

CHURCH LEADERS ENGAGING IN CRITICAL FAITH LEARNING:
A CASE STUDY OF HOW WOMEN BECAME
ORDAINED DEACONS IN A BLACK BAPTIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

CHURCH LEADERS ENGAGING IN CRITICAL FAITH LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF HOW WOMEN BECAME ORDAINED DEACONS IN A BLACK BAPTIST CHURCH

Kevin Rae Miles Johnson

This qualitative case study explored what critical faith learning strategies church leaders in a progressive, middle-income Black Baptist congregation in the Midwest developed to transform its once all-male leadership board to one inclusive of women. Critical faith learning was defined as the continual process of critically assessing one's faith, and making new meaning of previously-held religious beliefs, assumptions, and traditions through prayer, meditation, critical reflection, and extra-rational activity.

The study utilized a "critical case" sample of eleven church leaders, which consisted of the pastor, deacons (both male and female), and ministers. The researcher utilized multiple data collection methods, such as pre-interview data inventories, in-depth interviews, critical incident reports, document analysis and field notes. The findings emerged from the participants' responses to five guiding research questions and were categorized into five major findings: (1) Understandings of Faith and Critical Faith; (2) Critical Experiences; (3) Enablers and Barriers of Transformation; (4) The Dynamics of God/Holy Spirit, Pastor, and Deacons; and (5) What Church Leaders Learned.

Based on the findings, six conclusions were drawn: (1) Church leaders' understandings of faith are definite and varied; however, their understandings of "critical faith" are limited or lacking altogether; (2) Church leaders drew from

their own personal and work experiences to implement gender change and equality in the church; the Civil Rights Movement was particularly instrumental and informative; (3) Faith is constantly evolving and changing as it encounters external and internal factors that are both positive and negative; (4) Change within the Black Baptist church is dependent upon the perception of and guidance by a pastor/leader who exhibits both charismatic and transformational leadership qualities; (5) The process of organizational change within the Black Baptist church is not always cognitive or critically reflective, but oftentimes is the result of the movement and work of underlying and unexplainable dynamics—such as God and the Holy Spirit; and (6) In order for change and transformation to be successful within a Black Baptist church setting, church leaders must understand that change requires leadership, must be managed, is evolutionary (not radical), and must invoke the presence of God and the Holy Spirit.

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***But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.***

—Matthew 6:33 (King James Version)

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K. R. M. J.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This dissertation examines what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male deacon board to one inclusive of women. The context for the study involves the Pastor and members of the Deacon Board of a progressive, middle-income Black Baptist congregation in the Midwest.¹ The method used to conduct this research was an exploratory case study. By conducting this study, it was the researcher's intent to add to the body of literature on faith development and learning. Additionally, it was the researcher's intent to assist religious leaders and educators, specifically within the Black Baptist church, with addressing critical faith issues within their congregations.

Within the corpus of this chapter, the following will be described: (1) background of the problem statement; (2) problem statement; (3) purpose statement and research questions; (4) research site and design; (5) researcher perspectives; (6) assumptions; (7) rationale and significance; and (8) definition of key terms.

¹The location and name of the church as well as the names of the study participants are pseudonyms to preserve anonymity.

Background of the Problem Statement

When Blacks deserted predominantly White churches in the 18th and 19th centuries, they departed because their understanding of the Christian faith differed from that of their White slave masters. Realizing that they “no longer were obliged to suffer the indignity of segregation and the lack of opportunity for advancement within the White churches” (Wilmore, 1986, p. 80), Blacks developed a Black church movement of independence, liberation, and empowerment, one determined to experience the fulfillment of the Gospel. This determination, though noble in deed, was not for the entire Black community, but rather for those whose gender was male. Although Blacks were determined to serve God “in *Spirit* and in *Truth*,” their doctrine and polity were no different from those of the White churches they had left. This obviously created a schism in the Black church and led some 19th century Black women, such as Jarena Lee, to challenge the Black church’s doctrine and polity, specifically as it related to women’s leadership roles in the church. Fed up with racism and now sexism in the church, these women challenged the Black church about its own traditions and raised the following critical faith questions:

If the man may preach, because the savior died for him, why not the woman, seeing He died for her also? Is He not a whole savior, instead of a half one, as those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach would seem to make it appear? (Lee, cited in Andrews, 1986, p. 36)

Similarly, when a preacher argued at a women’s rights convention that a woman could not have as much right as a man because Christ was not a woman,

Sojourner Truth argued:

Whar did your Christ come from?... Whar did your Christ come from?
From God and a woman. Man had nothing to do with him. (Painter, 1996, p. 168)

These critical responses of Sojourner Truth and Jarena Lee raise the issue of servanthood and women's social roles in the church, and expose the sexist and patriarchal ideologies of Black male clergy. Sojourner Truth's repeated response of "Whar did your Christ come from?" suggests that the preacher's hermeneutic is not based on the Bible, but rather based on his own patriarchal view and andocentric hermeneutic. Jarena Lee's questioning of men being able to preach and not women reveals that she also disagreed with male preachers' andocentric hermeneutic. Lee's statement, moreover, challenged Richard Allen's² hermeneutic by forcing him to confront his own andocentric doctrine and theology. Thus, it is evident that both women refused to allow patriarchal values and andocentric hermeneutics to dictate their roles in society and in the church.

In addition to 19th-century Black women challenging the patriarchal views in the church, 20th and 21st-century theologians and womanists also have raised critical questions regarding the role of women in the church (Beale, 1979; Gilkes, 2001; Grant, 1979, 1993a; Hoover, 1979; McKinney, 2005; Williams, 1993; Wood, 1993). Specifically, Grant (1993a) critiques the labeling of women as the "backbone" of the church:

It is often said that women are the "backbone" of the church. On the surface this may appear to be a compliment, especially when one considers the function of the backbone in the human anatomy.... [However,] the telling portion of the word backbone is "back." It has become apparent to me that most ministers who use this term have reference to location rather than function. What they really mean is that women are in the background and should be kept there. (p. 328)

The issues raised by Grant and others undoubtedly have reignited an effort to redefine leadership within the Black church, and to emphasize a more egalitarian

²Richard Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and served as the minister in charge of Bethel A.M.E. Church. Allen publicly rebuffed Jarena Lee when she revealed that she had been "called to preach" (Andrews, 1986).

view of church leadership. Congregations that were once Biblical literalist are now embracing a Biblical hermeneutic that is transformative and critically reflective of one's faith. They are questioning many long-held theological beliefs, such as 1 Timothy 3:2-5,³ which has often been interpreted as the Bible prohibiting women to be in authority over men.

For example, when the Reverend Dr. H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., pastor of the oldest African-American congregation in Washington, D.C., began to critically assess his views on female deacons, he shared with his congregation the following argument on why they should ordain and embrace female deacons:

I believe that the word *diakonos* is never used to describe a person; rather it is used to describe a function. Deacon is not a noun which describes a person, but rather a verb which describes one's actions. Ultimately, God uses whom He chooses, whether to teach or to preach, or to serve as deacon within the administrative boundaries of the local congregation. (Hicks, 1991, p. 2)

Hicks' "Rationale for Female Deacons" is historic, for it not only highlights how a church leader has addressed critical faith issues, but also began to engage a congregation in critically reflecting upon its religious traditions, assumptions, beliefs, and faith. This shift in faith learning and development is indeed revolutionary and is currently becoming an unavoidable issue for other traditional Black Baptist congregations in America. As McKinney (2005) notes, the "conflict in the church ... goes well beyond different interpretations of Scripture. It is related, in part, to traditions that are increasingly being challenged" (p. 60).

³1 Timothy 3:2-7: "Now the overseer must be above reproach, **the husband** of but **one wife**, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴**He** must manage **his** own family well and see that **his** children **obey him** with proper respect. ⁵If anyone does not know how to **manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?**" (New International Version)

In an effort to understand this phenomenon and assist congregations in remaining spiritually relevant in today's post-modern world, this study sought to examine what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their once all-male leadership boards to include women. Given that power in the Black Baptist church rests in the positions of Pastor and Deacons (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Washington, 1986), it is imperative to examine what factors triggered a need to change traditional leadership models and what factors hindered this development. The researcher proposed to conduct a qualitative case study of a traditional Black Baptist church that has recently ordained female deacons and integrated the leadership of the church.

Problem Statement

In April 2004, a historical Black Baptist congregation held a leadership retreat to discuss its ministry vision and mission for its growing congregation. After the Pastor concluded his presentation to the 125 parishioners gathered, he opened the floor for parishioners to ask him any questions regarding his presentation or the future of the church's ministry. Seizing the opportunity to dialogue with the Pastor, a mid-30-year-old, professional woman asked the Pastor: "Why doesn't our church have female deacons?" Before the woman, who happened to be a Harvard MBA and Wharton BA graduate, could complete her sentence, longstanding members of the congregation, ranging in age from 60 to 75 years old, began whispering: "I can't believe she asked that question. She should know better than that. We don't have female deacons. That's not something we do at this church." Sensitive to the woman's question and aware of the murmurings of the congregation, the Pastor proceeded to answer the question diplomatically, understanding that the question raised was not only a

question of the woman, but possibly for those who were murmuring under their breath. Hence, the Pastor's answer was simply: "It has not been our church's 'tradition' to have female deacons." The response by the Pastor, although truthful and candid, did not address the woman's unarticulated question: "If our church is supposed to be committed to the Gospel message of liberation (i.e., Luke 4:16-19), then why are some persons, particularly women, in our congregations still regulated to subservient roles of leadership?"

The problem statement commenced with this vignette because in order for Black religious institutions to relevantly engage and retain their present faith communities, they will need to engage in critical faith learning to address the burgeoning faith and social issues confronting today's religious institutions. In today's post-modern world, church leaders and adult educators can no longer use "tradition" as the answer for why the church functions the way it does or believes what it believes. Two challenges the researcher sees before today's Black religious institutions are: (1) How does the church religiously educate its parishioners; and (2) How does the church engage parishioners in faith learning that is relevant, authentic, and critically reflective?

With an increasing number of working professional men and women in congregations, church leaders and adult educators are now forced to confront post-modern questions in order to remain spiritually relevant, authentic, and important for today's generation (English & Gillen, 2000). As many authors have noted, there is a growing interest in spirituality (English & Gillen, 2000; Hart & Holton, 1993; Tisdell, 2003; Weibust & Thomas, 1994; Westrup, 1998). English and Gillen (2000) argue that if religious institutions do not meet the growing need for an authentic religious education, then "new age movements (Downey 1997), HRD programs (Fenwick & Lange 1998), and fundamentalism (Armstrong 1998) will fill the gap" (p. 524).

While there is a growing body of literature regarding spirituality (Dirkx, 1997; English & Gillen, 2000; Hamilton & Jackson, 1998; Tisdell, 2000, 2003), there is a lack of research on critical faith learning and how church leaders engage in such learning to transform the leadership paradigms within their organizations. Most recently, Hess and Brookfield (2008) have attempted to address this issue of how to teach reflectively in theological contexts—focusing on the pedagogical issues that arise in teaching seminary students to think and reflect critically. Further, most writers who discuss faith in a learning context discuss it from the standpoint of faith-based learning (Blair, 2001) or the integration of faith learning (Nwosu, 1998). In both instances, the studies are based upon the “integration of faith and context” in adult professional studies programs at faith-based institutions. The studies do not address issues on how to make sense of one’s faith or approach faith learning as an evolving process, but instead focus on how to *integrate* what is *already known* into one’s life. This form of education is similar to the banking system described by Freire (1972), where the learner is the object or recipient of knowledge versus the producer of knowledge.

Critical faith learning, on the other hand, is the continual process of critically assessing one’s faith and making new meaning of previously-held religious beliefs, assumptions, and traditions through prayer, meditation, critical reflection, and extra-rational activity. In fact, the researcher believes that this study is the first to coin this phrase and use it to explore how people of faith address post-modern issues within the context of their faith. Although there are two known instances where authors have argued the necessity of adopting a critical faith (Kuipers, 2002; Theissen, 1979), these works do not integrate any learning or process models into their critical faith propositions. Thus, it was the aim within this research to address the matter directly and to add to the literature by

focusing on the reflective learning and teaching processes involving “laypersons” within a faith institution and, specifically, by exploring how church leaders have developed critical faith learning strategies to transform their deacon board.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to discover what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male deacon board to one inclusive of women. The context for the study was with the Pastor and members of the Deacon Board of a progressive, middle-income Black Baptist congregation in a major metropolitan city in the Midwest. Findings from this study sought to: (1) increase understanding of what is critical faith learning and how specific church leaders engage in this type of learning; (2) provide learning strategies for church leaders of other congregations; and (3) expand the literature knowledge of faith development, learning, and critical reflection.

Specific research questions this study sought to address are:

- (1) What is critical faith learning, and how, if at all, did church leaders engage in this type of learning to transform the deacon board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?
- (2) Why did church leaders transform their Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?
- (3) What experiences contributed to or hindered this transformation?
- (4) How did this transformation occur?
- (5) From this experience, what critical faith learning strategies have church leaders developed that may be helpful to other religious organizations?

Research Site and Design

The research design for this study was an explorative case study. The researcher chose to conduct this case study with the Pastor and Deacons of a Black Baptist church in a major metropolitan city in the Midwest. The church was founded in 1931, and currently has an intergenerational congregation of 3,200 members. The church is currently led by a nationally-respected Pastor who has been a civil rights leader and activist since his work with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Pastor agrees that one of the most remarkable and revolutionary contributions of the Black church is:

To be found in the areas of transformation and liberation. The Church literally played a transformational role in the whole of Christendom in the 20th century, far beyond the borders of the United States of America.... I boldly state that the liberation movement could not have been what it was, or achieved what it did without the dynamic leadership of the Black church. (Starling, 1999)

Committed to this Biblical understanding of liberation, the Pastor and the Deacon Board ordained its first female Deacons in 2000, and hence transformed its all-male Board to one that is inclusive of women.

In order to examine what critical faith learning strategies the Pastor and Deacon Board have developed, the researcher completed the following steps:

- (1) Reviewed the literature on faith development theory and critical reflection;
- (2) Conducted a pilot study to ascertain how the Deacon selection process was developed and what learning was gained from it;
- (3) Reviewed historical records, archives, minutes, articles, etc., pertaining to the transformation of the Deacon Board at the church; and
- (4) Conducted a comprehensive in-person interview of key stakeholders, including the Pastor, recently-ordained female deacons, chairs of the

Board, and at least two to three deacons who were either ordained with the female deacons or helped prepare them for ordination.

The total number of persons interviewed was eleven. The participants were asked to share the critical faith learning strategies they developed to transform the Deacon Board. Additionally, they were asked a series of questions designed to identify what factors triggered a need to change traditional leadership models, and to identify what factors hindered this development. It was the aim of this study to learn what critical faith learning strategies were developed that can assist other congregations with transitioning their ecclesiastical boards.

Researcher Perspectives

The researcher had professional familiarity with the church and, as a result, was able to observe the transformation of the Deacon Board and develop mutual relationships with the Pastor and Deacon Board. Although the researcher is no longer affiliated with the institution, the Pastor still views him as a colleague and adoptive son of the church. While this relationship may appear to raise validity threats, the researcher believes it gave him the credibility and trust needed to conduct a study with unlimited access to church records, archives, and church leaders. The deacon selection process is normally closed and not discussed with persons who are not the Pastor or deacons. This opportunity, therefore, to conduct such a study was rare and primarily based upon the researcher's relationship with the Pastor and previous service to the congregation. Without such a relationship, the researcher believes it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to gain such access to conduct a thorough dissertation study of critical faith learning strategies developed by church leaders.

Assumptions

Some assumptions the researcher holds as an adult religious educator and Black Baptist minister are:

- (1) All human beings possess faith;
- (2) All adults are able to learn, grow, and develop;
- (3) Knowledge is always evolving; it is never static;
- (4) Faith development is a process, not a destination;
- (5) Human beings are innately reflective of their faith;
- (6) Critical faith learning is inevitable for those who have been oppressed and/or live in a post-modern world;
- (7) Learning, in general, involves critical self-reflection and re-assessments of deeply-held beliefs and meaning perspectives;
- (8) Church leaders are capable of developing critical faith learning strategies;
- (9) Transformation in the church is the product of critical faith learning; and
- (10) The transformation of ecclesiastical boards from being exclusive to inclusive involves a transformative, critically reflective, deliberate, and evaluative process of one's faith, beliefs, and religious traditions.

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for conducting this study was to better understand what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male deacon board to one that is inclusive of female deacons. The researcher believed that critical faith learning has the potential to be very instrumental in the advancement of faith development, knowledge construction, and religious institutional advancement and development. First, critical faith learning provides

an avenue through which adult religious educators can engage religious institutions with the aim of enhancing, not destroying. Indeed, one of the fears or critiques of engaging in critical faith learning is that it will alter the metanarrative of the Judeo-Christian faith (English & Gillen, 2000; Lyotard, 1991). While this is a possibility, the researcher argues that a shift in theological learning is needed to advance the faith. A Biblical example that immediately comes to mind is Mark 5:17 when Jesus states that he did not come to “destroy the law, but to fulfill it.” It is the “fulfilling” aspect of one’s faith that can be realized through critical faith learning. Critical faith learning aims to assist a person in deepening one’s faith through the process of “becoming.” It is this “becoming,” or as the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:14, the “pressing toward the mark,” that guides this learning process.

Second, critical faith learning provides religious leaders with a tool to promote a learning congregation. Indeed, this is one of the issues cited by English and Gillen (2000): How do religious institutions promote a learning congregation? Traditionally, religious institutions have been described as “banking” institutions where parishioners come and receive knowledge but are not encouraged to critically reflect on knowledge. However, through the concept of a learning congregation, which mirrors Marsick and Watkins’ (1999) learning organization, religious leaders are able to (1) honor the learner as subject and (2) encourage parishioners to continue their quest for faith meaning making (Vella, 2000). As Marsick and Watkins (1999) note, the learning organization is “one that learns continuously and transforms itself” (p. 10) in order to:

1. Create continuous learning opportunities at all levels of the organization;
2. Foster inquiry and dialogue;
3. Encourage collaboration and team learning;

4. Establish systems to capture and share learning;
5. Empower people toward a collective vision; and
6. Connect the organization to its environment.

Similarly, the learning congregation can adopt these principles in order to foster ongoing faith development among its parishioners, ministries, and surrounding community.

Lastly, critical faith learning has the potential to engage the post-modern world through participating in dialogues and conversations that affect not only religious communities, but all communities. Religion/faith is too important to sit on the sidelines while other disciplines engage in the post-modern debate. Just as science articulates its view, so should religion. It was the researcher's hope that by conducting this study, faith will be viewed as something that evolves versus something that is static and received.

Definition of Key Terms

The following is a list of key terms that will be used throughout the study:

Critical faith learning – is the continual process of critically assessing one's faith, and making new meaning of previously held religious beliefs, assumptions, and traditions through prayer, meditation, critical reflection, and extra-rational activity.

Critical reflection – is the process of becoming aware of why we perceive, think, feel, and act as we do, and of the reason for and consequences of such thoughts. We become critically reflective by challenging the established definition of a problem being addressed (Mezirow, 1991).

Critical self-reflection – is an assessment of the way one has posed problems and of one's own meaning perspectives (Mezirow & Associates, 1990b).

Critical theory – draws on Marxist scholarship and seeks to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst that leads to the transformation of this social order (Fay, 1987). Its aim is to redress a situation in which a group is experiencing deep but remedial suffering. It seeks to unravel or help learners *unlearn* what they have previously acquired or been taught, and replace them with another set of knowledge in which people can relate and act in fuller, more satisfying ways.

Emancipatory education – is an organized effort to precipitate or to facilitate transformative learning in others (Mezirow & Associates, 1990b).

Faith – is people's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others, and world (as they construct them) ... as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them) ... and of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trusts and loyalties, in light of the character of being, value, and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images—conscious and unconscious—of them) (Fowler, 1981).

Faith development theory – is a lifelong developmental process that involves the exploration of experience and the process of learning that at times extends beyond knowing, valuing, and reasoning (Fowler, 1981; Goldman, 1965; Loder, 1981).

Faith learning or faith-based learning – is the process of integrating a set of faith beliefs or understandings that guide or inform one on how to live a God-fearing life.

Incongruity – is when something is not in agreement, inconsistent, or not in harmony with one's faith beliefs and principles.

Learning – is the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action (Mezirow, 1996).

Meaning perspective – is the structure of assumptions that constitutes a frame of reference for interpreting the meaning of an experience (Mezirow, 1990b).

Meaning scheme – is a point of view, or specific set of beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and value judgments that accompany and shape an interpretation (Mezirow, 1996). Each meaning perspective contains a number of meaning schemes. Meaning perspectives become articulated in a meaning scheme (Mezirow, 1995).

Perspective transformation – is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective, and making a decision or otherwise acting upon (revising a point of view, posing a problem, reframing a structure of meaning, or changing behavior) these new understandings (Mezirow, 1995).

Reflection – is an examination of the justification for one's beliefs, primarily to guide action and to reassess the efficacy of the strategies and procedures used in problem solving (Mezirow, 1990b).

