial management in leadership.	A total of 28 Indicators were generated as strategic indicators of integration and faith formation. The panel indicated 78.26% consensus for both students’ report on the Faith Maturity Scale and engagement in voluntary ministry were key indicators of spiritual formation. Consensus was achieved at 78.20% for faculty in disciplines who have received training in the integration of faith and learning within the last two years, 78.57% of non-Bible courses with at least one assignment related to the integration of faith, and 86.96% that course evaluations completed by students indicated meaningful integration in their courses.	The sample represents the current research demographics, but only seven out of 30 participants were women, two participants were Hispanic, and one was Black, with the remaining White. Priority of meeting sample criteria reduces transferability of the findings to ethnically diverse populations. The panel had a lack of consensus over a “universally accepted definition of the integration of faith and learning as well as what integration means in different fields of study” (p. 261).

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Ramirez et al. (2020) <i>Integration of faith and learning at a faith-based historically black university</i>	The researchers investigated the intentional, holistic, and systematic integration of faith in a HBCU. Little is known about whether cultural or ethnic characteristics influence the integration of faith (IFL) in learning. Utilizing Korniejczuk's (1994) hierarchical model, the researchers explored the extent to which IFL is deliberate at a faith-based HBCU.	A sample of 29 faculty members from a faith-based Historically Black University (HBCU).	The researchers used course evaluations, "specifically the sections that assessed the faculty's implementation of IFL . ." and whether they were full-time faculty to invite participants. Semi-structured interviews ranging between 1-1.5 hours were recorded and transcribed for data analysis using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis.	Four themes emerged from the data to address the question of how IFL is implemented at the faith-based HBCU and at what level are faculty integrating faith: (i) Connectivity: those that have a personal relationship with God motivated connection with students; (ii) Modelling: faculty believed their Christ-like behavior and decisions were taught to students; (iii) Intentionality: Curricular choices including content and Biblical application in assignments help convey a Biblical perspective; and. (iv) Spontaneity: Spontaneous moments clarified, enhanced, and reflected on the content.	The limitations included the following: (i) The study involved a single research site, reducing generalizability; (ii) the sample could volunteer to participate but did not need to adhere to the religious affiliation and beliefs of the university. Further description of integration (concept, practices, community, global context, and service) is needed. There is also very limited discussion about cultural perspectives interfacing with faith in the reported findings.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Richardson (2019) <i>Faith and learning in higher education</i>	Religious-pedagogical practices did not disappear in the university context, but became “marginalized” and was “replaced by discipline-specific content” (p. 51), rather than more institutional approaches to faith integration. The main faith integration concern is how to develop “implementation proficiency” (p. 52).	The action research study involving 14 teacher candidates enrolled in an education course was designed to introduce best practices and assessment of K-12 students with learning needs. Teacher candidates identify with personal struggles to share their faith in secular classes and integrate biblical content,	The research Inquiry was designed to engage theory, data collection, practice, teamwork, and situational practice (p. 58). Faith integration was modelled by the researcher who was also the course instructor.	Teacher candidates developed confidence to “align scriptures with course materials” (p. 63), how to weave “a biblical concept with an instructional concept” (p. 63), and that faith integration was a “developmental process” (p. 64). Establishing scriptural values depends on instructors knowing the Bible and its relationship to their discipline-specific-research (p. 66). Faith integration requires “in-depth cognitive consideration” (p. 66), institutional support, and takes time to develop proficiency (3-5 years; p. 66). Faith integration can involve collaborative initiatives between teachers and students (p. 66).	Establishing a link between teacher classroom leadership and biblical content integration and its pertinence for Christian administrative leadership supports future research. The researchers argue that “spiritual and vocational worlds” must be fused together and acknowledge the Bible’s relevancy. Further clarification is needed in the K-12 context about the Bible’s role in faith integration, specifically how leaders inform organizational practices with scripture.

(table continues)

Table B.4 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Literature on Leadership in Religious Organizations*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Bleeker et al. (2024) <i>Perceived influence of Christian leadership competencies during COVID-19</i>	The purpose of the study was to investigate how Christian business leaders made decisions to improve their personal and organizational excellence by integrating their Christian faith in a post-COVID-19 environment. The researchers sought to generate theory about how Christian leaders' religiosity complements management and organizational leadership practices.	The 14 Christian business leaders of religious organizations in South Africa were selected using a mix of purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling methods. Participants needed to have experience in executive management positions, believe in core Christian beliefs, and have experience with the research phenomenon of practicing faith-based decisions to improve organizations.	A qualitative design, involving semi-structured interviews of each of the participants was employed. Data was recorded and transcribed. Memoing and journal documentation to identify recurring patterns in participants' responses was utilized. To ensure the quality and rigor of the research, the researchers involved peer debriefing and member checking practices, as well as audit trails by their supervisors to ensure that data saturation had been attained and biases or misinterpretations were uncovered (p. 5).	Christian leaders that "have a strong connection with God can enhance employee well-being by promoting teamwork in solving problems, assigning tasks with a spiritual significance, fostering a sense of organizational belonging, and showing agape love by actively listening to concerns" (p. 9). There are distinct competencies and decisions that emerge for Christian leaders due to their faith and values being incorporated into their leadership methods, distinguishing them from secular leaders such as prioritize offering emotional and spiritual support to their employees and navigating complexity with humility and empathy emerging from the faith inside of them.	The sample size of 14 participants was small. The distinctions made between the differences of Christian and secular leadership would require comparative analysis between samples. Greater description of practice would help generate theories of what practices enhance an organization's performance. Providing a summary table or visual to capture the relationship between the participants' descriptions would have created more coherence in the proposed theoretical implications.

