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# A Qualitative Study of Seminary Principals for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SEMINARY PRINCIPALS FOR  
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

by

Eric W. Johnson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Education  
(Curriculum and Instruction)

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Logan, Utah

2008

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## ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Study of Seminary Principals for The Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

by

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Utah State University, 2008

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This qualitative study investigates how leadership is embodied within the role of seminary principals in released-time seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This study utilized a grounded theory approach and constant comparative analysis while triangulating the data obtained from personal interviews, participant observations, and analysis of documents. The primary sources of data came from the personal experiences and perspectives of four principals, eight teachers, and one area administrator that are analyzed through biographical interviews.

Analyses of the data were completed to determine common themes of leadership that were embodied by principals in released-time seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Results included the importance of: (a) principals as trainers, (b) a lack of training for seminary principals, (c) principals as a reflection of higher administration, (d) principal's influence on faculty unity, (e) principal's focus on

assisting the struggling student, (f) ensuring faculty professionalism, (g) personal satisfaction and growth, and (h) managerial organization. Recommendations from this study help provide a framework of leadership practices for current and future seminary principals, as well as those who oversee seminary principals within the Church Educational System.

(171 Pages)

DEDICATION

To Deverie.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*I was terrified when I was told that I was coming here. I had nightmares. I had heard that the principal was Nazi-like and that it was hard. And that it wouldn't be a good situation. But so far I have been thoroughly impressed.*

As Brother Augman recalled the journey of his transition as a teacher to a new school, the sheer panic and apprehension that overwhelmed him then was nowhere present in the comfortable office of a jovial man eager to talk about his principal. "The principal here has been super and it has made all of the difference for me, the other teachers, and all of the students!" Perhaps it was in his nature to be so complimentary, but as we continued to talk, Brother Augman was unrestrained.

Coming to this school has been a super experience. In fact, the principal I now have is the best principal I've ever had. And I think it is because you know what the expectation is and he backs you on it. And the expectation is what CES [higher administration] wants. He is not just running his own little agenda. And yet he is willing to say we need to do this and follow it. And you follow it, and everything's good. Life is great.

I quietly wondered if his situation was an isolated experience and if someone, a principal, could be that good. Brother Augman, however, quickly responded to my silent query as he continued to boast of his principal's influence.

There is one teacher here that I had taught with on another faculty. He'd been teaching for 22 years and was the kind of teacher that seemed to always struggle with principals. And when I knew I was coming to this school, and learned that this teacher was also on this faculty, it only added to my fears of dealing with a new principal. I thought there were going to be problems guaranteed. But this fellow teacher will say he is the best principal he's ever had. And now this teacher is doing some of the best teaching he's ever done.

Brother Augman was genuine as he spoke while recapturing the memories of his transition. Now, teaching under the direction of his third principal, he had been thoroughly convinced. This private religious educator who trembled at the thought of change had truly experienced something great. It was his principal.

### Statement of the Problem

For decades, educational research has documented the impact that principals can have upon schools and student achievement (Boyd, 1996; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cotton, 2003; Cuban, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte, Edmonds, & Ratner, 1974; Marzano, 2003; McEwan, 1998; Spartz, Valdes, McCormick, Meyers, & Geppert, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979). As one of the key components stemming from the educational reforms of the effective schools movement, the school principal continues to play a vital role in the ever-changing landscape of education. The potential of schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly mediated by the quality of leadership skills and expertise exercised by the principal. One of the most general conclusions emanating from the research on school leadership is that the school principal can exercise a significant effect on the success of a school (Kruger, 2003). In studying the research surrounding school principals however, a lacuna of information has developed as educational researchers have sought to better understand the role of the school principal.

It is currently noted that most of the studies addressing the educational leadership of school principals have been conducted at the elementary school level and within the

public education setting (Hallinger, 2003a). Yet as educational opportunities and settings continue to expand, the need to develop a foundation of research beyond the elementary school level and public education setting becomes more evident. According to Hallinger, “A paucity of research has been published that studies the impact of the principals at the secondary level; therefore, principals of secondary schools need to be the focus of further research to compare and contrast research findings at other building levels” (p. 6).

In addition to the need for continuing research at the secondary level, the need for further research within settings that are alternatives to the public education setting demand just as much attention. In recent years, there has been an increase in the available alternatives to traditional public schools as parents, teachers, and community stakeholders pursue such desires as greater autonomy from legislated school boards, parental influence on subject matter and content, and separation from federal mandates and testing (Hadderman, 1998; Kolderie, 1998; Murphy & Shiffman, 2002; Nathan, 2004). Included in this increase to the number of alternatives to traditional public schools is an increase in the number of private religious education schools within the United States (Annual Survey of America’s Charter School 2005 Data, 2006; Broughman & Swain, 2006; Center for Education Reform, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Annual Report 2006). Inherent with this increased growth of alternative settings to public education is the desire for accurate evaluation and understanding of how those alternative educational settings perform. Drawing attention to the religious education setting, Cohen (2006) stated that the “turn of the millennia is an exciting time for research in the field of religious education” (p. 153). The need for

understanding how various streams of religious education are responding to a dynamic world is becoming a critical issue among stakeholders of private religious education schools who are concerned about many pressing political and social issues (Nelson & Richardson, 2004). Thus, the continued development of research grounded in well-defined theoretical bases and combined with varieties of research methods of analytic tools can further our cumulative understanding of the growing issues facing religious education (Cohen). Researchers are optimistic that current studies being conducted within religious education settings are helping to develop a stronger foundation of research-based literature that will ultimately improve and shape the overall successes of religious education (Cohen; Lawson, 2006; Park, 2001; Re'em, 2001).

### Purpose of the Study

Despite the more recent burgeoning attention given to the field of religious education as well as the recognized need for research beyond the elementary level, the research and literature dedicated to the development, understanding and improvement of public education, particularly at the elementary level, continues to be predominant. Research is also consistently directed towards the shifting role and influence of the school principal as educational settings seek to mitigate the demands of educational change in a dynamic post-modern era. The documented impact that principals can have upon school and student achievement justify the efforts for continued research as well as provide a focal point for research in alternative educational settings (Boyd, 1996; Brookover & Lezotte 1979; Cotton, 2003; Cuban, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery,

1982; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte et al., 1974; Marzano, 2003; McEwan, 1998; Spartz et al., 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979). Thus, the components of educational research at the secondary level, in a religious educational setting, and that surround the influential role of the school principal have combined to become the catalysts for this study.

Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to address the dearth of reliable research on principals at the secondary level within the religious education setting. More specifically, by drawing on the “wisdom of practice” of experienced principals and teachers they supervise (Shulman, 1987) the purpose of this study is to investigate how seminary principals embody leadership in released-time seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As I pause to reflect on the contributing factors leading up to this study, the single greatest factor has always been founded in my desires to see improvement in the seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Having spent my career as a religious educator in the seminary setting and united with my love for learning and improvement, I have always sought opportunities to make the religious education experience better—better for the students, the teachers, and the principal. Yet it was not until my formal introduction into the literature on educational leadership that my desires for improvement in the seminaries rested squarely on the seminary principal.

The primary stages of development for this study emanate from my research of the school principal within the public sector. Early conclusions confirm the viable impact principals can have upon a school (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cuban, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte et al., 1974; Spartz et al., 1977;

Venezky & Winfield, 1979) as well as the many differing approaches to leadership that can produce such positive improvements (Daresh & Liu, 1985; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Southworth, 2002). The literature also confirms that when effective, principal leadership promotes an overall school climate that is conducive to more effective teaching and learning (Daresh & Lui; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; McEwan, 1998). This ability for principal leadership to produce climates conducive to more effective teaching and learning is very appealing as a teacher and fueled my desires to better understand and apply what I am learning about school leadership.

The most problematic portion of my study of the literature is the lack of information dedicated to school leadership within my current setting. The research I am searching for, which is dedicated to religious education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is almost nonexistent. The few studies I have found are general in their focus and not associated with leadership. Consequently, I broadened my research base by including the research developed from other religious affiliations as well as the educational leadership literature found within the public setting. In terms of other religious affiliations, the additional literature proves to be helpful but remains somewhat limited in its scope and applicability. The crux of my literature base, therefore, has been fashioned and is substantiated by the development of educational leadership in the public setting. Additionally, the methodology for this study in a religious education setting parallels the methodological practice of educational research in the public setting.

My decision in developing this study using a qualitative research approach underscores a desire to deepen my understanding of the processes or models of leadership

that are being employed by seminary principals in the religious education setting. It is observed in the literature that qualitative approaches have this ability to access the experiences of others in a way that cannot be obtained through general quantitative approaches (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Grinnell, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Additionally, in my experiences as a religious educator, I have already observed many of the routine decisions that are made by principals in the seminary setting, but feel that to deepen my understanding it will require a different approach than is often pursued with quantitative methods. Qualitative research is well suited to examine topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored and often includes the experiences and knowledge of others from their natural language or setting (Cassell & Symon; Guba & Lincoln). The literature also supports the use of qualitative methods as a means of providing a way to discover unnamed processes, to attend to the contextual specificity, to increase the volume of marginalized voices, produce thick descriptions of lives lived, and to transfer the findings between contexts (Ungar, 2003). These positive outcomes of research reinforce my selection of a qualitative approach in better understanding the leadership characteristics for seminary principals.

The data gathered in this study were drawn from the seminary principals themselves, as the active voices whose experiences have helped shape the seminary principalship (DeBevoise, 1984; Flick, 2002). The voices of the teachers, which often become marginalized or neglected in quantitative approaches, are incorporated to inform the overall understanding of leadership and employ the perspectives of those who also experience the decisions of leadership on a daily basis (Boyd, 1996; Kvale, 1996;

Lemanshieu, Roy, & Foss, 1997; Seidman, 1998). Included in the data are my own observations of the seminary setting (Lansisalmi, Peiro, & Kivimaki, 2004) and the developments of leadership that take place. My own lived experiences as a religious educator and knowledge of educational leadership provided by the literature in the public setting are elements that helped guide and sharpen my observational data. The final components of information that help blend and fashion together the various sources of data (Bernard, 2000; Cassell & Symon, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) include formal documentation of the statistical information surrounding student enrollment, completion, and graduation from the local seminaries.

### Research Questions

The central, over-arching question of this research is, “How do seminary principals embody leadership in released-time seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?” From the field of leadership, the literature recognizes that the multiple facets of one’s lived experiences helps influence and establish current leadership practice as well as inform future decision-making processes (DeBevoise, 1984; Schlueter & Walker, 2008; Sheehan & Sheehan, 2006). Additionally, taking the time to pursue an introspection of leadership practices and behaviors is also beneficial towards obtaining a deeper understanding of embodied leadership behaviors (Militello & Janson, 2007; Stoeckel & Davies, 2007). This attention to leaders’ past experiences combined with an introspective look at leadership is an essential component of data collection and analysis. Therefore, the following research questions are used to help guide the exploration of the

central, over-arching question.

1. What are the common themes in the principals' experiences that have prepared them to be selected as a seminary principal?

2. What behaviors does a successful seminary principal engage in?

3. What are the obstacles to the success of a seminary principal?

4. What personal strengths and abilities emerge from the principal as they engage in the work of a seminary principal?

5. What experiences as a seminary principal have been most influential in helping shape their leadership style?

6. What are the teachers' perspectives on the role of the seminary principal in relation to the previous five questions?

### Limitations

While the methodological approach used to understand the embodied leadership qualities for seminary principals parallels much of the research conducted in the public school setting, a qualitative approach does not support the general application of the findings and recommendations to other educational settings. The nature of this qualitative research was to provide a richer and deeper understanding into the lives and experiences of the participants within this study. The knowledge that has been gained, however, can then appropriately be included with the information from other methods and locations of research. This application of the recommendations and findings helps to inform and increase an overall understanding of the complex and varied aspects of educational

leadership from the perspectives of multiple settings. This approach can also lead to additional theories and models of leadership that are grounded in and then extend from that which has already been discovered. In addition, while this process does require a foundation of knowledge that is built upon multiple studies and varied methods of research, it does not assert that the body of knowledge gleaned from this individual qualitative study is indicative of the outcomes or conclusions of all research in other educational settings.

All of the data, analysis, and conclusions provided were within the context of four private religious education seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The leadership experiences studied were specific to the unique environment of the seminaries where the principals were studied and may not directly correlate with other educational settings.

The conclusions and recommendations were also shaped by the participants who shared their own experiences and that may reflect different interpretations of common situations based upon the context of their culture and environment. The conclusions and recommendations were also influenced by the participants' own perceptions of leadership and accurate recall of past experiences, and were limited by the individuals who were willing to participate.

### Delimitations

1. The geographic location of all of the participants in the study were employed within seminaries located in the state of Utah.

2. Ethnicity was limited but representative of the population of those employed in seminaries located in the state of Utah.
3. All of the participants were male between the ages of 25-56.

### Definitions

The specific nature and setting of this qualitative study of seminary principals for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints requires the use of language and terms that may be unique to readers who are unfamiliar with the environment, surroundings, and culture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are also phrases adapted from the literature surrounding educational leadership that will be helpful for the reader to understand. Included is a list of terms that will be frequently referenced throughout this study.

*Church Educational System:* The Church Educational System (CES) operates under the direction of the Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1994, p. 1). Within this study, the CES will refer to the governing body that specifically oversees and employs the administrators and teachers who provide religious instruction in seminaries of instruction worldwide.

*Seminary:* The term seminary is used to describe the schools of religious education used by CES. A seminary is used to teach high-schooled-aged youth (ages 14-18) in religious doctrines and principles as espoused by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A seminary is typically located in a private building adjacent to the public high school or junior high school and is administered by a seminary principal, a

support specialist (secretary), and a faculty of teachers sufficient to accommodate the size of the student enrollment. A seminary is not a place of higher learning dedicated to training its students to become professional, full-time clergy as the term is often used in other religious settings.

*Brother:* When making reference to the principals and teachers employed by the CES, the title “Brother” is used in conjunction with the last name in place of Mr. (i.e., Brother Mecham or Brother Kollins)

*Religious education:* When referencing studies that are representative of a religious education setting, the term religious education is most commonly used to describe private schools that are overseen by a religious body. These private religious education schools are not focused to provide instruction only in religious teachings as are the seminaries within the CES, but are indicative of schools that provide secular education in a variety of subjects (i.e., math, science, social studies) and are sponsored by an organized religious body.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Foundations

Over the past three decades, American education has been part of a process of development and reform that has been categorized as the effective schools movement. Within this effective schools movement, a number of schools have relied on effective schools research as the framework for their school improvement programs (Lezotte, 1991). The beginnings of the effective schools movement emerged in response to earlier research that maintained a lack of correlation between school policy and practice and student achievement. Early studies suggested that schools have little influence on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context. Early studies also concluded that differences between schools seem to have little effect on any measurable attributes of those who attend them (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972). However, these primary conclusions were not universally accepted as researchers looked more closely at these early studies.

Klitgaard and Hall (1974) are an example of researchers who were critical of the studies that concluded there was a lack of correlation between school policy and practice and student achievement. They argued that previous studies examined the average effect of all school samples on student outcomes and thus only measured general effects. They theorized that effectiveness of an individual school could have been averaged into the overall statistics and thus largely left unidentified. They eventually developed a study that

helped practitioners identify examples of successful students in individual schools as well as identify the policy, procedures and behaviors of those individual schools in ways that could later be replicated. This critical look at the connections between student achievement and the practice of schools opened the door to more thorough investigations into these effective schools to determine what were the components behind schools that were effective.

### *Effective Schools*

Additional studies began to emerge during the 1970s and 1980s that further established common characteristics found within effective schools. A list of those common characteristics included: (a) strong leadership by the school principal and teachers, (b) effective inservice training for school-wide staff, (c) a vision and specific goals for the school, (d) an effective system to track student progress, (e) high expectation for student achievement established by the teachers and principal, (f) a well-maintained classroom atmosphere for learning, and (g) a focus on reading (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cuban, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte et al., 1974; Spartz et al., 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979). This and other growing research in the effective schools movement began to lead to school improvements and models of application to enhance a school's goal of becoming an effective school. Schools pursued such basic improvements as orderly and purposeful atmospheres free from harm with a climate of expectation in which mastery of basic skills were demonstrated by student and teacher. They also established missions and goals that were easily articulated and purposefully crafted to match the priorities of the

communities in which they reside. Greater emphasis was placed upon the appropriate management of time dedicated to instruction in essential skills as well as the improved use of a variety of appropriate assessment procedures employed to track progress and learning. Open communication between parents and the community also was encouraged to ensure support and understanding of the school's basic mission to improve the students.

An additional essential component to the effective schools movement was the attention drawn to the role of the principal as an instructional leader. Edmonds (1979) maintained that one of the five basic correlates of effective schools was the principal's characteristics and behavior to interpret the school mission to the staff, provide guidance and encouragement to staff and students, continually monitor student progress, and serve as the communication link to parents and staff. Cuban (1988) also identified the political, managerial, and instructional roles fundamental to the principalship. Interest in the school principals grew as societal demands began to hold schools accountable in areas of effectiveness and naturally began to see the school principal as the director in meeting those demands. In an effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates a central mission to the staff, parents, and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program (Lezotte, 1991).

Because of this newly acquired interest aimed specifically at the school principal, further research and practice was directed towards the best ways of developing the principal as an effective leader of their school. The focus on leadership development for

principals and schools was the result of external policy reforms aimed at driving school improvement forward by changing the practice of school leaders (Hallinger, 2005). The change in practice for school leaders began to focus on the leadership development of principals and their ability to influence instruction. Research began to develop “instructional leadership” as the major emphasis for the role of a school principal. Instructional leadership quickly became the preferred emphasis for the development, training, and hiring of school principals.

### *Instructional Leaders*

In seeking to better understand the role of the principal within education and the strategies that are employed by these “instructional leaders,” one must understand the demands that have been placed upon the principal as instructional leader. First, with its emergence out of the research on “effective” schools, instructional leadership has been conceived as a role carried out by the school principal (Glasman, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). During the 1980s, instructional leaders were described as effective principals who were expected to devote time to leadership tasks that included coordinating and controlling instruction (Beck & Murphy, 1993). Instructional leaders possessed a clear commitment to the goal of promoting student cognitive growth and academic achievement as the primary outcome of schooling (Clark & Lotto, 1982; Leithwood & Montgomery). An additional descriptor of the instructional leader was a principal who led with a vision for the future that based upon values, beliefs, and experiences (Dwyer, 1984; Manasse, 1982; Stout, 1993). The role of the instructional leader began to address the effective influences that leaders could have upon the

instruction and curriculum issues that took place within schools. Yet one of the major dilemmas currently facing school leadership centers is the fact that principals are expected to be both organizational managers and leaders of effective teaching and learning (Southworth, 2002). Barth (1986) argued that because of the many roles demanded by a principal, the goal of a principal becoming solely an instructional leader may be an impossible dream. Hallinger (2003b) also quoted Barth saying that principals occupy a middle-management position and thus are limited in their authority to command. They are also impeded, particularly in secondary schools, when the principal often has less expertise than the teachers whom they supervise.

The growing demands that continue to be placed upon the school principal have required principals to elicit greater support from their constituents associated with the school they oversee. Signs of this outreaching by principals manifest themselves as increased attention to school missions and vision statements dedicated to garnering the support of faculty, students, and parents to a common goal. The success of such uniting efforts was validated as research uncovered a strong relation between the degree of instructional leadership provided by the principal and the existence of a clear school mission. As instructional leaders turned to a clear school mission, there was an increase in the overall influence upon student opportunity to learn and teachers' expectations for student achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). This step towards the inclusion of others to assist the instructional leader in all aspects of leadership led to yet another shift in the role of the principal leader.

### *Transformational Leaders*

More recently, the term “transformational” has been included in the metaphor of instructional leaders connoting leadership with the impetus for organizational change. Principals, who are continually faced by complex moral, interpersonal, instructional, managerial, and political demands are recognizing that a likely avenue for their more effective exercise of leadership may “lie in enabling other members of their schools, such as teachers, to assume and carry out leadership roles within the school organization” (Lucas & Valentine, 2002, p. 2 ). Organizational change is elicited through the vision of a powerful instructional leader who is able to persuade others to share their individual ideals (Greenfield, 1995). A collective vision facilitated by the instructional leader is also necessary to empower others to excel (McCier, 2003). Instructional leadership requires principals as change agents, or transformational leaders, who are skillful in creating collaborative environments in their schools (Southworth, 2002; Thomson, 1990). Brown and Moffett (1999) argued the need to amplify the picture of the instructional leader recognizing that leadership resides both in individuals and in groups working together. To successfully move beyond the challenges facing our current educational system, a collaborative connection within schools and organizations must exist. The transformational leader must be ready to identify the contributions and needs of individuals and groups and then be able to select models of leadership that will be most successful according to the dynamic conditions that exist within and around the organizations they lead. Yet with the development of the transformational leader schools continue to face the cascading landscape of society that is characterized by unprecedented

change and uncertainty (Bjork, 1996).

### *Principal Leaders*

As the educational landscape continues to address the growing influences of a dynamic society, the instructional and transformational leader must likewise adapt his leadership roles to maintain a viable position at the head of a school. Parental involvement, budgets, facility management, legal issues and safety are all examples of structures and processes that can place great demands upon principals and interfere with their attention to the needs of classroom instruction. A shift towards standards based instruction (curriculum that has become a prescribed set of academic standards driven by student achievement as measured by their performance on “standardized” test) within the public school system has also placed additional demands upon the school principal, as principals try to mediate the expectations and standards of federal and state constituencies with parental influences and teachers concerns over lack of curricular control (Tomlinson, 2000). With the increased development of these various structures and policies, principal leadership in education has come to mean more than just the management of instruction but includes the management of structures and processes around instruction. Elmore (2000) argued that principal leaders are hired and retained based largely on their capacity to buffer teachers from outside interference and their capacity to support the prevailing logic of confidence between a school system and its constituencies. The ability to lead, however, within the context of such assorted school-related demands, is again requiring the role of the school principal to make adjustments. Principals must be aware of these changing conditions and adapt both their goals and

means in order to help their school survive and thrive in such environments (Goldring, 1992). The leadership role of the principal is being challenged to move beyond the idealistic role of a leader who simply provides a positive influence on student learning or is able to market a goal or vision that everyone can agree upon.

Over the past 20 years, the normatively desirable role that effective principals are required to fulfill is quickly becoming a blend of the leadership roles of both the instructional and transformational leader (Lucas & Valentine, 2002). Leaders in today's schools are expected to produce purpose, commitment, and creativity in the members of their organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1994) as well as have a broad understanding of the environmental contexts in which their schools are located and develop and employ managerial, curricular, and instructional strategies that address those contexts (Lucas & Valentine; Singh, Bartlett, Rowan, Gale, & Roylance, 1997). In describing the type of leader able to communicate such effectiveness, these principal leaders have initially been described as strong, directive leaders who are been successful at "turning their schools around" (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Brouillette, 1997; Southworth, 2002). Cotton (2003) continued to illustrate that scores of studies show that student achievement was strongly affected by the leadership of school principals, and cited that principals who served as instructional leaders, in particular, were much more likely to have high-achieving students than principals who did not. Nevertheless, Cotton was also quick to note that research has found little evidence to suggest that a principal wields significant influence on a student's performance due to direct interaction. Further studies indicated that there was significant support that the greatest influence a principal has upon student

performance is through indirect interaction that is mediated through teachers and others (Gurr, 1997; Hallinger et al., 1996; Leitner, 1994). These findings supported the need for a principal to continue employing the directly influential qualities of the instructional leader but also look to infuse and more completely combine the developed qualities of the transformational leader that has more impact upon the students relating to the indirect collaboration of entire school communities.