Transformative learning – is the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights (Mezirow, 1990).

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to explore critical faith learning as a theoretical concept in order to clarify the terminology and to guide the design of this study. To achieve this objective, the literature review initially was divided into two sections: faith development theory and critical theory. However, after conducting the research and later trying to make sense of the data, the researcher concluded that additional literature was needed in order to better understand the phenomena of the study. As a result, charismatic and transformational leadership was added to the body of literature. This literature was added because the Pastor in this study was crucial to initiating and implementing the transformation of the Deacon Board. Without the Pastor's initiating, visioning, leading, guiding, loving, supporting, uplifting, managing, and directing, it would have been virtually impossible for the transformation to occur. Thus, this review includes four areas of literature: (1) faith development theory; (2) critical theory; (3) womanist thought and theology; and (4) charismatic and transformational leadership.

In section one, the researcher examines James Fowler's faith development theory. Specifically, the researcher discusses key concepts that are important for this study as well as any limitations the theory may pose. Similarly, in section

two, the researcher reviews critical theory, deliberately discussing its importance and limitations for developing critical faith learning. Central to this discussion is critical theory's contribution to adult learning in the areas of critical reflection and learning. In section three, the researcher reviews womanist thought and theology and explores its specific critique of sexism within the Black church. Lastly, in section four, the researcher provides a summary of Weber's three types of authority, reviews the leadership concepts of charismatic and transformational leadership, and discusses its importance and limitations for the study. In sum, the aim of this literature review is: (1) to better understand faith development theory and its contribution to adult learning; (2) to explore how critical theory and womanist thought and theology can enhance critical faith learning as an adult learning concept; (3) to investigate the intersection of charismatic and transformational leadership to organizational transformation; and (4) to ascertain how faith development theory, critical theory, womanist thought and theology, and charismatic and transformational leadership can assist the researcher in developing a theoretical concept for the study.

The criteria used to determine what literature to include in this study were based upon whether the work: (1) had a significant impact on faith development and learning theories; (2) could assist the author in developing a conceptual framework for critical faith learning; and (3) enhanced the literature on adult faith development and learning. Additionally, books, articles, and dissertations were reviewed within the following databases and sources: ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), UMI journals and articles, Pro-Quest, EDUCAT, dissertation abstracts, and general Internet searches.

Faith Development Theory

This section of the literature review asked three questions: (1) What is faith development theory? (2) Why is it important for critical faith learning? and (3) What are the limitations of using this theory to develop a conceptual framework for this study? In order to answer these questions, the researcher will first provide James Fowler's most recent definition of faith and then discuss the key aspects of Fowler's faith development theory that correspond to the aforementioned questions.

Understanding Faith and Faith Development Theory

According to Fowler (1996), faith is characterized as:

an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of beliefs, values, and meanings, that (1) gives coherence and direction to persons' lives, (2) links them in shared trusts and loyalties with others, (3) grounds their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference, and (4) enables them to face and deal with the limit conditions of human life, relying upon that which has the equality of ultimacy in their lives. (p. 56)

Drawing upon the works of Piaget (1954), Erikson (1963), and Kohlberg (1964, 1973, 1981), as well as Niebuhr (1941, 1962), Tillich (1957, 1967), and Smith (1963), Fowler (1981) grounds his theory in the structural-developmental school and develops a seven-stage faith development theory (see Table 1). For Fowler, humans are "endowed at birth with nascent capacities of faith" (p. xiii). As persons mature, their faith changes and develops, becoming less reliant upon the faith they received from their parents/caregivers and more influenced by their own life experiences in the world. The "pressures for change come both from within and from without—from internal processes of trying to 'keep [their] balance,' and from external influences that impact and threaten the balance [they] try to maintain" (Fowler, 1996, p. 72). Faith, in this sense, is constantly

Table 1: Fowler's Faith Development Stages

Stage	Characteristics	Transition to next stage
Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith (The Incorporative Self)	The seeds of trust, courage, hope, and love are planted during the prenatal period. They are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies, and deprivations in an infant's environment.	Convergence of thought and language, opening up the use of symbols in speech and ritual play.
Stage 1: Intuitive/Projective Faith (The Impulsive Self)	The world is given meaning through parents and other primary adults by intuitively projecting meaning through installation of those adults.	Emergence of concrete operational thinking. Resolution or submersion of Oedipal issues. Child's growing concern to know how things are and clarify what is real and what only seems to be.
Stage 2: Mythic/Literal Faith (The Imperial Self)	Meaning here is derived from those groups with which a person is affiliated; faith appropriates from the community those stories (myths) which make sense of the environment, taking them literally.	Implicit contradictions in stories that lead to reflection on meanings. Formal operational thought makes this possible. Literalism breaks down. Emergence of mutual interpersonal perspective taking necessitates more personal relationship with unifying power of ultimate environment.
Stage 3: Synthetic/Conventional Faith (The Interpersonal Self)	This is conforming faith, taking direction from popular convention, but beyond Stage 2 involving personal choices among conventions. It balances various conventional demands into a workable synthesis of meaning.	Serious clashes between valued authority sources. Marked changes by official leaders of practices previously deemed sacred. Encounters with experiences or perspectives that lead to critical reflection on how one's beliefs and values have formed and changed, and how "relative" they are to one's particular group or background. "Leaving home" may precipitate this examination.
Stage 4: Individuative/Reflective Faith (The Individuative Self)	This pattern of faith is personally chosen and consciously differentiated from the expectation of others; autonomous.	Anarchic and disturbing inner voices may intrude. Elements from childish past, deeper self, or a gnawing sense of sterility and flatness of meaning may signal readiness for change. Stories, symbols, and myths may break in on the neatness of previous faith. Disillusionment with one's compromises and recognition that life is more complex than the stage's logic of clear distinctions and abstract concepts can comprehend, moves one toward a more dialectical and multi-valued approach to life truth.

Table 1 (continued)

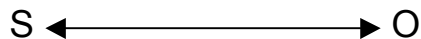
Stage	Characteristics	Transition to next stage
Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith (The Inter-Individual Self)	This faith embraces the paradoxes and discontinuities into consolidative patterns; one's own system is seen interdependent with the larger human family.	This stage is divided between an untransformed world and transforming vision and loyalties. This division may yield to the call of radical actualization in the next stages.
Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (The God-Grounded Self)	This is the faith of the saint in which ultimacy, rather than self, is the point of reference.	

Note. Information from *An Introduction to Psychology of Religion*, by R. W. Crapps, 1986, Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, pp. 186-187. Also contains information from *Stages of Faith*, by J. W. Fowler, 1981, New York: Harper & Row, and *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, by J. W. Fowler, 1987, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

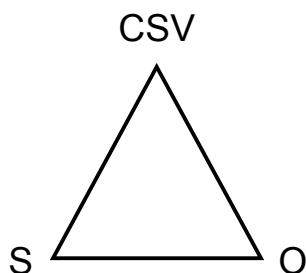
evolving, changing, and constructing new meaning and understandings of one's environment and world.

Importance of FDT for Critical Faith Learning

There are three reasons that Fowler's theory is important for critical faith learning. First, Fowler's theory is the most comprehensive of all faith development theories. While Kohlberg's (1964) research initially focused on how children develop moral reasoning and later (1973) included adults in his moral reasoning study, Fowler's (1986) theory was the first to postulate that faith development occurs across the human "life-span" (p. 37) and the first to provide a stage model to understand adult faith development. Influenced by Buber (1955), Mead (1934, 1964), Erikson (1963), Royce (1912), and Niebuhr (1960, 1962), Fowler (1986) argues that viable and lasting human communities have either a tacit or an explicit faith structure which is triangular in form (p. 16). In this sense, a self (S) is bound to others (O) by shared trust and loyalty (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Self and Other

This relationship between the *S* and *O* is ultimately governed by centers of supraordinate value (CSV), or what Fowler calls one's loyalties or faith (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Self, Other, and Supraordinate Value

Indeed, as the self, others, and centers of supraordinate value change, so does one's faith. It is this researcher's belief that social, religious, and/or faith dilemmas or events can greatly influence and/or alter one's faith/loyalties. It is the aim of this research to study how such influences lead to critical faith learning.

Additionally, as one notes in Table 1, Fowler's theory includes seven stages of faith development. Adult faith development commences in stage three through six: *synthetic-conventional*, *individuated-reflective*, *conjunctive*, and *universalizing faith*. It is during this period that Fowler (1986) believes some of "the most interesting and powerful faith stage transitions" occur (p. 37). It involves an ongoing process, of forming and reforming one's ways of "being in and seeing the world." Moreover, it is during the individuated-reflective stage that one has the capacity for "critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)," or what this study calls *critical faith learning*.

A second key aspect of Fowler's theory is that faith is a *verb*. Influenced by Fromm's (1949) humankind as a restless wanderer, Ernest Becker's (1968) *homo poeta*—man is the meaning maker, Kohlberg's (1964, 1973) moral reasoning for children and adults, and Victor Frankl's (1984) man's search for meaning, Fowler argues that what distinguishes human beings from other animals is their need to inquire what life is about. This distinct characteristic of meaning making is critical for Fowler's FDT and was initially articulated by Fromm (1949):

[Humankind] remains dissatisfied, anxious and restless. There is only one solution to his problem: to face the truth, to acknowledge his fundamental aloneness and solitude in a universe indifferent to his fate, to recognize that there is no power transcending him for himself and the fact that only using his powers can he give meaning to life. But meaning does not imply certainty; indeed, the quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers. If he faces the truth without panic he will recognize that there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by unfolding his powers, by living productively; and that one by constant vigilance, activity, and effort can keep us from failing in the one task that matters—the full development of our powers within the limitations set by the laws of our existence. Man will never cease to be perplexed, to wonder, and to raise new questions. (pp. 44-45)

For Fowler, humans are wanderers and cannot avoid making meaning out of their encounters and relationships with others and their environment. Faith “is a person's way of seeing him or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose” (Fowler, 1981, p. 4). It has to do with “the making, maintenance, and transformation of human meaning” (Fowler, 1986, p. 15).

Two components of the “faithing” process are: *constructive knowing* and *constitutive knowing*. Indebted to Kegan (1977), Fowler states that *constructive knowing* means constructing the knowledge resulting from the interaction of self

and reality, while *constitutive knowing* means not only constructing the knowledge, but also reconstructing the understanding of the self. As Fernhout (1986) notes, the “interaction of knower and environment may lead not only to an ordering of reality, but also to a reordering of a person’s understanding of his/herself in relation to the rest of reality” (p. 76). Indeed, Fowler’s emphasis that faith is a “meaning making” activity is important for critical faith learning because it argues that faith is a *verb, knowing activity* capable of “composing, construing, and constructing” meaning “wherein both self and other are ‘known’.”

Lastly, Fowler’s theory is important for critical faith learning because it offers a “dynamic language for an understanding of faith and religion” in a pluralistic world (Parks, 1991, p. 103). Given that the advent of postmodernism has brought about the demise of the “grand narrative” or “metanarrative” of generally accepted religious and cultural beliefs (Lyotard, 1991), Fowler’s (1986) theory argues that during stages three through six—*synthetic-conventional, individuative-reflective, conjunctive, and universalizing faith*—one has the capacity for “critical reflection on identify (self) and outlook (ideology)” (p. 37), or what this study calls *critical faith learning*. During these stages, one engages in an ongoing process of forming and reforming one’s ways of “being in and seeing the world.” Unlike the Piagetian paradigm, which is concerned with the “pathology” of an individual, Fowler’s theory focuses on “the potential of the human life” and the individual’s “direction of growth” (Parks, 1991, pp. 104-105). In sum, Fowler’s theory is important for critical faith learning because it emphasizes (1) that individuals are meaning makers, and (2) that faith is a process of meaning making. Lyon and Browning (1986) state that this claim has a two-fold purpose: one, it suggests that faith “is less something one *has* than something one *does*”; and two, it suggests that the core of Fowler’s faith “is not

so much with variations in content (or belief) but with the various structures of this dimension of knowing” (p. 206).

Limitations of Fowler’s Theory for Critical Faith Learning

There are a number of limitations in using Fowler’s theory to build a conceptual framework for critical faith learning. First, the broad definition of faith may present a challenge for engaging in critical faith learning. As Cox (1981) notes: “There is something in this definition of faith to offend everyone” (p. 92). Dykstra (1986) states that “Fowler cannot define faith any differently and still have a structural developmental theory of growth or change in faith” (p. 53), while Fernhout (1986) questions whether faith development is a distinct and unified developmental theory or simply a selective “composite” of several developmental theories applied to faith (p. 70). In an attempt to be inclusive and to focus his 1981 study on “the psychology of human development and the quest for meaning,” Fowler’s definition of faith may be too broad to address critical faith issues within a faith community and context. Ford-Grabowsky (1992) states that Fowler may have “impoverished the concept of faith by focusing on what he calls the ‘human side’ of faith without reference to the revealed ‘divine side’” (p. 109). For those who are particularly devoted to the Christian, Jewish, or Islamic faith traditions, Fowler’s definition puts their faith “at risk” (Parks, 1992. p. 98). This may present a challenge for critical faith learning, especially in communities that are not open or receptive to critical or postmodern approaches of faith learning and development (English & Gillen, 2000).

Second, the generalizability of Fowler’s study may be questionable for particular ethnic and cultural groups (Tisdell, 2001). As noted in the first section, African-American Christianity is rooted in addressing critical faith issues and learning strategies. This development resulted from an incongruity between

African-Americans' understanding of God and their oppressor's understanding of God during colonization and slavery in America. In *Invisible Man*, Ellison (1947) states: "We create the race by creating ourselves and then to our great astonishment we will have created something far more important; we will have created a culture" (p. 354). It is this culture of critical faith that is uniquely reflected in oppressed and disadvantaged ethnic/cultural communities. Similarly, it is this critical faith tradition that ignited feminist and Womanist critiques of the church. Nevertheless, Fowler's study does not reflect this finding because there is a notable imbalance toward a White and Christian data sampling (Fowler, 1981, p. 317). Furushima (1992) states that "if the universality of faith development theory is to be claimed, then cross-cultural data would need to be gathered and analyzed within the existing stage and aspect schemes" (p. 215). Fowler's findings may be generalizable for *one* community and faith tradition, but not for *all* communities and religious faiths.

Third, Fowler's theory may be limiting in the sense that it is "rooted in Western individualism" (Johnson, 1996, p. 87). Johnson argues that secular developmental theories on "post-formal thought" (i.e., Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, and Perry) are inappropriate for understanding faith/religious development because they are based on relativistic, existentialist philosophy. He states that these theories are socially-constructed models that articulate "secular" humanistic assumptions versus religious faith beliefs. As a result, those who adhere strongly to their faith traditions are relegated to FDT's level three or below, while those who embrace a more liberal and inclusive understanding of faith advance in the stage process (p. 86). In short, Johnson argues that Fowler's theory "reinforces the strong individualism that underlies ... modern Western culture.... It is only by leaving behind the faith of their fathers and mothers ... that people can move into more advanced levels of faith" (p. 88).

Similarly, Broughton (1986) asserts that Fowler's theory results in a conformist individualism, rather than faith itself. He states that Fowler's theory is nothing more than an expression of modern, bureaucratic culture ideology. It does not address the doctrine of sin and evil, but focuses on the positive functions of faith (Schneider, 1986). Faith, thus, can be a benevolent Divine Being or a malignant political structure (Broughton, 1986). Fourth, Fowler's theory may be limiting for critical faith learning because it primarily views faith as a verb (i.e., faith activity), but not as *political* activity. Dykstra (1986) states that the heart of faith is not "the native [structural] capacities one has, but what one does with them" (p. 60). It is this aspect of faith that is important for the researcher, particularly in developing a conceptual framework for critical faith learning. For faith is not static, but rather a dynamic and intentional process. This intentionality leads to the "total orientation of the self" (p. 61) and the total development of one's faith. Indeed, one of the shortcomings of Fowler's theory is its attempt to develop an "ultimate environment" or "Kingdom of God" (Fowler, 1974) without raising the questions: Whose "Kingdom of God"? Whose "ultimate environment"? Whose social and cultural environment? It is this researcher's strong belief that these critical questions must be raised when engaging in critical faith learning.

While the researcher believes that Fowler's faith development theory has made an invaluable contribution to the understanding of faith and faith meaning, specifically in building upon Tillich's (1967) "ultimate concern," the researcher also believes that Fowler's theory does not extend far enough to incorporate faith traditions and communities that confront hegemonic structures and traditions. Faith is not neutral, but rather a political activity that seeks to advance the agenda and religious beliefs of a particular person or faith community. In the next section of this literature review, the researcher will further examine this aspect of

critical faith learning and explore how critical theory can assist in addressing this crucial tenet of the conceptual framework.

Lastly, Fowler's theory may be limiting because it does not consider the barriers that inhibit growth. Indeed, a primary assumption of Fowler's theory is that human beings are engaged in a "quest for meaning." This assumption is crucial to Fowler's argument that faith is a verb, which results in a person's "faithing" or creating new meaning. This assumption, Dykstra (1986) argues, is faulty because faith "does not necessarily mean there will be growth, change, or progression" (p. 60). Rather than progressing through a series of "irreversible stages," Dykstra argues that growth may be regressive and require "realms of knowledge which need to be appropriated in faith, and some realms may have to be experienced and appropriated before others" (p. 60).

Summary

Fowler's faith development theory is a key theory to develop a conceptual framework for critical faith learning. Fowler's theory underscores that faith develops in stages and that faith is socially constructed. This notion that faith is constructed is important for critical faith learning because the essence of the theory rests upon critiquing the social factors that shape one's faith. Faith, in this sense, is political. While many purport that faith is neutral, Fowler argues that faith seeks to advance an agenda. The question for critical faith learning, hence, is: Whose agenda? Who benefits from it? In the next section, the researcher will explore these questions further as the critical aspect of the theory is developed.

Critical Theory

Within the past 15 years, there has been a shift in adult learning from the psychological perspective to the critical theory/social science perspectives (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). According to critical theorists, what one knows or learns is the result of one's interaction in the "lifeworld" (Habermas, 1971). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) state that the lifeworld represents individuals' "everyday personal interactions in home, family, and community" (p. 348). The lifeworld is impacted by the "system," which is the "structures of power (institutions and organizations such as government) or the means to power (such as money in a capitalist economy, or knowledge in the information age)" (p. 348). Hence, in order to address these structures, critical theorists argue that one must unravel the systems by challenging ideology and contesting hegemonic structures, and by asking: *whose interests are being served, who really has access, who holds the power to make changes, and what are the intended outcomes?*

Indeed, the Black Baptist church is not exempt from such questions. Given that faith is socially constructed and learned (Fowler, 1981), it is imperative to understand how church leaders' faith experiences and ecclesiastical context shape, mold, and construct their "faith worlds" and "cultures." Moreover, it is important to understand how church leaders transform their "faith worlds" and "cultures" to make them more inclusive in an ever-changing pluralistic society. To seek understanding, this section will first provide a brief overview of critical theory, its importance, and its limitations. Additionally, this review seeks to better understand the concept of "critical faith learning" through the process of critical reflection. It is the researcher's intent to use this information to develop a conceptual framework to guide this study.

Understanding Critical Theory

Horkheimer (1982) states that the *critical* aspect of critical theory is its emphasis on human emancipation. He argues that critical theory seeks “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (p. 244). Fay (1987) maintains that critical theory seeks:

to redress a situation in which a group is experiencing deep but remedial suffering as a result of the way their lives are arranged. Its aim is to overturn these arrangements and to put into practice another set in which people can relate and act in fuller, more satisfying ways. (p. 29)

In *The Power of Critical Theory*, Brookfield (2005) states that critical theory helps people understand how they “learn to perceive and challenge” their life situations (p. 2). Critical theory, in this sense, offers an explanation of why people “are frustrated and unsatisfied, why they are doomed to continue in this condition, ... and why it is that they have these conceptions” (Fay, 1987, p. 28). As a result, people become “enlightened” of their “thwarted” perceptions, motivated and empowered to liberate themselves, and determined to seek emancipation as their goal (p. 29).

Moreover, Argyris (1977) states that people normally engage in the *critical* aspect of critical theory when: (1) a crisis is precipitated by some event in the environment; (2) a revolution occurs from within (a new management); or (3) management intentionally shakes up an organization to create a crisis (p. 117). Other theorists conclude that it arises when there is a disjuncture (Jarvis, 1987), discontent (Fay, 1987), trigger event (Brookfield, 1987), or disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). For the purposes of this study, the researcher maintains that critical faith learning commences when one’s faith beliefs are *incongruent* with those of the church or one’s faith community. *Incongruity* is when something is not in agreement, inconsistent, or not in harmony with one’s beliefs and principles. Persons may either outgrow their

initial faith beliefs and traditions or be exposed to new beliefs from their life experience. In sum, the researcher argues that critical theory is a useful theory that can be employed to better understand “critical faith learning.” The aim of critical theory is to unravel or help learners *unlearn* what they have previously acquired or been taught. This is important for critical faith learning because it too seeks to help people of faith unravel and unlearn faith traditions that are hegemonic or not egalitarian. Gramsci (1971) argues that the issue is not whether people are *critical*, but rather if they have been encouraged to add a *critical dimension* to their “already existing” forms of cognitive activity (p. 331). Brookfield (2005) states that critical thinking from this perspective “is not an entirely new, higher-order cognitive activity, but a politicizing of what is already a naturally occurring process” (p. 108). In the next section, the researcher will discuss the importance of critical theory and later its limitations for this study.