Appendix C

Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership Development

Table C.1*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Cherkowski et al. (2020)	A qualitative study that explored positive leadership in K-12 schools. The study examined how principals and vice-principals derive a sense of well-being and flourishing in the complex work.	School administrators ($n = 9$) including vice principals and principals from two BC school districts.	In-depth appreciative inquiry interviews ranging between 60-90 minutes) were utilized. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed both inductively and deductively to generate themes of flourishing.	School leaders feel a sense of flourishing when there is congruence between their values of purpose, passion, play, and presence related to balance.	Public school leadership may be contrastive from that of Christian school leadership. A positive leadership lens might overlook an entire dimension of resistance to change raising questions about whether achieving balance is truly desired and congruent with complex adaptive change models.

(table continues)

Table C.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Mombourquette (2017)	A qualitative study examining the role of vision in effective school leadership that assessed how principals' personal and school-based visions impacted student learning outcomes.	Elementary, middle, and high school principals ($n = 27$) from Alberta.	Semi-structured interviews with principals that were also triangulated with standardized tests, surveys, and publicly available reports.	Principals in high-achieving schools had clear visions that were easily articulable and aligned with student learning, while lower-achieving schools lacked clarity.	The interaction between a leader and their community's practices involves values of mutuality, independence, and interdependence raising questions about whether clear vision is enough to guide change or if collaborative cohesion is needed within Christian learning communities.
Wang (2022)	A qualitative study investigating how job demands are prevalent and lead to intensified work conditions for BC school administrators.	School principals ($n = 18$) from the BC Metro Vancouver school districts.	Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The codes were analyzed thematically.	Principal work continues to change. Findings revealed how principals have struggled with job demands (workload, time pressure) and hindrances (role ambiguity, policy constraints)	Support for principals needs to be wide ranging and contextualized to systematically address common issues in public school administrators.

(table continues)

Table C.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Hartney et al. (2021)	A qualitative study that developed a model of educational leadership using “generative dialogue” to facilitate and assess the reflexivity of professional growth on leaders.	School leaders ($n = 37$) in an urban Western Canadian district.	The generative dialogue framed the first part of the research. In addition, five additional in-depth interviews were conducted to clarify the findings. Grounded theory approach was used to generate themes.	Generative dialogue impacted leadership development by facilitating reflection on relationships, professional growth, and increased accountability.	A critical concern raised is who and what continues to support leaders in the work they are doing in BC administrative roles. Both directive (professional development) and non-directive (coaching and mentoring) approaches are needed to support the complex roles. In the dissertation, a gap to explore for Christian leaders will explore who and what have led to the change leaders becoming who they are in their understanding of facilitating change within BC K-12 Christian schools.

(table continues)

Table C.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Wood (2023)	A qualitative phenomenological study examining how high school principals experience learning leadership in relation to transactional and transformational roles.	High school principals ($n = 7$) from rural and urban, small, medium, and large population centers.	Phenomenological, in-depth open interviews were guided by four open topics including learning to be a leader, transactional learning, transformational learning, and balancing transactions and transformations. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing meaning.	Learning leadership is an emerging phenomenon in Canadian leadership. It aligns closely with complex adaptive leadership as it requires agile ethical thinking and decision-making to navigate transactions and transformational expectations.	Learning leadership are brokers in complex systems who facilitate trust, care, and improvement by bridging transactional and transformational outcomes. I seek to explore how leaders learn, mediate, facilitate learning, and lead change <i>for, with, to, and by</i> their communities.
Hoven et al. (2024)	An exploratory qualitative study analyzing the impact that Pope Francis' vision of synodality on Catholic school leadership.	Superintendents ($n = 10$) from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territory Catholic school districts.	Semi-structured interviews ranged from 50 to 90 minutes including 15 questions provided in advance. The data was related to the theme of synodality through thematic analysis.	Synodality had an influence on Catholic superintendency through factors that included relationships, shared decision-making, and prophetic leadership. A vision of communality was also forwarded as a key practice.	Navigating tensions between synodality and institutionalism requires further description in the research. The dissertation explores the tension of personal faith and communal faith.

(table continues)

Table C.1 (continued)*Summary Table of Empirical Literature on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Rheaume et al. (2021)	A qualitative study that examined the Developmentally Responsive Middle Leadership (DRMLL) model to assess leadership practices.	Middle school administrators ($n = 17$) from three Alberta school districts.	Data was collected through focus groups and semi-structured interviews ranging between 28 and 72 minutes. Inductive analysis and descriptive data reporting was included.	The DRMLL model appeared to remain relevant but needed further clarification and expansion to include other factors such as how curriculum and instructional components promoted teaming and community building structures for the wider educational community.	This article raises the question whether educational change initiatives in faith-based contexts situate practices differently from that of public-school counterparts. For example, do Protestant practices look different from Catholic schools?
Kutsyuruba et al. (2024a)	A mixed-methods study examining factors that contribute to school leaders' well-being, focusing on flow, resilience, grit, and flourishing factors among Canada's Outstanding Principals.	Survey responses ($n = 37$) from past principal award winners of the Canada's Outstanding Principal program.	A survey using Likert-scale and open-ended questions in addition to correlation analysis between different variables and thematic analysis.	Flourishing school leaders exhibit each of the characteristics of resilience, optimism, and adaptive leadership. Supportive environments and professional networks were found to be important contributing factors to principals coping with job demands and work intensification.	A key contribution Is that there are ways to support principal psychological well-being as principals navigate the complexity of their roles by acting as positive social brokers and connecting principals to other leaders that can support their well-being.