Cuban (1984) described successful leaders as ones who lead from a combination of expertise and charisma. They are hands-on principals, “hip-deep” in curriculum and instruction, and unafraid of working with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning. It is this type of leadership that develops trust within the organization and inspires success as participants recognize the principal’s passion and expertise for the work. Brown and Moffett (1999) described the principal as a charismatic leader who engenders followership through their encouragements, empowering demeanor, and heroic vision for achieving order, meaning, and success amidst the complexity, confusion, and changes of our modern education system. The charisma and influence that can radiate from the skillful and positive hands-on nature of an instructional leader create a synergistic power leading to greater success for principal, teacher, and student.

#### Continued Emphasis

The complexity and continuity of demands placed upon the school principal encourage the development and understanding of leadership roles beyond a current categorization of the instructional or transformational leader. Principals are often

simultaneously meeting the needs of managerial, curricular, political, instructional, institutional, human resource, and symbolic leadership within their schools; thus, decreasing the effective efforts placed solely on an instructional or transformational leader (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Singh et al., 1997). Yet, even with this increase in demand, research still suggested that school achievement and improvement can be obtained through the leadership, skills, and effectiveness of the school principal (Chirichello, 2001; Cotton, 2003; Daresh, 2006; Fullan, 2002; Glickman, 2002; Marzano, 2003). Hallinger (2003b) cited that scholars conducting research consistently found that “the skillful leadership of school principals was a key contributing factor when it came to explaining successful change, school improvement, or school effectiveness” (p. 335). Hallinger also directed our attention to the next major component of effective principal leadership—principal leaders must adjust their performance of their role to the needs, opportunities, and constraints imposed by the school context.

### *Social Context*

The development of leadership is often subject to the influences of school climates, transitory fads, and the cultural values of the given society (Boyd, 1996; Lemanshieu et al., 1997). In addition, while contingency theories of leadership do explain how leadership varies from organization to organization or system to system, the importance of leadership being socially influenced is that it suggested that leadership could and would vary from setting to setting. Therefore, instead of searching for an overarching theory of leadership, research suggested the need for a more pluralistic approach to take account of the inherently variegated nature of leadership (Dimmock & Walker,

2000; Southworth, 2002) Fullan (2002) stated that sustained school success was never just one special event, meeting, or activity; rather it was a journey of recursive decisions and actions. Within the social context, much of the work of a principal can be viewed as simply carrying out activities in joint collective enactments by a group of people through their social interactions (Davydov, 1995). Cultural developments of a community, its school, and its constituents underscore the importance of the roles of both the social interactions and the individual within the entire education context (McVee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005).

Much of the research on school leadership has explored what principals have to say about school leadership with little attention to the other social influences that influence leadership. One example of such limited attention to multiple social influences is Ribbins (1997) who concluded that current research, generally speaking, has developed a leader's view of leadership. Research has not explored enough of the followers' perspectives and expectations of their leaders when developing models and theories of leadership. Data collected from teachers about effective principals' leadership tells us something about how well the principals' practices conform to teachers' mental models of what leaders do (Leithwood study as cited in Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000). Strengthening our understanding of leadership from the singular construction of leaders' own perspectives must be broadened to include the social constructs and perspectives of leadership provided by additional stakeholders (Southworth, 2002). Schools and school principals are directly influenced by societal changes and future investigations of the school principal will require researchers to take a

more extensive and expansive look at the varied social contexts influencing principals (Marzano, 2003).

### *Situational Nature of Leadership*

Situational theories of leadership have been developed to assist educational leaders in utilizing and cultivating multiple strategies that can be used to meet the demands of so many variables facing leadership. These theories of leadership are concerned with the moderating influence of situational variables on the relationship between leader behavior or traits and end-result variables such as group performance. These theories assume that different situations require different patterns of traits and behavior for a leader to be effective (Yukl, 1981).

According to the situational nature of leadership, there is no one best way to influence people. The leadership style a person should use with individuals or groups depends on the readiness level of the people the leader is attempting to influence (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). Principals must approach each individual decision and evaluate the importance of situational factors such as the nature of the task performed by a group, the leader's authority and discretion to act, the role expectations imposed by superiors, peers, and subordinates, and the nature of the external environment. Continued research that recognizes the situational nature of leadership has sought to identify situational moderator variables that determine what kind of leadership will be most effective in a given situation (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Hersey & Blanchard; Yukl, 1981). Examples of situational moderator variables include leadership decisions within the frameworks of (a) how the structure of the school develops in response to the school's tasks and

environment; (b) how data and analysis can set clear directions, hold people accountable to results and try to solve school's problems with new policy, rules, or through restructuring; (c) how the school organization exists to serve human needs; (d) how people's needs, skills, and values in conjunction with their formal roles and relationships can be lead through facilitation and empowerment; (e) how the concepts of power, conflict, and the distribution of scarce resources are used within the school environment; and (f) how leadership must be aware of the school's cultures and shared values (Bolman & Deal).

### Religious Education

Religious education has been an important part of religious worship for many religions. Schools of religious education continue to flourish within the United States and in large measure have patterned their educational developments after the successes and structures developed within the public school setting (Brelsford, 2005b; Warnick, 2004). Brelsford stated that Dewey's notion of experience and education has informed understandings of religious education since the modern beginnings of the field. He also cited the success of the modern democratic experiment in public education as the leading influence that continues to embed religious education within the traditional schooling structure. In addition, while religious education traditionally evolves its pedagogy and practice at a more cautious pace than the public education setting, examples of dynamic change can be seen in current religious educational settings in response to societal demands, research, and professional collaboration (Warner, 2005). Examples of these

dynamic changes included emerging approaches to religious education from: (a) a typological approach to religious education that centers on content; (b) a phenomenological approach to religious education which includes cultures, ethnics, and religious diversity; and (c) an educational approach to religious education which focuses on the intellectual studies of religion. Additionally, emerging educational theories within the secular setting continue to influence the religious arena. Studies are beginning to emerge in relation to brain theory and religious teaching within a church setting (Tye, 2006). Studies are also being developed along neurological/biological and evolutionary theory and the construction of knowledge in the religious setting (Brelsford, 2005a). These and other pedagogical approaches will continue to shape religious education as educators seek to improve the quality of religious education.

### *Church Educational System*

The CES was developed to provide religious education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and “has always included the mandate to bring souls unto Christ by effectively teaching the principles and doctrines that are in harmony with what the scriptures and Church Leaders teach” (Clark, 1938, p.10). These truths were to be taught in such a way that individual students could apply and integrate such teachings into their own lives.

This focus of instruction within the CES has continued to move forward since the inception of released-time instruction in the early 1900s. “Released-time” means a period during the regular school day when a student attending a public school is excused from the school, at the request of the student's parent, to attend classes in religious instruction

given by a regularly organized church (Division of Administrative Rules, 2007).

However, recent changes from the administrators of released-time religious education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have prompted an internal shifting and refining of fundamental teaching practices among teachers and faculties. Landmark addresses by the Commissioner of Church Education, Henry B. Eyring, in 2001 and 2003 began to lay the framework for extending the responsibilities of instruction within the classroom. His words of instruction began to narrow the focus for religious education, placing a greater need on students' abilities to embrace and live principles that were taught within the classroom. Additional directional shifting continued with counsel from Elder Richard G. Scott, who spoke as a member of the Worldwide Church Board of Education and instruction from Paul V. Johnson as the Administrator of Religious Education and Elementary and Secondary Education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 2003, Paul Johnson introduced what he termed "A Current Teaching Emphasis for the CES" and identified this as the result of a proposal to the Church Board of Education (Johnson, 2003). This current emphasis placed greater accountability on: (a) teacher preparation; (b) instruction as it specifically relates to reading the scripture text; (c) daily study and prayers; (d) understanding words of living prophets; (e) allowing students to explain, share, and testify of doctrines and principles; (f) providing opportunities of working with other students and opportunities of application outside the classroom; (g) mastery of key scriptures; and (h) a developed doctrinal competency expectation for all students. This proposal by Johnson was reviewed and integrated throughout 2003 and 2004 and formally adopted in 2005. The word "current" was taken

out of the title and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' CES now supports "A Teaching Emphasis for the Church Educational System," which outlines improvements in all of the areas originally presented under the Current Teaching Emphasis. This teaching emphasis represents improvements in a wide range of educational activities that include use and development of the curriculum, faculty collaboration and individual improvement, improved student performance, overall school improvement, and accountability to local and administrative constituents.

The Teaching Emphasis within the CES for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a focus designed to enhance the overall religious education instruction within Church seminaries and institutes throughout the world. Its purpose is to prepare more directly young people for effective missionary service and seek to deepen their faith, testimony, and conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Johnson, 2003).

With the formal implementation of the Teaching Emphasis into religious education, worldwide efforts of improvement were being made by individual teachers and administrators, as well as collective seminary faculties to become better aligned with the guiding principles the Teaching Emphasis outlines. Principals of the local seminaries have already received and will continue to receive training on the Teaching Emphasis. This focus on the Teaching Emphasis places greater attention on seminary principals who are responsible to disseminate training amongst the faculties they oversee. Principals will be faced with the challenges of implementing and focusing the vision of the Teaching Emphasis for teachers and seminaries throughout religious education classrooms. It will require principals to assess current situational variables associated with their seminaries

and then use an array of instructional leadership skills that will best meet the seminaries' needs. Improved understanding of the role of the seminary principal will be valuable and timely for the successful implementation of the Teaching Emphasis.

### *Current Research*

Current research has given little formal attention to the role of the principal and the leadership strategies that have been or could be applied to religious education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I was only able to find two studies that addressed principals' leadership strategies in relationship to religious education for this setting. The first study (Stuart, 1999) did not fully address principals' strategies, but focused more on self-assessments for employees at all levels of the CES. The second study (Watkins, 1992) was a thorough investigation of instructional leadership strategies specifically targeted towards seminary principals in the CES.

The Watkins (1992) study used instructional leadership strategies from the public education setting and sought to identify the use of those strategies by seminary principals. The study did identify some instructional leadership behaviors for seminary principals that are similar to those exhibited by public school administrators. However, those same instructional leadership behaviors that elicited positive classroom environments and higher student outcomes in the public setting did not significantly produce similar outcomes in the CES. Instead, the study determined that each time the principal or teacher perceived a specific instructional leadership behavior, it then had a negative impact on a teachers' perception of friendship, innovation, and student involvement in the classroom. The study ultimately did not develop any conclusions that connected the use

of instructional leadership strategies by seminary principals to improve the performance of students as to their enrollment, retention, and completion of seminary. The study was successful in determining that similar instructional leadership strategies are employed by both public and religious education principals. However, the outcomes of public principal leadership strategies and seminary principal leadership strategies varied. The Watkins study concluded with the recommendation to conduct additional studies using instruments of instructional leadership that were designed for the unique setting of the seminary. The study also drew attention to the fact that this was the first research conducted that tried to tie religious education specifically to public education in terms of instructional leadership strategies (Watkins). This study conducted in 1992 was an important step to laying a firmer foundation of research within the CES.

### *Seminary Principals*

The embodied leadership qualities of the seminary principal are employed within the very unique setting of private religious education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Within the CES, seminary principals are selected from among the core of employees that work anywhere within the CES worldwide. There are approximately 3,443 employees in the CES with 288 of those employees assigned as a principal over a seminary.

Within the CES, there is no formal training or certification required before an individual can be assigned as a seminary principal. The CES does not currently provide any formal program for principal licensure or administrative certification. Principals do not receive a pay increase as a result of being assigned as a principal and continue to be

assigned classes to teach, although they do receive a decrease in the total number of classes they teach. There is no tenured positioning that best qualifies someone to be selected as a principal and current seminary principals may later be reassigned back into the classroom full-time as a member of a seminary faculty. The unique setting of seminary principals underscores the need for better understanding of the role of current seminary principals as well as increased information on how a principal should best approach future responsibilities within the seminary setting.

### Summary

A thorough review of the literature on educational leadership has shown the evolution of the school principal as well as the more recent focused attention placed upon the leadership role of the principal. As schools continue to pursue those components of education that will make them the most effective, leadership qualities of school principals will continue to be evaluated as a key factor in school success. The review of the literature has also outlined the induction and growth of private religious education schools and their continued development as they seek to meet the religious education needs within a dynamic world.

Although the review of the literature has shown a great wealth of knowledge and research base dedicated to school leadership in the public education setting at the elementary level, and also acknowledges the growth of private religious education settings, there continues to be a lack of research that combines the study of school leadership within the private religious education setting. The literature review illustrates

that religious education settings have patterned much of their development after practices within the public setting. Research also has documented that religious education settings are not immune to many of the same economic, organizational, and societal issues that are consistently challenging the leadership in public educational settings. The literature is lacking however in studies dedicated to understanding the basic structures of leadership in private religious education settings. It is also lacking studies dedicated to understanding how leadership in private religious educational settings are meeting the demands of the same powerful, influential issues that are challenging schools in the public sector. Using the foundations of research established by the literature in the public setting, this study is designed to help establish meaningful research for, and seek a richer understanding of educational leadership within the private religious education setting.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the qualitative approach of this study and provides a more detailed understanding of how the data were collected. This chapter also portrays how the data collected was used to help develop and inform the analysis and conclusions of the overall study.

To better understand the role of a seminary principal for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I determined that a qualitative approach would be the best method for data collection because of its ability to tap into the experience of others in a way that cannot be obtained through general quantitative approaches (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Grinnell, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In my study of the literature, I found that the use of qualitative methods provided the ability to discover unnamed processes, to attend to the contextual specificity, to increase the volume of marginalized voices, produce thick descriptions of lives lived, and to transfer the findings between contexts (Ungar, 2003). Qualitative approaches seek to incorporate a broader source of data that often includes the experiences and knowledge of others from their natural language or environment (Guba & Lincoln). Qualitative research is also well suited to examine topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored, which can be difficult with quantitative methods (Cassell & Symon).

As the foundation to this qualitative study, I used a grounded theory approach to better understand leadership within the seminary setting. Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and refers to a style of conducting qualitative data analysis

that seeks to identify categories and concepts that emerge from text and then link the concepts into substantive and formal theories (Bernard, 2000; Glaser & Strauss; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory extends from the influence of tacit (intuitive or felt) knowledge combined with the use of qualitative methods to help uncover conceptual themes in a contextual way without any predetermined theoretical or conceptual framework (Lansisalmi et al., 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A grounded theory approach allowed me to focus on uncovering phenomena and processes related to the leadership of the seminary principals as they were happening. This approach also allowed me to then explore the interpersonal relations (Grinnell, 1997; Jorgensen, 1989) between faculty members and principals within the overall seminary setting in a systematically organized way in order to discover meaning and structures that supported an understanding of the role of a seminary principal (Glaser & Strauss; Strauss & Corbin).

## Setting

### *Population*

The population for this study was principals, teachers, and area administrators from released-time seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During the time that this study was conducted, there were 288 seminary principal positions serving released-time seminaries worldwide with the largest concentration of released-time seminaries located in Utah. The CES area that was selected for this study contained 22 seminary principal positions at both the junior and senior high level and one area administrator. Those 22 seminary principals administered a total of 89 full-time

teaching positions, eight part-time teaching positions, and over 11,478 students ages 14-18 (Area secretary, personal communication, February 6, 2007). Of the 22 seminary principalships 15 were at the junior high level and had no more than two faculty members (one principal and one teacher). The remaining seven seminary principalships were located at the senior high school level and serviced faculties of at least three members (one principal and two or more teachers). The larger senior high school seminaries were selected for this study so that multiple teacher interviews were available to compare and contrast with each of the principals who were interviewed (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998). The senior high seminaries were also larger in size and scope than the junior high seminaries and provided more leadership and decision making opportunities for their principals. This increased administrative role for senior high seminary principals provided a richer and more in depth overall view of the embodied leadership qualities of seminary principals for this study.

### *Sample*

Prior to participating in this study, permission from the Institutional Review Board at Utah State University was obtained to ensure the protection and ethical treatment of all of the participants. Written consent from each of the participants was obtained prior to each interview and all risks and benefits of the study were explained to each participant.

I first obtained permission from The CES Research Committee to conduct research involving seminary principals within the CES. Permission was granted by the committee to collect data for this study within one predesignated area of the CES and

limited to the administrator, principals, and teachers who were willing to participate. Participation was limited by the Research Committee to activities that would not interfere with the normal operations of the seminary program and pose minimal time constraints or disruptions for those who would be included in the study. The CES also made available time for me to conduct the various components of the study during regular school hours and adjusted my teaching schedule so that the study could be completed while I maintained my full-time status as an employee for the CES.

The participants who were interviewed were purposefully selected from the population of principals and teachers from among the seven senior high school seminaries selected for this study. Four principals from the seven available senior high school seminaries were selected based upon a theoretical sampling selection. Theoretical sampling selects cases or case groups according to concrete criteria concerning their content instead of using abstract methodological criteria (Flick, 2002).

Sampling for this study was achieved according to the relevance of cases instead of their representativeness. Among the seven available seminary principals, three of the principals were newly appointed and thus had not yet established leadership practices in their new assignments. Therefore, the remaining four seminary principals were selected for this study. Two teachers from each of the principals' faculties were also purposively selected to be interviewed. The inclusion of the teachers' perspectives towards their principals as well as the teachers' own experiences with administration in the CES helped inform the overall understanding of the role of the seminary principal (Seidman, 1998).

When selecting teachers I purposefully sought to interview teachers who had

taught the most number of years with the principals selected for this study. I also tried to select teachers who had the most years of overall teaching experience in the CES. My purpose in selecting teachers who had taught the most number of years with the participating principals was to help balance and substantiate the principals' statements of their own leadership styles with the perspectives of teachers who had been exposed to those leadership styles throughout the principals' tenure. My purpose in selecting seminary teachers who had the most years of experience in the CES was to draw upon their experiences and perspectives of having dealt with multiple seminary principals and leadership styles throughout the tenure of their careers (Kvale, 1996).

My initial attempts of contacting teachers to be interviewed produced several teachers who would not participate in this study over concerns of scheduling and time. I therefore needed to contact additional teachers who ultimately ended up having less years of experience than the initial teachers selected to be interviewed. The seminary teachers who were interviewed had an average of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years of overall teaching experience within the CES compared to the average of 9 years for all of the teachers in the participating seminaries. The teachers who were interviewed also had an average of 2 years of experience with their current principal compared to the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  year average experience with their principal for all of the teachers in participating seminaries. The principals who were interviewed had an average of more than 18 years of employment with the CES, almost 5 years serving as a senior high seminary principal, and averaged 3 years as the principal at their current assignment. All of the teachers who were interviewed were male. (At the time of this study there were no female principals, and only two female teachers out of

the 89 full-time teachers within the predesignated area used for this study. Neither of those two female teachers was located at seminaries where a principal was interviewed). I also interviewed the Area Administrator, who supervises all of the principals and teachers at the 15 junior and senior seminaries. The Area Administrator had over 30 years experience in the CES and had served as a seminary principal in multiple locations.

### Research Design

The research for this qualitative study was founded upon a grounded theory approach to data analysis. Grounded theory refers to a style of conducting qualitative data analysis that seeks to identify categories and concepts that emerge from text and then link the concepts into substantive and formal theories (Bernard, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory has the ability to provide new insights into the understanding of social processes emerging from the context in which they occur, without forcing and adjusting the data to previous theoretical frameworks (Glaser, 1998). Grounded theory helps researchers understand data and phenomenon as it unfolds within a study (Glaser & Strauss).

A grounded theory approach to data analysis first extends from the influence of tacit (intuitive or felt) knowledge combined with the use of qualitative methods to help uncover conceptual themes in a contextual way without any predetermined theoretical or conceptual framework (Lansisalmi et al., 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Stake (1978) described tacit knowledge as the gained experiences and associations that each person, novice or expert, has with which to build new understandings. Qualitative methods such

as participant interviews and participant observations are then used to become “grounded” in the concepts and themes that begin to emerge from the data.

Understanding of the concepts and themes then develops through a constant comparative analysis and is strengthened with a triangulation of data by obtaining data from multiple sources (Lansisalmi et al.). The strength behind a constant comparative analysis within a grounded theory approach is its ability to begin to understand individual components of data as they connect to and interact with the overall themes and concepts that emerge from the expanse of collected data (Bernard, 2000). As the researcher examines each part of the data collected, he or she then uses what is learned to compare with already known phenomenon as well as develop additional patterns and themes of understanding as they being to emerge. Thus, each new piece of data is compared and contrasted to each existing component of data, developing an analysis and understanding that is finely interwoven throughout the overall experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The grounded theory approach is also supported by a triangulation of data that seeks to achieve a theoretical understanding from multiple sources. As data were gathered in varying ways and from various sources, the themes and patterns that began to emerge were more tightly fashioned together as they represented an understanding extending from the overall experience and not just one voice or one perspective that may be limited in its understanding (Bernard; Cassell & Symon, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Grinnell, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Within this study, I developed a grounded theory approach using three major components of data collection that included participant interviews, participant

observations, and official records from each seminary. As the data analysis began to unfold each component of the data collected was essential to the overall understanding of the role of the seminary principal. This emerging process of data analysis began to quickly identify themes and concepts that prompted further investigation. Within this study it also focused my attention towards those components, such as teacher unity and formal faculty inservices that played a significant role in informing and developing the leadership roles of a seminary principalship.

### *Participant Interviews*

The initial step in the data collection process was using the participant interviews.

As I used the interviewing process, it was noted that:

In-depth interviewing is not used to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (Seidman, 1998, p. 3)

The interviews centered on the research focus questions, examined common themes, strategies of leadership, and allowed for discussion and personal reflection (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Seidman, 1998). The interviews, as a method of inquiry, assisted the participants to express their own narratives that helped make sense of the human experiences (Kvale, 1996) surrounding the leadership role of the seminary principal. I found that exploring the principals', teachers', and the administrator's past experiences helped clarify their current connections to the leadership role of a seminary principal (Whyte, 1997). The data retrieved from the interviews provided a wealth of information in the analysis of the data to connect past performance and decision making

of seminary principals with current practice and models of leadership. It also provided recommendations and insights for those wanting to better understand the role of seminary principals for the future.