Importance of Critical Theory for Critical Faith Learning

First, critical theory is important for critical faith learning because it seeks to free and religiously transform, rather than oppress and indoctrinate. As Gramsci (1988) notes, every society has some form of hegemony. Brookfield (2005) states that hegemony “is the process by which we learn to embrace enthusiastically a system of beliefs and practices that end up harming us and working to support the interests of others who have power over us” (p. 93). Moreover, Brookfield argues that hegemony “works by consent”: “People are not forced against their will to assimilate dominant ideology. They learn [to] do this, quite willingly, and in the process they believe that this ideology represents their best interests” (p. 94). It commences with one’s ideology, which becomes a hegemonic structure when the dominant ideas (ideology) “are learned and lived in everyday decisions and judgments and when these ideas ... pervade the

whole existence” (p. 94). As a result, Fay (1987) argues that “critical theory wants to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order” (p. 27). Brookfield (2005) states that critical theory “aims to help bring about a society of freedom and justice” (p. 8). The researcher maintains that contesting hegemony is important to understand one’s “faith world,” and how it works to perpetuate racism, sexism, classism, patriarchy, etc. in the church and in the name of God. As Horkheimer (1995) says, critical theory “is not just the theory of emancipation; it is the practice of it as well” (p. 233).

Second, critical theory is important because it emphasizes critical reflection. Indeed, one of the great contributions of Freire’s (1970b) praxis and conscientization, Habermas’ (1971) tripartite of learning, Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning, Argyris and Schon’s (1978, 1996) double-loop learning, and Mezirow’s (1991, 2000) transformational learning is their emphasis that effective learning “does not follow from a positive experience but from effective reflection” (Criticos, 1993, p. 162). In this vein, critical theory provides a means to create new knowledge and learning of one’s faith through the process of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1987, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2005; Merriam & Caffarella 1999; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Mezirow (2000) argues that all adults have frames of reference (i.e., meaning perspective), which are only transformed as adults become “critically reflective of their assumptions and aware of their context” (p. 19). Without critical reflection, Mezirow maintains that it is impossible to: (1) elaborate existing frames of reference; (2) learn new frames of reference; (3) transform points of view; or (4) transform habits of mind. Similarly, the researcher argues that without critical reflection, it is impossible to expand one’s faith perspective and beliefs. Critical reflection is needed in order to challenge

and contest the hegemonic structures that shape and mold one's faith and faith world.

Third, critical theory is important because it assists the researcher in learning more about the phases of critical learning. In Table 2, the researcher has reviewed the works of four theorists who posit different ways in which learners learn critically. For the purposes of this study, the researcher has grouped the critical learning theories into four phases of critical learning. In Phase One, there is generally a crisis that triggers the need to engage in critical learning. In Phase Two, learners begin to self-examine and unmask power through critical reflection. During Phase Three, learners contest hegemonic structures and seek to enlighten, explore, and consciously educate themselves toward new action, roles, and relationships. Lastly, in Phase Four, learners pursue liberation by planning a course of action and transforming their society and community.

As noted in Table 2, Marx's (Marx & Engels, 1978) critique of capitalism was the primary work that articulated the critical learning process. Later Brookfield (2005) adopted Marx's (Marx & Engels, 1978), Fay's (1987), and Mezirow's (1991) theories and developed one that includes seven learning tasks. The findings from this study aided the researcher in analyzing how church leaders engaged in critical faith learning, developed a revolutionary faith consciousness, and learned to act on this new faith to make their Deacon Board more egalitarian.

Table 2: Steps in Critical Learning

	Marx (1978)	Fay (1987)	Mezirow (1991)	Brookfield (2005)
	Critical Theory of the Capitalist Society	Complex of Critical Theories	Transformational Learning	Learning Tasks
Phase 1	1. False consciousness	1. Crisis	1. A disorientating dilemma	1. Perceiving and challenging dominate ideology
Phase 2	2. Crisis	2. False consciousness	2. Self-examination; 3. A critical assessment of assumptions; 4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;	2. Unmasking power
Phase 3	3. Education (i.e., class consciousness)	3. Enlightenment	5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;	3. Contesting hegemony
Phase 4	4. Transformative Action	4. Emancipation	6. Planning a course of action; 7. Acquiring knowledge and skills; 8. Trying of new roles; 9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and 10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.	4. Overcoming alienation 5. Pursuing liberation 6. Reclaiming reason 7. Practicing democracy

Source: Marx (1978), *Learning in Adulthood*; Fay (1987), *Critical Social Science*; Mezirow (1991), *Learning as Transformation*; Brookfield (2005), *The Power of Critical Theory*.

Limitations of Critical Theory for Critical Faith Learning

There are three limitations of using critical theory to understand and develop a conceptual framework for critical faith learning. First, critical theory is limiting because it is extremely rational. As noted by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), many women are alienated and “voiceless”

because critical theory often seeks “truth” by objective methods that are not appropriate for everyone (p. 228). Boyd (1989, 1991) and Boyd and Myers (1988) argue that transformation, while often a rational, cognitive process, also incorporates an emotional and spiritual dimension of learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Michelson (1996) concurs with this analysis and faults critical theory as a cognitive process that “valorizes emotional detachment, physical distance, and rationality” (p. 438). She argues that what is missing is the affective dimension and criticizes the critical reflection process as being male-biased. The researcher concurs with Belenky et al. and Michelson that critical theory uses methods that are beneficial for men, and argues that critical faith learning must embrace alternative approaches in order to avoid favoring one gender over another. Later, Dirkx (1997), a proponent of extra-rational theory, argues that:

Unlike the ego, which prefers logic, rationale, predictability and order within the learning environment, the soul thrives on open spaces within the experience. Soul often meanders and wanders its way through our individual and collective lives, producing uncertain, ambiguous, and even messy situations. Rigid adherence to an agenda or curriculum mitigates against expression of soul. (p. 85)

The researcher agrees with Dirkx because critical faith learning involves the integration of various aspects of one’s self including prayer, meditation, dreams, or theophany (i.e., a spiritual encounter with God) to bring about emancipation and transformation. The researcher maintains that the transformation of one’s faith belief is not a step-by-step, rational process, but a spiritual, ambiguous process, which often requires extra-rational methods.

Additionally, critical theory may be limiting for critical faith learning because it minimizes the role of the Holy Spirit. As Cone (1999) notes:

I do not believe that it is possible to understand what the gospel is all about in terms of its demands on people in our world unless one encounters the Spirit, i.e., God’s presence with the people. The Spirit refers to God’s gift of the power of insight so that one can hear and

do the truth as revealed in the biblical witness. Without an openness to the power and guidance of the divine Spirit and her presence in the world, we will not understand what the gospel is. (p. 113)

Moreover, Cone states that:

One should not belittle the value of disciplined intellectual effort in the life of the church, but the gospel is more than intellectual study. Sometimes intellectual formulations give us a false confidence about understanding of the truth. This has often been the case with the literary and historical criticism of the Bible. The truth of the Bible is simply not accessible apart from the Spirit. To claim that the Spirit is needed to understand what the gospel is, is to say that our resources alone are not enough to know who Jesus is. To speak of Jesus and his gospel is to speak of his Spirit who opens up dimensions of reality that are not reducible to our intellectual capacity. The Spirit is the power to hear and do the truth as lived by the people. Without an openness to walk and talk with Jesus and to be led by a Spirit not of our own creation, there is now way to hear the gospel and to live out its meaning in our ministry. (pp. 113-114)

This is important because Harris (1989) argues that faith learning involves “a partnership with God” (p. 16). Payette (2003) maintains that the role of the Holy Spirit is to “guide.” She states: “When adults engage the critical reflection process, the Spirit is present to guide one not only into truth, but also gain insight into false assumptions and unbiblical beliefs” (p. 7). Moreover, she maintains that adult learners “are not biblically transformed by just understanding the logic and reason of the Christian faith, but by personally encountering the living Truth” (p. 9). Gormon (2001) states that God/Holy Spirit “calls” people of faith into “consciousness,” which aids in their perspective transformation (p. 47). Faith in this sense involves human beings wrestling with God, and God wrestling with us. It is often through these divine encounters that persons of faith are able to make sense out of their life experiences (Vogel, 1991).

Second, critical theory is limiting for critical faith learning because it seeks to “undo” that which is the foundation of the theory: *one’s faith*. To engage in critical faith is to engage in *critiquing* one’s faith, experiences, and religious

traditions that have guided one's life. In this sense, faith loses its sacred place or standing and becomes mere (religious) ideology. By engaging in such activity, it would mean that one would engage in critiquing his/her religious traditions, which could lead one to critically assess one's faith and the persons or institutions that initially transmitted this faith. As postmodernists emphasize, once the Pandora's Box is open, everything is "contested" and "up for grabs" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 356). In short, to use critical theory to develop a conceptual framework for critical faith learning means that one may potentially continue to critique one's faith, beliefs, and even the concept of "God." This could lead to new faith beliefs or no faith at all. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that in order to truly understand one's faith, one has to embrace the *critical* aspect of critical faith learning. It is only through the process of critical reflection that one's faith becomes one's own.

Lastly, critical theory is limiting for critical faith learning because it cannot guarantee an egalitarian community. As Pietrykowski (1996) notes, the emancipatory goal of critical theory is impossible because critical theory itself represents a "logic" that "does not tolerate difference" (p. 90). Or to put it another way, critical theory inevitably reproduces the same hegemonic structure, albeit a new form, that it seeks to replace. Similarly, critical faith learning also reproduces faith hegemonic structures that must be critiqued and critically assessed.

Summary

Brookfield (2005) states that a theory is useful "to the extent that it provides us with understandings that illuminate what we observe and experience" (p. 5). The aim of this chapter was to define critical theory and to explain why it is important for critical faith learning. As the researcher noted in this section, those who engage in critical faith must critically reflect upon and challenge the

dominant faith beliefs and hegemonic structures that formed their faith world. While the researcher acknowledges that this study is not the first to explore critical reflection upon one's faith (English & Gillen, 2000; Foster, 1994; Groome, 1980), the researcher has opted not to develop further these frameworks because they: (1) do not necessarily address adult critical faith *learning*, but rather adult faith *curriculum* development; and (2) do not *critique* or *question* hegemonic structures or traditions, but rather merely *reflect* on them without being *critically reflective*.

The researcher concurs with Brookfield (1995) that *reflection* is not necessarily *critical* reflection. To engage in critical reflection requires one to move beyond the "acquisition" of new knowledge and understanding, into "questioning" of existing assumptions, values, and perspectives (Cranton, 1996, p. 76). Anything short of challenging one's faith beliefs will resemble the traditional "banking" models of religious education in which learners do not question but simply receive knowledge from their teachers (Boys, 1989; Foster, 1994; Groome, 1981; Harris, 1989; Seymour & Miller, 1982; Westerhoff, 1976). Critical faith learning, on the other hand, does not seek to "bank," "educate," and "fashion" a people religiously (Harris, 1989), but rather encourages learners to critically reflect upon and question faith traditions that are hegemonic and incongruent with one's faith beliefs and understandings. Given this understanding, the researcher has decided to use critical theory to develop the critical learning component of the conceptual framework. The researcher believes that this tradition is best to develop a theoretical framework that creates and critiques, believes and questions, practices and critically assesses one's faith and beliefs.

Womanist Thought and Theology

If I didn't define myself for myself,
I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for
me and eaten alive. (Audre Lorde)

Long before the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, which officially ended slavery in America, African-Americans found solace and strength within the "invisible institution" (i.e., the Black church) and the "liberation" narratives in the Bible (Raboteau, 1980; Williams, 2004). The former allowed African-Americans to build and have their own institutions, while the latter served as a source of inspiration and hope as they read the liberation stories of the Hebrew children from their oppressors in Egypt. Indeed, Exodus and other Biblical texts, like the New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ, inspired oppressed men and women to pursue freedom and the abundant life.

However, there was a flaw in African-Americans' pursuit of liberation and freedom, particularly as it related to the establishment of the Black church. According to Pinn (2002), "one of the most widely debated concerns during the entire history of the Black church, an issue cutting across all denominations, is the role of women within Black church life and activities" (p. 116). Williams (2004) states that:

When the issue of sexism surfaced in the Black church, particularly in the late nineteenth century on the heels of the emerging women's suffrage movement, the Black churches did not see gender equality as a concern—or at least as a concern equal to that of race and class oppression. (p. 1)

Indeed, this created a major dilemma in the Black church, particularly as it relates to full equality and freedom for both men and women. Williams' assessment is troubling because it unveils the dilemma that has plagued the Black church since its inception: *What do we do with the women?*

Within the corpus of this section, the researcher will provide an understanding of womanist thought and theology and its critique of sexism in the Black church. Additionally, this section will discuss the importance of womanist thought and theology for this study. Afterwards, the limitations will be discussed followed by a chapter summary.

Understanding Womanist Thought

In 1979, Alice Walker first used the term *womanist* in her short story “Coming Apart” to begin a new debate on “the relationship between women, social change, the struggle against oppression, and the quest for full humanity” (Phillips, 2006, p. xx). Walker employed the term to describe the experiences and perspectives of “women of color” and to expand the dialogue of feminist theory. Although feminist theory had been well developed by the late 1970s (Banks, 1981; Bryson, 1999; Delman, 1986; hooks, 1984), Walker and other women of color felt there was still a disconnect between feminist theory and the experiences of Black women. According to bell hooks (1981), “Black women have felt forced to choose between a black movement that primarily serves the interests of black male patriarchs, and a white women’s movement which primarily serves the interests of racist white women” (p. 9). Certainly, it was this tension that led Walker and other Black women to ask, as Sojourner Truth did in 1851 at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio: “Ain’t I a *woman*?” While many Black women embraced the central tenet of feminism—to end the subordination of women (Jaggar, 1994)—some felt that feminist thought was not addressing the societal history, perceptions, and behaviors impacting those whose experience reflected the unique intersection of race, gender, and class. In sum, feminist theory could not address the perceptions of women of color—and Black women, in particular—that because of the color of their skin, they “disappeared

as women,” and because of their sex, they were “largely invisible as Black people” (Bryson, 1999, p. 33).

Hence, in her 1981 essay and 1983 book, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Walker further defined “womanist” terminology and provided a definition that was grounded in the Black experience. According to Walker (1983), womanist thought referred to a female who wanted “to know more and in greater depth than is good for one ... outrageous, audacious, courageous, and *willful* behavior” (p. xi). Moreover, womanist thought describes a woman who is also “responsible, in charge, *serious*.” She is “committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health” (p. xi).

In addition to Walker’s definition, other womanist scholars further defined the term and located it within the unique experiences of Black women. Williams (1993) argues that womanist thought “is a prophetic voice concerned about the well-being of the entire African American community, male and female, adults and children” (p. 67). Mitchem (2002) maintains that womanist thought begins with an “analysis of roles assigned to African American women by their families and the dominant culture, the persistent stereotypes about black women, the combination of race with gender, and recognition of diversity among women” (p. 23). Philips (2006) says that womanism is:

a social change perspective rooted in Black women’s and other women of color’s everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of enduring all forms of oppression for all people, restoring the balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension. (p. xx)

Terrell (1998) states that one “does not get to be a womanist by virtue of her blackness and femininity,” but by “entering the womanist enterprise” and “exploring further the contradictions that shape their collective and personal lives

in the spirit of critical inquiry and in the spirit of hope” (p. 188). Cannon (1996) emphasizes that the “chief function of womanism is not merely to replace one set of elitist, hegemonic texts,” but rather “to use Walker’s four-part definition as a critical, methodological framework for challenging inherited traditions for their collusion with androcentric patriarchy as well as a catalyst in overcoming oppressive situations through revolutionary acts of rebellion” (p. 23). Based upon the plethora of definitions of womanist thought, it is clear that “womanism” is firmly rooted in critiquing and challenging “all forms” of oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physically disability, etc.

The definitions and categorization of womanist theories seek to address wide-ranging forms of injustice and oppression experienced by humanity (and nature) and to recognize the enduring humanity of all. Undeniably, however, the term and the literature have focused on the history, perceptions, and oppressive experiences of Black women, in particular, within a variety of societal contexts. Seeking to unveil the challenges and experiences of women within the African-American church, womanist theologians have emerged and provided a critique of the Black church during the post-Civil Rights era. In the sub-section below, the researcher will explore womanist theologians’ critique of the roles of women in the Black church.

Womanist Theologians’ Critiques of the Role of Women in the Church

Black womanists have examined the issue of gender roles and social roles in the Black church and have concluded that its doctrine is Eurocentric, androcentric, and patriarchal (Gilkes, 2001; Grant, 1993a, 1993b; Townes, 1993; Williams, 1993). Their assessment of the issues of sexism and oppression in the Black church resulted from serious questions about the church’s understanding of service: What does the concept of service mean for women, and how does it

translate within the Black church? Why are some people in the Black church more *servants* than others? The Black churches' inability to explain the seeming discrepancy between the modes and prevalence of male versus female service in the church has led women to protest against the existing "rules, beliefs, hierarchy, structure, and patriarchal conventions" (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1992). Hence, their evaluation of sexism in the Black community and church reveals the theological dilemma of service for Black women.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, womanist theologians built upon the works of Alice Walker and began to use theological discourse to unveil the many forms of oppression that pose a serious theological dilemma for Black women who serve in the church. They identified the ideologies, such as Eurocentricism, androcentrism, and patriarchal conventions, used to subordinate Black women and ask why these ideological tools are used to enslave them in the church (Grant, 1993a, 1993b; Mitchem, 2002; Williams, 1993; Wood, 1993). They challenged Black clergy furthermore to critically analyze the Eurocentric and patriarchal doctrines used in the church because their assessment of Black church doctrine is no different from that of their oppressors.

Grant (1993a) and Wood (1993) classify the roles of Black women in the church. In "Black Theology and the Black Woman," Grant (1993a) argues that Black women have been colonized to perform certain roles in the church. She identifies these roles as the "backbone" of the church. In discussing this backbone theory, Grant offers the following critique:

It is often said that women are the "backbone" of the church. On the surface this may appear to be a compliment, especially when one considers the function of the backbone in the human anatomy.... [However,] the telling portion of the word backbone is "back." It has become apparent to me that most ministers who use this term have reference to location rather than function. What they really mean is that women are in the background and should be kept there. (p. 328)

Moreover, Grant argues that this “conspiracy to keep women relegated to the background is also aided by the continuous psychological and political strategizing that keeps women from realizing their own potential power in the church” (p. 328). Hence, what would appear to be a term used to compliment women for their support of the church is in reality a term used to further mislead them and enslave them to Black clergy’s patriarchal ideologies.

Though many Black male clergy refuse to recognize the sin of their actions, Grant (1993b) questions why “some folk are more servants than others” (p. 204). In “The Sin of Servanthood,” she asks: “How does one justify teaching a people that they are called to a life of service when they have been imprisoned by the most exploitative forms of service?” (p. 209). “How do[es] [one] propose that we are called to service by Jesus, the one who has been sent by God to redeem us, when both God and Jesus have been principle weapons in the oppressors’ arsenal to keep Blacks and Black women in their appropriate place?” (p. 209). Grant’s dilemma with the application of the “service” concept raises other questions regarding God’s involvement in oppression: “Is God actually responsible for the systematic pain and suffering of [Black men] and women? Does God condone the servanthood relationships between [Black men] and women?” (p. 209).

Likewise, Wood (1993) critically analyzes the social roles of women in the church and expands on Grant’s analysis of Black women as the backbone of the church. In “Take My Yoke upon You,” she argues that Black women’s roles are also those of “pillars” and “scapegoats” (p. 41). Like Grant, Wood states that Black women are identified as pillars of the church because they *are* the church: they are 70% of the congregation; they are the primary financial investors; they are the teachers for Sunday School; they are the life, vitality, and longevity of the church (pp. 39-40).

Wood (1993) also states, however, that Black women are identified as scapegoats. Expanding on Grant's backbone theory, she asserts that women must bear the blame when the structure [church or community] crumbles. She argues that because of their sex, women are placed in a "seemingly polarized arrangement ... shifting arbitrarily as she engages in behavior deemed worthy of praise or blame" (p. 39). Hence, Wood contends that the labeling of Black women as "pillars" and especially "scapegoats" is just another way of further victimizing the oppressed.