Table C.2*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Prytula et al. (2013) <i>Toward instructional leadership</i>	In Saskatchewan, increased emphasis on large-scale assessment reform has shifted the principal's role towards an instructional leadership involving defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and creating a positive learning climate (p. 5).	From the 200 surveys, 90 were completed by Saskatchewan principals (two rural and three urban schools). Two-thirds of participants were male and one-third were female, from elementary (44%), middle (12%), and high schools (36%), with years of experience including less than five (50%), 5-10 (30%), and more than 10 years (20%).	This article reports data from the qualitative surveys adapted from Ulmer (2002) for Canadian schools completed by mail. Field tests were conducted by teachers, principals, and vice principals, but validity was not reported. Qualitative and quantitative questions explored how large-scale assessments affect the principal, influence teaching and learning, and what principals perceive as the best ways to improve assessment scores.	Top-down approaches to instructional leadership are critiqued due to the leader being positions as the expert. Assessment leadership helps position the principal as a "learning leader" (Crow et al., 2002). Increased collaboration around a shared goal emerged as a practice to improve teachers, teaching, and student learning. Large-scale assessments were reported to affect principals "more positively than negatively or not at all" (p. 21). Large-scale assessments catalyze principals to move towards instructional leadership and measure student learning.	The limited sample size of 90 principals out of approximately 200 was of concern. The researchers conceptualizes non-traditional learning leadership as "not only how to interpret data," but "proceed to effect school change and improvement, learning how teachers learn, learning how to model, dialogue, and collaborate, and how to sustain improvement" (p. 26).