I began each of the interviews by asking each participant to respond to open-ended interview questions that were based upon the initial research questions and that were used to help in the exploration of their experiences (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998). The interviews were designed to allow the participants to reflect on their personal experiences and not be seen as a formal interrogation of their opinions or practices. I conducted each of the interviews at the local seminary where each individual participant worked. I was also personally acquainted with many of the participants and wanted them to feel relaxed as they reflected on their experiences. I therefore conducted the interviews at a time that was convenient to their schedule and in their own office. I was able to complete all of the participant interviews (four seminary principals, eight seminary teachers, and one area administrator) over a period of about 6 weeks.

### *Principals*

I began each set of interviews with the senior high school seminary principals. My intent was to establish a foundation of understanding for each of the principals, their leadership characteristics and culture of the seminaries where they administered. This approach allowed me to discover key themes established by the principals that could later be corroborated, refined, and challenged by the perceptions and experiences of the teachers as well as the data gathered from my own observations (Redfern-Vance, 2002).

The typical interview for a seminary principal lasted about one hour. Each interview was recorded electronically and then I later transcribed the interview. Notes were taken during the interviews with attention drawn to key words and phrases to note recurrent themes (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Wengraf, 2001) or important points to check at a later time and compare with written transcripts and recordings. Notes also described other verbal and nonverbal communication associated with inflection of voice, points of emphasis by the participant, body language, office surroundings, and overall demeanor of the participant throughout the interview (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Additional time was also given at the conclusion of each interview for the principals to simply share any volunteered information or give concluding remarks (Kvale, 1996; Wengraf) dealing with any aspect of their own principalship or this study.

After I had completed the interview, I sent a copy of the transcribed text to the participant. I also invited each participant to review the transcript and reply with any needed clarifications, deletions, or additions to the interview. After this entire process all of the principals responded by saying they were comfortable with the transcripts. Two of the principals included some additions to their interviews that helped further explain some of their experiences as a principal.

#### *Teachers and Administrator*

After I had completed interviewing a principal, I then personally contacted the teachers who were selected to be interviewed. The teacher interviews were conducted in a manner similar to the principal interviews, but each teacher interview averaged only 30 to 45 minutes in duration. Each of the teachers was also given the opportunity to review the

transcripts of their interview for further commentary, to delete information, or clarify what was said.

My concluding interview was with the area administrator. His interview lasted approximately 1 hour and patterned the interviews of the seminary principals. However, as I was interviewing, I was keenly aware of how nervous and formal the participant seemed as he “spoke to the microphone” throughout the interview. The actual interview that was directed by some of the questions I had prepared as well as his own experiences lasted only about 15 minutes. Yet as I turned off the tape recorder and began to leave, our departing small talk turned into another 40 minutes of insight and explanation into his views and experiences with seminary principals. During this portion of the interview, I was unable to formally record our conversation and thus relied upon field notes that were completed afterwards as I sat in the parking lot before returning to my office. All of my interviewing was completed in a period of about 5-6 weeks.

### *Participant Observations*

In concert with the participant interviews from each seminary, I also included participant observations that were completed at the seminaries where the principals were interviewed. During my interviews of the principals and teachers, I noted that each made multiple references about leadership in terms of faculty unity and inservice training for teachers. I also noticed that the interviews largely centered the conversations about building unity and teacher training on the physical activities of lunch and weekly inservice training meetings. The consistent references to inservice training meetings and lunchtime gatherings encouraged me to focus my participant observations during these

two significant activities and helped link the observations to all of the other data that were being gathered. The participant observation experiences allowed me to witness the practices of leadership by each of the participating principals within their own settings (Jorgensen, 1989). It also allowed me to experience the social dynamics associated with each of the seminaries and their faculties as it pertained to the overall leadership qualities embodied by the principals.

Participant observations can be used and designed in such a way as to allow researchers to immerse themselves into the multi-faceted dimensions of the study from a variety of settings (Bernard, 2000; Cassell & Symon, 2004; De Munck, 1998; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Within this study, it allowed me to observe the decision-making processes of principals as they interacted and worked within the normal seminary setting. Participant observations also made it possible for me to check descriptions against fact, noting any discrepancies between the interview data and the reality of leadership performances (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003). I completed the participant observations for this study throughout a period of four and a half months. The participant observations included participating in twenty faculty lunchtimes at two different seminaries, participating in eight formal inservice meetings directed by the principal at two different seminaries, and completing 28 general participant observations of the seminary throughout the four seminaries included in the study. The general participant observations of the overall seminary varied in their duration ranging from 1 to 8 hours during the normal workday and helped to better establish an understanding of the overall interactions and workings of all of the seminaries. The participant observations also

allowed me to better perceive the experiences surrounding the seminary principal in a way that Flick (2002) described as “diving headlong into the field, observing from a member’s perspective but also influencing what is observed owing to his or her participation” (p. 139). An additional benefit to my participant observations is what Jorgensen (1989) described as the ability to draw attention to the here and now of everyday life situations, stress the interpretation and understanding of human existence and interaction, follow a logical process of inquiry that is open-ended, and involve direct observation with other methods of gathering information.

The participant observations were used to add to the collection of data from the participant interviews and were based upon my own interactions and overall sensory perceptions of the experience. My personal notes of the experiences and observations were used to record the dynamics of varying situations, impressions about leadership roles, patterns of leadership, and other nuances that helped clarify and define emerging themes (Bernard, 2000; Cassell & Symon, 2004; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Adler and Adler (1998 as cited in Flick, 2002) stated, “Observing is a skill which is methodologically systematized and applied in qualitative research. Not only visual perceptions but also those based on hearing, feeling and smelling are integrated” (p. 139). All of this observational data was then used to help triangulate the data collected in the personal interviews as well as the data found within the formal documents for each of the seminaries (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

My ability to participate in and observe multiple inservice training meetings and lunch hours with varying faculty members and principals was essential groundwork for

this study. I was able to focus my attention on the interactions among faculty members and their principals in specific settings that emanated from some of the overall themes that were being developed as I was continually processing and analyzing all of the data (Cassell & Symon, 2004). I also had general access to all of the seminars within the study and recorded information extending from observed interactions between faculties and principals, the overall “feeling” or setting of the seminary, and the casual conversations with varying faculty members about the seminary, the role of the principal, and about this study (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). As an employee for the CES, I felt I was given great flexibility and availability to access multiple sources of data for the participant observations. My only real limitations were created by the time constraints imposed by the window of time given for the study by the CES Research Committee.

### *Formal Documents*

The concluding major component of data collection that assisted me in strengthening and triangulating emerging themes was obtaining, reviewing, and analyzing information from official data records for each seminary. Analysis of official records and reports associated with each seminary helped broaden the understanding and overall role that a seminary principal played once it was connected to the other methods of data collection. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data helped inform the research and produced insight and understanding in a way that could not be duplicated by either approach alone (Bernard, 2000). This collection of data provided a benchmark for what dynamics each of the principals was dealing with at their particular seminary, and it also was seen as a measuring stick for success by some of the principals.

Upon completion of an interview with each of the principals, I also obtained documentation of the general seminary statistics that represented the official records and formal documentation for each senior seminary. The data from these documents included student enrollment data, student completion rates by term and year, and graduation totals for the entire seminary. It also included teacher class loads and totals in the same categories dealing with enrollment, completion, and graduation for each teacher. This data was collected for each year the seminary principal had served at the local seminary, as well as the year prior to the principal first arriving at the seminary. I used the information from these official reports to better understand some of the approaches to leadership that the principals were making within their principalship. Additionally, when I used this information in conjunction with the interviews and participant observations, I was able to gain a better overall understanding of the dynamics of each seminary and the leadership goals and challenges of each individual principal.

My review of the raw numbers associated with student enrollment, completion, and graduation for each seminary began establishing connections to the decision making processes of each individual principal and explained some of the subtle as well as dynamically different directional goals and leadership styles between seminary principals. I began to notice that the student levels in enrollment, completion, and graduation that were recorded by the reports seemed to be a driving force and a constant checkpoint for the successful practice of principals. In addition, when I compared the official reports with the emerging themes of leadership from the interviews and participant observations I instantly made connections. I discovered that each seminary

principal had established a specific leadership strategy at the onset of their administration. I also noticed, however, that as the statistical data surrounding student enrollment, completion, and graduation began to change the principals would adjust their leadership styles, strategies and decisions in a way that seemed to mirror the changes in their seminary statistics. This changing leadership approach helped support the role of situational leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Yukl, 1981) among principals in the seminary setting.

One example of this phenomenon was a seminary principal who recognized that his initial leadership focused specifically upon the overall unity between himself and his faculty. Yet, after his initial year of leadership, he began to recognize a need to decrease the overall seminary dropout rate and therefore adjusted his focus towards better training for the teachers and not so much upon unity. He felt that an increase in the skill of his faculty would help combat the dropout of those students who might more effectively be taught and thus retained within the seminary program. Overall, the additional information provided by the official seminary documents helped better conceptualize the leadership decisions that are a necessary component of a seminary principal's administration and helped strengthen the overall approach to this research study.

## Data Analysis

### *My Interpretive Lens*

Before describing the steps taken to analyze the data it is important to understand some of my experiences that generated my own tacit knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Stake, 1978) and the interpretive lens through which the data was filtered as I began the analysis process. At the onset of this study, I was in my third full-time teaching position as an instructor in the CES. Therefore, the information I had gathered from all of the literature surrounding educational leadership, my knowledge of the overall functioning of the seminary program, and my personal views of the role of a seminary principal that laid the foundation for this study were largely understood and synthesized from the interpretive lens of a researcher who had gained personal perspective and experience with multiple seminary principals during my 10 years as an instructor within the CES.

However, just prior to the first participant interviews for this study, my interpretive lens experienced a shifting and a sharpening when I was newly appointed as a principal at a junior high school seminary. This transition in assignment for me from teacher to principal demanded a new level of understanding to the practical nature of leadership and began to adjust my own perspectives towards what leadership was within the seminary setting. My change in assignment, during the periods of data collection and analysis required a more conscious look at what was really happening in the leadership roles of the seminary principals. I felt like I was trying to understand the role of a seminary principal while being caught right in the middle of my own transition from teacher to principal. I was too new in my change of assignment to fully appreciate the perspectives of a successful seminary principal and also too new in my change of assignment to neglect the understanding, positioning, and perspectives about seminary principals that I had carried as a seminary instructor. Thus, the resultant descriptive outcomes of the data for this study have been shaped by the filtering lens of an emerging

maturation of a newly appointed seminary principal.

### *Analyzing the Data*

Data collected for this study were analyzed and processed using a constant comparative analysis. The constant comparative analysis approach allowed me to process the data as it was being collected and thus begin to understand the data in relation to the overall dynamics of the study. Each individual interview and transcript, field notes, formal seminary records, the records from participant observations, and the formal seminary enrollment data were constantly compared with all of the data that was gathered throughout the duration of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process was maintained throughout the collection of data in order to develop conceptualizations of possible relations between the data. This constant comparative method combined “open” or “inductive category coding” with a simultaneous comparison of all of the other data obtained (Bernard, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). Open coding described the process of allowing understanding to emerge from the close study of the data that were collected. Researchers began to identify themes or phenomena from the data and then began to categorize them as they developed patterns of behavior or thought (Bernard, 2000). As phenomena and themes were recorded and classified, they were also continually compared and contrasted throughout all the collected data.

Initially, I began with the transcripts of each principal. After the interview of a principal, the electronic copy of the interview was typed into transcript form. This process of transcription helped me deepen my familiarity with the data and begin the process of establishing and recognizing concepts and themes. I began formally

identifying themes with the first transcript by pulling quotes and reflections from the principal to begin naming and solidifying overarching themes. Each succeeding transcript went through a similar process and each preceding transcript was then reread and reevaluated to match themes and concepts that had emerged from later interviews. Thus, over the course of all of the interviews each transcript was read and re-read in an effort to correctly represent all that was being spoken by the principals and teachers. The themes and concepts that began to emerge were maintained in a basic word processing file and color coded to maintain which source of data they originated from. The initial interview transcript generated about 15-20 emerging concepts and themes. However, by the end of the interviewing and transcribing process fifteen to twenty concepts and themes had swelled to pages and pages of themes and concepts.

The inductive approach that was used allowed me to generate knowledge about common patterns and themes surrounding the role of a seminary principal directly from those who were involved in the study (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman, 2000). The open-coding format provided a wealth of information that made it possible to identify, categorize and describe phenomena in a way that was specifically tied to the recorded data. The open coding method assisted in generating a topical indexing system through which any particular segment of raw text could be identified, accessed, compared to other segments, and interrogated during subsequent analytical operations (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Open coding also allowed me to discover potentially significant nuances and differences throughout all of the data. Once the interviews had been transcribed and coded, the process of coding the participant observations was next. In coding the

participant observations, I used my field notes as the text and followed the same patterns of coding that were used for the interviews.

The final major component of data collection was the official school records for each seminary. However, the data were included into the analysis in a manner different from the observations and interviews. After I had coded all of the interview and observation data, I wrote four biographical sketches or vignettes of the seminary principals using the interview transcripts and observations as a guide (Wengraf, 2001). Seidman (1998) and Terkel (1972) believed that writing a vignette of a participant's experience is an effective way of sharing interview data and opening up one's interview material to analysis and interpretation. Others more simply stated that this form of sharing the data transforms learning into storytelling which is one of the major ways that human beings have devised to make sense of themselves and their social world (Bruner, 1996; Mishler, 1986).

The formal seminary data, which included student enrollment figures, student completion, and graduation data, were then inserted into each of the biographical vignettes in order to see how the principal's leadership decisions interacted with the varying dynamics associated with each seminary. This process helped clarify some of the directional decisions and leadership strategies exercised by the principals and allowed me to generate a richer understanding of the role of the seminary principal. Any remaining observations, notes, impressions, or sources of additional data that I had experienced and recorded were also included in the write-up of the biographical sketches that illustrated the experiences of each of the seminary principals. This overall exercise of open coding

and the analytical method of constant comparison were central components to promoting the conceptual developments for this study and provided what Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) described as a highly interactive and iterative process.

The biographical sketches were the outgrowth of my grounded theory approach to better understanding the leadership role of the seminary principal. As I began collecting the data, I was overwhelmed by the vast amount of information that was generated. Developing the biographical sketches was my method of capturing a vision of each of the seminary principals in a way that was manageable in size and could be inclusive of all of the data that was being collected. The participant interviews were the main source of information but each sketch was strengthened by the additional insights obtained through formal documentation, observations, and teacher interviews. My own interpretive lens of the data also helped shape the sketches as I began to interact with the data and shape my own understanding of the theories and models of leadership that were emerging. I recognize that another author may have written different sketches, but for me these biographical sketches became the instruments of leadership that I could conceptualize and that could establish an informed and organized look into the vastness of information from each of the principals' lives. I used the biographical sketches to help identify emerging theory and practice of leadership that was indicative of the four seminary principals within this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRINCIPALS—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

This chapter is designed to give a background into the lives of those who were participating principals in this study. I developed the biographical sketches of each of the seminary principals in this study by combining data from the principal interviews, formal seminary reporting documents, and notations from the participant observations. The biographical sketches were initially created to assist me in blending the multiple sources of data into a manageable and broadened vision of each of the participating principals. In the sketches, I organized the information into five categories: (a) background, (b) shaping a leadership style, (c) successful practice, (d) concerns of leadership, and (e) future goals. These five categories were from among the list of the many codes I used as I initially began coding all of the gathered information. However, as I began to sharpen my focus on emerging themes and decided to develop biographical sketches as a way to organize the information, these five categories remained. The categories are efficient in outlining key ideas and follow a natural, logical presentation of the seminary principals. I also noticed that in some measure these categories mirror the initial interview questions that were used in the participant interviews and probably are representative of my own organizational approach to understanding each of the seminary principals' experiences.

The biographical sketches helped me begin to shape and inform my collective understanding of the leadership role of the seminary principal as leadership themes quickly began to develop. Seidman (1998) and Terkel (1972) reminded us that writing a vignette of a participant's experience is an effective way of sharing interview data and

opening up one's interview material to analysis and interpretation. This form of organizing and sharing assists the reader as the participants' behaviors become meaningful and understandable as they are placed in the context of their lived experiences and the lives of those around them (Bruner, 1996, Mishler, 1986; Patton, 1989).

In the following biographical sketches, the names of the participants have been changed. Identifying factors, such as location of seminary, have also been adjusted to protect the identity of those who may be known by the audience of this study. In this chapter, principals' background, seminary principalship, development of a leadership style, successful practices, concerns of leadership, and future goals were the categories in which I initially comprised the format for the biographical information. This format was shaped by and extends from the initial research questions that were asked in each of the interviews. The leadership themes that began to emerge throughout my collection of the data and writing of the biographical sketches are not specifically delineated within the narration of the biographical sketches. The themes of leadership that have emerged from this study and their connection to educational leadership theories will be addressed in Chapter V. This chapter will only present the biographical sketches as they were written, with the intent to help lay a foundation for the future analysis and discussion that will be presented in chapter five (Monson, 2006; Seidman, 1998; Terkel, 1972; Turner, 2007)

The biographical sketches within this chapter provide enough information to paint a picture of each of the principals' current leadership situation and the environments that have helped shape their leadership. They open the door to a seminary principal's

experiences and serve as a snapshot of the overall seminary principalship. They include some specific examples to give perspective but cannot capture the totality of the principals' experiences. Direct quotations are used throughout the biographical sketches to give voice to the participants, provide clarity to individual situations, and in some instances place emphasis upon varying aspects of leadership.

### Brother Mecham

#### *Background*

Brother Mecham had just over 20 years of experience as an educator in the CES. He has had experience as an educator in both the high school and junior high school seminary settings and has served as a junior high seminary principal at two different seminaries. Brother Mecham is in his first assignment as a senior high school seminary principal and has overseen a faculty of up to 10 full-time seminary teachers, one support specialist (secretary), and multiple part-time seminary instructors during his tenure as a senior high seminary principal.

Brother Mecham administered over a seminary that had seen a decrease in the overall number of potential seminary students for the 2 years prior to his principalship. However, during his tenure as seminary principal, the seminary had seen an increase in the total number of students who had enrolled for seminary classes, an increase in the completion rates for the students who had enrolled, and an increase in the total number of students who graduated from seminary.

Brother Mecham's introduction to a career in the CES was initiated after returning

home for serving a 2-year mission for his church. “I remembered my early days as a student in seminary and received a pressing feeling that I should pursue teaching as a career.” Brother Mecham continued to consider this career choice as a seminary teacher and was subsequently encouraged by a family friend who was already employed in the CES.

In his first years of teaching, Brother Mecham was given early leadership assignments in working with seminary student councils and has continued receiving student council assignments wherever he has taught. He felt that these assignments, which required him to organize large-scale activities, manage basic budgets, and motivate and train other youth leaders, probably prepared him to be first assigned as a junior high principal. Inspired by his experiences in working with others, Brother Mecham completed graduate schooling in social work. He believed that his training in social work improved his ability to work with individuals and provide counseling; his combined experiences with student councils have best prepared him for his current assignment as a senior high seminary principal.

### *Shaping a Leadership Style*

In developing his leadership style as a seminary principal, Brother Mecham saw himself as a dynamic and evolving leader. “What I am becoming in my role as a principal and my philosophy is evolving. And it will be much different in this upcoming year than what it was this past year.” Brother Mecham’s description of his previous year’s leadership was centered more specifically on the students. However, as he has looked to another year of service he acknowledged how much he has enjoyed the support role he

has played as a principal, training and serving his faculty members. “That’s probably the part of my job I enjoy the most and the driving force behind the things that I do as a seminary principal. I think my leadership is becoming a balance between the teachers and the students.”

Brother Mecham believed strongly in the development of the teacher as a means of influencing the overall success of the teacher and has placed great emphasis on teacher training and autonomy to cultivate a climate of professionalism and cooperation. When working with teachers, Brother Mecham “expects them to be professional.” Moreover, with that expectation he has sought to develop greater teacher autonomy. As he said,

I like to give autonomy to teachers. I want them to be worthy of that kind of autonomy. I want them to work independently. I love it when a teacher is anxiously engaged in a good cause of their own free will. When they come up with good ideas, without being given an assignment, in ways to improve the seminary. I value that a lot. I expect them to take the role.

Brother Mecham believed emphasizing teacher autonomy improved his success as a principal as teachers understand that he trusted them and allowed them to do the job they had been hired to do.

His focus on the faculty extended from the philosophy that “you really have to make some deposits before you make some withdrawals with teachers.” He worked to build relationships personally with each of the individual faculty members as well helped cultivate those relationships between faculty members. This relationship building is daily expressed as Brother Mecham purposefully sought out each individual teacher to express some measure of support for what they would be doing that day in seminary. He also assigned individual teachers to present portions of faculty inservices as a way of

highlighting skills they had developed or employed successfully in the classroom.

Brother Mecham's approach with his teachers consistently focused on building relationships among the faculty with the intent of laying a framework for change and improvement for successive years. He believed strongly that "in order to have success among your teachers you need to have developed a positive relationship so that feelings don't get hurt and tempers flare when suggested changes are prescribed." Much of Brother Mecham's focus on building relationships with each individual faculty member was expressed in his careful attention to and assistance with the needs of each faculty member he associated with.

Brother Mecham's consistent leadership approach to building relationships with his faculty also continued to evolve as he opened the door to building relationships with other constituents of the seminary. "As a principal, there are numerous opportunities to interact and counsel with a lot of students, and a lot of parents on a lot of different issues." Initial attempts to build these additional relationships were very personal for Brother Mecham and he had difficulty managing the emotional ties associated with each individual. Yet, within the principalship, he developed the ability to remove himself from the emotional ties and social pressures that could potentially persuade poor practice and decision making.

I am less worried now what other people are going to think. I'm not worried about how this policy or that policy is going to affect an individual student or how it's going to be read, or interpreted by other teachers or parents. I think I just have more of a desire to do the right thing for the right reason regardless of how that might make me viewed. That is a definite change in me. I think I have learned not to over-react so much. The value of letting things play out. I have learned the value of giving people some space and time to let people make some changes. Moreover, while Brother Mecham recognized that he would face many different

interactions and was ultimately responsible for the overall success of students at the seminary, he was quick to return to the strength of his faculty to achieve student success. His expectations and desired outcomes for the students were directed back into the hands of the teachers. He believed that through the faculty he could “create the right environment and quality teaching that draws and retains students.” The success of the faculty will be the success of the seminary.

### *Successful Practice*

As a principal, Brother Mecham acknowledged that “for the most part your time is not your own,” but he believed “that’s one of the fun sides about the job because there’s never the same day. There’s always something different.” Yet, despite the dynamics of his schedule, he found strength in the one constant of his daily schedule that is his morning routine. “I begin each day with a prayer, read a chapter out of the *Book of Mormon*, and then I like to journal a little bit some of my thoughts. That’s been the most helpful routine I can get into.” For Brother Mecham, it was the necessary component to prepare his mind and spirit for the rigors associated with his assignments.