Based on the critical analysis of Grant and Wood, one can better understand the reason that Williams (1993) distinguishes between the "Black church" and Black denominational churches. Because Black denominational churches have committed a "multitude of sins against Black women," Williams argues that the "Black church" is invisible. Citing a number of the Black denominational churches' sins, Williams unveils the impact that White values and androcentric hermeneutics have had on the churches. Moreover, Williams states that the sin of Black denominational churches exists partly because none of them have "*seriously* examined their doctrinal beliefs to discover whether they support racial, sexual, and class oppression" (p. 204). The denominational churches' failure to develop a "doctrine that emerges from [Black] people's experience with God" is the primary reason for oppression in the church. Hence, Williams maintains that unless the Black denominational churches develop a doctrine of church compatible with the Black struggle, their doctrine will continue to mirror the doctrine of "Eurocentric Christianity"—and, as a result, will continue to perpetuate oppressive practices within the church walls.

Importance of Womanist Thought for Critical Faith Learning

At its core, womanist thought is an aspect of critical theory that responds to the myriad of oppressive practices felt across humanity and by Black women specifically. Offering another perspective of critical theory, an understanding of womanist thought is important for critical faith learning, reflection, and ultimately transformative behavior as it pertains to the view and treatment of Black women in well-established institutions such as the Black church.

First, womanist thought is important for critical faith learning because it offers a new way of talking about gender issues within the Black church (Floyd-Thomas, 2006; Phillips, 2006). Unlike feminism, which emphasizes or privileges one sex over another, womanism “elevates all sites and forms of oppression, whether they are based on social-address categories like gender, race, or class, to a level of equal concern and action” (Phillips, 2006, pp. xx-xxi). Womanism, in this sense, is non-ideological and “abhors rigid lines of demarcation” (p. xxv). It seeks to build “structures of inclusiveness” and “does not need to resolve internal disagreement to function effectively” (p. xxv). Thus, womanism’s primary focus is not Black women, but rather, “Black women are the place where this particular form of thinking about commonweal [commonality] originates. Black women’s vision extends to encompass all humans, but it does not stop there” (p. xxv). This is particularly important for critical faith learning because womanism does not seek to *replace* one form of oppression with another but rather to *understand* another’s oppression in order to eradicate it.

Second, womanist thought is important because it engages in the “critical cognitive praxis.” Similar to critical theory, womanist thought seeks to liberate the oppressed by “debunking, unmasking, disentangling the ideologies, theologies, and systems of value operative in a particular society” (Cannon, 1996, p. 138). Moreover, womanist thought questions, tests, probes, marshals, and weighs

evidence “against cultural codes and signs, against imperious and subjugated truths” (Copeland, 2006, p. 227). In this sense, womanist thought engages in the dynamic activity of knowing and seeks to slice “open the brutal oppressions of sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism in order to advance being human and human flourishing” (p. 230). Indeed, this is important for critical faith learning, because womanism does not seek to just critique but to bring about a “decision that leads to action, to transformation in religion and society” (p. 231).

Lastly, womanist thought is important because it emphasizes the importance of subjugated knowledge. According to Collins (2000), “on some level, people who are oppressed usually know it” (p. 8). Copeland (2006) states that subjugated knowledge usually emerges “from ordinary people’s reflection on their experiences of gender, race, and class oppression” (p. 228). From this vantage point, persons are able to assess the world and determine what is needed to correct it. Cannon (1996) argues that because Black women have been subjugated, they have a knowledge reservoir from which to “draw.” This knowledge base can help them “outwit, outmaneuver, and outscheme social systems and structures that maim and stifle mental, emotional, and spiritual growth” (p. 135). This is particularly important for critical faith learning because it emphasizes the “dialectic” between “oppression, conscious reflection on experience of that oppression, and action to resist and eliminate it” (Copeland, 2006, p. 229).

Limitations of Womanist Thought for Critical Faith Learning

Womanist thought does present some limitations when applied to critical faith learning. First, womanist theories, at least as applied to the Black church, assume that there is a predominant role versus a subordinate role and in so doing presents oppressive practices as extreme, absolute, or an “all-or-nothing”

process. That is, womanist thought seemingly suggests that because women are treated as an inferior group within the Black church structure, they are therefore powerless. Rather, a critical faith learning perspective that is reliant upon thoughtful reflection in partnership with leader-directed strategies requires a more evaluative interpretation of behaviors and structures that is not as “black and white”—under this view, it is not that women are completely powerless because they are deemed to be inferior within a patriarchal institutional structure, but rather that they have disproportionately less power. Although identifying oppressive structures is important, employing a critical faith learning model as a means of addressing systemic oppression and inequity requires a more nuanced view. Critical faith learning requires the learner to reflect upon his/her own behaviors, and he/she is less likely to meaningfully engage in the reflective process if he/she sees himself/herself defined in general, all-encompassing terms such as “oppressor” versus “victim,” “powerful” versus “powerless,” or “superior” versus “inferior.”

The second limitation of womanist thought and feminist thought as applied to critical faith learning is that such theories do not necessarily capture the voice of women in the church. For example, it does not appear that womanist theories have been tested within the church context. There is a dearth of qualitative studies capturing the voices, perspectives, and experiences of those women (and men) who are active participants in the Black church institution. By not focusing on the voices of the “church-going,” there are likely assumptions embedded within womanist thought that have yet to be uncovered and/or that may prove to be inaccurate.

Lastly, the third limitation of womanist thought for critical faith learning concerns the process of transformative change. Womanist thought seems to focus on providing an ideological perspective of oppression, which, to its credit,

has highlighted the experiences of segments of humanity that would otherwise remain invisible. Nonetheless, womanist thought is limited in its application to critical faith learning because the latter is focused on transformational process—critical faith learning extends beyond ideology and seeks to engage the learner in an active process of change.

Further, and to the extent womanist thought has addressed the process question, womanist theories seem to assume that transformational change within Black church institutions can only occur with the passage of time. This assumption may not be accurate. Rather, there still remains the question of whether transformational change that is poised to address prevailing power disparities between men and women within the Black church will occur over the course of time or whether such transformational change must be directed and immediate. This study seeks to address this remaining question.

Summary

Womanist thought arose out of Alice Walker's attempts to provide a space for the perspective of and give voice to those experiencing oppression and injustice in all of its varied forms and in its varied contexts across humanity. Womanist literature, however, has focused on the experiences and perspectives of Black women, in particular, in an effort to recognize the unique intersection of race and gender, which had not been addressed in prevailing feminist discourse. Womanist thought has been applied to various disciplines and contexts. Most relevant to this study, however, is the extension of womanist thought to the Black church by womanist theologians such as Grant (1993a, 1993b), Townes (1993), Williams (1993), and Mitchem (2002).

After examining issues of gender and social roles in the Black church, womanist theologians have concluded that the Black church promotes a doctrine

that is Eurocentric, androcentric, and patriarchal. In sum, these womanist theologians determined that the prevailing Eurocentric, androcentric, and patriarchal ideologies within the Black church have been used to subordinate Black women and keep them relegated to a position of subservience within the church's power and leadership paradigms.

Womanist thought is important to critical faith learning in a Black church context because it offers a new approach to discussing gender disparity within the Black church. Further, womanist thought is important to critical faith learning because womanism does not seek to only critique, but it is a dynamic activity that ultimately seeks to transmit theory into action—its purpose is to liberate the oppressed in all institutions, including the Black church. Moreover, womanist thought is important because it emphasizes the relationship between oppression, conscious reflection on that oppressive experience and action to resist and eliminate it. Notwithstanding, womanist thought is not without its limitations, particularly when applied to the Black church and to a study focused on investigating the process of transformational change.

Charismatic and Transformational Leadership

Prior to African-Americans' ascending the corporate ladder and becoming presidents and chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies or elected government officials, the most revered, respected, and important position within the African-American community was that of pastor (Franklin, 1988). Cannon (1996) states that African-American pastors were esteemed as the dominant spokespersons for the community and served as the "arbiter[s] of intellectual moral life and the principal interpreter[s] of canonized sacred writings" (p. 115). Indeed, Black pastors were more than just *gurus*—teachers who transmit

“acquired” knowledge to the tribe or village, but rather *prophets*—courageous spokespersons who transmitted “revealed” knowledge received from God to their followers or church. In this sense, it is no surprise that African-American religious prophets, such as Harriet Tubman, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Henry McNeil Turner, were able to lead revolts, rebellions, protests, and liberation movements for the advancement of the African and African-American community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; McCulley, 1999). The pastor in the Black community was and is more than just a communicator of the gospel; he/she embodies the spiritual and divine extraordinary gifts that distinguish him/her from ordinary men and women.

Within the corpus of this section, the researcher will explore charismatic and transformational leadership and why these leadership concepts are important for this study and for critical faith learning. Initially, the researcher had explored only two areas of literature for this study: faith development theory and critical theory. However, after conducting the research and later trying to make sense of the data, it became clear that the findings and analysis sections would be incomplete without a better understanding of charismatic and transformational leadership. The researcher came to this conclusion because the Pastor in this study was crucial to initiating and implementing the transformation of the Deacon Board. Without the Pastor’s initiating, visioning, leading, guiding, loving, supporting, uplifting, managing, and directing, it would have been virtually impossible for the transformation to occur. Thus, additional literature was needed in order to better understand the phenomena of the study. To begin, the researcher will provide a summary of Weber’s three types of authority. Next, the researcher will summarize the leadership concepts of charismatic and transformational leadership. Lastly, the researcher will discuss the importance

and limitations of both charismatic and transformational leadership for critical faith learning.

Three Types of Authority

Max Weber (1947) identified three types of authority—traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic. In Table 3, the reader will note that charismatic authority differs from traditional and rational-legal authority. For one, charismatic authority leader may have trouble trying to legitimize the authority. In short, traditional and rational-legal leaders either inherit authority or are elected or appointed. Results

Table 3: Traditional, Rational-Legal, and Charismatic

	Traditional	Rational-Legal	Charismatic
Definition	Based on the belief in the sanctity of tradition and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them	Based on the belief in the legality of patterns of standard rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands	Based on devotion to the specific and exceptional revelation, heroism, or exemplary character of a n individual person
Leader	Patriarchal figure, clan leader, family head, chief, priest	Elected or appointed officials	Demagogues, prophets, pastors
Form	Religious, sacred, or spiritual forms	Rational-legal system of laws	People feel a strong emotional bond to leaders
Length of Time	As long as the community or people support and maintain it	As long as in office	Not long because followers must continue to legitimize authority; leader must constantly legitimize, demonstrate authority so followers can reinforce it
Transferable	Yes	Yes, but only to the next leader occupying the position	Possibly, but very difficult
Examples	Monarch systems	Constitutions, written documents, etc.	Hitler, Gandhi, Napoleon

from followers “attributing” an extraordinary characteristic to a leader (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998), while traditional and rational-legal, are dependent upon traditions and system of laws (Weber, 1947). Moreover, traditional and rational-legal models are transferable to the next leader, while charismatic authority is not. Generally, it is difficult to transfer authority and leadership because the new Charismatic leaders, on the other hand, must earn it and continue to legitimize authority in order to maintain it.

The researcher shares the aforementioned because charismatic leadership (authority) was very instrumental in the power dynamics within this study. As Weber (1947) notes, a person only becomes a leader when others agree to accept and submit, and legitimate the authority of another (p. 328). Based upon this view, there is dissimilarity between power and authority. Power is the ability to impose one’s will on another within a social relationship, while authority represents the right to exercise or authorize that power. In this sense, power is relational. In order for one to exercise power, a person must receive power either through tradition, legally, or one’s own charisma. Within the African-American community, power was not received traditionally or legally (i.e., discrimination, prejudice, Jim and Jane Crowism), but was acquired through the charisma of the leader. Such is the case in the Black church. Charismatic and transformational leadership within the African-American community has often rested with the position of pastor (Frazier, 1974; Morris, 1984). Charisma obviously does not hold true for all pastors. Nevertheless, there is an expectation that pastors will receive or have received these extraordinary leadership gifts and abilities from God (Morris, 1984).

Understanding Charismatic Leadership

Max Weber (1947) first championed the leadership concept that some leaders have charisma, which enables them to display “supernatural, superhuman” qualities. In Greek, *charisma* means “divinely inspired gift,” which means one is able “to perform miracles or predict future events” (Yukl, 2006, p. 249). Yukl says that Weber used the term to describe “a form of influence based not on tradition or formal authority but rather on follower perception that the leader is endowed with exceptional qualities” (p. 249). According to Weber (1947), charisma occurs during a “crisis” in which the leader emerges and attracts followers who believe in the vision. Hence, Weber defines charisma as:

A certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he (sic) is set apart from ordinary men and treated as a endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers of qualities. These are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and in the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. (pp. 358-359)

Charisma, in this sense, is a divine gift. It is a “rare and complex phenomenon” that is difficult to obtain or transmit to another leader (Trice & Breyer, 1993). Every leader does not possess it, and every leader may not obtain it. Additionally, those who possess it can potentially lose it if the leader “fails to benefit his followers, it is likely that his charismatic authority will disappear” (Weber, 1968, pp. 49-50).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will explore in detail the refined versions of Weber’s charismatic leadership (Conger, 1989, Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998; House, 1977; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) and will focus on Weber’s (1968) characterization of the “prophet” as a charismatic leader. In order to understand leadership in the Black Baptist church, one needs to better understand the role of prophet and why this role/position is important within the Black religious experience.

The Prophet as Charismatic Leader

Weber (1968) states that the sphere of religion “is prone to the manifestations of charismatic creativity and innovation” (p. 252). Of the two principal roles within the church—prophet and priest, Weber argues that the “prophet” is best suited as the “bearer of charisma” (p. 253). In Table 4, one will note the difference between the two positions and what distinguishes the prophetic role from that of the priest. Indeed, the “call” of the prophet is “the decisive element” that distinguishes “the prophet from the priest” (p. 254). The prophet, by virtue of the “call,” has a “mission” to proclaim “a religious doctrine of divine commandment” through “spoken word, the pamphlet, or any other type of literary composition” (pp. 253, 260-261). Weber states that the priest “lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition,” while the prophet’s claim is based on “personal revelation and charisma” (p. 254).

Table 4: Prophet versus Priest

Prophet	Priest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obtains authority through persona, divine revelation and charisma ▪ Exerts power simply by virtue of personal gifts ▪ Core mission is to share divine doctrine or commandments ▪ Practices divination as well as magical healing and counseling (p. 255) ▪ Is not remunerated for services ▪ Demonstrates authority through emotional preaching and proclamation by the spoken word, the pamphlet, or any other type of literary composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition ▪ Exerts power by virtue of his office ▪ Receives authority through ▪ Core mission is to fulfill priestly duties in the place of worship ▪ Does not practice divination or heal. ▪ Is remunerated for services ▪ Even in cases in which personal charisma may be involved, it is the hierarchical office that confers legitimate authority upon the priest as a member of a corporate enterprise of salvation

The Black Pastor as Charismatic Leader

As noted earlier in this section, the African-American pastor has been and continues to be a central figure in the life of the Black community. The rise and power of Black clergy within the African-American community was a direct “result of the elimination of Negroes from the political life of the American community” (Frazier, 1974, pp. 48-49). According to Frazier, “the Negro church became the arena of their political activities.... In the Baptist churches, with their local autonomy, individual Negro preachers ruled their followers in an arbitrary manner, while the leaders in the hierarchy of the various Methodist denominations were czars” (p. 48). While Frazier offers a derisive review of the African-American preacher, his analysis nevertheless underscores the origins of charisma authority within the Black church.

According to Morris (1984), charisma within the Black church incorporates the following: a calling, personal relationship with God, strong magnetic personality, and the ability to relate to one’s followers as a spiritual leader. These gifts were important and key to the minister’s competence. Furthermore, the minister’s life experiences and formal education were also crucial. According to Morris, charisma in the Black church tradition is not based on:

The beliefs held by charismatic individuals or their followers as on performance. Experience is often crucial to performance, and most ministers who became charismatic civil rights leaders brought a great deal of experience with them into the movement. Most of them had grown up in the church and understood its inner workings. They knew that the highly successful minister developed a strong, magnetic personality capable of attracting and holding a following. Many of the ministers were college graduates with considerable training in theological studies. It cannot be overemphasized that much of these ministers’ training occurred in the Black colleges and universities under the direction of leading Black educators and theologians of the day. (p. 8)

Witnesses and participants of the civil rights movement, these ministers grew up in the church and understood its inner workings, as they were likely groomed for

leadership from their youth. They were mentored by “leading Black educators and theologians” who were not only instructors and scholars, but were true mentors who “taught and counseled” as they imparted the core values of the movement: human dignity, personhood, manhood, and courage. Thus, charisma was not something they had to study to learn, but it was a part of their everyday life experiences. As a result, those who witnessed charisma in the Black church, such as the pastor in this study, knew how to demonstrate it and maintain it in order to cast vision, lead, direct, and empower the people of God in order to effectuate change within the church and society.

Understanding Transformational Leadership

James Downton (1973) was the first theorist to use the term *transformational leadership*. In 1978, Burns further developed an understanding of leadership and argued that the leadership process occurs in one of two ways: through transaction or transformation. Transactional leadership is task-oriented, emphasizes work standards, and encompasses an exchange between the leader and follower, while transformational leadership “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). In transactional leadership, leaders either reward or punish followers or subordinates for the work that they have rendered, while in transformational leadership leaders inspire subordinates to exceed their self-interests and work for the betterment of the organization.

In order for this to happen, transformational leaders must be able to define and articulate a vision for the followers (Burns, 1978; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998). Bass and Avolio (1994) argued that transformational leadership is composed of “Four I’s” or four dimensions: (1) idealized influence; (2) inspirational motivation; (3) intellectual stimulation; and (4) individualized consideration.

As the reader will note in Table 5, there is a progression in order to motivate followers. First, followers must admire, respect, and trust their leader. Once this is established, the leader has a responsibility to inspire followers through articulating a clear vision with achievable expectation and goals. Third, the leader must not be stagnant, but innovative—seeking new ideas and solutions to ensure that the organization is relevant. And lastly, the leader must listen and ensure that the followers are able to achieve their goals and at the same time grow personally.

Table 5: Transformational Behaviors

Transformational Behaviors	Descriptions
Idealized Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavior that results in follower admiration, respect, and trust in the leader. It also includes a consideration of followers' needs over the leader's personal needs, and high ethical and moral conduct
Inspiration Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavior that articulates clear expectations and commitment to organizational goals. ▪ Inspiration is stimulated through outward enthusiasm and optimism for the future of the organization
Intellectual Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavior that seeks new ideas and creative solutions to organizational problems from their followers, and encourage new approaches for performing tasks
Individualized Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavior exhibited by leaders who listen attentively, paying special attention to their followers' achievements and growth requirements

Importance of Charismatic and Transformational Leadership

First, charismatic and transformational leadership is important for the study because it helps the researcher better understand transformation from a

leadership perspective. The researcher makes this point because FDT and critical theory often address transformation from a learner or student perspective (Brookfield, 2005; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). For example, a crisis or disorienting dilemma arises that forces the learner to self-examine, critically assess assumptions, recognize discontent, explore new options or context hegemony, plan a course of action, acquire knowledge, pursue liberation, build competence, and reintegrate into one's life.

Charismatic and transformational leadership, on the other hand, commences not with a crisis or disorienting dilemma, but rather with the charisma of the leader. As Bass (1985) notes, "charisma is a necessary ingredient of transformative leadership" (p. 31). Leaders are able to transform and lead followers to experience psychological growth and development only after they have sanctioned and embraced the charismatic leader (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998). As a result of the followers sanctioning and attributing charisma to the leader, the leader is able to guide an organization from its present to its future. Conger and Kanungo (1998) suggest that charismatic leaders commence transformation by exercising the follow steps: (1) evaluating the current situation; (2) formulating goals; and (3) developing the methods and strategies to implement and achieve these objectives. This information is particularly helpful to the researcher because the charismatic leader in this study, the Pastor, may have unconsciously applied these steps as he led the transformation of the board.

Second, charismatic and transformational leadership are important for this study because these theoretical concepts shed light on how leaders can use "visioning" to stimulate critical faith learning. According to Sashkin (1988), there are four attributes that distinguish charismatic leaders from non-charismatic leaders: the ability to (1) express vision; (2) explain vision to others; (3) extend

vision; and (4) expand vision. Yukl (2006) builds upon these components and argues that there are six guidelines leaders demonstrate in order to transform organizations: (1) articulate a clear and appealing vision; (2) explain how the vision can be attained; (3) act confident and optimistic; (4) express confidence in followers; (5) use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values; and (6) lead by example.

As one compares Sashkin's (1988) and Yukl's (2006) understanding of steps for leaders to transform organization in Table 6, what is clear in both guidelines is vision. In both guides, the leader must have a vision, express it, dramatize it, embody it, and apply it. Moreover, as the vision is shared with the followers, Yukl (2006) states that metaphors, analogies, anecdotes, stories, and symbols can be used to "excite the imagination and engage the listener in trying

Table 6: Guidelines for Charismatic and Transformational Leadership

Sashkin's Charismatic Leadership Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Express vision ▪ Explain vision to others ▪ Extend vision ▪ Expand vision.
Yukl's Transformational Leadership Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articulate a clear and appealing vision ▪ Explain how the vision can be attained ▪ Act confident and optimistic ▪ Express confidence in followers ▪ Use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values ▪ Lead by example.