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Wang (2024) Principals' well-being	The research explores the nuances and complexities of principal emotional and psychological well-being dimensions in British Columbia related to four major themes of work intensification, well-being, health and safety, and coping strategies.	The sample includes 471 principals (69.5% elementary, 18.7% secondary, principals, and 3.0% were middle school principals). A little over half of the respondents were female (57.8%), mostly ages 45 and older, with the average number of work experience years seven ($sd = 5.2$). A small sample of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (3.2%) principals were involved.	For this research report, the data emerged from an online questionnaire containing 56 questions using five-point Likert-scale, matrix, multiple choice, and open-ended response questions that allowed additional clarifying comments. The total invitations sent was 1239. Data analysis included reliability analysis, correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling to test the constructs.	The key findings indicate that wellbeing is a complex, multidimensional construct comprised of components such as emotional, psychological, physical, and social well-being, of which, social well-being has the greatest effect size and account for approximately 74% of school principals' overall well-being (p. 458). Wang (2024) concludes by arguing that social support and relationships are necessary, but professional development and training that help principals to navigate the system and live a healthy life were found to be critical (p. 461).	The study highlighted that community made a difference mitigated against burnout, implying that job satisfaction leads to more sustained leadership development and (p. 459). Spiritual well-being was not a statistically significant factor in overall well-being. Questions arise if a leader's work context contributes to perceived effects of spiritual well-being.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Cherkowski & Brown (2013) <i>Towards distributed leadership as standards-based practice in BC</i>	An investigation into the British Columbia (BC) provincial leadership standards for understanding distributive leadership practices.	Four BC principals of which there was distribution of male and female and elementary and high school administrators.	The qualitative narrative inquiry using thematic analysis was conducted within principals and vice principals of one school district in BC to gain an understanding of leaders' distributive leadership experiences. Two in-depth, face-to-face interviews with each of the four participants explored questions concerning leadership practices and experiences of distributive leadership.	The principal Is a key voice of school culture and leadership, but not the lone hero (p. 25); thus, the research sought to resolve this paradox. Three themes were identified including the importance of sharing vision for distributed leadership, leading with character and integrity, and helping others find their leadership voices. Distributed leadership occurred when individuals took ownership, worked with leaders, or in lateral leadership structures (p. 40).	Distributed and instructional leadership contributed to "creating and sustaining a shared vision and modelling moral leadership," and "establishing relationships" leading to flourishing (p. 41). School-based leadership capacity building requires further description in future research.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Webber (2024) <i>Contextualised shared leadership: A Canadian case study</i>	A 10-month case study exploring teacher leadership in partnership with principals was described as the “sleeping giant” with innovation capacity, quality instruction, and continuous improvement. Leadership.	Two teachers in one private K-12 school in Western Canada. Teacher leaders were defined as those who “lead within and beyond the classroom,” influence others towards improved educational practice, and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6).	An “ethnographic-like” methodology (p. 322) was utilized to gather and analyze field notes, transcripts, and observational data. The research site was a school community “characterised by students with learning difficulties including diagnosed learning disabilities, ADHD, and other learning challenges” (pp. 321-322). At points, the teacher participants were also part of analyzing the data, which is a stated limitation.	Four themes were identified: (i) Teacher work: teacher positivity, cohesion, and shared decision-making and meaningful contribution, professionalism guiding work, rigor, and embracing different perspectives; ii) Communication: sharing of distributive leadership approaches (Harris et al., 2022); (iii) Learning culture: participation in the teacher professional growth and learning culture at social and human capital levels; and (iv) Operational support: follow up measures to ensure shared goals through distributive leadership were being met.	Principal leaders’ relationships and interactions with teachers leading to distributed leadership revealed organizational “readiness for shared leadership and school improvement” (p. 332). Possible questions about “how situations with teachers who did not agree with school policies and practices were addressed” (p. 332) making it pertinent for the dissertation.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership Practice*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Cherkowski (2016) <i>Exploring the role of the school principal in cultivating a professional learning climate.</i>	The qualitative, single-subject case study explored how school leaders need to strive for system change to improve schools but also keep in mind “small-scale personal growth of individual school leaders” (p. 524) as it helps characterize the role of the school principal in establishing professional learning.	One principal of a rural British Columbia K-12 school participated. The participant is identified as principal Robert, a white man in his early 40s, married with three young children, has over 20 years of experience. He has a high school English teaching background and completed a Master of Education degree.	Narrative data were collected through interview sessions (lasting 60 to 90 minutes) and transcripts of observations and field notes invited stories and descriptions of the principal’s experiences. The iterative process in grounded theory was utilized (Glaser & Straus, 1967). Three broad themes (shared vision for learning, personalizing professional learning, relationships for learning) emerged from the data.	From the three themes, shared vision accounted for efforts to engage larger groups of teachers in school change. The professional learning theme described how different types of conversations (data, conflict, and creative solutioning) led to staff learning. Making professional learning public was one way that accountability and commitment were shared. Conclusions raised the importance of studying interconnectedness and interdependence of systems as it pertains to a leader’s (p. 539).	Building relationships and having conversations with teachers about their professional learning was found to be critical for school improvement. Future research is needed on adaptive leadership theory describing leaders’ interconnectedness and interdependence within their social networks.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Spooner (2024) <i>An examination of educational leadership preparation in Ontario</i>	Principal preparation programs are shifting to include more topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As such, the purpose was two-fold: (1) to study educational leadership preparation in Ontario and (2) to understand the Principal Qualification Program (PQP) participant perspectives on equitable leadership.	Six current school assistant/principals that completed the PQP course in Ontario. Participants needed to “self-identify as Black, Indigenous, racialized/person of color” (p. 45). Participants were mostly in their first or second year of leadership, with two cases the exception (participant Harris, a principal, had 20 years of experience).	Qualitative, semi-structured interviews employing purposeful snowball sampling was employed. Data analysis included coding and thematic analysis (Creswell, 2012; Saldaña, 2013).	Findings were organized into the following themes: Acceptance of Responsibility, Challenges in Practicing Equity-Oriented Leadership, Identity as an Avenue of Connection, and PQP Impact on School Leadership in Practice. The findings revealed that “the racial experiences and identities of each principal” described their journey of “self-acceptance, discrimination faced in leadership, and fighting internalized oppression” (p. 50). “critical self-reflection did not appear to be tied to any formal preparation” (p. 50).	PQP programs areas of preparation included some content knowledge; however, the more significant areas were around understanding complexity of personal experiences and positionality with staff relationships (p. 48). My study will invite participants to reflect on their developmental preparation and experiences.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Woloshyn & Savage (2023) <i>Exploring Canadian principal experiences during the covid-19 pandemic</i>	The volume and complexity of principal work has “intensified” while the skills required have been “diversified” (p. 3). The study’s research questions explored principal experiences of leading their schools through the pandemic, effective practices that principals adopted, and how they navigated pandemic challenges.	Fourteen principals from Ontario K-12 Catholic schools accepted letters of invitation to participate. The participants had on average 8.5 years of experience as principals (range = one to 20) and an average of 25 years of experience as educators (range = 19 years to 38 years).	The three-phase qualitative, semi-structured interviews ranging between 60-90 minutes on videoconferencing (Microsoft teams) explored participant principal experiences. Thematic analysis focused on an inductive coding method to seek out evidence related to the research questions. Themes were generated inductively.	Three themes emerged: (i) Relationships: Trust, frequency of communication, and accessibility sustained relationships across individual preferences, beliefs, or needs; (ii) Resources: Managing human and technology-related resources by forwarding creative solutions with lack of resources were “especially pronounced during the first phase of the pandemic” (p. 13); and (iii) Resilience and Wellbeing: Care, compassion, and calm were needed throughout the chaos in their communities.	School leaders’ reflections on sustaining interpersonal relationships, securing and deploying physical resources, and promoting resilience and wellbeing continues were critical. Discussion of external factors impacting revealed retrospective reconstructions focused on how the pandemic was managed, building theory from experiences.

(table continues)

Table C.2 (continued)*Supplemental Table of Empirical Studies on Canadian Educational Leadership*

Author(s), Date, and Study	Research Focus	Sample	Data Collection	Findings and Conclusions	Assessment
Lowrey (2014) <i>A mixed-methods study of principal efficacy and transformational leadership in Canada</i>	The purpose was to explore how Canada's Outstanding Principal's (COP) programme strengthened the relationship between transformational leadership and principal efficacy. The study specifically focused on the perspectives of best practice in successful Canadian principal leadership.	This mixed-methods study explored insights of the COP recipient population from 2005 to 2010 which included a population of 187 principals across each of the Canadian provinces.	Phase one included the completion of the online questionnaire and phase two included a telephone interview protocol to seek understanding and description of COP recipients' experiences. Data analysis included qualitative and quantitative measures as well as the interaction and cross-referencing between the results.	Findings described how transformational leaders could set the direction, develop people, and redesign their organizations to a great extent (p. 42). Self-reports on the quantitative survey and descriptions in the qualitative interviews reported how creating positive learning environments, raising achievement, and building collective efficacy contributed to continuous improvement. A "purposeful, reciprocal, and iterative peer networking" (p. 16) was found to be critical for leadership development	Leaders may have networks but more significant is the quality of networks contributing to leadership professional learning and practice. Links between principal efficacy and collective efficacy would strengthen research describing the relationships that help them implement and sustain educational change.