Another component that Brother Mecham considered a consistent foundation supporting successful practices as a principal was his emphasis on professionalism. “I am professional in my demeanor” and “I expect my teachers to be professional.” He continued by stating, “I feel there is an expectation for me to administer appropriately. In administering appropriately, if I have a teacher that is not making it, it is my responsibility to deal with it and provide corrections where necessary.” This professional posturing of his faculty was shown in his management of appropriate clothing worn by

faculty (suit with jacket is expected), prompt participation in all faculty meetings, and continual training on appropriate teacher relationships and conduct with individual students.

Brother Mecham's background in social work was a third component that supported his successful practice as a principal. The training he received in social work kept him grounded in his focus on each of the individual teachers without getting lost amidst all of the administrative responsibilities associated with the principalship.

As the principal, one thing I really enjoy doing a lot is...and I figured it would be something that I would enjoy a lot...and as I've looked back, one of the most enjoyable parts of this job is I get to serve each of the teachers. I really do enjoy that. I really enjoy trying to help the faculty with different things. Whether that's just listening or encouraging or taking someone's class halfway through a class so they can get to somewhere they need to be. Whatever.

His attention to the individual teacher was seen as he quickly pushed away his own managerial assignments to invite a teacher into his office to listen, visit a teacher in his classroom, or even leave his office to say good-bye to a teacher who is simply going home for the night. That same sense of individual service that is given in behalf of the teachers, however, is also directed towards the students at the seminary. Brother Mecham stated, "I probably get to have more time than teachers to help students that may be struggling and I am continually seeking for ways to individually assist them in their lives." Overall, Brother Mecham's professionalism was expressed in the dedicated attention that he sought to provide when he assisted individual students or teachers.

### *Concerns of Leadership*

As a principal who was in the early stages of his principalship, Brother Mecham's concerns over leadership centered on the lack of training he received from higher administration and the failures that may come when working with individual teachers. From the outset of his assignment as a principal, Brother Mecham felt that he was not adequately prepared by higher administration to handle the varied demands of the principalship. In regards to training, "there has been a little bit of training from the area office, the *Administer Appropriately Manual*, and some satellite training, but honestly, most of the training is on the job." He did not discount the initial attempts at training altogether but believed that training only provided "general support to supplement the secretarial-type duties." Overall, "I would desire more training than what you get." Moreover, even though Brother Mecham was already beyond his first year in the principalship, he still believed it would be helpful to have some more specific training. "Maybe as a principal if I receive more principal direct training, which is directly applicable to my job as a high school seminary principal then it would save some time in the learning process. And it may help in doing my job quicker and more effectively."

Brother Mecham's second major concern of leadership dealt with his own personal evaluation of the interpersonal relationships with teachers on his faculty. In relation to his concern of leadership when decision making with teachers, Brother Mecham shared an experience that he wished he would have handled differently.

In my first year with one teacher situation, I probably overacted too quickly, too sternly maybe...at the beginning without making enough deposits up front. I took up a big withdrawal and I paid for that. Through most of the year I had to deal with that and that was a tough learning experience.

While continuing to reflect on the issues that make being a seminary principal not enjoyable, Brother Mecham again directed his attention to his interaction with teachers.

Dealing with a teacher that is not performing is one of the most challenging things about being a principal. Having to call on someone that is not performing as a teacher, who is not up to standard, and then after the correction you don't see the benefits or effects, and things might get a little worse. That's frustrating.

In addition, while some of the greatest joys of Brother Mecham's assignments centered on his successes with the faculty, there was always that constant concern that his leadership was not appropriately and effectively managing and leading his teachers.

### *Future Goals*

Brother Mecham's career in the CES has been largely directed by the needs of higher administration that has placed him in his various assignments. Brother Mecham has not pursued any of the assignments he has received nor does he currently hope to prescribe any specific future assignments in the CES. His career has been a genuine willingness to accept any assignments or changes in his employment. However, when asked about his future goals, he was quick to express his satisfaction with his current assignment as a seminary principal. "If I could have my career the way I want it to be, I guess I'd like to spend a couple more years in this assignment. I'd like to be here."

Brother Mecham enjoyed his associations as well as the growth that he is experiencing. "I feel like I'm in this assignment to learn as much about good teachers as I am to learn about being a good administrator. And I really feel like I'm in a place that is allowing me to get the training I really need."

## Brother Kollins

### *Background*

Brother Kollins has overseen faculties ranging from seven to nine full-time seminary teachers, one support specialist (secretary), and multiple part-time seminary instructors over the course of his 10 years as a senior high principal at two different seminaries. In the past 4 years of his current assignment, Brother Kollins has seen a slight decrease in the total number of potential seminary students (potential students are based upon the demographics of youth from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints within his school boundaries). During that same 4-year time period, the seminary has stayed about the same in terms of total students enrolled with a slight increase in the percentage of students who received full credit for seminary. Yet the seminary has continued to experience a decrease in the total number of students who received credit for seminary as well as a decrease in the total number of students who graduated from seminary.

Brother Kollins graduated from high school with the feeling that he was always going to be a “youthy guy” (his term for working with teenagers). He graduated from college with the intent of working with high school age students in public community youth programs and was introduced to seminary teaching. “My first experience in the classroom was horrible and I wasn’t going to go back to it.” However, after a second taste of seminary teaching he “fell in love” with teaching and began a career in the CES.

Over his 20 plus years in the CES, Brother Kollins has taught in both senior high school and junior high school seminary settings both inside and outside of the state of

Utah. He served as a junior high seminary principal at several different seminaries prior to his first assignment as a senior high seminary principal.

Brother Kollins believed that the skills he gained as a teacher were a key influence that helped prepare him to be selected as a senior high seminary principal.

I love the philosophy of the CES that is all about teaching. And so I've appreciated this idea that there is not an administrative track, there is not a teaching track. We are all in the same boat and that is good teaching. And I think that is good. So I think good teaching is what prepares a principal. That you are a good teacher and lead by example and are able to mentor and give suggestions and be able to help. And so I think for me it has been helpful to learn that skill first—getting good at being a teacher—and then you step out into all of the administrative stuff that you learn as you go.

The skills of effective teaching have remained a steady foundation throughout Brother Kollins' service as a seminary principal. Effective teaching drove his personal preparation as he sought to continually improve his own teaching ability. His motivation to provide training and accountability for his faculty is also influenced by his desires for effective teaching, and it represents his key to success for the students who participate in the seminary program he oversees.

As a compliment to his skills as a teacher, Brother Kollins also believed that his experiences and associations with higher administration while serving as a junior high seminary principal led to his assignments as a senior high seminary principal. "I had a pretty good relationship with the area director I think, and I gave some pretty good suggestions in training counsel. And then he asked me to go be principal at the high school seminary." Brother Kollins believed that the "confidence and the trust" that he had developed with the area director, more than just the teaching, led to his assignment. "I think it was a package. But the relationship helped and there was some confidence that

was built over time.”

### *Shaping a Leadership Style*

Brother Kollins believed his role as a principal is focused directly on addressing the needs and the skills of the faculty. “I think a focus on the teachers is where it ultimately needs to make a difference. I focus on the faculty knowing it benefits the students.” Because of his efforts to assist teachers with improvements in the classroom, Brother Kollins was convinced that the “students will be taught the gospel, love seminary, and move forward gaining their own testimonies.” This emphasis kept him regularly trying to do things administratively to help the teachers improve so that the students are positively impacted.

The driving force behind Brother Kollins’ focus on the faculty was his firm and clear application of the policies and expectations of the CES. He believed that teachers should support the given expectations and that if the teachers “will face the CES in their policies then there is freedom within those realms. But they’ve got to meet those minimal expectations.” Brother Kollins believed that part of the reason for his current assignment deals with the expectations that need to be met by the teachers. “One of the reasons I was placed here is just because the area director felt there were some expectations that were not being met here.” Brother Kollins’ focus on the way he believed the CES had expectations for teachers assists him in moving forward with his faculty in a way that provided a constant and equitable foundation for all of the teachers.

I believe there is a standard and an expectation that the Church Educational System has and I believe they [teachers] need to meet that expectation. And I have had some teachers that haven’t and we have gone through the process of

trying to resolve that. It is a difficult thing. But there is an expectation because it is all about the kids. And if we are not at that level then we need to work to get to that level. So there is an expectation that they [teachers] will get to that level.

This task, however, has often been filled with challenges and met with some resistance by teachers on his faculty. Brother Kollins admits that he has had a couple of real difficult situations with faculty members.

One challenging experience dealt with a faculty member who Brother Kollins felt was not heading in the right direction as a teacher. “So we talked about his teaching a lot, and it never really resolved itself.” The changes that Brother Kollins suggested related to what he believed the expectation was. “We had a great relationship as long as I didn’t cross into the classroom. But as soon as I crossed into the classroom then it all went south.” In his attempts to assist this teacher, Brother Kollins recalled “some heated conversations about teaching, and what this teacher needed to do, and how it should happen. And then he was pretty vocal about his feelings about where he was at and that he was a good teacher.” Such an experience was difficult for Brother Kollins and a real growing moment in his principalship as he stated that he cried a few times as he would ponder ways to assist the situation. “It was a hard year of administration.” Yet Brother Kollins persisted and still believes that there needs to be a long period of due process for every teacher, filled with a lot of opportunities for change and open communication about the needed changes. “But I think you have to be open about that. And I worry as an administrator that sometimes we are not willing to be that open about it. Willing to say that you need to fix this and you are not meeting the expectation.” Unfortunately, he believed that with some administrators “we have ignored it for too long and it has created

its own conflicts.”

Brother Kollins also identified what he termed maintaining a “balance” in many of the others administrative duties as a principal. “There are many sensitive issues with parents that are hard to deal with, but happen quite regularly.” Working with public school administration is also an area where he has had to balance carefully so that “you have good relationships with the school, but that you don’t cross the line of church and state.” Brother Kollins placed great emphasis on maintaining balance with ecclesiastical leaders so that the seminary can remain in concert with what the ecclesiastical leaders really want for the seminary. Then he included the diversity of faculty members and all of their family situations. “So that balance sometimes is interesting to work with. Blending [all of the situations] sometimes is a challenge from a principal’s perspective,” and a consistent demand placed upon the principal.

Brother Kollins said that there are very few things that he does not look forward to in his current assignment. He has enjoyed his time in the CES including his time as a seminary principal. He recognized that his service as a principal is still evolving, improving, and maturing.

I had a real compliment this year, or at least I took it as a compliment. I have a reputation that precedes me. We all do. And you worry about your reputation and what people think. And we were having a meeting to help a newly assigned teacher with some policy things. And I tried to come up with a creative way to do things. When it was all said and done, Brother Augman, who has only served under me for 1 year, who knew that reputation and has some experience rather than just judgment said something like, ‘Brother Kollins does a really good job Paul (the newly assigned teacher) in administering these policies.’ I felt good about that, because Brother Augman had been open enough with me to tell me where he was coming from when he first came here. And he was coming from an experience, in my opinion, that was pretty loose to here where I am pretty structured. There was a big diversity between the two principals. And I felt good

that he was o.k. about having some directions, guidelines, and some structure. But there was still a relationship and an understanding. But the reason why I felt like that was such a compliment, was because I think I have loosened up a little bit as I've come to understand and judge policies differently. So I think that is a good thing that you can adjust and make changes and do things differently based upon the chemistry of your faculty and what you have learned.

For Brother Kollins, this experience reinforced his need to continue to “learn as I go,” ever improving in his abilities as a seminary principal.

### *Successful Practice*

In terms of successful practice, Brother Kollins tried to structure his day in a way that allowed him to deal with the many challenges that he would face. He also tried to foresee when those challenges could arise. “I generally try not to teach first period because there is always a teacher who calls in sick, or a school assembly, or something like that. So, often first period deals with some administrative things.” Much of the others aspects of Brother Kollins’ successful practice continued to support his focus on the faculty. His leadership decisions were guided by his vision of the expectation and a desire to unify the faculty in a way that breeds trust in him, each other, and also fosters a willingness to move forward with the policies and procedures that are administered by the seminary principal.

In terms of the expectation, Brother Kollins stated, “I have a philosophy that I treat the men like I would want to be treated. I think that kind of rules what I try and do.” Leading by example reinforces his perception that a principal should not have a different expectation than the teachers. Principals “should have the same expectation to teach the gospel, and to teach it well, and to be a committed professional, and to do the things that

he is supposed to do.” Brother Kollins did not support the role of the principal as one who uses his principalship as some way to get around things. “If the expectation is to be a good teacher, then I try to be a good teacher.” For Brother Kollins, that is one of the “most important thing I can do.”

In terms of unity, Brother Kollins was constantly seeking ways to bring the faculty together and was passionate about how much time the faculty spent together. He supported and encouraged fellow faculty members to exert extra effort in behalf of one another. One of the ways he accomplished this vision was to create opportunities for the faculty to be together. Faculty unity began each morning as everyone gathered for prayer. “I feel very strongly about faculty prayer meetings every day. So we pray every day. It gives us a chance to pray together, and then pray for each other.” Another daily activity surrounded lunch. “I am also pretty strong about getting together at lunch. I think being together at lunch can create some pretty good faculty cohesiveness. So we try to encourage everyone to eat together.” While Brother Kollins recognized and honored the fact that lunch is the teachers’ personal time, he also maintained the expectation for unity. “Teachers don’t have to eat together. But, I guess the teachers know what the expectation is, so they don’t miss. Because I talk about that expectation and I think it is important. So we can laugh and giggle and have fun together.” This laughter and fun also has translated to faculty gatherings outside of the school setting as Brother Kollins occasionally organized the faculty to get together to enjoy dinner or socialize at someone’s house.

An additional component of successful practice that continues to support unity

came as Brother Kollins appropriately prepared each week for inservice training.

I try and take very seriously [weekly] inservice. I think that if we are doing inservice right then we are sharing real feelings and real needs and real desires that create connections and bonds as we help one another. And I think that is a great way to create faculty unity.

Brother Kollins has found success in unity and continues to do all he can to help every member of the faculty feel included and important as a contributing member to the entire seminary.

### *Concerns of Leadership*

Brother Kollins expressed two main concerns that he observed over the course of his 10 years as a seminary principal. The first concern he recognized was what he called “a disconnect” between the practice of the seminary principal and the expectations of the area administrator who oversees the seminary. While he is grateful that the area director has trust in principals, he did not know if there was great follow-up to see if principals were doing what they were supposed to be doing.

My experience has been within this area that there is a large diversity of what goes on in one building verses another building. And I think it is administered based on a personality, and that is wonderful, but is there an expectation or is it based upon where you go and each individual principal is where you get that expectation. The relationship between the area director and the principal I think needs to be important. We have a monthly meeting, but do we really sit down and talk about each man individually, unless there is a circumstance? I don't know that we really do that sort of thing. Are we in concert when we sit down so we are seeing the same thing and we are talking about the same thing? So maybe some directions on working in concert with the area director on some things would be a good thing. Because we as principals just seem to adjust to the personality of the area director. And the teachers adjust to the personality of the principal. And that's o.k., but if we are all on the same expectation page, then we shouldn't have to make those career adjustments because of this guy's personality. I think there needs to be a higher expectation that *all* of us meet.

This concern over consistent expectations reinforced Brother Kollins' leadership approaches within his own seminary that have been illustrated earlier. He continues:

I would also like to see it so that a principal doesn't feel like he has to call the area director for things like leave—or some of those circumstances. I think it would feel nice to feel like we are running the ship. And we are connected to the area director obviously, but those decisions can just be made. I feel like sometimes I have to say, 'Well let me call the area director on that.' And I don't know where that line crosses to where that needs to be his decision or mine. And I know there is that line that needs to happen. But on some of those leave issues and things like that I think we can actually do a better job protecting him. For me it is easy to say I've got to call the area director. When really I should be saying let me figure this all out, and be the guy to say no, if that is really what needs to happen. And I think principals should be entrusted a little bit more to say some of those hard questions but also trusted to give approval on some of those other issues that come up. I think that would be a helpful thing.

The second concern that has continued throughout his time as principal has been the issue of training. "I think we could do a lot better on training principals on how we are supposed to do things as a principal." In his 10 years as a principal, Brother Kollins has had an area director only once give him something that was received as principal-specific training. Brother Kollins had expected training when he was first assigned as a principal but received very little assistance. "When I was first assigned to be a high school seminary principal, I went to a retreat where we did a 2-day, sitting around... 'really you're supposed to do that?' and 'you need to do what?' But that is how it kind of came." He never once sat down with an area director and was really trained nor was he ever given any written instructions on how to perform in his new assignment. "I was never given a manual that I was supposed to read. I think we ought to have a principals' book that has some policies that will come up over and over and over again that you really ought to be aware of."

### *Future Goals*

Brother Kollins continued to focus his future on his love of teaching that first welcomed him into the CES.

When I first started in seminary, I just wanted to teach, and still do. I am not going to be a principal forever. I am just o.k. going back into the classroom. I don't know that I ever had any administrative track. I've never requested, I've always been asked. I've kind of been plugged into an administrative track which I hadn't expected. And I don't think I'm a very good administrator. I have inadequacies about that . . . I worry about that a lot. But for whatever reason, here I am.

Brother Kollins continued to enjoy his assignment as a seminary principal and clearly admits that he is glad he has been principal. "I think we ought to have a lot of men [become principals]. It's good to have a broad set of experiences and they will enjoy the experience." However, in Brother Kollins future plans he knows that he will probably not be a principal forever. "My wife and I have always had the philosophy that we'll just go where you want us to go."

### Brother Preston

#### *Background*

Brother Preston has overseen faculties ranging from six to eight full-time seminary teachers, one support specialist (secretary), and multiple part-time seminary instructors over the course of his 4 years as a senior high principal at two different seminaries. In his current assignment, Brother Preston administered in a seminary that has seen a decrease in the total number of potential seminary students, a decrease in the total number of students who have enrolled for seminary, as well as a decrease in the

number of students who have completed seminary with full credit. However, he has set in motion plans that have slowed the decrease in the percentage of students that receive full credit for seminary and last year he saw an increase in the total number of students who graduated from seminary.

When Brother Preston was in high school, he came from what he termed “an extremely troubled family.” Midway through his senior year of high school, he had a seminary teacher who went out of his way to talk with him in response to a flippant comment that Brother Preston had written on a feedback sheet. “He actually came over to my house after he talked to me on the phone. I didn’t change overnight but he put me on the path.” Brother Preston finished high school with a desire to pursue a jurist doctorate, but the more he fell in love with his faith the more he wanted to do for other people what his seminary teacher had done for him. Therefore, instead of pursuing a jurist doctorate he completed a degree in history and pursued a career in the CES.

Brother Preston was currently in his second assignment as a senior high seminary principal and believed that from early on he had a mindset that had consistently been directed towards the principalship. He had regularly been observant of the role of seminary principals, and particularly intrigued by what the principals were not doing.

As I got my masters degree in management and administration and saw what could be done in leadership and administration verses what was going on—not that it was bad—but there could be so much more that a principal could do. I saw that there was so much more to help the seminary and the kids. I didn’t necessarily covet, but like I said, I was planning things so if I was asked to become a principal I knew what I would do. So I had already started planning things out, writing things out, and having those discussions in my head and with other people about what I would do. I wouldn’t say I was coveting a principal position, but I was preparing if that would be the case.

Observation of existing principals and practice combined with his graduate schooling in management and administrative leadership helped Brother Preston feel comfortable when he was first asked to be a seminary principal. He accepted the assignment believing that he had already laid the foundation mentally for what a seminary principal should be doing.

### *Shaping a Leadership Style*

Brother Preston's leadership style was fundamentally rooted in two driving principles: unifying the faculty and assisting the struggling student. In understanding those two driving principles, Brother Preston has developed subsets that allow him to focus his administrative decisions in ways that will best help the faculty and the students.

"My biggest motivation now that I am a seminary principal is that I want to have a united faculty that gets along with one another, that cares about the work and that tries to do the work in a united fashion." Brother Preston measured this unified vision in relation to every aspect of the seminary. He organized and influenced his seminary to have his teachers uphold the same classroom policies, use the same grading sheet, and participate in an inservice program that fostered collegial observations and assistance. "For me," says Brother Preston, "the biggest thing is unity. And then as a subset of that, creating an atmosphere of improvement in the teachers through observation and feedback that I think creates greater unity." While his motivations for unity "ultimately are to benefit the students," he believed that his greatest successes as a principal would emanate from a unified faculty and seminary.

In his personal approach to the seminary principalship, Brother Preston used an

analogy that helped him understand his position between higher administration and the faculty he oversees.

Seminary principals are like middle managers of corporate America to make a comparison. They're close enough to the ground but a little bit distant...they're in the middle. To be honest, I think they are one of the pivotal players in the whole scheme. Because they are so close to the ground, but they are in line with the administration. I see them as that pivotal middle manager that is able to take the higher vision and implement it on the ground.

In using this comparison, Brother Preston offered a caution that helped him avoid the mistake of simply applying some packaged program of principalship in order to unify his faculty and assist the struggling student. "The primary role of a seminary principal is not to *administer* the program as it is to *minister* to the teachers in training them, observing them, and helping them to observe each other." Brother Preston trained his teachers to become better teachers. He recognized that this approach required him to not only know the needs of his faculty but also have the ability to meet those needs in a way that leads to an improved teacher.

Brother Preston's perceived role as a middle manager was one of the metaphors that helped maintain the balance among a unified faculty, dynamic student population, and area administration.

Although my top priorities would be the teachers in teaching them and training and developing them, I also seek to create a balance that is helpful for everyone else involved with the seminary. Along with creating a faculty that's unified and steadily improving and thus directly beneficial to the students I am also driven by my own background in seminary. My own personal struggles as a youth drive me towards the kids that are struggling. So there are certain things that I have been trying to do on a one on one basis to influence struggling students. But to keep the balance I must also remember that an area director benefits from a seminary principal that is doing his job well.... [Principals] that are finding ways to implement teaching effectively and get the men to implement teaching effectively then it's a great boon to the area director."

As Brother Preston balanced these multiple areas of emphasis as a principal, he believed that he was continually seeing signs of success.

I have seen kids and teachers ‘make it,’ and for me that has been the greatest pleasure because I had the ability to make that happen. And right behind those successes has simply been the opportunity for the journey. The process of taking different teachers and bringing them together to a feeling of unity, to the point where they can walk into one another’s classroom without any prior notice, and the feeling is that ‘you’re welcome, I want you in here,’ has been amazing.

As Brother Preston recognized, that process of building that leads to success was a process that “you have to start again every year because of the change in teachers and students. But it’s a process that they can get comfortable with and become united with one another. It is awesome.”

### *Successful Practice*

Brother Preston’s ability to be an effective principal, that unifies the faculty and assists the struggling student, he believes emanates from a foundation in effective teaching. Initially Brother Preston stated, “Make sure you are a good teacher. If you are going to be the seminary principal then you have to be a good teacher to teach and train other teachers, as well as influence the lives of struggling youth.”

One of the expectations within the CES is that seminary principals continue to teach. Brother Preston believed it is correct to have the principals continue to teach by stating that if principals “are to be responsible for the training in the building, observations, etc., they need to teach.” For Brother Preston, this also suggested that principals continually need to be improving in their own teaching in order to encourage and assist the other teachers in doing so. Furthermore, in order to administer correctly to

teachers and students alike, he believed principals must be grounded in classroom experience. Such experience was needed to understand simultaneously what it is like to be the teacher and the principal, thus leading to “better and fairer” decisions and insights.