Sources: Sashkin (1988) and Yukl (2006)

to make sense out of them" (p. 275). By engaging the listener in this manner, the leader is able to convince followers to reflect upon the vision and make a choice

either to support it or not support it. In either case, the leader moves from just being a “charismatic” figure with attributable gifts and followers to a leader who is truly transformative. It is this study’s belief that both charismatic and transformational leadership attributes were employed to implement and execute the vision that the Pastor had received from God.

Lastly, charismatic and transformational leadership is important for this study because it helps followers transcend their past-present thinking. As Bass (1985) notes, transformational leaders are successful when they assist followers by: (1) making them more conscious of the needed change; (2) encouraging them to transcend their own self-interest or benefit for the sake of the organization; and (3) stimulating aspiration to become more than what they are. In this sense, charismatic and transformational leadership is an important leadership concept because it challenges followers and leaders to reflect, grow, make sense of life, and envision a brighter future.

Limitations of Charismatic and Transformational Leadership

There is a plethora of limitations to charismatic and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Beyer, 1999; Bryman, 1993; Yukl, 1999, 2006). First, charismatic leadership is “risky” and is not a “panacea” for solving the challenges within an organization (Bryman, 1992; Trice & Breyer, 1993; Yukl, 2006). Yukl (2006) states that charismatic leadership often generates “negativity” or the “dark side of charisma” (pp. 259-261). Moreover, Yukl argues that many charismatic leaders are “tyrants and egomaniacs whose actions may cause the eventual downfall” of the company or organization (p. 277). While there are some charismatic leaders who work for the good of the organization, most work for their own self-interest (Oakes, 1997).

Second, it implies “radical change in the strategy and culture of an organization” (Yukl, 2006, p. 261). Yukl says that some organizations may not be ready for a radical change. He states that it is “difficult to make radical change in an organization if no obvious crisis exists and many members see no need for change” (p. 261). As a result, some charismatic leaders often leave the organizations where they serve in order “to establish a new one” because it is often “too difficult” to implement a radical vision and change within an existing organization.

Third, Bass (1985) states that a leader can be “charismatic” but not be “transformational.” Yukl (2006) states that transformational leadership seeks to inspire follower commitment to shared objectives and create collective efficacy. Bass (1996, 1997) argues that while transformational leaders can be found in any organization and at any level, this is not true for charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership, on the other hand, is rare and is often beholden and dependent on favorable conditions (Bass, 1985; Beyer, 1999; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 2006).

Lastly, Yukl states that charismatic and transformational leadership is a newer theory and has many have conceptual weaknesses (Beyer, 1999; Bryman, 1993; Yukl, 1999, 2006). These weaknesses range from ambiguous constructs, insufficient description of explanatory processes, a narrow focus on dyadic processes, omission of some relevant behaviors, insufficient specification of situational variables, and a bias toward heroic conceptions of leadership (Yukl, 2006, p. 272).

Summary

In sum, the literature review was instrumental in providing needed insight to better understand and make sense of the phenomena studied. Fowler’s (1986)

faith development theory represents a beginning to understanding faith and its different phases of development. However, there are some limitations, and further research is needed, particularly as it relates to different faith communities, in order to validate the concepts posited by Fowler. Nevertheless, the researcher found Fowler's work helpful, specifically as it related to faith being a "verb" (dynamic process).

Similarly, the literature on critical theory contributed greatly to the study. Indeed, the researcher commenced this work believing that critical theory was principal to understanding critical faith learning. The works of Habermas (1971), Mezirow (1991, 2000), Brookfield (1987, 2005), and others clarified how critical theory seeks to emancipate and liberate persons from their various perspectives and faith beliefs. Also, critical theory was helpful in underscoring how hegemonic forces contribute to "harming us and working to support the interests of others" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 93). This was particularly helpful for this study because of the patriarchal structures in the church that continue to be a hindrance to faith development and growth.

Womanist thought and womanist theology, in particular, assisted the researcher by providing the perspective of women in the Black church context. Womanist critiques concerning the historical view, treatment, and elevation of women in the Black church provided a necessary baseline of information and the context from which the leadership transformation studied in this research could take place. By understanding the perspectives offered by womanist theologians, it became clear how truly transformational the process of changing a historically all-male deacon board to a board that was inclusive of women would be.

Lastly, charismatic and transformational learning enabled the researcher to understand the "how" of the study, specifically as it related to the role of the Pastor in implementing change. Indeed, the Board would have not been

transformed if the Pastor was not both a charismatic (Weber, 1947, 1968) and transformational leader (Burns, 1978). This literature was helpful to the study by emphasizing how charisma, vision, leadership, guidance, and management must be employed to implement change. In short, critical faith learning within a church environment does not just involve faith and critical reflection, but also critical leadership (Yukl, 2006).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology for this study. In order to achieve this objective, the chapter is divided as follows: (1) the rationale for a qualitative case study; (2) an overview of the study; (3) the information needed; (4) the case study sample and criteria for selection; (5) methods of data collection and management; (6) methods of analysis, interpretation, and synthesis; (7) validity and reliability; and (8) limitations.

The Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male deacon board to one that is inclusive of female deacons. The methodological approach chosen was an exploratory, qualitative case study. The researcher chose this approach “to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: *why* they were taken, *how* they were implemented, and *with what result*” (Schramm, 1971, cited in Yin, 2003, p. 12, emphasis added). Merriam (1988) argues that a qualitative case study represents “an intensive, holistic description, and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 10). Yin (2003) argues that case studies commence when a “why” or “how” question is asked about a contemporary set of

events over which the investigator has little or no control (p. 9). Such is the case with this study; it sought to answer the *why* and *how* questions in addition to exploring *what* processes church leaders have developed to assist other congregations seeking to transition and transform their ecclesiastical boards.

Additionally, the researcher chose a qualitative case study because there is no literature that documents how church leaders have transformed their all-male deacon board to one inclusive of women. Creswell (2003) states that a case study can be helpful in exploring “in-depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (p. 15). As a result, the researcher sought an approach that would yield “rich” data (Maxwell, 1996, p. 95), “in-depth and detail” (Patton, 2002, p. 14), and that is “the most complex strategy” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 61). Marshall and Rossman note that a case study entails “multiple methods—interviews, observations, document analysis, even surveys” (p. 61). By utilizing multiple data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews, critical incidents, document analysis, and field notes, the researcher intended to address the core research questions of the study. In short, the researcher chose this approach because it: (1) examines “why” and “how” questions; (2) has no control over the phenomena proposed for study (i.e., the transformation of the board occurred before the study began); (3) is a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life, faith-based setting; and (4) seeks to understand the experiences or learning that contributed to or hindered the leadership transformation.

Overview of the Study

The researcher collected data from August through November 2006. The first data collection tool used was a pre-interview data inventory (PIDI), and then a critical incident report was conducted to explore the most formal and informal critical faith learning. Both instruments were transcribed and imported into NVivo for later data analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. In addition, the researcher administered an in-depth, semi-structured interview that lasted approximately 90 minutes and was digitally recorded, transcribed, and imported into NVivo. During the interview, fieldnotes were taken to capture relevant nuances and to tie together ideas, thoughts, and concepts that emerged from the interview experience. Lastly, the researcher conducted a document review of all pertinent documents.

The Information Needed

In order to address the core research questions, the study conducted the following information: (1) background; (2) demographic; (3) conceptual; and (4) perceptual. The information was collected from the literature review, pre-interview data inventories (PIDIs), in-depth interviews, critical incident reports, document analysis, and field notes. Table 7 provides a summary of the information needed for this study by data source.

Background Information

The background information needed was two-fold: organizational and individual. Organizationally, the researcher needed information on the history of the church's Deacon Board, including its founding, mission/purpose, roles of the

Table 7: Information Needed by Data Source

Information Needed	Data Source				
	Literature Review	PIDl	In-Depth Interviews	Critical Incident	Document Review
Demographic Information					
Gender		X			X
Age		X			X
Race		X			X
Religious affiliation and denomination		X			X
Educational attainment		X			X
Family income		X			X
Background Information					
Current position/title		X			X
Civil rights history or advocacy		X			
Leadership positions in the church		X	X	X	X
Personal faith values		X	X	X	
Conceptual Information					
Definition of faith	X	X	X	X	
Definition of critical faith	X	X	X	X	
Definition of critical reflection	X	X	X	X	
Perceptual Information					
Understanding of the role of deacon	X	X	X	X	
Understanding of the concept of critical faith	X	X	X	X	
Understanding of the transformation of deacon board		X	X	X	X
Lessons learned from the transformation of the Board		X	X	X	

members, and present and past leaders. Similarly, the researcher needed background information from the individual respondents (i.e., respondent's length of membership, leadership positions and titles held, and time of service in said organizations). The researcher collected this information from a PIDI, in-depth interviews, and case documents.

Demographic Information

The demographic information collected basic information, such as gender, age, race, religious affiliation and denomination, educational attainment, and family income. The researcher also collected information related to the participants' prior religious experience in various churches and ecclesiastical communities. The PIDI and case documents provided this information. Lamm (2000) states that the interviewee demographic information is needed "to identify patterns, if any, in the way demographic variables impacted the extent of transformative learning or influence on leadership behaviors" (p. 64). This information assisted the researcher in comparing and contrasting similarities and differences among the church leaders.

Conceptual Information

To develop a conceptual framework and classification scheme, the researcher collected conceptual information from all data. The literature review greatly aided the researcher in working toward this objective. In Chapter II, critical faith learning was defined and explored as a potential adult learning strategy. The researcher explored further this theoretical concept through the use of Brookfield's (1990) critical incident technique, which was first developed by Flanagan (1954). Moreover, the researcher used this information to develop coding schemes and to better understand the data.

Perceptual Information

The perceptual information assisted the researcher in better understanding the faith beliefs and assumptions that guided church leaders to transform the Deacon Board from all-male to one inclusive of female deacons. Additionally, the researcher used Maltbia's (2001) questions as a model. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand:

- (1) How did the church leaders Biblically understand the role and what it means to be a deacon?
- (2) What were their intentions for including female deacons on the Board?
- (3) How did the church leaders go about realizing their intentions, and what were the elements of their general *approach*?
- (4) How did the church leaders evaluate their performance or progress?
- (5) What were the key experiences and learning gained from this experience?
- (6) What critical faith learning strategies were developed?

It was the researcher's aim to use this information to formulate codes and themes that were analyzed and used to write up a final report, synthesizing the lessons learned and how they were learned.

The Case Study Sample and Criteria for Selection

This section provides a description of the case study sample, and the process by which the researcher selected participants. The researcher chose this sample because this church is an example of critical faith learning. The study's participants included eleven church leaders, consisting of the Pastor, deacons, and minister (the first female minister and a male deacon who later became a minister). The strategy used to determine the sample was a critical, purposeful

case. The researcher's rationale for adopting this approach was to acquire "information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2002, p. 46). Patton argues that purposeful sampling is ideal for singular cases because they seek opportunities for "in-depth" study and can open up "new territory for further research" (p. 46). Such was the case with New Spirit. Its decision to ordain female deacons was not only historical, but *rare* for a Baptist church in general, and the Black Baptist church in particular. While a small number of churches have slowly begun to *discuss* the idea of ordaining women to serve as deacons, New Spirit is among a *rare* number of churches in the Baptist faith who have actually *made* the transformation and been successful. Hence, the researcher chose "critical case" sampling because:

- (1) The New Spirit case is *rare* (i.e., very few Black Baptist congregations have ordained women as deacons);
- (2) It would yield the "most information" because it is a relatively new phenomenon;
- (3) It would have the greatest impact on the "development of knowledge"; and
- (4) It has the potential to create *logical* generalizations (or learning) that may be helpful to other ecclesiastical organizations.

Additionally, the reason the researcher selected the New Spirit context was because the Pastor of the church expressed strong interest in the study. Thus, it made sense for the researcher to draw samples from this organization because it yielded accessibility to church leaders, a high level of participation, and unbridled freedom to research and gather important data. Given that the purpose of this study was to explore critical faith learning strategies developed by a Deacon Board, this researcher decided to select church leaders who participated and experienced the transformation of the Deacon Board. As a result, the persons

selected for this sample included: the Pastor, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board at the time of the transition, the first round of female deacons on the Board, three male deacons who agreed and three male deacons who disagreed with the proposal to transform the Board, and the first female minister. Again, the reason the researcher employed this strategy was to obtain information-“rich data.” The researcher’s aim was not to generalize the study, but rather to explore “in-depth” the *how*, the *why*, and *by what process* was the transformation achieved. It was the researcher’s hope that by using a single, critical case strategy, the study would lead to interesting findings that would answer the “how” and “why” questions and provide an answer, if any, regarding the process by which critical faith learning developed as a result of this experience.

Methods of Data Collection and Management

This section provides a description of the steps that were taken to implement a qualitative case study and the methods to collect and manage data. The researcher chose a multiple-methods, or triangulation, approach for at least three reasons: (1) triangulation increases the reliability of the study; (2) it provides a way for “understanding inconsistencies in findings”; and (3) it offers opportunities for “deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 248). Prior to describing each of the four methods of data collection for this study—PIDIs, in-depth interview/critical incident, document review, and field notes, the researcher first discusses his entry into the Deacon Board community.

Entry

To obtain a sample of eleven church leaders, the researcher asked the Pastor to assist in purposefully selecting the population. While the researcher had professional familiarity with the church and is familiar with some of the deacons, much has changed within the past four years. This required the researcher to employ the assistance of someone who was more familiar with the Deacon Board and could make solid recommendations for a purposeful sample. Without such assistance, it would have been very difficult to gain entry into the Deacon Board community. As the researcher had already experienced in attempting to gain access to two other contexts, the Deacon Board is a closed, religious entity within the church and very seldom grants entry to persons who are not a part of this ecclesiastical community. In short, there were three primary reasons for consulting the Pastor: (1) he is the “gatekeeper” and initial entry point for the study; (2) he knows, better than anyone else, those persons who can provide “rich” data for the study; and (3) he can legitimate the researcher and the study, opening up the door for potentially productive data collection. Once the researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification, he contacted the Pastor to discuss selecting the sample and administering the PIDI.

Pilot

The researcher piloted the PIDI, in-depth interview, and CIT with at least two persons prior to receiving IRB approval and conducting the study. Seidman (1998) states that the “unanticipated twists and turns of the interviewing process and the complexities of the interviewing relationship deserve exploration *before* researchers plunge headlong into the thick of their projects” (p. 32). The researcher heeded this advice, tested a pilot, and used this experience to

“revise” instruments in order to strengthen methods of data collection and analysis (Maxwell, 1996).

Pre-Interview Data Inventories (PIDI)

The pre-interview data inventory (PIDI) was an important preliminary instrument that was used to collect background and biographical data prior to in-depth interviews and critical incident reports. The PIDI obtained the following information: gender, age, race, educational attainment, family income, tenure on the Deacon Board, and other ministry and leadership affiliations within the church. Additionally, the researcher asked the participants to explain what it means to be a deacon and who, in their opinion, is able to serve. The researcher obtained this information via telephone using a digital audio recorder so that it could be electronically stored and later retrieved for transcribing and listening to in various media formats (i.e., MP3 and CD).

In-depth Interview

The researcher used in-depth interviews to obtain “rich” and “detailed” data (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the researcher asked the Pastor and deacons, totaling 10 to 12 participants, to discuss what led to the decision to ordain women for the Deacon Board, why was there a change, how the transformation occurred, what were the critical steps taken, and what critical faith lessons were learned from this experience. In short, Part One asked open-ended, contextual questions. It provided the researcher with an understanding of the interviewees’ relationship with the church, tenure of service on the Board, and general understanding of the role of a deacon. Part Two involved an in-depth, critical incident approach. According to Flanagan (1954), the critical incident technique (CIT) is helpful to collect “direct observations of human behavior” and “to facilitate

their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (p. 327). Brookfield (1987) states that the critical incident “prompts respondents to identify an incident” and “concentrate on describing particular happenings” (p. 97). The researcher used CIT to probe for stories and learning from critical faith experiences during the transition. Additionally, the interview questions were grounded in the literature review and the research questions and purpose.

The approach the researcher used to collect the in-depth interview data was a standardized open-ended instrument. The reason the researcher chose this approach was to make certain that “each interviewee was asked the same questions—the same stimuli—in the same way and the same order, including standard probes” (Patton, 2002, p. 344). The researcher believed that this approach helped ensure consistency, efficiency, and “guarded against” and “minimized” variations of the study.

Moreover, the protocol for the in-depth interview included the following: a heading, instructions to the interviewer (opening statements), semi-structured questions, probes to follow important questions, a section for recording comments of the interviewer and interviewee, and a section for recording reflective notes (Creswell, 2003). The interviews took place face-to-face, lasted for approximately 90 minutes, and were recorded using a digital audio recorder. The interviewer and interviewee wore lapel microphones to record the interviews. During the interview, the researcher recorded information using handwritten notes and a digital audio recorder. After the interview, the researcher employed the services of a transcriber. Once the data transcriptions were returned, the researcher shared information with the participants to conduct member checks and clarify any statements that may have been misunderstood. The researcher also conducted member checks at the end of each interview using the research

notes and a digital audio recorder. Within two to four hours of the interview, the researcher's reflections were recorded in writing, and the member check occurred via phone approximately two weeks after transcriptions had been sent. Merriam (1988) and Patton (2002) state that member checks add a form of triangulation of data and add credibility to the data collection process.

Document Review

The researcher also conducted a document review for all pertinent information related to the selection of deacons, especially females. The researcher reviewed articles written by the Pastor, agendas from the Deacon Board meetings, church worship bulletins, weekly newsletters, and annual reports. Once the information was reviewed, the researcher imported information into the NVivo software program and coded accordingly.

Field Notes

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that "the meaning and context of the interviews can be captured more completely if, as a supplement to each interview, the researcher writes out fieldnotes" (p. 108). The researcher used fieldnotes to capture the nuances of observation, including the interviewee's facial and body expressions, voice tones, and direct quotations that could be lifted later from the transcription.

Methods of Analysis, Interpretation, and Synthesis

Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that the purpose of data analysis is to bring "order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data" (p. 150). It "includes selecting, condensing, and transforming *data*; *displaying* these data in an organized way; and drawing and verifying *conclusions* from the condensed,

displayed data” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 299). Patton (2002) states that qualitative data are naturalistic, fluid, and emergent; and as a result, “ideas about directions for analysis will occur. Patterns take shape. Possible themes spring to mind. Hypotheses emerge that inform subsequent fieldwork” (p. 436). Moreover, given the naturalistic nature of qualitative data, Patton states that the questions “generated during the conceptual and design phases of the study, prior to fieldwork,” and the analytic insights and interpretations that “emerged during data collection” are a primary source from which to draw in organizing analysis (p. 437). In short, the purpose of this section is to build upon the researcher’s early analysis and to implement a more formal and in-depth analysis. In order to achieve this goal, the following phases of analysis were needed for this study: (1) data management and reduction; (2) coding; (3) memoing; (4) data displays; (5) interpretation; and (6) synthesis.

Data Management and Reduction

Qualitative study generates a plethora of data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). As a result, the researcher used various forms of technology and software (i.e., NVivo software) and a transcriber to manage and reduce the data. This information was stored accordingly and used for data analysis. The researcher used data reduction continuously until the report was completed. As Miles and Huberman (1994) note, even before the data are actually collected, “anticipatory data reduction is occurring as the researcher decides (often without full awareness) which conceptual framework, which cases, which research questions, and which data collection approaches to choose” (p. 10). Data reduction occurs in “writing summaries, coding, teasing out themes, making clusters, making partitions, [and] writing memos.” The researcher

employed this technique to sharpen, sort, focus, discard, and organize the data in such a way that the “final conclusions can be drawn and verified” (p. 11).

Coding

Patton (2002) states that the challenge of content analysis is to simplify and make sense out of the complexity of collected data. Coding is needed thus to organize data, understand it, and develop a “manageable classification or coding scheme” (p. 463). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that codes “are used to retrieve and organize the chunks” of data collected (p. 57) and “empower and speed up analysis” (p. 65). Moreover, they state that the researcher must organize and categorize these “various chunks,” so that the researcher “can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme” (p. 65). Indeed, the coding process is “analysis”; it involves how one differentiates and combines data retrieved in conjunction with one’s reflections about the information. For the purposes of this study, the researcher coded in three phases: (1) a provisional “start list,” (2) open coding, and (3) check-coding. The researcher revised the codes as the “field experience continue[d]” (Patton, 2002, p. 61).

Memoing

To avoid becoming “overwhelmed” with the coding process, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest “memoing,” or writing, “ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser, 1978, pp. 83-84). Glaser states that memoing can consist of “a sentence, a paragraph or a few pages” (p. 84). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that memos do not “just report,” but rather “tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept” (p. 72). The

researcher employed NVivo to capture memos and to link this information “to previous case discussions, or to case summaries” (p. 73).