Appendix D

Christian Educational Leader's Practice Guide to Resistance to Change

Table D.1*Ezekiel 34 –The Lord Will Be Israel’s Shepherd: Application to Change Leadership*

Resisting the Resistors	Shepherds Replaced, Flocks Rescued	Points of Application
“Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves!” (v. 2a).	“I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable. I will remove them from the flock . . . I will rescue my flock” (v. 11-12).	The true shepherd’s character is defined by care of the flock. Leaders are led by God, the true shepherd who leads the flock.
“You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock” (v. 3).	“I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.” (vv. 13-14).	The true shepherd puts the flock first, clothes, and feeds the flock; the mountain is renewed as the place that upholds God’s relational presence. Change leaders take care of the whole flock, even the vulnerable, misguided, and obstinate. They create rich environments for thriving by positioning themselves among their flock.
“You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured”. (v. 4a).	“I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice” (v. 16b).	The true shepherd identifies those that are going astray and strengthens them. The true shepherd identifies strong and deceptive intruders. The change leader’s ministry of reconciliation and healing role within a community is clear.
“You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost” (v. 4b).	“I will search for the lost and bring back the strays” (v. 16a).	The true shepherd interrogates reality to discerns threat and foe. Change leaders strengthen the vulnerable, identify deceptions, strong resistance ideologies, and discern the good for the flock. The change leader’s ministering role is bringing justice.

(table continues)

Table D.1 (continued)*Ezekiel 34 –The Lord Will Be Israel’s Shepherd: Application to Change Leadership*

Resisting the Resistors	Shepherds Replaced, Flocks Rescued	Points of Application
“You have ruled them harshly and brutally” (v. 4c).	“I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd” (vv. 22-24).	The shepherd will no longer allow the flock to be harmed. The change leader is meek, powerful, but self-sacrificing. The change leader disadvantages themselves to preserve the whole flock by tending to the sheep’s concerns.
“The sheep became food for the wild animals and no one searched or looked for them” (vv. 5-6, 8).	“I will make a covenant of peace . . . make the places surrounding my hill a blessing . . . send down showers of blessings . . . trees will yield their fruit and ground yield crops . . . people secured in the land . . . the Lord will break the bonds of resistance and enslavement and rescue. Neighboring nations will not devour” (vv. 25-31).	God himself will be the one to search for Israel and be their shepherd renewing the covenant faithfully. Most often, God takes the consequences upon himself, prefiguring the cruciformity of the shepherd. The true shepherd is also true gardener: he pastures the sheep by preparing the yield of fruit and crops as the food, preventing the flock from being devoured by neighbouring nations and wild animals, famine, and scorn. The change leader does not only look to save the strong but also the weak.

Table D.2*Change Resistance Capabilities for Educational Leadership*

Capability	Component # 1	Component # 2	Component # 3
Cognitive	Problem-solving by understanding and interpreting problems • Identifying goals • Articulating principles and values • Identifying constraints • Developing solution processes	Knowledge about direct effects on school community and learning • Technical or rational conditions • Emotional conditions • Organizational conditions • Family conditions	Systems thinking • Being able to manage complex relationships • Foresight to understand future consequences of actions
Social	The ability to perceive emotions • Recognizing our own emotional responses • Discerning emotional responses verbally and nonverbally	The ability to manage emotions • Reflecting on the outcomes of one's own emotional responses • Persuading others to reflect on their responses	The ability to act in emotionally appropriate ways • Being able to exercise control over emotions • Being able to help others act on emotions that serve their best interests
Psychological	Optimism • Habitually expecting positive results • Recognizing where we have or do not have influence or control • Taking positive risks	Self-efficacy • Believing in one's own abilities to achieve • Taking responsible risks, expending effort, and persisting in the face of initial failure	Resilience and Proactivity • Recovering, adapting, and thriving in change circumstances • Being able to stimulate and manage large scale change • Create meaningful change

(table continues)

Table D.2 (continued)*Change Resistance Capabilities for Educational Leadership*

Capability	Component # 1	Component # 2	Component # 3
Spiritual	Ethical Discernment and Wisdom • Seeking guidance from God and others within networks • Recognize implications for lifespan development and communal thriving • Align decision with core beliefs	Purpose and Calling • Recognize how to inspire others to collective goals • Lead with a sense of care • Transform schools into adaptive and cohesive learning communities	Compassion and Followership • Value each member by understanding the role of grace and dignity • Advocate for spiritual practices that build a relational network of bonded and bridged relationships • Lead from humility, pursuing reconciliation and a common good

Appendix E

Communication with Interview Participants

Appendix E.1

Initial Invitation to Participants

Dear *Participant Name*,

Hope you are doing well! I am reaching out to share with you that I am conducting my qualitative dissertation study on British Columbia K-12 Christian School leaders and their experiences of educational change leadership. **As I believe that you have valuable insights to contribute, the purpose of this email is to invite you to take part in my dissertation research study.**

Your participation would include the following:

- i. A short 15-20 minute phone call/google meet to go through the Informed Consent form, explore eligibility with selection criteria, and clarify questions about the scope of the research participation commitment.
- ii. A 5-minute demographic questionnaire that ensures accurate representation of your leadership work prior to the interviews.
- iii. An in-depth interview taking approximately 75-90 minutes on google meet.
- iv. To validate the interviews, I will also share a Respondent Feedback form for you to review the following:
 - a. The full transcript so you can verify its accuracy.
 - b. A one-two page Composite Vignette or profile that summarizes your experiences and the research phenomenon so you can verify its accuracy.