To prepare himself for the rigors of the principalship, Brother Preston does his best to begin each day with a consistent routine.

The thing I do is get up early in the morning and take care of myself first. The exercising, reading and praying. I have found those things in the morning have been beneficial for me because a lot of the decision you make or the calls you make or the discussions with parents, it really helps to have that discernment from the Spirit. So I think it begins before you even get here.

In addition to his personal preparation, Brother Preston also sets his mind to approach each decision in a principle-based manner. “I try to deal with everything and everyone in a principle-based manner.” He has consistently worked hard on being able to identify the principles behind his decisions. “For every situation I ask myself, ‘what’s the principle from the policy manual on that?’” This same focus on principles was used whether he was trying to correct problems with a teacher’s skills or while making decisions that related to students or parents. He consistently asked, “What’s the principle behind that?” or “What’s driving that?” instead of just having a general discussion about what he saw. “It is just so effective that I’ve just fallen in love with that and I’ve tried to do that in every situation.”

Along with his own personal and spiritual preparation, Brother Preston sets a regular routine for the faculty each day. Each morning they began with a prayer meeting as a faculty. He then distributed an announcement sheet for the day that had a reminder of where they should be in the curriculum. It included a reminder of anything that needed to

be done or anything that was going to be happening for the week. Brother Preston also prepared this formal handout just in case anyone was late for prayer meeting to ensure that everyone was updated. He then made personal contact with every member of the faculty between prayer meeting and before classes begin. “I just to go around and talk to them, you know ‘How’s your day?’ Or if I know they’ve had a kid that’s been sick or they’ve been ill or whatever it may be.” His personal contact time again reinforced his desires to develop a faculty who supported one another in all things.

As part of their weekly inservice training meetings, Brother Preston continued to develop unity as he taught, modeled, and trained his faculty. As a subset to unity, Brother Preston was quick to note, “I’m really big on counseling. That it’s not just the principal but we’re united in what we do.” Brother Preston began the year by picking out 25 fundamental skills surrounding counseling. Each week the faculty discussed one of these skills to help foster a more open communication as they met.

We try to come to all decisions as a group in the spirit of counseling and then I ask the group and expect that once we have made a decision that everybody live by it—even if they think it is wrong, and know it’s wrong, and have to suffer with us, and even die with us. And it’s been amazing! When you have a group of men who are united and are willing to stick to that, it pays off. Not just in the silly little administrative ways, but it pays off more in the feeling that is amongst the faculty. And the kids can feel it. The kids can feel the unity and understand that this is a group that cares for each other and that has a vision for and cares for us as students.

Brother Preston felt that his approach to unity through counseling has worked well for their faculty and was reaping positive benefits among the students.

Coupled with his demands for unity through counseling, Brother Preston also emphasized accountability. “I am big on accountability. We all have good intentions—

and I think where a leader will help the people he is trying to help succeed is in accountability.” As a seminary principal, Brother Preston held his teachers accountable for what they have been asked to do. As an example of this accountability, the faculty decided as a group that they were going to observe a fellow faculty member in their teaching at least once a month. This unified goal then became a part of the way they were going to do inservice training. Throughout the month, teachers were assigned to observe a fellow faculty member and then the last inservice of the month was a roundtable discussion about the observation and feedback they had with their assigned teacher. “In a round-about way, you are held pretty accountable when you’re all sitting around there and if you didn’t go observe somebody it’s going to be pretty obvious pretty quick.”

In his administrative approach to ministering to the needs of the struggling student, Brother Preston sought to hold a high expectation of success for all of the individual students who participated in seminary and thus raise the overall successes of the entire student body.

I have high expectations for the students so we’ve tried to do things to help the students realize that *they* need to do things. And that once again it all starts with good teaching. So there are those high expectations and again holding students accountable. And I love kids who struggle because I was one of them, but at the same time I don’t let them languish forever.

Brother Preston’s efforts with the struggling student include working very closely with the school and the parents and the ecclesiastical leaders.

### *Concerns of Leadership*

As Brother Preston reflected on various aspects of his principalship, two major areas of concern began to emerge. The first area of concern addressed the lack of

understanding by principals of the overall vision of expected leadership encouraged by area administration and the entire CES. The second concern deals with training and the skills required to fulfill his immediate responsibilities as a seminary principal.

Even now in his second assignment as a seminary principal, Brother Preston did not think that he has a full, clear idea of what the CES wanted him to do as a seminary principal. He sought to develop that understanding through his area administrator, “But I’m going on my third area director, and to be honest I would say that each one of them looked at my responsibilities in a different light. I don’t think there is really a clear vision of what it really is to be a seminary principal.” He suggested that it would be very useful for the CES to have some kind of training to assist principals in understanding the overall vision that is expected by the CES. However, Brother Preston offered no concrete suggestions on the best way to provide that training.

Although Brother Preston expressed the concern that there was difficulty in identifying and understanding the CES’s overall expectation or vision for his role as a seminary principal, he did relate an experience that perhaps opened the door to the development of some future principal specific training.

There was a meeting in which the area directors and the assistants to the area directors were to go to. The area assistant was unable to go and the area director asked if I would accompany him to the meeting. The meeting was a discussion about how do you get men to observe one another and give feedback to one another and get them to improve. And the reason I think Brother Franks asked me to come along was because I’ve been implementing that. And I hesitate to say I because, again, it came out of our counsel discussions that we had together as a seminary. And when they were making the presentation, Brother Franks had me to tell them what I was doing. And it wasn’t exactly what the Church Educational System was presenting, but I learned what they were talking about. And I learned a perfect way to tweak it for this last year that has made a big dividend. But I came away from that meeting saying o.k... I was darn close in my building to

what the administration downtown was envisioning.

For Brother Preston, this experience proved beneficial and gave him confidence that he was in line with what higher administration was expecting.

The second concern for Brother Preston centered squarely on his opportunities for training both at the onset of his new appointment as a seminary principal as well as his opportunities for ongoing training. When first appointed, Brother Preston said that he received, “absolutely nothing,” in terms of training for the rigors of his assignments. “The training I got was mine own background and my degree. But as far as the Church Educational System provided, nothing. Not a piece of paper, not a workshop, not a ‘this is what we do.’” This negative response to training continued to resonate in Brother Preston.

I think a lack of training is bad. For example, you sign your life over on the financial responsibilities as a principal. When you become a principal, they give you that form that holds you responsible for the finances. Now I’m responsible for thousands of dollars...and it’s great that we have support specialists that are in the building and generally stay in the building longer than anybody else to keep you on track...but at the same time there is no training. There is no training for that. I think it is bad because there should be some rudimentary training about the bookwork, the reports, all that stuff. If they could offer some kind of 1-2 day workshop where all of that administrative stuff could be addressed.

To illustrate the confusion that takes place at the appointment of a new principal, Brother Preston shared the experiences of the newly assigned principals at a recent area meeting, which emphasized the need for training.

It was funny to watch our first administrative counsel meeting of the summer to watch the three new principals. And we are talking one language about things and you looked at them and ‘What form?’ and ‘What are you talking about?’ and it would have been good for them to have some training before that meeting. Because I’ve had phone calls from two of them asking for follow-up. It would have been good for them to have had a one or two day training for that meeting so

that they understood all that paperwork stuff. So that they understood enrollment. All that stuff from the point of view of now being the principal.

However, Brother Preston did not believe the training should stop with the training of rudimentary responsibilities in just 1 or 2 days. “I also think it would be helpful to receive training from the Church Educational System about what they want seminary principals to continue to do in regards to overseeing their faculties.”

### *Future Goals*

As Brother Preston addressed the short-term approaches to his future years as a seminary principal, his attention was drawn more and more towards the individuals with whom he would have influence.

I want to better be able to help people’s specific needs. I was really gung-ho the first year and I had a mold, and ‘you better fit in it ‘cause here we go.’ And I had the counsel idea and all, and that was really good, but I’m kind of bi-polar. Not in the psychotic way, but bi-polar in the way that I’m an extreme realist, but in my heart I’m an extreme idealist. I just kind of envision that everyone’s at the same level. Have the same motivation and the same thing. And I kind of had that mold. And we would counsel about different things and I quickly realized that not everyone’s in the ballgame for the same reason, and not everyone it warming up before they swing, and whatever analogy you want to use. So one of the things that I feel I have developed pretty well, and I still need to set that vision; create that vision of what it is we are supposed to be doing, and then work with each person. I need to know them well enough to know where they are at, in finding that vision. And then just being able to customize how I talk with and work with them. Putting the shotgun away and getting the rifle out.

This focused change towards the individual was becoming the defining attribute that drove much of what Brother Preston was seeking to become as a seminary principal.

When Brother Preston began his career in the CES, he said that he loved reaching out to and working with the students but that he really did not have any delusions of grandeur of becoming a principal or anything. For any future assignments, Brother

Preston's greatest desire had nothing to do with the role of a seminary principal but focused on an opportunity to teach at the collegiate level either in institute or at Brigham Young University. However, Brother Preston will continue to enjoy his current assignment as a seminary principal.

### Brother Dugland

#### *Background*

Brother Dugland has overseen a faculty of up to nine full-time seminary teachers, multiple support specialists (secretary), and multiple part-time seminary instructors over the course of his 4 years as a senior high principal. During the time of his current assignment, Brother Dugland experienced a decrease in the total number of potential seminary students and a slight decrease in the percentage of students who completed seminary with full credit. However, Brother Dugland saw an increase in the total number of enrolled seminary students, an increase in the total number of students who received full credit for seminary, and an increase in the total number of students who graduated from seminary.

Brother Dugland pursued a career in the CES from a foundation that was laid by his own experiences as a student in seminary. "I was the seminary council president. And so I got to see more of the workings of the seminary program while in high school." He also recognized the influence of his father who was a full-time public education teacher, "so I'd always been exposed to education and teaching." Combined with his positive experiences in high school seminary as the council president, it led Brother Dugland

towards a career teaching seminary.

By his second year of teaching in the CES, Brother Dugland was assigned to serve as the seminary principal at a one-man seminary at a junior high. “The experiences I got there were invaluable. Because back then they didn’t have secretaries and so you did all of the administrative work.” Brother Dugland called his junior high seminary principalship the “on-the-job training” that he believed played a significant role in his successes as a senior high seminary principal. He also attributed a 5-year coordinating assignment (overseeing seminary programs located in areas of the world where released-time seminary is not available; such seminary programs are usually staffed by volunteer teachers and thus “coordinated” by a full-time CES employee) outside of the state of Utah as fundamental to his selection and successes as a senior high seminary principal. Brother Dugland additionally believed that his current assignment was a reflection of a work ethic and an administrative mindset that was in harmony with the CES. “I believe that my work ethic and what they [higher administration] saw as my understanding of the objectives of the Church Educational System and my values were in line with theirs.” It was the confidence garnered by his work ethic and understanding of the vision of higher administration that he feels opened the door to his principalship.

### *Shaping a Leadership Style*

Brother Dugland’ approach to the seminary principalship was heavily grounded in his loyalties to the vision, commission, and objectives of the CES. Many of the decisions he made as a principal as well as his approaches to leadership were driven by the policies of the CES and how he felt the CES would have those policies implemented. “My goal

would be to accomplish that which the Church Educational System has set out to do. I would like to see the seminary and the faculty here fulfill the objectives of the Church Educational System.” This strongly committed approach to his leadership duties keeps Brother Dugland correctly positioned to lead in a manner that is consistent reflection of higher administration.

The area director expects me to maintain the policy and procedures here. I seek to achieve those expectations whether it deals with priesthood leaders, whether it’s finances, or whether it’s dealing with inservice training. Any direction that comes down [from higher administration] you will do as they ask and what they ask. And they expect me to get the honest feedback about the teachers and the seminary so that I can return and report clearly and accurately what is taking place here. Again, my job is to uphold policy.”

This resolute determination to represent higher administration was the driving force behind all of the leadership decisions that Brother Dugland made. Likewise, Brother Dugland’s strict attention to the designated policies and procedures of higher administration also translated into the professional expectations that directed his treatment of the faculty. “I expect men and women of integrity. I expect them to show up on time, and put in a full day’s work for a full day’s pay. I expect them to keep the policies of teachers in the Church Educational System and to use their preparation time wisely.”

However, not all of Brother Dugland’s demands for his teachers were so prescriptive as he genuinely desired his teachers to love teaching and improve in their abilities to succeed. “I would hope that all of the teachers are willing to assist one another in their professional development and continue not just to be teachers but to also be students of good teaching”

As a principal over a senior high seminary, Brother Dugland was driven by his responsibility to represent the vision of high administration to the faculty, but he also did his best to represent his teachers to higher administration within the context of his loyalties to the policies of higher administration.

I don't represent my faculty to the area; I represent the area to the faculty. And so, although, to clarify that. The area wants me to support the faculty. So I don't see myself as just someone that just comes down and gives the commands of what everyone is supposed to do. But the area administration asks what can they do as an area to support the teachers and bless the lives of the students. So we give feedback that way.

This position of representing both faculty and higher administration was comfortably maintained as Brother Dugland continued to focus his efforts within the context of appropriate policy.

Brother Dugland also minimized the significance of his responsibilities as a leader by eliciting the help of his faculty while again placing his decision-making processes clearly within the context of policy.

We [everyone employed in the CES] are all trying to do the same thing and to achieve the same outcome. Some just have different assignments to see that it works. And a principal just has administrative responsibilities. There are not huge decision making choices, necessarily, that a principal does because they are all minor decisions. All the major decisions are determined by policy. How you are going to implement those policies you work through that as a faculty, to be in agreement. And if there is not agreement then the principal has to make those decisions. But none of those decisions are ever very significant.

Because of Brother Dugland' efforts to position his leadership decisions in a manner that he felt was consistent with the policies of the CES, he maintained the ability to define most of what he did as minor leadership decisions.

In addition to his support of the policies of the CES, Brother Dugland also

recognized his responsibility to assist and improve the quality of teaching within his faculty. His approach to this responsibility was guided by his belief that a principal needs to be a good teacher and that a principal must also lead by example. “A principal needs to be someone who has had success in the classroom, but also recognize that he too needs to have continual growth in that area and is still working towards it.” He envisioned a principal not as someone who had “arrived” in the teaching, but as someone who had consistent success in the classroom. “I think this is critical because as a good teacher you have seen what teaching skills have brought about specific successes. And if you are not having those successes then how can you assist others to get to where you are not.” Brother Dugland did not believe that principals needed to be the best teacher on the faculty, but that they did have to have enough experience with teaching skills, and all that it is expected to take to be a successful seminary teacher, if you are going to lead others to that point of successful teaching.

In dealing with students, Brother Dugland continued to focus his foundation in the policies of the CES to help shape his expectations for their performance. He described his expectations as a principal for the students as more general than specific. Instead of pinpointing rules and prescriptive measures of student behavior, he simply stated that he “expected them to follow the policies of the building.” He also supported such general statements as “treating people and the building with respect, coming prepared each day to learn, and having a desire to learn.” His approach to the needs of the students was much in the same way that he addressed the needs of the faculty and he hoped to improve the seminary by balancing his efforts between both students and faculty. “I think the

principal has a profound impact on the faculty, but equally on the students. Everything you do has a direct impact on the students. So I see a principal as having equal influence on faculty and students. I don't think you can separate the two."

### *Successful Practice*

Brother Dugland began each day intent upon his focus to "uphold the policy" and perform the tasks of the day in a way that would be of benefit to the students and faculty. His daily routine included arriving early to work each day. "There is the spiritual preparation that I put in before I come to work, and then there's the preparations I make here to make sure that all the administrative items are in place." Some of those routine preparations include checking schedule changes, missing or sick teachers, or special requests from higher administration. He also liked to review any preparations that the faculty had made at the beginning of the year that may direct the efforts of the day. The formal day began when he gathered the faculty for prayer. "That is an essential part in starting out. Seeing if there are things that a teacher needs. Seeing if there is something I or the support specialist can assist with to help them get ready for the day." For Brother Dugland, it was daily doing a check to make sure all of basic needs of the seminary were being met.

Brother Dugland believed in making formal personal contact with each member of the faculty each day to build better faculty unity and cohesiveness. He also conducted weekly inservices to help supplement faculty unity as well as maintain the focus and direction of the overall seminary. Typical weekly inservices were used purposefully to address changes or lapses in policy items, review current instructions from area or

Church administration, and also seek to meet teacher-specific needs through training in teaching skills and classroom management.

Another component of his successful practice is his assignment to keep teaching while serving as the seminary principal. Brother Dugland believed that the practice of having seminary principals continue to teach was a great advantage when addressing teaching skills for inservice training. It also provided a way for him to remain focused on the purpose of the seminary and how the teaching could best benefit the lives of the students and teachers who were associated with the seminary.

I teach three classes this year, which is a good thing. It keeps you plugged into a power source. It keeps you grounded to what it is all about. It helps you see each day why we are doing what we are doing. It reminds you that why we have a budget is to bless the lives of the students. Everything is focusing on the students, and if you weren't teaching I think it would become very easy to focus on the administration and the people part of it would fade out.

The challenge he faced, however, dealt with the class loads that have been required by some principals.

I don't agree necessarily that it is a good idea to teach as heavy a load as they sometimes require because of some of the things that an administrator can do to bless the lives of the teacher, whose loads are very heavy. If you pile up classes on the principal he won't have the time. He is spending the same amount of prep time as the other teachers, hopefully to prepare lessons. And then teaching two or three classes that narrows the amount of administrative things they can do to maybe assist the teachers in helping them. With completion or enrollment. And I've found with the fewer classes I have the more success I have working with individual students to get them to come back and enroll.

Overall, Brother Dugland was pleased that he continued to teach and believed that it was vital that principals stay in the classroom.

Brother Dugland did admit that in working with teachers towards their improvement, it required a firm knowledge of the personalities and abilities of your

faculty. He believed that inservice training could meet some of those needs but, “a principal needs to be able to read individual teachers and he cannot read them all the same.” Some of his favorite experiences were in quiet moments where he was able to sit down with a teacher privately and assist them in making some changes. “This has actually been very positive as long as you handle each case delicately. Because you need to remember that each teacher is an individual and will respond to critique differently.”

This same focus on the individual also generated successes in working with students or parents who had specific concerns or needs regarding the seminary. Brother Dugland has come to really enjoy when parents call and they were really upset, or they came in and were really upset because he has had success in following really basic gospel principles to help parents quickly realize that he was on their side. “I am here to assist them and to bless the life of their child, and I’ve never had a parent that I’m aware of, walk away dissatisfied with the outcome.” This ability to address the needs of the individual while maintaining policy had been a valuable skill in his leadership.

### *Concerns of Leadership*

Brother Dugland expressed three areas of concern as he reflected on his experiences as a senior high seminary principal. These concerns initially surfaced within the context of the expectations for a principal as a trainer, but were also present as he addressed a principal’s teaching load, and the lack of training he received as a principal.

The first concern is a principal’s ability to give honest feedback to teachers who need to improve their teachings skills. Brother Dugland believed that much of this concern came because principals often come right out of the classroom with very little

administrative training.

One day you're a teacher's colleague and the next day you're turning around and telling them changes they need to make or they are going to be put on probation. That is a very difficult role to assume because of the lack of training a principal receives.

Brother Dugland was concerned that to simply get pulled out of the classroom and be told that "you're such a good teacher that you now get to watch everyone else and help them become better" was very overwhelming. "To try to critique teachers and do that in a loving way that fosters growth instead of feeling like you're being critical is probably the most challenging concerns of leadership."

The second major concern expressed by Brother Dugland was in creating the balance of administrative duties while continuing to carry a teaching load. Currently, Brother Dugland was required to teach three classes of seminary in addition to the administrative duties that he must fulfill. Optimistically he said that teaching three classes was a good thing. "It keeps you plugged into a power source. It keeps you grounded to what it is all about and helps you see each day why we are doing what we are doing." However, he did not believe it was a good idea to teach as heavy a load as was often required because of some of the things that an administrator can do to bless the lives of the teacher, whose loads are also very heavy. "If you pile up classes on the principal he won't have the time to be effective." Removing administrative time for teaching additional classes narrows the amount of administrative things principals can do to assist teachers with such things as student completion or enrollment. Brother Dugland has found that with the fewer classes he had, the more successes he had in working with individual students to get them to come back and enroll.

Personally, Brother Dugland would love to see principals teach a maximum of one or two classes. “I don’t think you should teach more than two to be effective as a principal.” From his own experience, he saw his effectiveness as a principal go way down when he was moved to teaching three classes. The time that he had once had available to prepare administratively was now taken up with class time or lesson preparation. He believed that some people would argue that a principal teaching three classes still has sufficient time to accomplish all of their duties. “But the reality,” he says, “is that some weeks that works, but some weeks that is not an option.”

The third major concern for Brother Dugland was the lack of training that he received as a principal. Formally, Brother Dugland received very little training for his current assignment. He believed his greatest asset for the principalship was his role as a coordinator of 107 teachers over a period of 5 years. Most of the teachers he supervised had no teacher training and so he, by necessity, played the role of the trainer. “So to sit with these new teachers day after day or to assist teachers in that sense, that was great training. But that just came out of an assignment, not because they [higher administration] sat down and said here’s some training for you.” Brother Dugland believed that some of this lack of training was because higher administration assumed that those who were called as principals would have had some experience, particularly in ecclesiastical assignments, or as a parent, that would have already prepared them for the demands of a principalship. However, despite the reasons for not training, Brother Dugland was quick to state:

I am a firm believer that the lack of training hinders results. In the Church as a priesthood leader you are constantly receiving training for specific roles. In

scouting they expect you to go to training monthly and be specifically trained. But somewhere in the CES we have missed that. They do some training to get you to teach and then you learn by experience. And I think it hinders the program.

Currently, Brother Dugland does participate in monthly meetings with other seminary principals and the area administrator. Yet the training in these settings is not commonly pursued. “Sometimes in our monthly principals’ meetings it is almost like, ‘If you make a mistake then we’ll let you know how you are supposed to do it right.’ However, any training is when a principal in that meeting says, ‘I’ve got a problem, how do you handle this?’ And then there is a discussion. But if you don’t bring it up then it doesn’t happen.”

In addition to his concerns about training the principals, Brother Dugland also offered a suggestion about the process that was used by the CES in selecting senior high seminary principals. He believed that for many of the teachers the process of selecting a principal is kind of a mystery. “No one really tells you how it is done. You just kind of watch and see who gets made a principal and it often leads to unspoken rules or incorrect laws about the selection process.” Brother Dugland believed that it would be beneficial if the CES would just be clearer about how principals are selected. Earlier in his career, Brother Dugland experienced similar confusion over the placement practices for teachers throughout the CES. Eventually a presentation was provided by the CES that explained to teachers how the placement process worked. Brother Dugland believed that a similar explanation about the selection of principals would be just as beneficial to teachers.