Data Displays

As noted in this chapter and the literature review, data displays were incorporated into this study establish the needed tables, matrices, and figures to better understand the phenomenon. Hence, this analytic tool was used to further: (1) present the data and analysis in one place; (2) allow the analyst to see where further analyses were needed; (3) make it easier to compare and contrast different data sets; and (4) permit the researcher direct access to a report, improving the credibility of the conclusions drawn (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 92). Furthermore, data displays were used “to provide preliminary conclusions about what is happening” and “suggest leads toward new data” (p. 90). The researcher used NVivo to reduce the data and create understandable descriptions that would be used in various data displays.

Interpretation

After the researcher identified the codes, themes, concepts, beliefs, behaviors, and processes of the study, the next step was to seek answers to the following questions: *What does this mean? What does this tell me about the nature of the phenomenon of interest?* (Patton, 2002, p. 477). According to Patton, interpretation involves: “going beyond the descriptive data. Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order on a unruly but surely patterned world” (p. 480). Patton argues that sound interpretation is rigorous and includes “dealing with rival explanations, accounting for

disconfirming cases, and accounting for data irregularities as part of testing the viability of an interpretation” (p. 480). The researcher sought to challenge his own preformulated hypothesis and assumptions regarding critical faith learning within the Black Baptist church.

Synthesis

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher compared and contrasted the themes and concepts generated and proceeded with writing up a final report, synthesizing the lessons learned and how they were learned (Patton, 2002). Patton states that an “interesting and readable report provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis for an interpretation, and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader to appreciate the description” (pp. 503-504). To achieve these goals, the researcher included salient quotes and descriptions to provide a thorough but condensed report. By synthesizing data in this manner, the researcher was able to “build theory through induction and interpretation” (p. 500).

Validity and Reliability

The researcher reviewed the literature of Patton (2002), Creswell (2003), Maxwell (1996), and Miles and Huberman (1994) and adopted four strategies to enhance validity and reliability (see Table 8). As noted in Table 8, the researcher clarified his biases at the outset of the research. Given his professional familiarity with the church, the researcher acknowledged his biases and worked diligently to guard against any beliefs or assumptions that would impede or alter a rigorous and credible study. Maxwell argues (1996) that stating one’s biases is important because “qualitative research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity”

(p. 91). The researcher sought to ensure that the study's conclusions would be valid and not his own.

Table 8: Validity and Reliability Strategies

Strategy	Description
Clarification of researcher bias	The researcher articulated in writing his biases and assumptions.
Member checking	The researcher asked a former deacon who served at the church during the transition to serve as a “check” throughout the analysis process, creating an ongoing dialogue regarding interpretations of the researcher's data analysis and conclusions.
Peer examination	The researcher asked a colleague to “check-code” the in-depth interviews. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that check-coding is important because coding definitions “become sharper when two researchers code the same data set and discuss their initial difficulties” (p. 64). Moreover, check-coding “not only aids definitional clarity but also is a good reliability check.”
Triangulation of data	Data was collected through multiple sources to include interviews, critical incidents, document analysis, and field notes.

Source: Patton (2002), Creswell (2003), Maxwell (1996), Miles and Huberman (1994).

Second, the researcher asked a former deacon, who had served at the church during the transition, to serve as a “check” throughout the analysis process. This created an ongoing dialogue regarding interpretations of the researcher's data analysis and conclusions, and hopefully clarified issues that were unbeknownst to the researcher. Third, the researcher asked a colleague to “check-code” the in-depth interviews. While the researcher believed that he conducted the study with the highest integrity, he realized that an interviewee may have had a “bad” day and not be interested in undergoing the interview, or the interviewer may have interjected personal bias that reflected his views rather

than the views of the interviewee. Thus, a “second set of eyes” only enhanced this study and sharpened discussions regarding discrepancies in the study.

Lastly, the researcher employed triangulation methods in purposeful sampling and data collection. The researcher acknowledged that while the Pastor was helpful in selecting participants, he also may have selected persons he felt were good for the study. To counter this possibility, the researcher sought assistance from the aforementioned deacon (informant) regarding persons purposefully selected. The researcher employed this strategy to make sure there was a diversity of opinions, positive and negative. Similarly, the researcher utilized triangulation to collect data and to provide additional ways of “comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means *within qualitative methods*” (Patton, 2002, p. 559). By using multiple sources of data, the researcher was able to “build on the strengths of each type of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach” (p. 307).

Limitations

The researcher recognized the limitations of this study and was committed to articulating his own biases and other factors that may have hindered validity and reliability. First, the researcher recognized the limitations regarding the researcher’s role. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that researchers have “their own understanding, their own convictions, their own conceptual orientations; they, too, are members of a particular culture at a specific historical moment. They will be undeniably affected by what they hear and observe in the field, often in unnoticed ways” (p. 8).

Second, the researcher recognized the limitations regarding the methods of data collection. The interviewee may not have been interested in undergoing the interview, or the interviewer may have interjected personal bias that reflected his views rather than the views of the interviewee. Similarly, documents have limitations, and “may be incomplete or inaccurate” (Patton, 2002, p. 306). Indeed, this was the “ongoing challenge, paradox, and dilemma of qualitative analysis” (p. 480). The researcher believed, however, that this was countered by developing a rigorous and well-executed methodological design.

Third, the researcher recognized the limitations regarding the methods of data analysis. According to Patton (2002), many researchers “present a holistic picture of what the phenomenon, setting, or program is like and struggle to understand the fundamental nature of a partial set of activities and people in a specific context” (p. 480). This researcher did not seek to portray a “holistic” picture, but rather to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: *why* they were taken, *how* they were implemented, and *what* lessons were learned from this experience.

Chapter IV

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine what critical faith learning strategies church leaders developed to transform their all-male deacon board to one that is inclusive of female deacons. In this chapter, the researcher presents the major findings from the interviews and pre-interview data inventories (PIDs) of the eleven participants. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the confidentiality of participants. The researcher arranged the major findings into five categories and provided a descriptive summary of each in Table 9. The findings emerged from the participants' responses to the follow five research questions:

- (1) What is critical faith learning, and how, if at all, did church leaders engage in this type of learning to transform the Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?
- (2) Why did church leaders transform their Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?
- (3) What experiences contributed to or hindered this transformation?
- (4) How did this transformation occur?
- (5) From this experience, what critical faith learning strategies have church leaders developed that may be helpful to other religious organizations?

Later, in Chapter V, the researcher goes beyond the descriptive data presented herein to analyze and interpret what was discovered from the study.

Table 9: Major Findings with Descriptive Summary

Major Findings	Descriptive Summary
<p>Major Finding 1.0 <i>Understandings of Faith and Critical Faith</i></p>	<p>Church leaders have various understandings of faith and critical faith. While their understandings of faith are definite, albeit varied, their understandings of critical faith are limited or lacking altogether.</p>
<p>Major Finding 2.0 <i>Critical Experiences</i></p>	<p>While church leaders can all draw from their own personal and work experiences to implement gender change and equality in the church, the civil rights movement is particularly instrumental and informative for church leaders because of its advocacy for human equality. Church leaders who participated in or are familiar with the civil rights movement are able to draw from this experience to implement change that is indeed <i>radical</i>, but is perceived by the masses as <i>evolutionary</i>.</p>
<p>Major Finding 3.0 <i>Enablers and Barriers of Transformation</i></p>	<p>Church leaders are confronted with a plethora of experiences that contribute to or hinder transformation. These enablers and barriers do not stifle faith, but help faith develop, grow, and change. Faith in this sense is never boring or static, but is constantly evolving and changing as it encounters external and internal factors that are both positive and negative.</p>
<p>Major Finding 4.0 <i>The Dynamics of God/Holy Spirit, Pastor, and Deacons</i></p>	<p>There are various learning methods and strategies that church leaders can and may employ to stimulate change and transformation. However, change within the Black Baptist church is not always cognitive or critically reflective, but often times is the result of the movement and work of underlying and unexplainable dynamics—God and the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Major Finding 5.0 <i>What Church Leaders Learned</i></p>	<p>In order for change and transformation to be successful within a Black Baptist church setting, church leaders must understand that change is ongoing, requires leadership, must be managed, is evolutionary (not radical), and must invoke the presence of God and the Holy Spirit.</p>

Major Finding 1.0: Understandings of Faith and Critical Faith

This researcher assumed that the church leaders who participated in this study had an understanding of faith and critical faith. The researcher discovered, however, that each of the participants had various views and/or understandings about faith and what this study calls “critical faith.” In this section, the researcher reveals the various views and understandings of faith and critical faith, and why these findings are significant for this study.

Faith

First, it was assumed that all eleven (100%) participants had a definition of faith. For three participants (27%), faith was defined as written in the Letter to the Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” For the remaining eight (73%), there was no “uniform” definition of faith. Their definition of faith was mixed and complex and often reflected their varied religious beliefs and life experiences. For example, Deacon G defined faith as “to believe that through all things, good or bad, God will bring you out of the storm.” Deacon H defined it as “the internal belief that there is a divine power and guidance in our lives. That all things are possible with God to guide us. It is an integral part of us that we must contain and support but that we cannot control. It is to believe in God’s plan for us without doubt.” Reverend W argued that faith is the “ability to believe in the reality of things unseen, and the possibilities of that which is deemed impossible.” Thus, there is no consensus on the word *faith*. The majority of the participants had various understandings or definitions of this word.

Critical Faith

Another major finding involved the understanding or lack of understanding of critical faith. Earlier in Chapter I, the researcher stated that there were two challenges that Black religious institutions must address:

- (1) How does the church religiously educate its parishioners; and
- (2) How does the church engage parishioners in faith learning that is relevant, authentic, and critically reflective?

The assumption on the part of this researcher was that churches have engaged in what this study calls “critical faith learning” or at least have an understanding and/or definition of it. In Table 10, the researcher presents the participants’ answers to the question: *What is critical faith?*

Table 10: Definitions of Critical Faith

Participant	Definition of Critical Faith
A	Praying and believing, all things will work out for the good.
B	Divine faith is firm belief in the authority of divine revelation. It is thus we believe all truths relating to God, revealed to us in scriptures.
C	Unsure
D	Critical faith allows one to act toward accomplishing a goal even when every thing is working against you.
E	<i>No answer</i>
F	Critical faith is one that is essential or necessary. It may also mean a faith that is exposed to careful judgment or ridicule.
G	Never heard of critical faith—I guess critical faith is to be strong in your belief.
H	Critical faith means to me when faith is the sole sustenance in our lives, and when we live our life with the belief that we have divine guidance in good and troubled times. It is our inherent belief that God’s plan is always working for us and not against us.
J	Serious and crucial positions.
M	Critical faith is the ability to grow in grace, experience change though active love, initiate change in the context of the love of Christ.
W	I’m not sure. I am having a problem with conceptualizing the term “critical faith.”

As one will note in Table 10, four of the eleven (36%) did not provide a definition of critical faith, while seven participants (64%) did. Out of the seven that did, only three participants (F, J, and M) used language that might invoke the spirit of “critical theory.” In fact, while Deacon C, a relative young, progressive deacon, was being interviewed, he asked: “What do you mean by critical faith?” He further stated:

I am suggesting that this may not be an issue that is critical, that I’ve seen as critical to someone’s faith as compared to other incidences which might be critical to someone’s faith. I don’t know how to define critical faith. I mean...faith is faith. Could it be less or more? More critical...or less critical...or can you have....degrees of faith? I guess you could, but, I mean, we say if you can believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, then you shall be saved...so I don’t know if that’s helpful to get into that line of things.... That’s probably the best way to answer that right now—I don’t know. I have no idea.

Similarly, Deacon G did not understand critical faith: “Never heard of critical faith—I guess critical faith is to be strong in your belief.” In the case of Deacon E, the eldest deacon on the board, when the researcher asked him “what is critical faith,” he merely looked at the researcher with a “blank” face and did not make an attempt to answer the question during the interview or on his PIDI.

In short, only three participants offered some definition of the *critical* aspect of critical faith. However, while this percentage was small, a number of the participants did engage in critical faith questioning. This finding will be discussed further in this chapter.

Major Finding 2.0: Critical Experiences

The next major finding in this study involved critical experiences. Regarding critical experiences, the researcher asked participants during the interview and in their PIDI: *What key experiences contributed to the transformation of the board?*

Some participants cited either their own personal civil rights experience or an experience from the civil rights movement that had influenced them or the church. Other participants cited experiences such as those that were faith/church-related. Table 11 presents these three critical experience categories.

Table 11: Critical Experiences

Principal Themes	Interviews N=11	Percentage
Personal Civil Rights Experiences	7	64%
Influence of Civil Rights Experiences	4	36%
Critical Leadership/Transformational Experiences		
<i>Ordination of first female minister</i>	10	91%
<i>Inclusion of women on trustee board</i>	4	36%

Moreover, the researcher discovered that the transformation occurred not just because of critical experiences, but also because of savvy church politics. The church, like every organization, is a human organism that is only as effective as the person leading the organization. In the case of New Spirit, the researcher discovered that without the savoir-faire gained by Pastor M from his civil rights experience, it would have been very difficult for him to transform the board. Church indeed is a political institution. And like other organizations, decisions are not made in isolation, but often with the help of experienced, strong, persuasive, and effective leaders.

For the purposes of this section, the responses of the participants from the PIDI and interviews were combined and are listed in the following sub-sections: civil rights experiences; influence of civil rights experiences; and critical leadership/transformational experiences.

Personal Civil Rights Experiences

Regarding critical experiences, the first major finding was the impact of the civil rights movement on the transformation of the board. From the data, seven of the eleven (64%) cited personal civil rights experience and its influence on their openness to equality not only among the races, but also gender. Some of the leaders worked with Operation Big Vote, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Urban League, Universal Negro Improvement Association, Operation Bread Basket, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, Southern Christian Leadership Council, etc. As Deacon F stated, “Yes, I have always advocated civil rights. I grew up during the days of sit-ins and marches, the era of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Similarly, Dr. J shared:

I am a Dr. King child. Dr. King came to New Spirit, and I supported the Selma March while at Baldwin-Wallace College by having Reverend Dr. O support a bus load of students going to Washington, D.C. to support protection for the marchers studying the science of non-violence under Reverend James Bevel—direct action strategist for Dr. King.

Moreover, the spiritual leader of New Spirit, Pastor M, cited his experiences as a student sit-in leader; organizer, and chapter leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC); Vice President of NAACP Chapter; a Founder, Organizer, and National Chairman of Rainbow PUSH; and Chairman of the Progressive National Baptist Convention’s Civil Rights Commission. Pastor M emphasized that his involvement in the civil rights movement and being “jailed four times” unveiled that there were some things worth fighting for. Human equality for him is not something that should merely be “preached” from the pulpit, but something that requires “leadership”—leadership that is willing to go against the grain of society and even the grain of the church. These revelations were particularly interesting to the researcher because he assumed that life

experiences contributed to one's life decisions, but did not understand the magnitude to which these experiences influenced one's faith beliefs.

Influence of Civil Rights Experiences

To further emphasize the role that the civil rights movement had on the transformation of the deacon board, the researcher discovered that four of the eleven participants (36%) cited an example of how civil rights experiences may have influenced the transformation of the board. Deacon B discussed how difficult it may have been for the Pastor to be involved in the civil rights movement but then “deny” women the “opportunity” to serve as a “deacon or minister.” Deacon D echoed this theme when he stated: “It amazes me that the church, while incorporating the civil rights struggle, did not begin to involve women in the church until much later—almost 30 years later, which is absolutely amazing to me.” He further stated that in order to bring women on the Deacon or Trustee Board, the leader had to be “committed to making the change in order for it to be successful,” just as a civil rights leader was committed even if it meant you had to “lose your life.”

Pastor M also cited examples of how the civil rights experience influenced his thinking and theology as a pastor. He stated:

Years ago when I was living in the South and in Georgia, rigidly segregated, I listened to a certain Baptist white minister giving a lecture in some institute, and he was grappling with the whole issue of integration and race relations, and he said, the one thing the black church ought to do is to continually confront the white community with theology. It's good to challenge us legally, but we can always hire a lawyer to get an...to give an opposite side.... And although he was not lifting up anything, that was a new idea coming from one who represented the tradition of segregation and racism. I thought it was highly instructive, and if you look at the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr., that's exactly what he did throughout his career. He was constantly raising the moral, the theological issues.

Moreover, Pastor M's statement further confirmed the influence of the civil rights experience in how it helped him develop his strategy to transform the leadership boards at his church:

And I must say at this point that I silently took a page out of my civil rights experience or civil rights unwritten textbook. In the early days of the civil rights movement, whenever the lawyers and the organizations were involved, that were looking for a person or persons to establish a test case for significant change, we have always looked for the persons or a person who was scholarly, who had, you know, great academic ability, whose personality was a... well-balanced personality, who had the ability to interact with people, the ability to sustain criticism and challenge, and who had a deep and anchored faith. Now, that's why in the early civil rights cases, practically all of the persons who were the testing plaintiffs came out of the church.

While few cited how the civil rights movement may have influenced the transition of the Board, it is clear that those who did experience it used their experiences as reference points on how to transform the Deacon Board and make it more inclusive of female deacons.

Critical Leadership/Transformational Experiences

During the interviews, the researcher discovered that critical leadership/transformational experiences also influenced the Board. They included the inclusion of women in the ministry and Trustee Board (see Table 12 below). Ten of the eleven (91%) stated that the licensing and later ordination of the first female minister, Dr. J, paved the way for female trustees and later female deacons. Deacon A, Chair of the Deacon Board, stated:

I would think that the hardest step in doing so was ordaining Reverend J as a minister, and a lot of people had ideas that all of this was supposed to be male. Even now, some churches don't want, from my understanding, female preachers in the pulpit, and see, we realized the fact that the Lord wants everybody to carry the message through the unsaved world, and everybody has responsibilities.

Referring to Pastor M, Deacon B argued that “he got a good positive feedback from that, and so that inspired him to go with the women.” Deacon H believed it “opened doors,” and thus “it became a much more accepting thing for there to be females on the Deacon Board.... I think the associate ministers who were female of course took on a large role at the church to help guide what was going on, and based on the leadership of the pastor.” Pastor M further stated:

Table 12: Critical Leadership/Transformational Experiences

Principal Themes	Interviews n=11	Percentage
Ordination of first female minister	10	91%
Inclusion of women on Trustee Board	4	36%

In short, there were numerous experiences that contributed to and influenced how a male deacon board would be transformed. Indeed, what was particularly interesting was how the Pastor drew upon his own civil rights experiences to model how the transformation would occur. In his words, he “took a page out of” the civil rights “textbook.” Because of Pastor M’s experiences and others cited by the participants, transformation occurred.

Major Finding 3.0: Barriers and Enablers of Transformation

The researcher assumed that there would be barriers and enablers of the transformation. However, what the researcher did not anticipate were the number of inhibitors and contributors. In fact, because of the plethora of factors that either helped or hindered the transformation, the researcher was forced to narrow the list to those that were most frequent and/or had the greatest positive or negative impact on the transformations. As such, there were seven barriers and nine

enablers. For the purposes of this study, the researcher placed the barriers and enablers into subcategories. An overview of the enablers and barriers of the transformation is presented in Table 13 in order of frequency.

Table 13: Barriers and Enablers of Transformation

	Interviews n=11	Percentage
Barriers		
community destroyers	2	18%
Biblical proof-texting	4	36%
spirit of negativism	5	45%
female opposition	5	45%
invisible and silent opposition	8	73%
Tradition	8	73%
male mindset (sexism)	10	91%
Enablers		
spirit of love	3	27%
all-inclusive church	4	36%
witnessing of male deacons	6	55%
preaching, teaching, and practical theology	6	55%
modeling of ministry transformations	6	55%
critical faith questioning	6	55%
critical thinking, reflecting, and learning	6	55%
movement in religious community	9	82%
showing capacity-ability	11	100%

Barriers

In this sub-section, the researcher discusses the seven barriers discovered from the study. As previously stated, the researcher included these data not

solely because of the frequency, but also because of the potency each had on the transformation.

Community Destroyers. When asked what barriers hindered the transformation process, two of the eleven (18%) cited community destroyers as a barrier to the transformation. Dr. J stated that the Board transformation “did cause flak in the city.” Some in the community “rebuffed” the Pastor and told their own congregation: “Don’t bring it up in my church.” Dr. J recalls that this did not gravely affect the transformation of New Spirit’s Deacon Board, but acknowledges that it had the potential to be a cancer to the process as a whole.

Similarly, Pastor M cited instances in which community destroyers sought to “drop poison pills and pour cold water on” New Spirit’s process. He believed that the reason persons tried to derail the efforts of New Spirit is because they were “threatened” by New Spirit’s actions and did not want this revolutionary “change” of the Deacon Board to somehow spread to their congregation.