It's a big commitment of time and energy, so I am happy to work with your schedule if you are interested. This would take place over a timeline of 2-3 weeks. Your participation is completely voluntary throughout the study.

If you wish to participate, please email me back and we can set up the 15–20-minute conversation to (i) to go through the consent form, (ii) answer any questions, and (iii) schedule the meeting so the process is well-organized in advance.

Purpose: The study is designed to bring voice to BC K-12 Christian school leaders' experiences of organizational change leadership, their change processes and practices, and the meaning they ascribe to those experiences. A key goal is to engage in research that supports the developmental efforts of Christian school leaders across their lifespan and in their respective Christian learning communities.

It is my hope to increase understanding of the *who*, *how*, *what*, and *why* of Christian school leadership for organizational change. My curiosities are theological, organizational, practical, and developmental as I hope to explore how we can support and encourage K-12 Christian schools. Because I believe there is a void of silence on this important topic, I aim to give voice to the experiences of our educational leaders and their efforts towards changing, sustaining, and directing K-12 Christian learning communities.

Additional Details: This study does not offer any monetary incentives for participating. However, participants' contributions will be used to further research on BC K-12 Christian school leaders and facilitate future inquiry into their lived experiences.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in my research!

Sincerely,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.2

Follow Up Email Communication for Interviews

Dear *Participant Name*,

Hope you are doing well! I previously reached out on *(list date)* to invite you to participate in my dissertation research study, which focuses on the practices of educational leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools. The purpose of my initial email was to invite you to share your experiences of educational change leadership as part of my research.

If you wish to participate, please email me back and we can set up a short 15–20 minute phone call or google meet to go through the Informed Consent Form. I will also send you the interview questions for you to get familiarized with them and be informed of the focus of our conversation.

Sincerely,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.3

Response to Participant Invitation

Dear *Participant Name*,

Hope you are doing well! Thank you for your response.

I look forward to connecting with you for a 15-20-minute phone call/google meet to go over the Informed Consent Form. Please [click here to see my calendar for some times I am available](#) and share with me some times you are available to connect in the next week or so.

In advance of our meeting, you can [click here to review the Informed Consent](#). If you agree to participate, you can sign your consent and access the demographic questionnaire there as well.

Reach out if you have any questions.

Blessings,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.4***Response to Participant Invitation with response not to participate***

Dear *Participant Name*,

Thank you for getting back to me. I appreciate your response and look forward to other opportunities to connect with you in the future!

Blessings,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.5

Reminder Email Communication for Interview

Dear *Participant Name*,

I am looking forward to the interview conversation with you tomorrow. Thank you for completing your signed Informed Consent Form and Demographic Questionnaire. I am reaching out to confirm our meeting time at (*state time*). You can [click here for a link to the google meet meeting](#). Please also find the interview questions attached with this email should you decide to prepare in advance though there is no requirement to do so (*linked below from Appendix H without probing questions*).

Reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.6

Interview reminder email if the Informed Consent Form has not been received

Dear *Participant Name*,

I am looking forward to the interview conversation with you tomorrow. I am reaching out to confirm our meeting time at (*state time*). You can [click here for a link to the google meet meeting](#).

I have not yet received your completed Informed Consent form and/or Demographic Questionnaire. If you agree to participate, please [click on the electronic form here](#) in advance of our google meet meeting. Thank you.

Reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix E.7

Follow Up Communication After Interview

Dear *Participant Name*,

Thank you for making time to support my learning! Please find the interview transcript and Composite Vignette attached with this email.

To help keep us organized, here are the follow-up items:

1. **Interview Transcript's Accuracy:** I have attached the transcript from our conversations. I appreciate you taking time to review, clarify, or revise any information from the interview to ensure the transcript's accuracy.
2. **Composite Vignette's Accuracy:** I have attached the Composite Vignette summarizing my understanding of your experiences and practices of educational change leadership.
3. **Your feedback is welcome and appreciated:** Once you have reviewed the Interview Transcript and Composite Vignette for accuracy, you can share your feedback on both documents and complete the Respondent Feedback Form. I appreciate your timely completion of this important step in the process.

Any data included in the form may be used for data analysis and reporting. I appreciate you taking time to review. Any minor errors that you might come across will be cleaned up in the reporting. I will maintain confidentiality in my written report of the findings.

I have really valued the opportunity to connect with you and learn from your experiences! I hope this work will benefit you and your community and contribute meaningfully to future learning about Christian educational leadership.

If you have any questions or need to arrange a follow-up conversation, please do not hesitate to reach out and we can find a time to connect.

Blessings,

Kevin Mirchandani

Appendix F

Electronic Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Appendix F

Electronic Participants' Demographic Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to collect demographic information about your leadership context and experience once you have signed the Informed Consent Form. I would appreciate you completing the following demographic information. Some of the details might be changed to ensure confidentiality, but I am collecting this information to ensure that I accurately understand participants' experiences. I would appreciate you completing the following demographic information in the grey field. While all your answers are highly appreciated, please feel free to skip any questions that you may feel uncomfortable responding to.