### *Future Goals*

When Brother Dugland began his career in the CES, he said that he “wanted to go

into the classroom and teach until he retired.” He had no aspirations to be in administration. “I came in, honestly, wanting to go into the seminary classroom and teach my whole career.” However, at this point in his career Brother Dugland’s vision of solely teaching his entire career has been altered by exposure he has had to the many different assignments within the CES. “My desires now would be to change my assignment every 4 or 5 years and to experience as much of the Church Educational System as I possibly can.” He is anxious to move forward and “would love the rest of my career to get a whole new assignment not like anything I’ve done before, and broaden my experience. I love change.”

#### Summary

The biographical sketches that are presented in Chapter IV serve as a means of illustrating experiences in educational leadership as portrayed by the seminary principals who participated in this study. Their voices and common experiences provide a more informed look into the dynamic roles and decision-making processes of seminary principals. Their stories, now open to analysis and interpretation, become effective tools in supporting the themes of leadership that emerge from this study.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Eight major themes surrounding the leadership of the seminary principal emerged during the analysis of the data. These themes are the results of the constant comparative analysis of the data and a grounded theory approach that allowed the themes to develop in a contextual way independent of any predetermined theoretical or conceptual framework (Lansisalmi et al., 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All eight of the themes plays an integral part in framing the overall leadership roles of the seminary principals and can be identified in the practices of anyone of the principals. However, each of the themes also have a varying degree of expression in each of the individual principal's experiences. Thus, not all eight of the themes are equally expressed by the data that were collected. In addition, while some of the themes have more of a dominant presence throughout the data, all eight of the major themes can be identified in the leadership roles of all four seminary principals in this study.

The eight major themes that emerged from the data I have identified are: (a) principals as trainers, (b) a lack of training for seminary principals, (c) principals as a reflection of higher administration, (d) principal's influence on faculty unity, (e) principal's focus on assisting the struggling student, (f) ensuring faculty professionalism, (g) personal satisfaction and growth, and (h) managerial organization. The names given to each of the themes are my own titles and were not selected to reflect any specific model of leadership that is current among the literature on educational leadership. However, the names I selected do appropriately identify leadership roles that are

commonly found throughout the literature on educational leadership and are also included in models of leadership that are present in the public education setting (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Chirichello, 2001; Glickman, 2002; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Yukl, 1981). I also purposefully listed the major themes in an order that reflects their reoccurring presence throughout the data. Therefore, “principals as trainers” is more dominantly expressed throughout the data while “managerial organization” is less frequently emphasized. I also patterned the discussion of each theme in a similar manner giving greater written analysis to the more prevailing themes.

### Principals as Trainers

The role of the seminary principal as a trainer was a dominant theme expressed by all of the principals who were interviewed and was substantiated by the additional data obtained through the other participant interviews and participant observations. The literature surrounding educational leadership also supports the need for principals to assume the role of a trainer and provide effective training for school-wide staff (Cuban, 1984; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Levine & Stark, 1981; Lezotte et al., 1974; Spartz et al., 1977; Venezky & Winfield 1979). Analysis of the data suggests that the importance of principals as trainers was founded upon four areas of emphasis: (a) the principals’ own effectiveness as a teacher; (b) principals who were still teaching in the classroom; (c) formal weekly inservice meetings; and (d) the need, skills, and challenges of correcting teacher behaviors. I have included each of these four areas of emphasis as subcategories to “principals as trainers” to help illustrate the pervasive influence of this

first theme.

### *Principals as Effective Teachers*

The first area of emphasis relating to principals as trainers was the belief that principals need to be good teachers. “I think good teaching is what prepares a principal,” and “I had performed well as a teacher,” were consistent explanations as to why the principals believed they were initially selected for their assignments as a seminary principal. Brother Dugland clarified by suggesting that principals did not have to be the best teacher on the faculty, “but you have to have enough experience with teaching skills and all that it is expected to take to be a successful seminary teacher if you are going to lead [teachers] to that point.” Teachers likewise supported this instructional leadership role of a principal and consistently commented that the best teachers on the faculty should be the principals.

As the area administrator, Brother Husted, commented that “one of the primary roles of the principals” is to see that the faculty is trained to become effective and skilled teachers. This approach to leadership is consistent with the development of the historical role for principals as instructional leaders that developed during the effective schools movement (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 1991). Brother Husted agreed that the principals themselves are wonderful teachers and can assist their faculties to improve in their abilities to teach. From a teacher perspective Brother Kyles’ support of principals who are good teachers represents the view that was commonly accepted by participants in the study. “I don’t think that policy states that principals have to be a skilled teacher, but do I believe they have to be a skilled teacher? Oh yeah. And if they’re not then you didn’t

pick the best to get in there.” He quickly summarized his point by asking “How are principals going to train and teach the teachers to get better if they don’t have the skills to do it?”

During the study, I observed that teachers were comfortable and appeared to have a level of trust with the skills and teaching abilities of their principals. In both formal meetings and informal gatherings, I observed teachers regularly sharing teaching skills, classroom management techniques, and successes in their teaching. The principals at each of the seminaries were consistently included in these formal and informal discussions and were often at the center of the discussions. The principals were able to offer a wealth of knowledge and experience, and teachers commonly asked the principals to share additional ideas on what they [teachers] could do to improve success. One of the teachers expressed his confidence stating, “[Principals] are the connection for the teachers. They are there for the teachers to go to.” The feelings and attitudes expressed by many of the teachers also identified the principal as a resource and an advocate for teacher improvement (Brown & Moffett, 1999; Cuban, 1984).

Brother Comstock, who at times struggled to develop his own confidence and style as a teacher, described how his principal helped him improve as a teacher.

Brother Mecham right now is great at gathering together teaching ideas, teaching skills, and just trying to be a support in every way. For me this last year I had an especially hard class to deal with. And so I just talked about it with him. And we made a few plans. And he’s great! We got it through. And he let me decide because I was the teacher. In the end the decision was that we needed to break some kids up and so we moved them to different classes where we thought they would be more successful. He totally supported me with it and even encouraged me to do something with it to make it better.

As one of the newest members of the faculty, Brother Ripley was also excited by how his principal, Brother Kollins, provided excellent training as a principal.

He is wonderful! He has been in my classroom from start to finish two times every term. And that is not just me, that is all of the teachers. And not just a quick little pop in, 'oh, I visited your class.' And then we will visit after and he gives very appropriate feedback. He will always share strengths and he will also share things you need to look for. He'll give insights, and then this is pretty cool, he will always say, 'What do you want me to look for next time.' In hopes that you'll work on it.... I just sense that our best interest is at heart in whatever he does. That he is just there to take care of us and wants us to succeed. So it has been really good. This last year has been awesome!

The confidence in their principal expressed by Brother Comstock and Brother Ripley underscores the import of a principal trainer as it pertains to the overall successes of the seminary.

### *Leader Versus Manager*

Despite the successes that can be obtained as principals fulfill the role of a teacher trainer, one of the criticisms addressed in the literature surrounding school leadership is the potential for educational leaders to become disconnected to the teachers and teaching they oversee. Many school leaders are expected to be both leaders of effective teaching and learning, as well as organizational managers. Moreover, with the added organizational administrative responsibilities, principals become removed from classroom experience and effective teaching skills (Lezotte, 1991; Southworth, 2002). In public education, the dilemma faced by principals is the ability to fulfill the role of both leaders and managers. School principals are not only asked to be an effective instructional leader, but an additionally effective manager (Freeman, 2006). Instructional leadership responsibilities are often associated with improved pedagogy and leadership

that inspires faculty unity. Management tasks are often directed towards budgets, buildings, and available resources. There is great tension, however, in fulfilling both of these roles because of the limitations imposed by time, resources, and effective training. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) suggested that great managers are not simply leaders in waiting and vice versa, but that that essential skills and activities required for leaders and managers are simply different. While Buckingham (2005) suggested that a principal can choose to excel in either role or both, he must be aware of the different roles that are played.

Within the seminary setting, this demand for both an instructional leader and manager was easily observed and vocally expressed by all of the seminary principals. However, it was most manifest in terms of the management tasks that always seemed to “never give enough time for lesson preparation” or “the day to day stuff” that would interfere with helping improve teachers or assist students. This management concern was also evident as teachers addressed their concerns for a lack of training. Most of the lack of training was in reference to forms to fill out, how to use budgets, and policy procedures that would most often be classified as management tasks. Seldom were instructional leadership responsibilities seen as areas where principals were not trained.

### *Continuing to Teach*

In addressing the tension between the varying roles of leader and manager, one of the steps that have helped to alleviate this concern within the seminary setting is the expectation that seminary principals continue to teach in the classroom. In the educational literature, Lieberman and Miller (2005) suggested that leaders should plan to

continue to assume responsibility for “deepening their own practice and that of their colleagues.” As principals continue to teach they “should be determined to take the lead in inventing new possibilities for their students and themselves” (Lieberman & Miller, p. 155). Depending on the size of the seminary and number of teachers they administer, principals continue to teach either two or three classes of seminary while serving as a principal. Favorable support of principals continuing to teach was unanimous among all of the participants.

Brother Mecham stated that one of the roles of the principal is to be helping the teachers to teach. Yet he observed that if principals are separated from the classroom “I don’t know if they will have that much credibility in trying to teach the teachers. Being in the classroom helps you have sensitivity for what it’s like to be a teacher.” Continuing to teach connects Brother Mecham to the teachers and he believed that as he planned teacher inservice training he did so with a little more sensitivity to the teachers. “In training, I feel strongly about the need to teach. It is hard to ask teachers, your co-workers, to do things that you’re not willing to do yourself. Teaching keeps you fresh. It helps you relate to the teachers.” The continual growth as a teacher that Brother Mecham feels while in the classroom helps remind him of his focus on the teachers as well as the students.

Brother Dugland, who also represents the perspective of the principals, said that continuing to teach was necessary if principals were to remain responsible for the training and observation of teachers. In order to administer correctly to teachers and students alike, he believed that “principals must be grounded in classroom experience. Such

experience is needed to understand simultaneously what it is like to be the teacher and the principal, thus leading to better and fairer decisions and insights.”

The teachers’ enthusiastic belief that principals should remain in the classroom was representative of Brother Westcroft’s statement that “a principal who is teaching is more in tune with his faculty.” Brother Peters supported this connection to the faculty and felt that “without a doubt, principals should teach. One of the responsibilities of an administrator is to not be far removed from those they are administering for or to.”

Brother Whitley believed that teaching helped ground the principal’s perspective on why they are even in the CES. “Having principals teach lets them know that first and foremost they weren’t hired into the Church Educational System to be an administrator. They were hired because they were a good teacher. It keeps them in touch.” Brother Whitley considered it “odd to be in an inservice meeting and have your principal talking about the importance of teaching and not be teaching.” If he were selected as a principal, he would try to take opportunities to teach as often as his assignment would allow. He was convinced that “definitely a principal should teach.”

The assignment for principals to continue teaching offers a wealth of advantages that were well received by both teachers and principals. The list of advantages includes (a) the ability to remain in tune with his faculty members; (b) to better relate to the needs of the students; (c) to provide credibility in inservice settings; (d) to keep in touch with current research and pedagogy; (e) to provide a clearer overall vision of the needs and concerns of the seminary; and (f) to help remind principals that the overall purpose of the seminary is to teach the students. Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) work in the public setting

also supports the need for principals to continue teaching as they identified “modeling the way” as one of five fundamental practices that enable principals to obtain success among their faculties.

One concern that continued to arise was how to maintain an appropriate balance between teaching loads for principals and the time needed for effectively administering the seminary. I more regularly experienced the challenge of principals trying to balance their time for instruction as I participated in faculty inservice. As I attended inservice meetings that were relatively poorly planned, I sensed that the poor planning was not a lack of desire, but seemed to reflect a lack of time for preparation. I also sensed the urgency of time from principals who were busy with many administrative duties but kept lamenting that they “couldn’t deal with that” because they still “needed time to prepare” for classroom instruction. This consuming conflict of time requires principals to carefully plan and adjust their time to meet the consistent demands of classroom lesson preparation as well as other administration duties.

### *Inservice Meetings*

The next area of emphasis supporting principals as trainers was the use of weekly faculty inservice training. At all of the seminaries included in this study, weekly faculty inservice was the major component in a formal attempt to “improve an individual’s ability to apply correct principles and to use fundamental skills” (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003 p. 33). As “leaders of effective teaching and learning” (Southworth, 2002), the seminary principals spoke fervently of the importance of weekly inservices. In my interviews with principals, inservice meetings were touted as highly

organized and efficient means whereby the principals could direct the training and needs of their faculty. However, in the inservices I observed there were varying degrees of success and consistency with room for improved training opportunities. Most inservice gatherings lasted 1 hour and included 15-20 minutes of focused instruction dedicated to improving the teachers' performances in the classroom. The remaining time was shared discussing calendar items, idle conversations of inattentive teachers who were listless and preparing to go home, and genuine sharing among faculty members in productive principle and skill-based conversations.

The most efficient inservices observed were held by Brother Preston whose inservices were a reflection of a principal that seemed to put the most time, planning, effort, and consistency into his inservice training. These essential components are strongly suggested as key components towards the success of any educational leader (Gardner, 1995; Glickman, 2002; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Brother Preston began by outlining his inservices each month for his faculty. In the first inservice of each month a new teaching topic/skill was presented to the faculty, including literature and examples justifying its use and effectiveness in the classroom. Within the ensuing week, each faculty member was required to set a personal goal to make improvements relating to the teaching skill that was presented at the inservice. Each teacher then emailed their goal to the principal. Using those personal goals, Brother Preston would then develop the next two inservices for the month. Each faculty member was also assigned to go observe another teacher sometime during the month. They were given a copy of the goal that the teacher they were observing was working on and asked

to provide feedback relating to that particular goal. The final inservice of the month was a roundtable discussion of what was observed by all of the teachers, with recommendations on how to best apply the initial teaching skill within a teaching setting. The inservices for Brother Preston's faculty were consistent, and I observed Brother Preston regularly reminding his faculty to email their goals, or plan to go see another teacher. I also observed the teachers openly talk about what they had experienced while observing another teacher. In my observations, I noted that teachers were supportive and excited about what they were seeing other teachers doing within the classroom. There was a positive candor and general desire to assist and improve teaching among many of the faculty. Much of the nonteaching time that was observed at this seminary, before and after meetings, at lunches, and informally in the halls was also centered on teaching techniques and improved practice. I also noted that the general conversations about improving teaching were consistently higher at Brother Preston's seminary than at the other seminaries I observed.

### *Correcting Teacher Behaviors*

The final emphasis supporting the theme of principals as trainers was the need, skills, and challenges of correcting teacher behaviors. Much like the other areas of emphasis for training, the principals interviewed all identified this as an essential component to training the teachers they oversee. Likewise, the research on leadership clearly identifies that one of the basic practices for leaders is the need to develop people, which sometimes comes through individual correction (Mulford & Moreno, 2006). However, unlike all of the other areas of emphasis, each of the principals expressed some

concerns over how best to handle this delicate need to correct teacher behaviors. Most of the conversations surrounding teacher corrections emanated from discussions surrounding what principals like the least about their job, or what events do they wish never would have happened. Teachers also identified the need to correct a teacher as something they believe they would like the least about being a principal. Despite the dislike toward teacher corrections, everyone agreed that it was an essential component of effective training.

Brother Mecham articulated some of the challenges associated with identifying and then correcting teacher behaviors:

Dealing with a teacher that is not performing is one of the most challenging things I do as a principal. But if I have a teacher that is not making it then it is my responsibility to deal with it and provide corrections where necessary. The challenge comes when you realize that you are not dealing with just a teacher but you are dealing with a father, husband and breadwinner. And when a teacher's job performance is not measuring up you realize the implications of discipline.

Hargreaves (2005) suggested that a leader best makes a difference by taking restorative action through small, but persistent efforts applicable to each situation. Approaches to correcting the skills and behaviors of teachers were met in a variety of ways by each of the principals. I observed principals correcting teachers in both large and small group settings. Sometimes principals would also privately meet with a specific teacher to address a specific need. Inservice time was often directed towards correcting an individual teacher in a general non-specific way. Principals also took time to observe behaviors and document the needed corrections over a period of time to ensure appropriate training and correction. While the methods and settings for correction were varied—even among the same faculty—I did not observe any advantage for a specific

approach to correcting a teacher. Successes and failures were consistently achieved with multiple methods of correction. The literature surrounding the situational nature of leadership recognizes that different situations require different patterns of traits and behavior for a leader to be effective (Cochren, 1995; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

According to the situational nature of leadership, there is no one best way to influence people. The leadership style a person should use with individuals or groups depends on the readiness level of the people the leader is attempting to influence (Hersey & Blanchard; Yukl, 1981). The Principals' approaches to each individual situation also incorporated the perspectives of leadership that were framed and described by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal. Bolman and Deal describe principals who are often meeting the needs of their faculties from a managerial perspective, political ideology, instructional needs, institutional standards, human resource components, and even symbolic leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

This first overall theme of principals being trainers was the most prolific theme and consistently connected to almost every aspect of the seminary principalship. In the minds of the principals, teachers, and area administrator within this study, principals fulfilling the role of a trainer represents the primary responsibility of a seminary principal. However, with this dominant theme also unfolds the most evident paradox surrounding the seminary principalship: the lack of training provided for seminary principals.

## A Lack of Training

As Hallinger (2003c) noted, there has been a lagging effort to provide sufficient training for educational leaders. Typical programs that have offered pre-service and in-service training for principals and other school leaders have been non-systematic, optional, and sparsely provided. Yet the research clearly indicates that the training of educational leaders is an important step towards the overall success of those leaders and the programs they lead (Beran & Kohnova, 1995; Green, 1998; Hallinger). The principals in this study also agreed that training was a necessary component for those who were selected to serve as seminary principals. However, an overwhelming absence of training for those who served as seminary principals was reported by all who were interviewed. Principals felt that when they were first assigned they lacked the specific knowledge and training that was needed to enable them success when faced with the demands that were placed upon them as principals. When initially asked about what type of training they received as an administrator every principal stated, “honestly, most of it’s on the job.” Yet when I pressed the principals for anything they would consider training for their assignments as a principal several resources were identified.

The first resource available for training is the monthly meeting held with a group of local seminary principals under the direction of the area administrator. One of the designs of the meeting is to discuss the needs of all of the seminaries, and then provide training for the principals on how to best address those needs. As Brother Dugland observed:

Most of our meetings that I sit in we talk about what direction is the area going to

head and how are we going to get there. But basically any training is when a principal in that meeting says I've got a problem, how do you handle this? And then there is a discussion. But if you don't bring it up then it doesn't happen.

The potential for seminary principals to miss needed training in essential skills could lead to principals who feel isolated within their assignment and further entrenched in the difficulties of understanding and administering their assignment.

Brother Kollins described another attempt at training when he was invited to attend a Principals' Retreat where "we did a two day, 'sitting around saying...really you're supposed to do that?... and you need to do what?' But that is how it kind of came. I never sat down with an area director and was really trained." The principals also mentioned two additional forms of training that included their monthly or bi-monthly phone calls from the area administrator and one satellite broadcast that was provided for all principals throughout the CES. However, consistently the principals felt that any training that was provided for their role as a seminary principal was something they had obtained through external resources such as an advanced educational degree, by simply being observant of other principals' practice, or even through previous assignments held in the CES.

Brother Meham mentioned that his master's degree in social work has become more valuable he continues in his assignment as a principal. Brother Preston likewise stated:

The training I got was mine own background and my degree (Masters Degree in management and leadership). The biggest help I had initially was my degree and the classes I had with that. And the ideas that I had always been coming up with as I was trying to apply it.... You know, coming up with if I was a seminary principal what would I do differently based on what I had learned. But as far as the Church Educational System provided, nothing. Not a piece of paper, not a

workshop, not a “this is what we do.”

While this lack of training was not a unique feature not all of the principals were able to draw upon the experiences of an advanced degree for assistance. Brother Dugland’s support came not because they offered it to him for that purpose, but due to a prior assignment he had a foundation of leadership. Brother Dugland was a teacher coordinator for 5 years with over 107 teachers to supervise. This assignment was in an area where seminary instruction relied heavily upon volunteer teachers, who in most cases came with no teacher training and or other educational experience. So “to sit with them in early morning classes day after day to assist teachers in that sense, that was great training.” Each of the foundations of leadership described by the principals was seen as their “own” experience not because the CES sat down and provided training for the principals.

To underscore the need for training, the literature on educational leadership states that within the public sector there is a growing turnover in principalships. This turnover has led to a greater demand for immediate leadership and individuals are often selected without the necessary training for their assignments (Chirichello, 2001). Yet some would argue that there is a benefit from “followers having the opportunity to become leaders” (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998) as newly appointed principals experience great growth from the “trial by fire” (or field-based learning) experience of dealing with the daily demands of the principalship (Daresh & Playko, 1993).

When asked if formal training prior to their appointment would decrease some of the growth that comes from learning your role in a “trial by fire” setting, Brother

Mecham was quick to respond: “Yeah, but my concern isn’t always about my growth, at the expense of someone else’s feelings.” Brother Dugland further explained the need for training:

I am a firm believer that the lack of training hinders results. Ecclesiastical leaders in the Church are constantly receiving training for specific roles. In scouting they expect you to go to training monthly and be specifically trained. But somewhere in the Church Educational System we have missed that. They try to do some training to get you taught and then you learn by experience. And I think this hinders the principals.

My observations of the principals support the principals’ feelings that they are limited in their performance as they are simply required to learn their responsibilities as they go. Brother Mecham, who tenders the least years of experience as a principal, seemed to be the most susceptible to difficulty when faced with the routine details and decision-making opportunities of the principalship. It was first evident as I requested the formal documents that reported student data from the seminary. His knowledge of the reports, their location, and how to obtain current data was limited and quickly adjusted his personality from its relaxed personable demeanor to that of a quick-paced and personally disengaged manager. This same switch in personality manifest itself multiple times as he was approached with routine tasks that required the minimal attention of the principal. A contrary version of this performance was Brother Kollins, whose 10 years as a principal had seasoned his ability to perform many of the routine tasks with minimal effort and great efficiency. He was comfortable and natural with what he needed to do as it related to such routine tasks as reporting data, or organizing his faculty. I sensed his confidence as a principal even before decisions had to be made and much of that confidence I believe was enhanced by the familiarity he had gained throughout his tenure

as a principal.

One of the specific challenges that results from a lack of training is the concern of being disconnected to the area leadership and the vision that the CES has for its seminary principals. Having administered at multiple seminaries Brother Kollins expressed his feeling that in terms of training from higher administration there is a little bit of a disconnect among seminaries.

I don't feel like I have a clear vision of what they [the CES] wants me to do. And I don't know if there is great follow-up to see if we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. My experience has been that there is a large diversity of what goes on in one building verses another building. And I think it is administered based on a personality, and that is wonderful, but is there an expectation or is it based upon where you go and the principal is where you get that expectation? So I think the area director needs to be a little more helpful in training principals and following up on what is expected. We have our monthly meeting where we are kind of sent off to do our things.... And maybe I should be complimented because they trust me, but I think it could be a scary way to administer.