Biblical Proof-texting. A second barrier to the transformation process was Biblical proof-texting. Biblical proof-texting is the practice in which a person selectively takes Biblical passages to confirm or negate a deeply-held position. The study revealed that four of the eleven (36%) participants cited Biblical proof-texting as a barrier. For example, Deacon A stated that sometimes “you run into this with some of the membership, and they state the fact: ‘Well, you know, women were not allowed in certain positions’” in the Bible. The purpose of such statements was to argue that the ordaining of female deacons was not scriptural and should not be embraced by the Pastor and deacons because it has no Biblical standing. Additionally, Pastor M acknowledged that Biblical proof-texting was indeed a hindrance in the church. However, his response to it is best summarized in the following statement:

Tradition reaches out to grab approved texts...to defend itself, so the King James translation of the Bible was constantly the pronoun. "He" becomes a shield or an umbrella to do a lot of folk who don't want to, who are not open to change. Now interestingly enough, no one ever challenged us on the scripture, which says, a deacon should be the husband of one wife. And I have in a humorous way when the question has come up in my discussion I have often responded, "Yes, that's right, at least one at a time." And if you are living in a community where reality shows that there are persons among that...to whom we are ministering, who have divorced, some have not been married, some are widowed, so nobody was quite ready to go to war on that.

Lastly, Dr. J stated that some leaders argued that when Jesus "appointed the seven, there were no females." This argument is based on Acts 6 in which seven "men" were called to serve as deacons to the widows. Those who cite this scripture were emphasizing the fact that the seven deacons were men and *not* women. Hence, for those leaders who held this belief and supported it with Biblical scripture, it is impossible for women to be able to serve as deacons because of their gender.

Spirit of Negativism. Five of the eleven (45%) cited the spirit of negativism as a barrier. Deacon G shared that after it was announced that she was a candidate to become a deacon, some people "changed" not for the better but for the worse. She stated that they would "stop speaking to you" and began to treat her differently because of her new status as a "deacon-in-training." Similarly, Pastor M acknowledged that the spirit of negativism was at work during the transformation. He labeled it as "ill-will" and stated that it had the potential to "bubble up and create issues" within the church. When the eldest deacon, Deacon E, was asked about what barriers hindered the transformation process, he emphatically said "the devil." For him, to go against the vision of the Pastor was equivalent to going against the vision of the Lord. Thus, he believed that those who did not support the Pastor and his vision were being controlled by a negative, adversarial spirit.

Female Opposition. Probably, the most surprising finding for the researcher was female opposition to women becoming deacons. Five of the eleven (45%) participants cited this as a barrier. The researcher assumed that men would be opposed to female deacons, but did not expect for *females* to be opposed to female deacons. Deacon A stated:

Well, imagine it; people are not understanding, and I would label that women in the congregation, not seeing eye to eye.... A lot of people are not ready for change, even though it's needed. But they're not ready to accept change. I would say this was in it, you know, and, as a matter of fact, I was not aware of this until lately. One of our members on our deaconess board is still not. She has not accepted this fully, and I was not aware of this until lately. But her husband is on our sick list, and we sent a lady deacon to tell the community, and she didn't think this was a good idea.

Other participants, such as Dr. J, stated she has found that "women might have had a harder time with my going into the ministry than some men, because some women wanted to see a man minister, not a female." Deacon G's interview mirrored these sentiments when she stated how women responded to her being asked to serve on the Deacon Board:

You know, lot of ladies said you got to change your ways. I said, Change my ways. I said, if Reverend M asked me, but I actually think he must like the way I am. So, Mrs. M said, "No you don't. You know, they tried to do the same thing to me when I came to this church as the pastor's wife." You know, so what do I have to change because I don't even know why? Now I got to change? But no one hindered me or my back was not against the wall at any time. It is just been ongoing, you know?

Reverend W stated that there were many women who asked him: "Why her?" "Why that woman?" In short, the oppositional forces against females becoming deacons were not just with men, but women too. This was an important discovery, particularly as it relates to how pastors and leaders transform their boards. Oftentimes it is believed the contrary winds will be just the men, but this study revealed that it may be the women as well.

Invisible and Silent Opposition. In addition to the aforementioned barriers, eight of the eleven (73%) acknowledged that there was an invisible or silent opposition within the Deacon Board. According to these eight, some deacons may not have verbally expressed their opposition in meetings, but silently did so without causing a great disturbance. For example, Deacon B, an example of the silent opposition, stated that after the “announcement” that New Spirit would now have female deacons, he asked himself: ”Do I want to be a deacon in that? Yeah, I do.’ So after the announcement was made, I go ahead and do what I do. And hopefully it’ll still be gratifying to me.” Deacon B’s statement is just one example of conversations that took place among the deacons of the church. Because of Pastor’s M’s power, influence, and leadership standing, many deacons were afraid or did not wish to share their opposition regarding the transformation. For instance, Deacon C said he would be “naïve to believe” that everyone was in favor of the transformation of the Board. He stated that “there probably was somebody that had some feelings about it but nothing that ever really got into the process because it is, you know, the way that process actually runs even right now.” Deacon D referred to this opposition as an “undercurrent.” Even Pastor M acknowledged the silent opposition, but stated that “it never surfaced.”

Tradition. Another barrier to the transformation of the board was tradition. Eight of the eleven (73%) cited tradition as a barrier. Deacon C stated that some folks “work better from a traditional standpoint, meaning that you do this the way it kind of has been from the history of the church period.” Deacon H called it “traditional thinking” or “old school thinking.” She described it as “old,” “rigid,” and “inflexible.” Pastor M stated that tradition played an important role in serving as a barrier for the transformation. He stated: “Tradition was probably our greatest force working against this, and after a while tradition tends to reach out specially

in faith-based institutions or in religious institutions. Tradition reaches out to grab approved texts... to defend itself, so the King James translation of the Bible was constantly the pronoun.”

Male Mindset (Sexism). The last and most frequent barrier cited by the participants was the “male mindset” or “sexism.” When asked about what barriers hindered the transformation of the board, ten of the eleven (91%) cited male mindset as a barrier. Table 14 presents the participants’ answers.

Table 14: Male Mindset (Sexism)

Participant	Male Mindset
A	Some male deacons not too accepting and understanding.
B	Was I for or against it? You know...again I say if I was...I don't know if I would be. It would never get to the point where if I got 10 deacons, 8 are going to be women. So therefore maybe I would somewhat be prejudiced in that regard because if I got 10 probably 8 is always going to be men. It may be 7 but it would...somewhere along the line I would keep that Baptist tradition in that regard and the history.
C	I think there were some challenges there; some things that you just needed to be a little bit more conscious of there. Let's put it that way. I mean the deacons traveling in pairs of course and so I think, you know, well now I have got to pair off people appropriately and the women go with women and men go with men and trying, you know, just to be aware of some of those items that really had not been an issue before.
E	I think, deacons. It's better now. Much 100% better. Deacons use to think that they were the boss of the church. They want to boss the pastor. We had that here, but Reverend O [a previous pastor] destroyed that.
F	Well, I would say one thing. The current state of the minds of the former deacons. Like I said before, some male deacons do not welcome female deacons. I'm not saying all of them, but there may be one or two because of their upbringing, because of the culture that they are used to or used to have and that, you know, the place for a woman is. It's here or the place for a woman is not here. So I think that that may play a role in trying to hinder what was happening, but it did not win over. And that's just how I feel. It's just the culture that people are used to and not knowing how God can work a lot of things out and that their ideas and their past experiences or whatever the upbringings were about women as a whole may have influenced any objection to the process.

Table 14 (continued)

Participant	Male Mindset
G	I guess probably it'll be a long time for women to become Chairman of the Deacon Board or (LAUGHTER). You know, they send the males up to the balcony but not the ladies right, you know. They will ask a volunteer but they always taking the lead.... But they don't ask us. Would you all like to be a part of that or you know? I guess to protect Reverend M they think we can't do this.
H	If we were going out to visit the sick or give communion, you know, they felt like they had to overprotect us in some way. So, but that's I think since the years have passed. I think that's calmed down quite a bit. But it was an unusual experience.
J	Really just the mindset of, that whole male mentality that men are the leaders, that leadership is for males and not females. Some would go through saying, "Jesus didn't have a...any when he appointed the seven. There were no females." But because of how it's always been...then that has been, it's always been male. Why would we change it now? So just that how it's always been kind of mindset. Some of the same...it's the same mindset of males being in charge, males being...standing before the people. Now for some, females don't teach, especially don't give orders to male. So that's a leadership position so not a position that a female should take.
M	So people didn't pay a lot of attention to that and given the fact that many churches across the nation have had female trustees for number of years and although that was his voice, they intended to go...they still sort of looked at that move as you know getting some more secretaries in the group and that kind of thing.
J	I would have to say the traditional mindset of the congregation that men only were called to be deacons.

As one will note in Table 14, ten of the eleven (91%) participants provided a view that they either encountered or were aware of a preexisting male mindset or sexist mentality, which served as a barrier to the transformation. Out of these ten, four of the participants—who were all female—were particularly expressive. When describing their experiences with the male mindset, these participants stated that they felt overprotected, received a message of “a woman’s place,” and interpreted signals that males were the “leaders.”

In sum, there were a number of barriers that hindered or attempted to derail the transformation of the deacon board. While these barriers were not successful

as it relates to hindering the transformation of New Spirit's Deacon Board, it is important to reveal these barriers because they are instructive for what leaders can expect when undertaking such a transition.

Enablers

The researcher discovered nine enablers of the transformation of the deacon board. They are listed in Table 13 (above) and presented below in order of frequency from least to greatest.

Spirit of Love and All-Inclusive Church. When asked what contributed to the transformation of the deacon board, four of the eleven (36%) participants cited the spirit of love as an enabler. Reflecting on this spirit, Deacon H stated:

Because of the love, you know, and it was just the energy that we had. There were seven of us that went through, male and female. There were two females and the other males that went through the class for orientation. We bonded as a group obviously, and we knew each other and through Pastor's guidance and, you know, and just the love of the whole process, we didn't feel like we were being put through any kind of special. You know, maneuvers or manipulations to get on the deacon Board. All we wanted to do is to learn and to serve and to be part of that of the church family. And it became a very easy process for us and very inspiring. So, you know, we saw our role...and my role growing and really felt comfortable for me...that I wasn't being put through anything that was, that I felt uncomfortable doing and so I appreciated that.

Pastor M also saw a spirit of love in the process. He stated:

Now, if the person is demeaned, humiliated, and embarrassed, they become wounded and will fight back out of their embarrassment and out of that wound and out of that demeaning situation. But if people are dealt with in the spirit of love it's difficult for them to just keep fighting. And this is why I have such a great faith and commitment to agape love, the redeeming love of Christ. It is redemptive. It is effective. You can't put a time clock on it. Sometimes it works immediately but more often than not it's a gradual process.

Others also noted that love is apart of the church's mission statement: "to teach, preach, and practice the unconditional love of Jesus Christ."

This finding is important because it is the driving force behind the transformation. As Pastor M stated, if a person is demeaned, humiliated, and embarrassed, it is difficult to win over that person. However, if a person is dealt with in a “spirit of love,” it makes it less difficult for that individual to keep “fighting.” Hence, the “spirit of love” was certainly an enabling factor that contributed to the transformation of the board. Such a discovery is important for pastors and leaders who would like to institute change in their own ecclesiastical settings.

Similarly, four of the eleven (36%) participants maintained that because New Spirit was an all-inclusive church, it made it easier for the transformation of the board. Deacon D stated, “No one, including women, should be left outside the body. And when you talk about his preaching and so forth, when it becomes inclusive nature, the natural progression is to bring them in...to bring the women into official capacities.” Deacon E also articulated this sentiment as he recounted his conversation with other male preachers and deacons:

I wanna tell them these preachers and deacons to be led by the Holy Spirit. If the Lord tell you, you need some woman deacons, get ‘em. Get ‘em. Let the deacon’s know now. Say these are women deacons. We all are deacons.

Pastor M added that as the church transformed the board, they began to receive compliments from other congregations about “how wonderful it is that you belong to a congregation that’s doing this.”

Witnessing of Male Deacons. Another intriguing finding for the researcher was the witnessing of male deacons as an important fact in the transformation of the board. Six of the eleven (55%) participants cited witness of male deacons as an enabler. Reflecting on her journey toward ministry, Dr. J stated that it was one of the senior male deacons, Deacon E, as well as a former pastor, who served as her chief advocates:

Now I grew up with New Spirit from the time that I was very young. And if you listen to Deacon E, you know, I don't know the story, but he is always saying it. He always says that Reverend O always said to everybody, "This is going to be a great woman of God." And it was Reverend O who first put me in oratorical contest. So I went to the Baptist. I was in the Baptist Sunday school oratorical contest for a number of times. And I remember that at one of them the message that I gave it was clear that I was the winner. Then the judges decided that the young man won. When we came back, Reverend O made it very clear to everyone that it had nothing to do with my presentation. It had to do with the fact that I was female.

Deacon F talked about how some male deacons "would just take you under their wing and they would show you what you need to do." Indeed, this information is extremely helpful, particularly as it relates to the senior deacons' role as chief advocates. Again, because the Black Baptist church is an autonomous, self-governed organization, pastors need buy-in from the church leadership in order to institute change.

Preaching, Teaching, and Practical Theology. A finding that was not surprising to the researcher, but nevertheless important for the study, was the critical role of preaching, teaching, and practical theology in the transformation. Six of the eleven (55%) participants stated that preaching, teaching, and practical theology were enablers. Deacon D said that it was the "inclusive nature of Pastor M's preaching to always accentuate that we are all children of God, whether black, white, yellow or male, female." Others, like Deacon E, stated that Pastor M "don't abuse nobody from the pulpit; he preaches." Dr. J cited how the Pastor used his sermons to give "history" to demonstrate the hand of God in history. For example, she stated "that God has continuously brought forth the leaders that were both males and females. So this is not a new thing. It's a new thing for us in our churches, but it's not a new thing for God." In sum, preaching, teaching, and practical theology are important to any transformation in the church, and particularly for the transformation of the deacon board. The aforementioned are

the mediums through which learning takes place in the church. Hence, no growth or learning takes place in the church, particularly a Black Baptist church, without some integration and implementation of these enablers.

Modeling of Ministry Transformations. Six of the eleven (55%) participants referenced the modeling from within and outside the church. Reverend W recalled the first female trustees and how they “challenged” the Pastor and the Board and provided “a breath of fresh air” because they “pushed the envelope a bit.” According to Deacon W, the Pastor saw perhaps the benefit of these initial female board members and began to put “the same level of critical players now from the ranks of women within our congregation in a place and placed in the Deacon Board.”

From the outside, Pastor M invited Drs. Ella and Henry Williams to New Spirit to preach a tag-team sermon. The Williams are highly-regarded and well-known husband and wife clergy within the Black church tradition. He stated that he was “trying to paint a picture of what the body of the Christ should be.” A reason Pastor M brought the Williamses is because he believed that “you have to try to demonstrate it in your own life with all of your faults, flaws, and failures as best as you can.”

Critical Faith Questioning. Six of the eleven (55%) participants engaged in critical faith questioning. Table 15 presents some of the findings in this study.

Table 15: Critical Faith Questioning

Participant	Critical Faith Questioning
C	<p>One of the things we did in that retreat was...we asked ourselves: "What does the deacon board look like ten years from now?" And, you know: "What does trustee board look like?" You know: "What's happening in our congregation and how do we need to be positioned to serve?"</p> <p>What if we have a congregation and we are getting, you know, 25, 50, 60 people joining in a week, you know? I mean...how do we prepare to do with that, you know, I mean what do we need to look like in order deal with that?</p>
D	<p>Deborah, one who God selected as one of the judges of Israel back in the old days, when women were ostracized from any position in Israel or in effect, in the whole world. So therefore if God in those days could use a woman to judge his people, which was Israel at the time and set her above everybody, then it shouldn't be any surprise that a woman can be selected to the Deacon Board or might become a minister or head of a church or Pastor?</p>
G	<p>So what is their role as a female deacon? Because you see all these male deacons all your life and, you know, the way they are. Ok, you know. So I said if you think I can do this, I will accept.</p> <p>There are more women at the church than there are men, and yet they want the men to lead us, you know. And we said why can't we help lead them?</p> <p>It's always the men doing the thing as the deacon's stuff and what are women supposed to do? Are they gonna respect us, like respect the mens?</p>
J	<p>That goes back to your critical faith. Asking questions: "God is this you, because I don't want to miss you if this is you?"</p> <p>It has also helped me to know that there is not an area that I can't question about how things are going because how they are going doesn't have to be correct and just that's how I got into that book about the God of the normal. Just because that's of the normal trend does not mean it's God's trend, so it helped me to continue to just say: 'Is this right? Is this you God? Is this how you do it or is this how some people have said that you do it?' So it keeps me never being satisfied because they said it has to be that way. Because I remember saying that at my initial sermon. It was in my notes but I said 'now if any of you are having a problem with this, you all will have to check with my father because I am following his instructions.</p>
M	<p>"When is New Spirit going to ...get some female deacons?" Just the question that we wanted to hear because then I knew that once the recommendation was made that we already had some Amens.</p>

Table 15 (continued)

Participant	Critical Faith Questioning
W	<p>It appeared to be a movement of a sort in the community, religious community that was bouncing off of perhaps females moving into a clergy and then it began to ask questions of: "Why aren't women represented in other areas of ministry that were uniquely or traditionally built to be men or male roles?"</p> <p>We want to know: "Where does that line up in scripture and are we doing the right thing? I was looking forward to be supportive of the fact because I know in my traditional thinking and people in my traditional audience question: Were we violating scripture by doing that?"</p> <p>So I think we're just operating on what we have traditionally embraced, and then we consider: "Is this right or wrong?"</p>

Critical Thinking, Reflecting, and Learning. Six of the eleven (55%)

participants cited critical thinking and reflecting as a contributor to the transformation. Reflecting on the Apostle Paul's writings, Deacon G argued:

I look past this fact because men were so dominant in the Bible. That a lot of the reading is geared toward men and you have to read between the lines that when Paul was talking. He was talking for the men because where he came from to where he went and he is like...he is thinking on the men side. And then when the lady do help, he talked about them but I don't look at it like the deacons are geared up for men because the scripture has one person talking, you know. And so it's just I guess when I detest that in a little bit. Some might say the scripture is just talking about a male right there, but I know that when I read the scriptures for men and women, you just to have know that one person was talking was just speaking for the man, but in today's age you have to be ready for transition. You have to know that God's word is meant for man, woman, boy or girl. And you have to give and receive and understand and even though they say he, that it means all of us.

Others shared her sentiment. Dr. J stated that you "have to remind people that when you are looking at Romans, really when you are looking at words there, Phoebe was probably a deacon." When asked, "How do you help people think critically?" Pastor M maintained:

I think...for me in three basic ways. I think the message of the gospel has to be intentional in that area where we constantly seek to give people an understanding of the gospel in such way that they truly can

put on a new garment in their thought process, a gospel of inclusiveness, a gospel of grace, a gospel of forgiveness, and a gospel of redemptive, redeeming love. Then I think that has to also be brought into every teaching experience that you engage people in and in counseling as well. But also I think may be forthwith that you have to try to demonstrate it in your own life with all of your faults, flaws, and failures as best as you can. But I think if you preach or proclaim this in sermons and messages and lectures and ways, it make sense and then try to seek to have the teaching ministry of the church present a curriculum, though imperfect, that's in harmony with that preaching experience and then in your counseling, whether it's the counsel of... in premarital experiences or in marriage and family conflicts or in parent, child or siblings, all of that is amazing how it permeates other experiences.

Thus, critical thinking and reflection was essential for the transformation.

Eight of the eleven (73%) participants referenced critical learning within the body of Christ. Deacon A stated:

Sometimes, you run into this with some of the membership, and they state the fact: "Well, you know, women were not allowed in certain positions." But when they realized that we all are servants and under the leadership of Christ, then that; I feel that that opened the door and gave people a better understanding of what deaconship was all about.

Deacon C cited that after a church retreat, the leaders learned through conversation that the Deacon Board needed to grow: "One of the things that came out of that conversation was that the Deacon Board probably needed to be much bigger." Additionally, Deacon H stated that post the ordination of the first female deacons, they still had to educate the congregation that they were not "deaconesses," a term generally reserved for wives of deacons, but "deacons." She stated: "They would look at us and say, 'Wow, you guys are deaconesses?' And we said, 'No. We were not deaconesses. We're deacons.' So, there was a lot of education I had to go on about that and the role that we were taking on."

Movement in the Religious Community. The researcher also found that nine of the eleven (82%) participants believed that the progressive movement in the

religious community also contributed to the transformation of New Spirit's Deacon Board. Deacon D stated:

Personally I didn't have any first hand knowledge of it, but I think from my perspective what happened, was that we're getting ready to enter into the 21st century and as the progressive church, it was again overdue for women to be selected to be in the Deacon Board.

Pastor M also stated that other churches, including a sister church in the city, had already made the transformation. Because of the revolution taking place in other churches in the region, the transition at New Spirit was not only expected, but was embraced.

Showing Capacity/Ability. Finally, a major finding that contributed to the transformation of the Board involved the female deacons' ability to "show capacity." All eleven (100%) participants affirmed that the women were able to show capacity as deacons. When asked about whether women should be deacons, Deacon E affirmed the ability of women to serve in this capacity by recalling the very first time he heard a female deacon show capacity/ability: "She can pray, speak. She gifted." Deacon F said there were those who doubted her and the other women, but soon "saw, with their own eyes, some of the responsibilities of the women and that they can serve as deacons as well." Dr. J argued that "the effectiveness of the women" also "helped in the learning experience of the church because they were able to do it! To the point that you couldn't say: 'I don't even know why they chose them.' They could go toe to toe with all of the duties." In sum, Reverend W stated that when he and the other deacons saw the female deacons serving, "you get an awareness that everyone is OK with it."