1. Job Title (Principal, Director of Learning, Superintendent/Head of School/Executive Director)	(open comment box)
2. Sex (Male/Female/Prefer not to disclose)	(M/F/Prefer not to disclose)
3. Cumulative years of educational service in a BC K-12 Christian school	(open numerical box)
4. Years as an educational leader in current role and current school:	(open numerical box)
5. School Geographic Region: (Eastern Valley, Interior, City, Island, Fraser Valley, or identify other).	(open comment box)
6. School's denominational affiliations: (Interdenominational, non-denominational, Reformed, Parochial, etc.)	(open comment box)

Appendix G
Verbatim Interview Instructions

Appendix G

Verbatim Interview Instructions

Welcome: Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in my research study on educational change leadership and share your experiences and perceptions as a K-12 Christian school leader.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and perspectives of current British Columbia K-12 Christian school leaders. The interviews explore educational change leadership in Christian school communities. In this interview, I would like to ask you a series of questions that invites you to detail your life history, work experiences, leadership practice, and the meaning you ascribe to your experiences of educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools.

Research Questions:

1. What is the current discourse concerning educational change leadership (Domain One), the integration of faith in educational leadership practice (Domain Two), and the context of leadership development in Canada (Domain Three)?
2. What are the critical gaps in understanding for Christian leaders facilitating educational change initiatives with their faith-informed practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Two)
3. How do biblical and theological perspectives of Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 interact with theories of educational change and organizational dynamics to inform change leadership practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Three)
 - a. How can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders reframe resistance to change in a way that constructively leads their communities towards greater adaptability in response to educational reforms? (Chapter Three)
 - b. What practical strategies can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders adopt to positively harness the energy of resistance when facilitating curricular, organizational, or theological change initiatives within their communities? (Chapter Three)
4. What developmental experiences have led participants to becoming educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Four)
5. What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia? (Chapter Four)
6. In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices? (Chapter Four)
7. How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia? (Chapter Four)

Before we engage in our conversation, I would like to outline some protocols:

Confidentiality: I will record this meeting, but I want to assure you that your privacy will be maintained in reporting the results. Your name will be replaced by a pseudonym and all information will remain confidential. I want to also assure you that steps are to be taken to maintain confidentiality in the analysis and reporting. Your place of employment (research site) will be masked and not identifiable.

Value of your opinions: Your opinions are very valuable and help to bring voice to BC K-12 Christian school leaders' experiences.

Interview protocols:

- This interview will take approximately 75-90 minutes.
- Participants are not required to answer any questions that might cause discomfort.
- Feel free to share examples about your experiences. I will engage with some probing questions to make sure I accurately understand what you are sharing with me.
- We can move through the questions I shared with you in the interview guide.
- If you need to take a break or return to a question, please let me know.

Informed Consent Form

You should have received a copy of the Informed Consent Form and already shared a signed copy of it with me. Let's take a moment to check if you have any questions about the Informed Consent form before we begin.

I hope this opportunity will be mutually beneficial for you and your learning community.

Now, if you will allow me, I am going to turn on the google meet recording to help with transcription for this interview. Let's begin. (Start google meet recording).

Closing Protocol for Interview

I will now turn off the recording.

Thank you for taking time to share your experiences of educational change leadership with me.

In terms of next steps, I will be generating a transcript, reviewing its accuracy, and then sharing that with you.

I will also write a one-two page Composite Vignette that summarizes what I understand and have learned about your experiences.

I will send you a Respondent Feedback Form (Appendix I) that will invite you to revise, clarify, or share any feedback on the accuracy of the transcript and Composite Vignette. There will also be a space to include a pseudonym.

You can withdraw your consent up to two weeks after you complete and submit the Respondent Feedback Form without penalty.

I will maintain confidentiality in reporting about your place of employment and mask all other identifiable descriptions.

Do you have any further questions for me?

Thank you so much.

Appendix H

Interview Question Guide

Appendix H

Interview Question Guide

Research Questions (inclusive of Chapters Three and Four):

3. How do biblical and theological perspectives of Israel's resistance to change in Ezekiel 36 interact with theories of educational change and organizational dynamics to inform change leadership practices in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Three)
 - a. How can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders reframe resistance to change in a way that constructively leads their communities towards greater adaptability in response to educational reforms? (Chapter Three)
 - b. What practical strategies can BC K-12 Christian educational leaders adopt to positively harness the energy of resistance when facilitating curricular, organizational, or theological change initiatives within their communities? (Chapter Three)
4. What developmental experiences have led participants to becoming educational change leaders in British Columbia K-12 Christian schools? (Chapter Four)
5. What is educational change leadership as experienced by K-12 Christian school leaders in British Columbia? (Chapter Four)
6. In what ways do K-12 Christian educational leaders in British Columbia describe the integration of faith in their educational change practices? (Chapter Four)
7. How do participants make meaning of their experiences of being an educational change leader in a K-12 Christian school in British Columbia? (Chapter Four)

Context and Preamble: I look forward to hearing about any stories, examples, and details of educational change leadership in current or past practice while working in a BC K-12 Christian school context.

Part I- Life History and Work Experience (~5-10 minutes)

Introductory Question:

1. Please help me to get to know you better. What are 1-2 formative experiences that have developed and prepared you for leadership in a BC K-12 Christian school?
 - a. **Probe:** Are there any ways those experiences have prepared you for leading educational change in the BC K-12 Christian school context?
 - b. **Probe:** *Who* or *what* has been influential for you becoming who you are today?
 - a. **Probe:** What were your thoughts/feelings/emotions/perceptions/actions, and conceptions in those experiences?