Interesting to note was my time spent with the area administrator Brother Husted, whose comments about trusting principals validate Brother Kollins' concern. Brother Husted did not voice his concern over a lack of training or connection between seminaries, but instead reflected his excitement by the level of trust and autonomy the principals are given in regards to the seminaries they oversee. His administrative style assumes that the independence granted to principals because of how well they are trusted is the very reason they are successful. He expressed little concern over the variations that might be experienced from one seminary to the next. Additionally, very little was spoken about training in behalf of principals, while he consistently touted how skilled principals are and that they will know how to best manage their seminaries.

This concern over the disconnect among seminaries was also expressed by the teachers. Overall teachers remained very loyal to their current principal, yet I often perceived situations in which teachers sought to bring in alternative expectations from faculties they had served on previously. This was most manifest in inservice meetings when policy was being addressed and teachers would tout such statements as, “But at my last seminary we did it this way” or “I heard that at the other seminary the principal...” Such statements typically fostered discussions that were generally unproductive and required additional administrative skills by the principal to alleviate. Thus a training program that helps address the concern of a disconnect among multiple seminaries may prove helpful in overcoming any of the potential struggles that could arise within individual seminaries because of a disconnect.

Despite the principals expressing a lack of training provided within their assignments none of the principals seemed angry or ill-contented towards the CES’s approach to assigning new principals. Generally, the principals felt that there was great support from the area administration but they still believed it would be helpful to have some more content specific training for current seminary principals and especially for newly appointed seminary principals. Principals remain hopeful for more specific training that is directly applicable to the job of a high school seminary principal. Brother Dugland felt the difficulties of being made a principal right out of the classroom having received very little training.

One day you’re colleagues with the other teachers and the next day you’re turning around and telling them changes they need to make or they are going to be put on probation or something like that. To simply get pulled out of the classroom and be told, “that you’re such a good teacher that now you get to watch everyone else

and help them be better teachers.” That is a very difficult role to assume because of the lack of training you receive.

This feeling was expressed by all of the principals who felt some measures of inadequacy at being transitioned from the role of classroom teacher to the role of the educational leader.

As I looked to the literature on leadership one of the primary foundations for developing new seminary principals would include the support, experience, and assistance of existing leaders in behalf of their developing less-experienced colleagues (Daresh & Payko, 1993; Kram, 1985; Zey, 1985). This is often accomplished through some form of mentoring in the primary stages of leadership (Zey). Additionally, principals were eager to see specific formal training designed and developed to help acclimate new principals to the rigors of the principalship. Brother Mecham was not the only principal who lamented that if he had “had training upfront that would have saved some time in the learning process,” and it may have even helped in doing his job “quicker and more effectively.” While reflecting on the lack of training when first assigned Brother Preston noted how funny it was to watch the first administrative counsel meeting of the summer that included three new principals. He remembers the current principals “talking one language about things” and looking at the new principals and hearing them saying ‘What form?’ and ‘What are you talking about?’ Brother Preston believes it would have been good for those new principals to have been acclimated even prior to their first meeting to the demand and language of the principalship. Since that first meeting he has said that he has received phone calls from two of the new principals asking for follow-up. “It would have been good for them to have had a one or two days

training for that meeting so that they understood all that paperwork stuff. All that stuff from the point of view of now being the new principal.” As a newly assigned principal Brother Preston said that principals should “demand to get some sort of training on the administrative stuff.” Specific training topics should include: bookwork, finances, class schedules, reports and reporting, Facilities Management associations, and school contacts. Brother Mecham stated that “having a fairly seasoned and well trained secretary helps you with the financial, bookkeeping, and all that stuff” but a secretary is not sufficient to meet the needs. “You still are just kind of learning with trial and error. And then you make adjustments for the following year and hope that it gets better.”

The principals believed that developing a workshop specifically designed for newly appointed seminary principals would be a good format for training. “Perhaps 1-2 days to cover many of the rudimentary tasks of a principal.” It was also suggested that this training should be divided between those who are newly assigned as junior high seminary principals and those who are newly assigned as senior high seminary principals. All of those who had served as a junior high seminary principal mentioned that the responsibilities of a senior high seminary principal were more challenging and often completely different than those associated with the junior high seminary principalship.

As an additional suggestion, Brother Kollins was in favor of having a “principal’s book that has some policies that will come up over and over and over again that principals really ought to be aware of. It would be nice to have a general document.” Currently the CES provides two general handbooks entitled “Teaching the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders” and “Administering Appropriately: A

Handbook for CES Leaders and Teachers.” Both handbooks were mentioned by several of the principals as helpful tools for leadership, but not specific enough for the daily duties of the seminary principal. Overall the need for initial and ongoing principal specific training remains a consistent concern for those who have been assigned as seminary principals.

### Principals as a Reflection of Higher Administration

*“I don’t represent my faculty to the area; I represent the area to my faculty.”*  
— Brother Dugland.

Although all of the participants interviewed did not believe that there was a specific profile for those who have been selected as seminary principals, they were nonetheless very united in identifying loyalty towards higher administration as one of the descriptors they believe may have or should have influenced the selection of seminary principals. From both the teachers’ and principals’ perspectives the principals were individuals who showed some level of loyalty to the CES and could thus represent the CES to those they supervised. Participants were also just as confident that the quality of loyalty to higher administration must be a continuing characteristic for the future successes of a seminary principal. Chirichello (2001) supported the belief that highly competent principals need to be able to develop, articulate, and implement their leadership in a fashion that is a shared reflection or vision supported by higher administration. As I continued to study the literature, I observed that within the seminary setting there appeared to be a much higher level of loyalty to higher administration by both teachers and principals than would be found among principals and teachers in the

public education setting.

To further illustrate this leadership characteristic, Brother Kyles described what he believes are the reasons a seminary principal is selected. “I think it varies depending upon the area director and the emphasis they place on what they are looking for. But the major focus is always loyalty.” Brother Dugland elaborated:

I’m not sure why I was selected as a principal, but I would hope that my work ethic and what they saw as my understanding of the objectives of CES and my values were in line with theirs. So they would have confidence that I would be able to do it the way they would like it to be done.

Support for this perception of loyalty to “higher-ups” was jokingly delivered by members of multiple faculties who would often chide a colleague for “excellence” in front of their principal, and comment on their potential to “move up and become the next principal.” However in most of this joking among faculties that I observed, I also observed sincere statements of appreciation and congratulations when a fellow colleague successfully fulfilled an assignment or performed well in front of higher administration.

The quality of loyalty in principals is also often coupled with the principal’s prior associations and rapport he has developed with the area administrator. Brother Kollins feels that “prior to my selection as a principal I think “I had a pretty good relationship with the area director.” He remembers giving some pretty good suggestions in training council meetings as a teacher and shortly after that time he was asked by the area director to go be a principal. “So I would think probably more the confidence and the trust that I had developed with the area director more than just the teaching was why I was selected.” As a teacher, Brother Peters observed that:

All of the principals are well respected by the area director, that’s for sure. I

haven't seen any principal being selected that the area director doesn't know well. Their associations with those individuals prior give them a good indication if the teacher could be in an administrative role and be effective. And so I think generally some of the selection comes because they have seen them in the past and they can trust them.

The literature on educational leadership also cites instances that validate the idea that a principal's loyalty is often tied to relationships that were fostered prior to an appointment as a principal. Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry (2005) highlighted one of the distinct challenges surrounding a principal's reflection of and loyalty to higher administration. Their study looked at the factors on why fewer and fewer teachers seem interested in administrative positions. Their research noted that the value placed on the relationships between school leaders and a teacher prior to an administrative appointment is more significantly considered a disincentive to become a principal. The "grooming" done by school leaders to teachers did not favor well in the principal's overall reflection of higher administration.

Another challenge that is expressed in connection to a principal's reflection of higher administration is in relation to the CES's dynamic approach to placement for their teachers and principals. Within the CES it is very common for teachers and principals to be assigned to various seminaries within a geographic area over a short period of time (i.e., I myself have been teaching for 10 years and have taught seminary at three different locations). The concern given by the participants surrounds the ability for multiple principals within a geographic area to accurately reflect a unified and "correct" overall vision of higher administration within The CES. Participants noted that when they were reassigned to teach at a different seminaries within the same geographic area there was a

lack of consistency in the way in which principals' reflected the attitudes, guidelines, procedures and vision that was supposed to be coming from a single higher administrator. Participants wondered why there was such diversity between seminaries if the principals were all being loyal to the same level of higher administration. Participants expressed a desire to see a closer harmony between seminaries locally and believe that this responsibility can and should best be mitigated by the principals of the seminaries.

### Principal's Influence on Faculty Unity

The participants of the study identified a principal's efforts in faculty unity as a consistent focus of their leadership. In the handbook for leaders and teachers in the CES it states, "When we act in a united effort, we create spiritual synergism, which is increased effectiveness or achievement as a result of combined action or cooperation, the result of which is greater than the sum of the individual parts" (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003, p. 23). Educational leadership research is also quick to tout the need for unity among faculties and in large measure attributes the efforts of the principal as the major catalyst for such unity (Frey & Pumpian, 2006; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Tharp, 1989). Thus, many of the principals' approaches to improving the quality of their seminary programs were to focus on the unified efforts of their faculties. Some of the tools used by principals in this study to achieve faculty unity included weekly inservice training, faculty socials, daily faculty and individual contact, classroom observations by principal and teachers, and faculty counsels to determine curriculum decisions. And while some may argue that most of these tools are more appropriately addressed as it

pertains to training overall faculties, they were also used as a way to consistently develop and reinforce faculties that worked together and supported one another.

When Brother Mecham first was assigned as a principal his vision of success was having a “united faculty that gets along with one another, that cares about the work and that tries to do the work in a united fashion.” As he pursued this singular goal of faculty unity, he was unprepared for the varying needs and personalities among his faculty. It was one of his toughest learning experiences as he learned to adjust his personality to his entire faculty. “In one teacher situation I probably overacted too quickly; too sternly maybe, and I paid for that. For most of the year I had to deal with that mistake.” Having experienced that difficult life lesson, Brother Mecham made adjustments in his preparation for his second year of the principalship. Yet he never lost sight of the goal of unity and continues to keep it towards the forefront of his responsibilities.

Similar to Brother Mecham’s experience, one of the immediate challenges to faculty unity in the public setting is that educational leaders must often work with a staff that they did not personally select (Scholastic Administrator, 2008). When appointed, seminary principals are assigned to schools with existing faculties that are changed mostly under the direction of higher administration. This factor alone underscores the need for principals to focus some of their leadership decisions on the overall unity of the faculty they administer. Brother Dugland explained by stating that “each new principal or teacher brings a new feel to the program which automatically changes the feel of the seminary. And it changes the feel of the faculty.” Brother Kollins further expressed that the diversity of a faculty and their family situations can become a challenge from a

principal's perspective. Multiple leadership practices or tools were used by the principals with the intent to assist in unifying their faculties and meeting their varying needs.

At the beginning of each day, it was the practice of each principal to gather the faculty for prayer. The locations for prayers varied, but the expectation that all participate was felt by everyone. Brother Kollins was the most vocal. "I feel very strongly about prayer meetings every day. So we pray every day. It gives us a chance to pray together, and then pray for each other." Prayer was the informal opportunity for many principals to ask about sick family members, gather updates on special events, share jokes and stories, and generally encourage one another prior to entering the classroom. Additional informal opportunities of "getting together" were also fostered by principals depending on the personalities and needs of their faculties. Brother Preston would gather his faculty after lunch or during preparation hours to relax and play a quick game that was centered around teaching skills and fellowship. Brother Mecham organized his faculty to meet before school for breakfast at a local restaurant. Brother Dugland would bring in produce from his garden and inspired others to bring in gifts to share that cultivated a common sharing of talents and resources. Brother Kollins focused his efforts on lunchtime as well as afterhours eating:

I am pretty strong about getting together at lunch. I think being together at lunch can create some pretty good faculty cohesiveness. So we try to encourage everyone to eat together. And that is their personal time so they don't have to... Well, I guess the teachers know what the expectation is, so they come. Because I talk about that and I think that it is important to be together. So we can laugh and giggle and have fun together. And then we occasionally get together. Go out to dinner, or get together at somebody's house to make sure we socialize together.

Using the activities a means to foster unity among faculty was the foremost

concern as principals continually gathered their faculties together.

In a formal way faculty inservice also provided an opportunity for unity. Brother Preston who consistently had the most well organized inservices ensured that each member of the faculty contributed to the inservice. It became the place for even quiet members of the faculty to share skills and experiences that were appreciated and admired by the entire faculty. He also used inservice as a way to team teachers up each month to observe and assist one another in their teaching. This collaborative effort fostered genuine concern for the success of fellow faculty members. Brother Kollins summarized his focus on unity with his very serious approach to faculty inservices. "I think that if we are doing inservice right then we are sharing real feelings and real needs and real desires that create connections and bonds as we help one another." For Brother Kollins, this was one of the most powerful and lasting ways to create faculty unity."

An additional emphasis resulting from faculty unity is the measurable impact that faculty unity has upon the students of the seminary. In the public education setting, Chaltain (2007) found when educators work together to create open, accountable, relationship-driven climates there is a measurable improvement in school safety, faculty performance, and student learning. "Sometime I think that we forget that ultimately it ought to be the students we are trying to help. But if you are helping unify the faculty members you are really helping the students." Brother Mecham was definitive in his assertions that it is the students that benefit the most from the unity of a faculty. He quickly recognizes that when faculties are unified then teachers will feel more secure and confident as a teacher. This confidence then translates into what Brother Mecham

describes as “teachers who feel more like they have a purpose and that they are meeting goals and expectations.” The feelings of support among professional colleagues is also touted as a result of a strongly unified faculty. “They feel like someone’s got their back and can help them out.” Brother Mecham continued to explain that as teachers become more effective and more satisfied while in the classroom then “that translates into the lives of the students. So the students are ultimately the ones who will get the biggest benefit.”

I observed an example of this approach to unity as a teacher came to work and was visibly distracted with an impending family issue. The pull of his family issues were making it difficult for the teacher to focus his attention on the upcoming workday. Brother Mecham was quick to pull this teacher aside and provide every opportunity to talk about the family concerns. Brother Mecham immediately drew attention to the importance of this teacher’s family and removed any of the concerns about what would take place at work that day. I recognized Brother Mecham’s sincere desire to assist his fellow colleague and the teacher easily trusted Brother Mecham’s efforts. As the conversation continued, I observed the teacher physically become calmer as they unitedly discussed his needs. Brother Mecham supported and assisted the teacher in dealing with the family situation and was fully prepared to cover the teacher’s work assignments if needed. The teacher’s renewed ability to handle the situation was obtained before its negative affects had any contact with students who would be participating in seminary that day.

In connection to the focus on unity among the faculty and its ability to impact the

students, I also noted that the longer a principal continued in his assignment the sharper he focused his attention exclusively upon unifying the faculty. Demands such as class sizes, communication with stakeholders, attendance issues and other concerns were given less open attention the longer a principal served. The needs of the individual faculty members seemed to become the sole focus as principals trusted that their efforts in unity would benefit the overall seminary program.

#### Principal's Focus on Assisting the Struggling Student

The fifth major theme to emerge from this study was the seminary principal's leadership in assisting the struggling student (a struggling student is defined as a student who is in danger of not completing seminary with full credit, or a student whom the teacher perceives is having difficulty in their personal life or life choices that would hinder learning). Cotton (2003) argued that effective principals are seen as leaders who have the interpersonal skills necessary to make them aware and supportive of the personal needs of students, particularly those who are labeled as "struggling students." Bolman and Deal (1992) likewise described principals with a focus on the struggling student as ones who are approaching their leadership decisions from the human resource frame of leadership. This approach by seminary principals to address the needs of the individual student is a common catalyst in many leadership decisions. I often observed principals make and approach leadership decisions with the intent of assisting an individual student or an individual situation. This focus was seen as entire faculties were in counsel together in inservice training, as principals individually followed up with

teachers concerning specific students, and was also observed as principals met with and reviewed individual students' needs as a part of their daily schedule.

The role of the struggling student and the potential influence a principal can have was a strong catalyst for several of the principals at the beginning of their careers as illustrated by Brother Preston.

When I was a senior in high school, I came from an extremely troubled family. Midway through my senior year of high school I had a seminary teacher who went out of his way to help me. He actually came over to my house. I didn't change overnight but he put me on the path.... The more and more I fell in love with the gospel the more and more I wanted to do for other people what he did for me. That was my prime motivation in pursuing a career in Church Education.

Motivated by being able to assist even just one struggling student, principals recognize that while serving as a principal they are in a position to spend more time than they did as a teacher working with individually struggling students. Brother Mecham observed, "As a principal I probably get to have more time to help students that may be struggling in multiple areas of their life and I enjoy that. And I need to make sure that when they come in, they feel the spirit, learn to love the scriptures and learn to love and support one another." Brother Preston also loves his "ability to work with more of the kids who struggle," because he was one of them. "But at the same time I don't let them languish forever."

Brother Kollins approached his responsibility towards the struggling student by regularly stopping students in the hall, pulling them into his office and visiting with them to determine how they are doing and if the seminary is meeting the student's expectations. Using this approach allows students to become very comfortable with Brother Kollins and they perceive him as a friend and one who can assist them in their

lives. It was common to see students call out to Brother Kollins and wave as they were leaving other classes and many would also stop to talk about how they were doing.

For many students, the school principal becomes the representation of their overall school experience (Mitchell, Winter, & Martin, 2007). Therefore, the need for the seminary principal to be engaged in the lives of the students is paramount. Brother Whibley and Kyles described their vision of the role of a seminary principal and how his influence impacts students. “A principal is someone that students can come and talk to and feel comfortable with. They should feel comfortable around him and know who he is.” They also believe that principals should “just go out and every once in a while talk with students. He should gather together seniors and makes sure they are on course” but then have the skills and foresight to address “what the students need to do and give them direction to get there.” As an advocate for anyone, especially a struggling student, “principals should get to know the students” and “really be a part of them so the students can have someone to look to in leadership.” Brother Whibley also added, “From my perspective, principals who want to interact with the students understand their role better.” Teachers were not eager to support the role of a principal who has removed himself from the daily experiences of the seminary. “Their role is not just to be locked in their office and let the seminary do its own thing.” The need to have principals out and among the students was keenly addressed by the teachers. “If you are the principal of the seminary then the seminary students need to be your main focus. Not necessarily all of the administrative responsibilities.”

From an administrative standpoint principals initiated regular discussions about

how to best assist individual students in both faculty inservice meetings and privately with individual teachers. None of the principals were ever shy about referring to specific students by name and eliciting the assistance and advice of the teachers before making individual decisions that were intended to best help the students. The desire to provide extended opportunities for student success and develop new and creative ways to help students succeed was a prevailing conversation when principals were assessing the overall seminary. The following experience illustrates how Brother Dugland sought to approach every situation. He feels he was successful in assisting individual students without causing undue difficulties for the overall seminary program.

A young lady came in to see Brother Dugland and wanted to switch classes, which was against seminary policy. She was belligerent in her behavior towards Brother Dugland and seemed prepared for a fight. Brother Dugland's first response to her was, "Thank you for coming in and letting me know about this. I can see that this is important to you and let's see what we can do." This gentle and sincere approach caught her off guard and she apologized and said, "Well it isn't that bad," and began retelling some of the details of her story in an attempt to minimize some of her initial belligerence. Brother Dugland told her that she should stay in the class that she was currently in. However, as he later explained, "Because of the way I had talked to her before—that I was listening to her and could recognize how she was feeling—she listened to me and the reasons I gave for her staying in her current class."

After Brother Dugland explained his side of the issue, this young lady still insisted on going to another class, although her demeanor and conversation were much

subdued. Brother Dugland allowed her to change to a different class (of his choosing) with the invitation that if she felt like after a couple of classes she had made a wrong choice, then to come on back and he would put her back in her original class. The following week Brother Dugland reported that after about two class periods she came back and she said, “I need to be back in my original class.” Brother Dugland observed, “since then that young lady’s seminary experience, instead of being one of ‘they’re not going to get me,’ it has changed to they want me to be here. It is a safe place for me.” Brother Dugland’s approach to the individual student was designed to help the student feel like they were listened to, were safe, and that their opinions and feelings mattered. And as Brother Dugland concludes: “When this is all said and done if we look at the students I’ll say there was some success in this process.”

### Ensuring Faculty Professionalism

Another theme extending from the leadership roles of seminary principals centered on the professionalism of both principals and their faculties. Professionalism here is defined as the established features that an occupation should have in order to be termed a profession (Whitty, 2003). Varying qualifiers are often included in lists that correctly establish standards for professionalism in any field. But participants within this study oriented their understanding of professionalism as it related to a code of professional conduct oriented towards the ‘good’ of the profession (Grady, Helbling, & Lubeck, 2008; Whitty, 2006).

The idea of a “culture of discipline” within the educational setting is not a new

concept but an accepted practice among successful school administrators (Scholastic Administrator, 2008). Brother Mecham described a culture of discipline in the seminary as “creating the right environment and having quality teaching that draws and retains students.” Each of the principals recognized their role in carrying the responsibility to maintain professionalism at the seminary and train their teachers to do likewise. They also felt the burden of dealing with teacher that were not making it professionally and striving to assist them. Brother Kollins strengthens this position by stating, “I believe there is a standard and an expectation that the CES has, and I believe teachers need to meet that expectation. And if we are not at that level then we need to work to get to that level.”

One example of this professionalism led by example came pointedly one morning when Brother Dugland gathered his faculty together to specifically draw attention to his daily arrival to work on time for the past 5 years. He then presented a personal record he had been keeping indicating the tardiness of faculty members during the previous months. He took time to draw their attention to the professional standards that should be met, including being to work on time, and then dismissed them to go and get ready for the day. Another illustration of professional demeanor reinforced by a principal came as Brother Preston stopped a faculty member mid sentence as that faulty member was sarcastically teasing another colleague. He then quietly reminded him of the goal for unity. The faculty member quickly apologized and everything moved forward as normal.

The specific behaviors and practices that constitute professionalism within an educational setting can vary depending on a number of factors including such things as

culture, size, and needs of the school (Glazer, 2008). In the seminary setting professionalism was defined by both teachers and principals as they described the behaviors and attitudes that were expected on a daily basis. From the participants I developed a lengthy list of descriptors that were identified as the behaviors, attitudes, and practices of professionalism for teachers and principals within The CES. Generally the list developed by principals harmonized with the items identified by the teachers. The following is an example of a few of the descriptors of professionalism:

1. Adheres to and upholds the policy.
2. Is prompt with assignments.
3. Shows up on time.
4. Puts in a full work day.
5. Uses proper teaching techniques.
6. Doesn't take sick days to extend vacation.
7. Is self directed as much as possible.
8. Takes attendance every day.
9. Is unified with their faculty.
10. Doesn't talk bad about colleagues.
11. Is loyal to the CES.

I did observe that while the principals agreed with many of the identified characteristics of professionalism, each principal still seemed to favor certain aspects of professionalism (i.e., Shows up on time, takes attendance every day, doesn't talk bad about colleagues) that they deemed more important behaviors or attitudes. Additionally, I

also observed that the teachers recognized their principal's preferences in professionalism and were quick to adapt their behaviors and attitudes to meet the focus of their principal. Overall I observed that the principals were confident with the professionalism in "their buildings" and that they believed the professionalism of their teachers was a good reflection of the overall seminary.

### Personal Satisfaction and Growth

Within the experiences of each of the seminary principals, there was a consistent awareness of personal satisfaction and individual growth that came as a result of service within their assignments as a seminary principal. I observed components of their personal satisfaction as principals spoke positively about their assignments and were genuinely excited to share about the success obtained during their service. I also noted that the tone of voice and body language of the principals was positive throughout most of the interviews.

As I furthered my studies to better understand the nature of personal satisfaction in relation to the educational setting I found multiples studies citing personal satisfaction as a viable and necessary component to successful leadership practice (Daresh & Playko, 1993; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Hart, 2003; Humphreys & Wolfson, 2008; Scott, 2000). However, within the same studies I also found a wide variety of methods of how best to report such evidences of personal satisfaction. Some studies used strictly worded likert scaled tests while other studies relied upon contextual statements and behaviors that would confirm higher levels of personal satisfaction (Daresh & Playko; Hart; Scott). For

this study, I did not employ any specifically designed test of personal satisfaction but was observant of the principals' own reactions to and positive comments about their principalships. The following comments illustrate examples of some of the common sources of satisfaction experienced in the seminary principalship:

Brother Mecham: Your time is not your own. But that's one of the fun sides about the job because there's never the same day. There's always something different.

Brother Preston: I love the opportunity to work more with the kids that are struggling.

Brother Mecham: As the principal one of the most enjoyable parts of this job is I get to serve. I really do enjoy that. Training and serving the faculty members—that's probably the part of my job that I enjoy the most.

Brother Dugland: Actually some of the most favorite experiences I've had are when I've sat down with a teacher privately and had to make some changes. And I've pointed out that there needed to be some changes and then working together with them in specific areas. That has actually been very positive.

In the analysis of the data, I found that personal satisfaction emanated from many different sources but most often was associated with (a) working through a difficult challenge that influenced the entire seminary, (b) successfully rising above the constancy of a busy and dynamic schedule, (c) the rewards of seeing success in individual faculty members or students, and (d) reflecting on their own growth and character development throughout their time as a seminary principal. Overall, principals expressed a high level of personal satisfaction within their assignments as expressed by their positive approach to their administrative duties, interactions with faculty and students and their expressed willingness and joy in continuing to serve in the capacities they had been assigned.

Interesting to note was the contrary perspective of the teachers when asked about what would be the greatest thing about being a seminary principal. Brother Westcroft was quick to respond:

I don't think there is a greatest thing. I think being a principal is like taking a hit. I don't think it is anything like, 'Woo! I get to be a principal.' It doesn't pay off on all of the trouble you deal with and decisions you have to make. Things that you have to help people correct that they don't want to. I don't know if it would be that good.

Yet, despite the perception from teachers that the actual leadership role of the seminary principal would not be enjoyable, teachers' comments about what opportunities they think would be personally satisfying as a principal did match the responses given by the principals. Many of the teachers' comments stated that they believed the greatest thing about being a seminary principal would be the ability to get more involved with the faculty and their personal lives. They were also favorable as they viewed their own principal in inservices and as Brother Bernard states: "I think being able to teach teachers would be the most enjoyable thing about being a principal." Continuing this thought Brother Lauder believes that if you were successfully able to help a teacher become better, then you would be helping quite a few students as well. "I think that would be the greatest thing," to help a teacher make changes that will have great consequences for good throughout their career with all of the students they will teach.

An additional component to personal satisfaction came from the principals' own reflections of how they have grown since being assigned as a seminary principal. In speaking about the growth of a principal, Brother Kyles observed that there are some things that you can gain in the principal's assignment that you cannot gain as a teacher

because as a principal “you are challenged in a different way.” The combination of continuing to teach while further incorporating administrative responsibilities “stretches you and cause you to grow.” Then there are the associations with the faculty. “As a teacher I can develop my own association with each teacher individually, but as a principal they develop everybody’s association a little bit better too.” Principals have a greater ability to affect not just one teacher, but have an effect on each member of the faculty with each other.

Brother Preston’s ability to work with the faculty has developed and strengthened throughout his principalship.

The thing that I’ve developed since I’ve been principal is being able to deal with everything and everyone in a principle-based manner. “What’s the principle behind that? What’s driving that?” It is just so effective that I’ve just fallen in love with it and I’ve tried to do it in being able to help people’s specific needs.

Brother Dugland also expressed his growth in a similar manner but has focused on principle-based decision making in working more with parents and students. He openly expressed his enjoyment at having to deal with parents who call and are really upset, or who come in and are really upset. His success is in “following really basic gospel principles” and the parents quickly learn that he is their advocate in the seminary.

Each of the principals also recognized that their growth has been a continual process as they have been maturing throughout their principalship. Educational literature substantiates this maturation from the onset of a new administration. Much of the growth experienced by a principal begins in the first years of leadership as the principal is exposed to the rigors of his assignments and is continually shaped over time (Daresh, 2006). There are multiple examples of the types of personal growth and life skills that can

be fostered and strengthened while serving as a principal.

Brother Mecham administered in the community where he grew up as a child and was very familiar with many of the local families who are stakeholders to the seminary. Initially he had been self-conscious about how his decisions may be viewed by life-long friends and community members. However, he described his increased ability “to not be so concerned” about the decisions he was making as a principal while maintaining confidence that what he was doing is right. “I am less worried now what other people are going to think. I think I just have more of a desire to do the right thing for the right reason regardless of how that might make me viewed.” Brother Mecham said that he was now able to better put his decisions within the context of a “bigger picture.” In my observations I was able to see this same decision making ability as principals regularly would go through a process of gathering information, consulting with teachers who may be involved, conferring with policy, and then making decisions that seemed most appropriate and helpful for the individual situation, but always within the context of the overall seminary setting. This process was followed whether it involved a single student, parent, teacher, or even the entire seminary.

Teachers were also able to identify ways in which their principal had developed character traits while serving as a principal. Often they would identify those developing traits as they were complimenting the direction a principal was going or how their principal had changed throughout the year. Brother Whipley’s observations of Brother Dugland in his first year as a principal described an educational leader who was very heavily oriented towards a particular style of leadership. He was “very letter of the law”

as it related to policy and procedures, but you could tell that “he was still trying to find his balance properly.” Brother Whibley continued to watch his growing leader and now observes that, “I think I have seen him grow in the sense that I have watched him take care of his responsibilities more effectively.” He has “watched the pendulum swing come back” and feels that his principal, Brother Dugland has found his administrative style and “I think he is very effective at it.”

Brother Kyles described the growth he has seen in his principal especially in matters of teacher discipline. “Brother Dugland takes care of things a little more behind closed doors instead of in front of the entire faculty. And that has been good for rapport, and trust.” When he first began administering much of the teacher correct Brother Kyles observed was addressed in front of the entire faculty. But as Brother Kyles explained, “faculty members already feel like they need to do better, but they don’t feel they need to be put on the spot.” Brother Dugland’s change in his approach to discipline has been positive for the entire seminary faculty. “I am impressed he has made the change. Especially since he was used to administering things a certain way. That is a pretty impressive ability to develop.”

In some cases, teacher observations again were identical to those given by the principals, as illustrated by Brother Kollins’ self-assessment and Brother Westcroft’s perceptions of Brother Kollins as his principal. Brother Kollins stated that “I think I have loosened up a little bit as I’ve come to understand and judge policies differently and I’ve learned to be a better listener. I have learned a lot about communication and trying to see both sides of the issues.” Brother Westcroft’s observation was that:

Brother Kollins has become a lot more relaxed over the years. He has learned not to get so high stressed, which is a nice thing. I think he has learned that a lot, because he took a lot of things personal. It had nothing to do with him it was just his job and what he was supposed to do, but he took it as him. So I think he is starting to understand there is a difference between a principal and who he is as a person. He's relaxed a lot. And he is a pretty policy guided person. He's starting now to find a balance. I think this has given him more of an opportunity to see how to help people instead of worry so much about what is the policy all of the time. I think it has been good for him, to balance him out.

The ability for seminary principals to experience personal satisfaction and growth while in the role of a seminary principal was a consistent component of their service. Each of the principals was able to identify ways they have enjoyed their work and become better in their individual abilities to administer. Overall, the seminary principals reflected that they were grateful for the experiences that they have had while serving as a principal and how those experiences provided such personal periods of growth and enjoyment.

### Managerial Organization

A final theme in the leadership roles of seminary principals was the organization of managerial or administrative responsibilities associated with the seminary principalship. Within the public education setting the managerial demands placed up a school principal compete very heavily with the demand of a principal as an instructional leader (Southworth, 2000). Barth (1986) and Hallinger (2003b) argued that because principals now occupy a middle management position they are thus limited in their authority to command. Principals, they continued, are impeded particularly in secondary schools, when the principal often has less expertise than the teachers whom they

supervise but cannot dedicate additional time in instructional leadership because they remain weighed down by the demands of the managerial responsibilities.

Within the seminary setting however many of the managerial demands that are heavy upon the public school principal are lessened by the dynamics, function, and size associated with a seminary principalship. Examples of such managerial components that are mitigated or even absent from the seminary principalship include such things as budget, facility size, additional support staff, special education programs, sports programs, and even cafeteria needs. Yet seminary principals still experience many of the same demanding managerial concerns surrounding such basics as student completion and enrollment reporting, general finances and budgets, staffing, and building maintenance that are also managed by principals in the public education setting.

When discussing the role that principals play in meeting managerial concerns, all of the principals stated that at the onset of their administrations they were overwhelmed by the amount and varying nature of decisions that were placed before them as a principal. They were unfamiliar with all that was expected of them in the principalship and needed help in managing all of their responsibilities as well as managing their time that was available to deal with each decision. Developing a consistent and organized routine that dealt with the demands of a “regular day” was a necessary skill employed by all of the principals. While each routine was a little bit different, there were some components to the overall structure that were common to all of the principals.

Glickman (2002) insisted that detailed preparation is typical of many great leaders. This minimizes the chances of failure through extensive planning that allows the

leader to respond and adjust to the many unanticipated day-to-day problems that will occur. It is also noted that educational leaders who have a clear sense of direction and specific plans to achieve them have the greatest impact (Leithwood et al., 2004). This underscores the need for principals to develop and employ some measures of organization into their leadership and decision-making practices.

The first component common to all of the principals' organizational strategies was personally starting out each day early and starting it out "right." Brother Preston and Brother Dugland both agreed that there is a spiritual preparation that has to happen before they come to work each day. "I get up early in the morning and take care of myself first" said Brother Preston. "I exercise, and read scriptures, and pray. . .it begins before you even get here." Brother Mecham's approach was to get to work early to read and do some journaling to help collect and organize his thoughts. Once they were personally and spiritually prepared principals felt that they were then ready to tackle the decisions that would come.

As the faculty members began to show up for work each day the principals had a scheduled gathering time to greet one another, pray, and address any of the upcoming needs of the day. Brother Preston was the most consistently organized with a daily announcement sheet that he prepared for every teacher. It contained a pacing reminder of where the teachers were supposed to be in their teaching, assignments that were to be completed before next inservice, and any other announcements that would be specific for the day (i.e., school assemblies, fire drills, etc.). Brother Dugland, Mecham, and Kollins did not provide a sheet, but daily reviewed all of the same types of items personally with

their teachers before they prayed. Brother Dugland specifically liked the morning prayer time because it gave him a moment to assess his faculty and their needs for the day.

What I do is try to check all of my basis so to speak. Are all my teachers and faculty members here? Are there any announcements we need to be aware of, or policy changes from higher administration? Or is there anything this week that we are going to have to face?

This routine assessment was a necessary component in successfully moving forward for the day.

After the faculties were assessed, the principals then split in their approaches to the day. Brother Dugland and Brother Kollins began their teaching during the first period of the day. They were anxious to begin working with the students so that the rest of the day could then be dealt with non-teaching administrative decisions and not interrupt their performance as a teacher. However, the Brother Preston and Brother Mecham preferred not to teach the first period of the day so as to have some dedicated administration time to appropriately deal with the upcoming decisions of the day. From what I observed neither approach wielded superior results and was largely determined by the principals personality and preference. Overall, Brother Preston was the most organized and had a daily schedule filled out that outlined each hour of the day and the decisions he was going to have to make, but again, that did not ensure he was more successful in his principalship.

The biggest focus on organization was having a good sense of the daily needs of the faculty (which were met at the beginning of each day) and establishing sufficient

lesson preparation time for upcoming classes. The remaining administrative decisions of the day were then so varied in timing and nature that the best strategy seemed to be the principals' own willingness to set aside time to deal with teach situation. This situational approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Yukl, 1981) kept the principals busily assessing each decision-making opportunity within the context and time of the daily schedule. All of the principals commented that at the onset of their administrations the time needed to deal with all of the administrative demands was overwhelming. This was also compounded with the lack of training that was mentioned previously. Yet as I observed each principal it appeared that the demands of the administrative decisions diminished over time as a function of maturation in their assignment as a principal.

Overall, the teachers did not express any concerns about the organizational styles of the principals they served under, and only commented that their principal was very well organized. This supports the statements by Gardner (1995) and Sternberg (2005) who suggest that organization must be a constant in leadership. "Sooner or later a leader needs some kind of organization to support their success" (Sternberg, p. 200). And while the literature on leadership is firm on the need for organization, much like the teachers in this study it does not dictate any formal styles that prove superior, but only confirms the need for some level of organization and planning to be in place (Gardner; Glickman, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Sternberg).

## Summary

The analysis of the data in this chapter has helped identify and explore eight major themes surrounding the leadership roles embodied by seminary principals for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each one of the eight themes represents a significant component to the complexity that surrounds educational leadership within the seminary setting. And while the setting of religious education for this study is uniquely positioned outside of the public education setting, the analysis of the data also confirm that each of the themes is consistently linked with current research emanating from the general body of literature surrounding leadership in other educational settings.

When the eight themes of leadership identified are used to better understand the overall leadership practices of the seminary principal, a model of leadership also begins to emerge. This model of leadership is linked to the historical role of the principal teacher, rooted in instructional leadership and shaped by the theoretical components of situational and transformational variables that are allowing the principal to be successful amidst the dynamics of the current educational landscape.

Some might argue that leadership roles situated to an historical approach to current leadership opportunities will leave the seminary principal ill equipped for the demands and challenges being faced in the educational settings of a modern world. However, when placed within the context of the situational nature of leadership, the eight themes that emerged provide a sufficient wealth of leadership qualities to assist seminary principals in the successful leadership of their schools.

## CHAPTER VI

### OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

#### Overview

As the role of the principal continues to exercise a significant effect on the success of schools, educational stakeholders will continue to develop additional ways to understand and strengthen the role that principals play (Kruger, 2003). Within the public education sector, change continues to build upon a solid historical foundation of research and practice. Alternative educational settings, however, use the wisdom of practice established in the public setting while seeking to strengthen and develop a foundation of research specifically targeted to the unique settings they employ.

The focus of this chapter is to help analyze the leadership qualities embodied by seminary principals in the religious secondary education setting. The development and current practice of educational leaders in the public setting were used to corroborate the identification and development of themes of leadership that are employed by seminary principals in a private religious education setting. Eight major themes emanated from the observations, interviews, and analysis of data surrounding the four seminary principals in this study. The analysis has shown that each of the eight major themes was consistently linked to the leadership practices of educational administrators in the public setting. Each of the themes has been shown to be a contributing component of current educational theory. The themes have also been associated with varying models of leadership that help shape our understanding of current leadership practice (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Glickman,

2002; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993)

From the seminary principals who were studied, each of the eight major themes emerged as a contributing factor in the overall leadership characteristics that help inform our understanding of the leadership roles of the seminary principal. Independently, each theme was identified and represented by each seminary principal. However, it was noted that independently, each of the themes was expressed in varying degrees of prominence. This varying degree of prominence among themes offered two diverging conclusions.

The first major conclusion suggested that the emergent themes could be employed by the principals in varying degree according to situation, ability, and need. This conclusion was founded in the perspective of the “principal as an instructional leader” model of leadership that emanated from and was solidified as an outgrowth of the effective schools movement of the 80s and 90s. Additionally, when the themes of leadership are then applied according to situation, ability, and need, they become linked with the more current situational and transformational theories of leadership that elicit a more dynamic principal role than is offered by the simpler historical model of instructional leadership.

The situational nature of leadership expressed by the seminary principals in this study was confirmed by the presences of multiple themes of leadership being employed by single principals in a variety of ways. The principals’ ability to shift and redesign their models of leadership was influenced by the situational needs and experiences of their individual seminaries. The principals in this study were well equipped to adjust when circumstances necessitated a differing approach to decision making. This situational

aspect of leadership among seminary principals was also influenced by a transformational component of leadership.

The transformational nature of leadership that was manifest in the seminary principals was represented by the principals who became “agents of change” (Southworth, 2002; Thomson, 1990) for their seminaries, their students, and most assuredly their teachers. The principals in the seminary setting used the eight themes of leadership as a means of directing and moving their organizational stewardships in a manner consistent with the vision and focus of the CES and in harmony with the needs of the faculty and students whom they served. Again, it was the combination of a strong principal teacher model influenced by situational variables employed to bring about organizational change, thus improving the overall quality of the seminary.

The second major conclusion suggested that because the emergent themes had varying predominance that was similar among all of the seminary principals, then the varying predominance is independent of the individual seminary setting, or abilities of the principal. The common varying predominance of the eight leadership themes could be influenced by such things as specific policies and procedures required by higher administration within the CES, increased value and priority of themes that are supported within the culture of seminaries, or they may simply be an indication that some leadership themes play a more pervasive role in the leadership decisions that seminary principals routinely make. However, each of these possible assumptions would require further research to develop and validate.

## Recommendations

Qualitative research needs to continue to support the study of educational leadership within the seminary setting. This and future studies will continue to lay the foundation for a greater understanding of the models and theories of leadership that will best improve the overall successes of seminary principals and their schools. Most existing research has only addressed the needs of educational leadership in the public setting. While the findings of this research do identify models and theories of leadership that are being used within the seminary setting, these models and theories cannot be generalized to all other educational settings. The findings of this study do, however, add to the foundation of knowledge that continues to elicit research in search for viable approaches to leadership in other settings. These findings are encouraging for future research that wishes to develop stronger connections to the literature already available in the public setting and create a network of research that is developing in alternative educational settings. Additionally, a closer look into the themes of leadership that emanate from this study will produce specific avenues of research that could be targeted to aid in the improved development of the seminary principal. I offer two specific areas of recommendation for future research that will strengthen the body of knowledge dedicated to educational leadership within the seminary setting as well as assist in better understanding the development and management of seminary principals within the CES. These two areas of recommendation are dedicated to the two most predominate emergent themes of this study: principals as trainers and a lack of training for seminary principals.

As the driving theme of leadership, principals as trainers permeated every aspect

of the seminary principalship. The first recommendation for future research rests with the need to develop a greater working understanding of the leadership mechanisms currently employed by seminary principals to help train their teachers. Once an understanding of current leadership practices dealing with training is compiled, then steps can be taken to evaluate and improve the successes of such leadership practices. Developing research that is focused on understanding the specific mechanisms of training that are currently used by seminary principals as well as the outcomes of this training, would justify the use of current training methods, eliminate unsuccessful practice and further promote the development of improved practice.

The second recommendation for future research deals with the consistent concern of a lack of training for those who are selected as seminary principals. With the perceptions of principals from this study who feel that there is not enough, or never has been training provided to assist the seminary principal, a closer look into the seminary training programs for the CES is essential. Overwhelmingly the principals in this study felt that they missed some crucial aspects of training when they were first assigned and openly wondered if they were hindered in their successes because of this lack of training. Additionally, principals were eager to receive ongoing training to assist them in the dynamics of their principalships. These concerns suggest several directions of research that could be developed in regards to additional training.

It would first be important to research if the CES believes they are providing training opportunities and if the perception of principals from a larger population of seminary principals matches the lack of training perspectives of the principals within this

study. This type of research may inform higher administration about the reception of training programs that they feel they are currently providing, or may reinforce the need for the CES to implement a specific principal training program. Research directed to better understand and evaluate the purposes and needs of training seminary principals could also help address the expressed disconnect between local principals and higher administration about how a seminary principal is supposed to oversee a seminary. This type of research could further investigate the differing needs associated with training for the instructional leader verses the needs associated with the managerial tasks of the seminary principalship.

In addition, the development of a formal administrative training or certification program within the CES may become a viable outgrowth of any research developed in this area. From this study, participants were quick to suggest various measures to improve training such as, 1- to 2-day specific training at the onset of principalships, concurrent training on specific administrative situations, and even a handbook designed specifically for the seminary principalship. These and other components would be appropriately developed with further research supporting the training needs of seminary principals.

A final recommendation that has merit for research dealing with principals as trainers or the lack of training for seminary principals is the need to broaden the size and scope of this current study. Future research could be expanded to include an increased number of participating principals, teachers, higher administration, and students. The inclusion of seminary principalships that go beyond the concentration of seminaries

within Utah and are more representative of a worldwide CES may also be more beneficial for future studies.

As research from the setting of seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to seek better ways of understanding the nature and development of leadership, the paucity of research that limits appropriate practice and progressive understanding will diminish. Moreover, while the developments of educational reformers from numerous settings will consistently help redefine and reshape the educational landscape, the established position for those in alternative educational settings, like seminary, will only continue to be strengthened by dynamic and emerging research.

### Summary

In his report on the discourse associated with principal leadership over the past decades, Hallinger (2003a) concluded that the suitability or effectiveness of a particular leadership model is linked to factors in the external environment and the local context of a school. “Schools will continue to differ widely in terms of their needs and resources as well as in the type of leadership required to move them forward” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 237). The private religious education seminary setting also continues to experience changes linked to the external environment and the local context of its schools. It is believed that the constant evaluation of leadership associated within their contexts and settings will also lead to overall school improvement. The continued development of research designed to evaluate leadership strategies of seminary principals in religious

education will provide sustained future growth and success in response to the dynamic needs and demands of a global society. Establishing this foundation of research for seminary principals now only proves to strengthen the framework of knowledge for others who may discover new possibilities of leadership within the context of religious education. In addition, the foundation laid by this study may help expand the vision for future leadership effectiveness as principals are exposed to leadership practices that are outside their usual range of behavior. As leaders also begin to identify and understand the situational nature of leadership they will continually be able to provide the effective leadership that is necessary to respond to all of the challenges and ambiguity that they will encounter. Moreover, while it is tempting to use the same old solutions, regardless of how much the problems have changed, effective leaders must create a balance between old practice and innovative policy; leaders must seek to integrate the best practice for the given situation and be willing to change as circumstances change (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

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## VITA

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