Part II – Work Context, Experience, and Process of Change (~15-20 minutes)

Key Questions:

2. What is your current role and could you tell me as much as possible about the details of your experiences at work related to educational change leadership?

3. Can you share with me some examples of educational change initiatives you have been involved in and can you detail for me their change process? (2-3 experiences).
 - a. **Probe:** Are there any other *stories, examples, or details* that might help describe the work of educational change you are engaged with and your experiences?
 - b. **Probe:** How would you describe the socio-cultural context/environment/or ethos of your community during the experience?
 - c. **Probe:** Can you describe your feelings associated with the experience?
 - d. **Probe:** Can you elaborate on what you mean by (*specific word or phrase*)?
 - e. **Probe:** Are there any other examples you could tell me about?
4. Can you share any specific examples or experiences where your social connections might have influenced your educational leadership of a change initiative? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** Were there any moments of clarity for you?
 - b. **Probe:** Are there any examples detailing the influence of relationships within your school community that have contributed to educational change?
 - c. **Probe:** What would your learning community say about how they experienced the change initiative?
5. In what ways, if any, have you encountered resistance to change throughout an educational initiative? What was that like for you as the change leader? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** What was that like for members of your educational community?
 - b. **Probe:** Could you describe any tensions that existed within your community as you led the change initiative?

Part III- Educational Change Leadership Practices (~15-20 minutes)

6. What practices, if any, have been significant for you in leading educational change within your Christian learning community? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** Could you share an example of what that practice has looked like in your educational community?
 - b. **Probe:** Are there any practices in your leadership that you found to be significant when encountering resistance to change?
 - c. **Probe:** How have others around you reacted to the practices you mentioned?
 - d. **Probe:** Have you had any moments of delight in the midst of a change initiative?
 - e. **Probe:** Can you describe how members of your community have learned new practices that supported the adoption of the educational change initiative?
7. What, if any, are distinct characteristics of a Christian educational change leader? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** Could you tell me more about that?
 - b. **Probe:** What do you mean by (*specific word or phrase participant used*)?
 - c. **Probe:** Could you share with me an example of where you have seen (*the specific characteristic mentioned*) practiced within an educational change initiative?

8. Are there ways your Christian faith has informed your change leadership practices? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** Could you tell me more about that?
 - b. **Probe:** What do you mean by (*specific word or phrase participant used*)?
9. Can you detail any other examples of the processes and practices of facilitating educational change with your BC K-12 Christian school context that we have not yet talked about?
 - a. **Probe:** Are there any other experiences you would like to revisit?
 - b. **Probe:** Have you had similar or different experiences than what you have shared?
10. Do you have any examples you could share of when you have experienced educational changes sustained over many years?
 - a. **Probe:** Could you detail how this has shaped your Christian learning community?

Part IV: Meaning Making of Educational Change Leadership (~15-20 minutes)

11. What does it mean to lead educational change within the context of your current K-12 Christian learning community?
 - a. **Probe:** What dimensions/incidents/people intimately connected with the experience of facilitating organizational change stand out to you as meaningful?
 - b. **Probe:** What is critical for communities to understand when journeying through educational change in a BC K-12 Christian school?
12. What does it mean to you that faith informs educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapters Two and Three)
 - a. **Probe:** Is there anything more you can share with me about the role of faith in navigating social connections with educational change initiatives?
 - b. **Probe:** Is there anything more you can share with me about the role of faith in navigating resistance to change?
13. How do you see yourself directing future efforts with educational change processes?
 - a. **Probe:** What does it mean for your future self?
 - b. **Probe:** What would this mean for a future curricular, theological, or organizational change initiative you are leading?
14. How then would you envision the preparation and development of Christian school leaders for leading educational change in BC K-12 Christian schools? (Chapters Two and Three)

Closing Questions: (~5-10 minutes)

15. Is there anything else you could share with me that is significant to the experience, practice, or meaning of educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools?
16. Is there anything we have not discussed that would help contribute to my research study on educational change leadership in BC K-12 Christian schools?

Appendix I
Respondent Feedback Form

Appendix I

Electronic Respondent Feedback Form

(1) Does the transcript in its current form accurately reflect what we discussed?	YES ☐ or NO ☐ <i>Open Response Box:</i> If no, please include the page number and indicate where revisions, additions, or clarifications are necessary:
(2) Does the composite vignette accurately reflect your lived experiences with the research phenomenon?	YES ☐ or NO ☐ <i>Open Response Box:</i> If no, please indicate where revisions, additions, or clarifications are necessary:
(3) Would you like to have a follow up conversation to discuss any further details of the interview?	Highlight either YES ☐ or NO ☐ <i>If Yes-</i> <u>Click here to see my availability to meet with you by phone or google meet</u>
(4) Please include a pseudonym that may be used in the reporting of results.	<i>Open Response Box</i>
(5) Signed (First and Last Name; will not be included in reporting of results):	<i>Open Response Box</i>

Participant Name:

Date:

VITA

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

Mirchandani, K. A. (2026). "Why you should start or finish a PhD program: Reflections from my PhD journey." *Christian Scholar's Review*.

Mirchandani, K. A. (2025). Trinitarian theology and friendship. In M. Etherington (Eds.). *Foundations: Contemporary topics in Christian education*. Wipf & Stock.

Jule, A., Kristjánsson, C., Lee, Y., & Mirchandani, K. A. (2023). Who am I now? Spirituality in a faith-based teacher education program in Canada. In T. Lucey, & M. Lin (Eds.), *Rekindling the embers of the soul: An examination of spirituality issues related to teacher education*. Information Age Publishing.

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