In sum, there were a number of enablers that contributed to the transformation of the deacon board. As with the barriers, the enablers underscore the complexity by which the transformation occurred. Again, these

enablers discussed in this chapter should help pastors and other church leaders better understand how to transform an all-male deacon board to one inclusive of female deacons.

Major Finding 4.0: The Dynamics of God/Holy Spirit, Pastor, and Deacons

The fourth major finding of the study involved the work of God/Holy Spirit, pastor, and deacons. To better understand the transformation of the Board, the researcher asked the participants a number of questions about “how” the transformation occurred. The answers ranged from God’s giving the Pastor the vision, to the Pastor’s preaching, teaching, and counseling, to the deacons’ singing, praying, and meditating to God. Based upon these answers, the researcher discovered that there were three essential relationships that guided how the transformation of the Board took place: (1) God and Pastor; (2) Pastor and Deacons; and (3) the Holy Spirit and Deacons.

God and Pastor

First, when the researcher asked the participants “how” the transformation of the board occurred, all eleven (100%) emphasized that the genesis of the transformation commenced with the vision that the Pastor “received” from God. Reflecting on Pastor M and his vision for the deacon board, Deacon D stated that “God speaks to him and in doing so, as the pastor of the church, then he implements the vision that God provides to him.” Deacon A, the Chair of the Board, stated that some people “wouldn’t be able to see what the shepherd sees.” According to Deacon A, as the shepherd, the pastor becomes the spokesperson for God:

I understand that he – the Lord gives him the vision and direction for the church. He, in turn, is the shepherd; he’s a spokesman. He brings

the Master's program to the church through the official board. That's the way I understand it, and then we, in turn, accept what he says because we are not called to be leaders or to be pastors. They are children by God, and we feel that he has sent him for such a time in this – to New Spirit, to lead this people, and we accept that. That's the best way I accept it, you know, because I feel like he's the one who's the overseer. He's the one who takes direction from the Holy Spirit and from the Lord as to which direction the church shall go in.

Deacon D echoes this belief and argues that God gave Pastor M the vision to implement in the church:

He's the only shepherd. God speaks to him and in doing so, as the Pastor of the church then he implements the vision that God provides to him. It is much easier to follow a Pastor that you know has the interest of the people at heart, or his sheep.

Deacon F also states that Pastor M is a visionary and believes that this is the reason he sought to transform the Board:

My experience is that, as a member of New Spirit, my Pastor, himself, is a visionary, and I think he saw that there was a need to do just that; to incorporate women into the deacon board, and I don't know for a fact, but I can assume that because we have so many female ministry leaders, females involved in the church as a whole, females attending church compared to males that, at some point, we will have to see that we need to involve them more into the deaconships.

Thus, this relationship is essential for the transformation because it puts the church leaders at ease and underscores that when they listen and adhere to the directives of the Pastor, they are also adhering to the directives that the Pastor has received from God.

Pastor and Deacons

Another critical relationship the researcher discovered was between pastor and deacons. As stated in the previous sub-section, the Pastor's relationship with God authenticated him as God's official representative in the deacons' minds.

The researcher determined that due to the Pastor's relationship with God, the Pastor consequently became the recipient of what is known as "pastoral

authority.” All eleven (100%) participants emphasized that pastoral authority played a decisive role in the transition. In Table 16, the researcher presents the various views of pastoral authority and how it influenced and contributed to the transition of the board. Deacon H stated that it was not a surprise to her the transformation was successful because: “The pastor is seen as the authority. And people, you know, they defer to his thinking and his vision because we trust in that. It goes back to what I was saying before we trust what’s happening and

Table 16: Pastoral Authority

Participant	Pastoral Authority
A	He brings the Master’s program to the church through the official board. That’s the way I understand it, and then we, in turn, accept what he says because we are not called to be leaders or to be pastors. We feel that He has sent him for such a time as this—to New Spirit, to lead this people, and we accept that.
B	Pastoral authority...his authority should be in or under direction of higher authority. It should be either shepherd over flock, and so he’s got the authority to marry people, to counsel people. Then he has got the authority to dictate to us...,He is the Shepherd and I, you know, respect the authority.
C	There is some authority that the pastor has to move and operate. Not only some of the business aspects of the church but definitely the spiritual aspects of the growth and development of that church. I mean one clear thing that we talk about is that in the Baptist faith that the deacons are not the pastor’s boss. That’s not our role to boss him around and to tell him what to do. Some people don’t interpret it that way and I have been told that by a couple of folks but I don’t think that that’s our role. He’s accountable to God and that’s where it all stops. So I’d say, yeah, he does have some authority...I don’t think I can compare to a private business, because even if you compare, I don’t think you can compare a pastor to a CEO of a company because the CEO of a company usually reports to a board...So there are some comparisons that we can make on certain occasions, but on this issue I would say that is the authority that’s given to pastor, and there’s just really no mechanism that really challenges that currently.

Table 16 (continued)

Participant	Pastoral Authority
D	Likewise with his being the Pastor of the church he has the ability to do what he thinks is best for the church because it turns out best for the church most times. Now nobody gets it right 100% of time. But he is right more times than most people.
E	So anything you know what Pastor M wanted to do, he do it here.
F	Pastoral authority is that ability of the pastor to implement change. With the help of his deacon's board, he's one that is the overseer of the church and his authority to implement change and to make things right for the congregation.
G	<p>Well pastoral authority to me is if you are the pastor of this church, then you have a right, you know, to ordain female or male or female ministers or trustees. I think that gives you the right. I know you need to probably have the head of the deacon board, head of trustee there with you to make some decision, but I think that a true minister or pastor has been called to, you know, to be a pastor. Then I think they listen to their heart to see what God explained to them, and I think Reverend M is quite a good example of that because there are some of the things that happen, you know, he does it with such authority, that it doesn't matter to him if you like it or not.</p> <p>He is our pastor. He is our father. He is our leader. So somebody has to have that authority to make decisions for this family or for the church. So I think pastoral authority of a pastor is making the right decision for your family so.</p>
H	I believe that that is the right to be able to set policy, to be able to provide guidance, to be able to make decisions about how processes happen within the church or within the board or within individuals as part of keeping new organizations together. Also to be able to provide, I think, the spiritual guidance to make a board move or to make an individual or congregation move forward in the way that it should. So if the pastor sees someone or something going in a direction that is not the right one, that he does have the authority to, you know, to redirect it and to provide some additional guidance or other options for that. And I think that that authority also is necessary to lead a deacon board. The deacon board provides support and guidance to the pastor but he also has the authority to lead us as a group for the betterment of the church and for our own spiritual guidance.
J	In the Baptist church it's a dictatorship...you told me I can be candid and I will not be shy of that. What the pastor says is it.

Table 16 (continued)

Participant	Pastoral Authority
M	<p>Through the years, New Spirit has had great respect and commitment to strong pastoral leadership. I didn't establish that. I found it here and sought to build on it without abusing it. And, I think the next pastor, after myself, will find that tradition very much alive. Therefore, pastoral initiatives, pastoral insight, and pastoral leadership are not exceptions here, but they are expectations with a history for that. Therefore, recommendations, programs, projects, and initiatives that are brought and presented by the pastor are generally welcomed by the congregation, even if they are not able to pay for it all the time. And, I think that is something to be considered with reference to initiating change in a congregation.</p>
W	<p>I believe that pastoral authority would mean that the pastor has the right to make executive decisions...His or her decision is sound and has been driven by prayer and some divine intervention... and trusting that they would trust him. However, if it doesn't go that way with that board then he may or she may take the right to overstep that and invoke that change regardless of that because they have pastoral authority.</p> <p>It gets to be a very edgy area because I think that we have to be able to make decisions as pastors. We have to be able to overrule some things that we know are not necessarily the best look at it... but we have to stay on the side of the fence where we are fair and not humanist and we are not prejudiced by what I want or what I think the better good cause for... so pastoral authority would have to be a keen awareness of the better good as that applies to God not to ones self.</p>

that is for the good.” Deacon G maintained that in order for Pastor M to lead the transition, it had to be something “between Reverend M and God.”

As discussed above, there were numerous barriers to the transformation, yet the transformation of the Deacon Board was smooth and did not cause an upheaval within the church. The lack of internal upheaval and direct resistance could be attributed to, among other things, the well-developed relationship between the Pastor and deacons. As Deacon D notes, he and other deacons on the board greatly respect Pastor M and believe that he “is the type of person” they “want to become like.” Thus, Pastor M was skillful in developing his relationship with the board, which eventually paid dividends in the end. Table 17

highlights this relationship and underscores the three primary methods Pastor M employed to develop his relationship with the board. In sub-sections below, the researcher discusses each method in detail.

Table 17: Pastoral Led Strategies

Principal Themes	Interviews n=11	Percentage
teaching and preaching	7	64%
critical pastoral leading and intervention	9	82%
seed-planting and vision (teaching-indirectly)	11	100%

Teaching, Preaching, and Leading. First, seven of the eleven (64%) participants stressed that Pastor M was able to lead and develop relationships with them through his teaching and preaching. Dr. J emphasized that the purpose of teaching and preaching was to “open” the minds and help people “see” God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Unconsciously agreeing with Dr. J, Pastor M stated, “Teaching...has a way of opening paths in many other avenues.” When asked about his role in the transition, Pastor M asked:

How can we preach, teach, and practice the unconditional love of Jesus Christ and at the same time close the door of service in the face of your daughters, your wife, your mothers and future generation? If we say that this person is not qualified, it's only because this person happens to be female. Then what have we said about all of the females in your family... past, present, and future? According to the teachings of Jesus, and I think when people are presented honestly and lovingly with this kind of teaching and this kind of challenge, those of goodwill, those who are truly struggling and trying to be the best they can within the body of Christ, we will see this as an opportunity to grow in grace.

Moreover, Deacon F stated that:

Teaching was a part of the training process in that we had sessions with the Pastor and the Head of the Deacon Board and Assistant Head of the Deacon Board, and the process included multiple meetings, multiple training sessions on the role of the deacon. We

actually received a booklet that explained what a deacon was and scripture references to the role of the deacons.... That was part of it so that you knew what your responsibilities were as a deacon. So, yes, teaching did play a great part in it, and we still get the opportunity to...be taught on a quarterly basis because we still have meetings that will keep us up to date on what's going on.

Reflecting upon sermons he heard Pastor M preach, Deacon D emphasized:

The inclusive nature of Pastor M's preaching always accentuates that we are all children of God, whether black, white, yellow or male, female. We all have roles to play in our development to become more Christ like. We all have gift of a spirit, spiritual gift or fruits of the spirit and one of the things that Pastor M continuing emphasis in his teachings were the development of fruits of the spirit and using those fruits of the spirit to help church become better. The body I should say. Therefore incorporating the spirit means that no one including women, should be left outside 'the body' and when you talk about his preaching and so forth—when it becomes inclusive nature, the natural progression is to bring them in ... to bring the women into official capacities.

In short, teaching and preaching were very instrumental in the transformation process.

Critical Pastoral Leading and Intervention. Second, the Pastor was able to develop a solid relationship with the deacons because they had witnessed his ability to lead and intervene. Nine of the eleven (82%) participants emphasized the critical role the Pastor played as leader and intervener. When asked about how the transformation occurred, Deacon F said:

I think that the fact that our Pastor had to do the preliminary to let them know what was happening and that he would never just bring anything on the Deacon Board without first having conversation about it, not knowing in detail what went on, but I would think that he readied their minds in some way to receive this process.

Deacon G stated that "Reverend M, being the person that he is, people look up to him. He can make a stand, not many can do." Dr. J called Pastor M the "forerunner," willing to not only take the stand, but also the "flak." Again, through

his leading and intervening, Pastor M was able to develop relationships and trust with the deacons that aided in the transformation of the Board.

Seed-Planting and Vision Sharing. Lastly, the researcher discovered that because Pastor M had developed a solid relationship with the deacons through effectively teaching, preaching, and leading them over many years, it placed the Pastor in a better position to cast the vision to transform the Board from all-male to one inclusive of female deacons. In fact, all eleven (100%) participants believed that seed-planting and vision were also critical. Deacon H acknowledged that the board transformation was a long process, but believed that it began with “seed” and “vision”:

Well I think it's a long process...it's not something that can happen overnight and I've seen Pastor do this for quite a few years where he starts with a seed of an idea or starts almost a mantra. Take for example "every member a minister." You know every member a tither or the mission statement of the church and getting people to really understand what that means. The same time it's almost a gift because you have to be able for people to see the vision of the future and where they are in that vision. So if I didn't believe that I had a place and my children have a place in the future of the church at New Spirit, then I wouldn't support it. I wouldn't see things happening for the future. So it's an exhausting job I think to be able to help people see that vision.

Reverend W discussed how Pastor M planted seeds at a meeting about what “another church” is doing regarding females in leadership. As a result, the leaders at New Spirit began to “dialogue about those possibilities.” Moreover, Deacon F emphasized that Pastor M was a “visionary”:

My experience is that, as a member of New Spirit, my pastor, himself, is a visionary, and I think he saw that there was a need to do just that; to incorporate women into the deacon board, and I don't know for a fact, but I can assume that because we have so many female ministry leaders, females involved in the church as a whole, females attending church compared to males that, at some point, we will have to see that we need to involve them more into the deaconships.

In sum, the deacons trusted Pastor M and were familiar with his leadership. While not everyone may have readily embraced the change of the board, they at least embraced the concept because they were willing to trust the pastor's vision—even if they did not fully agree with it.

The Holy Spirit and Deacons

The third and final relationship for this study was between the Holy Spirit and Deacons. This finding underscored that leadership transformation was possible not merely because of the Pastor's leadership, preaching, and teaching and the deacon's relationship with him, but rather because of some external factor that moved the leaders to embrace the vision that the Pastor had received from God.

Seven of the eleven (64%) participants cited the movement of God and the Holy Spirit as a major factor in the transformation of the Board. Deacon A stated that "I would feel that the Holy Spirit was there helping us accept new challenges, and the Holy Spirit would help us see that this is the way that we should move our church in the 21st century." Deacon D also emphasized the move of God by saying:

If it is of God, the change will be made. If it is not of God, things will move on and then you pray about it and then let God handle the rest. Whether the change occurs or whether your concerns are implemented by the Pastor, whether they are not implemented by the Pastor, it is what the influence of God makes on the individual.

Indeed, nine of the eleven (82%) participants reported that the Holy Spirit and God served as ultimate change agents for the transition. Deacon A stated:

The Holy Spirit helps us to see different ideas and the different things he wanted us to see as we grow, and we grow through prayer, through meditation, through Bible study. That's how we grow...I would feel that the Holy Spirit was there helping us accept new challenges, and the Holy Spirit would help us see that this is the way that we should move our church in the 21st century.

Deacon C emphasized that the Holy Spirit was definitely “evident,” particularly in “guiding the Pastor to identify those initial candidates.” He argued that the “reaction to those candidates was well received” and served as an example of how the Holy Spirit “manifests itself during this process.”

Additionally, Deacon G argued that in order for the congregation to accept the new female deacons as “deacons,” the Holy Spirit must have “just moved across that congregation” at the ordination service. Also, Dr. J reported that:

the Holy Spirit can bring about these kinds of changes...a total change of a person’s heart and mind against the norm. Only the Holy Spirit can give you the courage, and confidence to be able to stand up and do that. You have to know that God has told you to do that because you are taking a stand, an unpopular stand and you have to know that you heard the voice of God to do that.

Reflecting upon the ordination service of the first female deacons, Deacon G recalls lining-a-hymn, which is a combination of a prayer, meditation, and song. Trained by the senior deacons, Deacon G recalled what impact her singing “I Know I Am a Child of God” had on her, the deacons, and the congregation:

I don’t know, maybe the spirit just moved across that congregation, you know? First James was doing his and then Reverend M was just talking, you know. He said, “Sometimes the person just needs some help. And so, Sister G can you just give us a ‘common meter hymn.’” And I just sung “I Know I’m a Child of God,” and my mom hollered. And somebody else started...you know? So, I was like, “Oh My God! This is just awesome!”

In sum, based upon the participants’ responses, the Holy Spirit served—as an unexplained external factor—as the ultimate change agent.

Major Finding 5.0: What Church Leaders Learned

In analyzing the data, the researcher also examined what church leaders learned and what knowledge they gained from the experience. From the

interviews, the researcher placed learnings into subcategories. An overview of what was learned from the experience is presented in Table 18 in order of frequency.

Table 168: What Church Leaders Learned

Principal Themes	Interviews n=11	Percentage
Change requires pastoral leadership	3	36%
Change strengthens faith	4	36%
Learning and development are ongoing	5	45%
Change is aided by prayer and singing	5	45%
Change questions, reflects, and dialogues	6	55%
Change must be managed	7	64%
Change involves the Holy Spirit	9	82%
Change is evolutionary, not radical	10	91%

Change Requires Pastoral Leadership

Three of the eleven (27%) participants stated that they learned that change requires pastoral leadership. Reflecting on New Spirit's process, Deacon D maintained:

For any change to take place, specially in the church, the Pastor has to be the one leading the charge. Now he has to make sure against this ... for instances the churches that don't have women in the ministry, women in the deacon board, or women in the trustee board, he has to be the one that is truly committed to making the change happen. Just like in any of the business environment if the leader is not committed to the change the change more likely will fail.

Deacon F and Dr. J stated they had learned that the "leader of a church is key in making" change possible.

Change Strengthens Faith

Four of the eleven (36%) participants stated that they learned that the transformation of the Board actually helped them grow and strengthened their faith. Deacon G said:

It's had a great impact on my life because if nothing else happened, with this becoming a deacon, it brought me closer to God. And like I said, it has taught me how to treat people, you know. Before I might have cursed you out and told you get out my face, but it's more proper to be more humble.

Pastor M stated that it has given him “new tools experientially as well as in the whole faith tradition and...a pedagogical framework. It has really...I think, in a common way, it has given me greater strength or greater testimony.”

Learning and Development are Ongoing

When asked what they had learned, five of the eleven (27%) participants argued that more learning and development were needed in order to support the transformation of the Board. Deacon C stated that learning is “not a one-time process” but requires ongoing “professional development or more training.” Deacon F and Pastor M also argued that more “leadership resources and institutional aids” and “training” are needed within the seminaries and divinity schools to prepare church leaders on how to manage and effectuate institutional change. Dr. J stated that “I have learned that people need to be prepared. I have learned that with the right kind of leader, people will accept a radical change and can become comfortable with it.”

Change is Aided by Prayer and Singing

Five of the eleven (45%) participants stated that they learned that change is aided by prayer and singing. Dr. A forcefully argued that prayer helps in “the growth and development of the church.” He stated that because “this is the

Lord's business...you can't do his business unless you ask His guidance and His direction. You have to have prayer. You need that." Deacon G stated that the combination of prayers and singing at the ordination service led to people "clapping" and "shouting." Deacon G and others at the service understood the "clapping" and "shouting" as an affirmation of the new female deacons.

Change Questions, Reflects, and Dialogues

Six of the eleven (55%) participants argued that they learned that change involves questioning, reflecting, and dialoguing. Dr. J stated that it has helped her develop a "critical opinion" about the "male-dominated" pulpit:

Well, it helped me to know that my God was an equal opportunity employer, because to say to me that, there were certain things that I couldn't do in the church because I was female. For me, it was not acceptable. It was like God I believe that you speak to all of your children.... It has also helped me to know that there is not an area that I can't question about how things are going because how they are going doesn't have to be correct and just that's how I got into that book about the God of the normal. Just because that's of the normal trend does not mean it's God's trend, so it helped me to continue to just say: "Is this right? Is this you God?"

Deacon G said it helped her understand that God is talking not just to the men, but "all of us." Deacon C stated that it raised questions not only about women's roles, but men's roles in the church:

Does that potentially push a role that was traditionally held by men? Does that have some of our men less willing to assume some of the responsibilities that they previously assumed, now that the women folk could do it? So "oh, you know, the women would do it" and so that to me brings on another challenge, you know. How do you begin to make sure that you don't become so complacent now in the development of men for roles of responsibility, because women folk are ready?

Deacon W emphasized that the change of the Board has stirred dialogue. People are now more open and comfortable in discussing more traditionally-held religious beliefs and practices.

Change Must Be Managed

Seven of the eleven (64%) participants stated that they learned that change must be managed. Deacon C argued:

I don't think you can say I'm going to do x, y or z, whether it's female deacons or whatever the case may be and do it and just expect it to happen and expect it to work. I think it is a long-term proposition that has to be managed and if you don't, then I think you can potentially cause trouble down the line.

Deacon D talked about spreading the deacons throughout the congregation so they can get closer to the people and generate the "Amen's" needed to facilitate and support the transformation of the Board. Pastor M emphasized that he realized that the change could have been managed much better and that he could have helped the congregation "see it in action," "learn," and "discover that we are not so unique after all, because sometimes assumed uniqueness can lead to arrogance."

Change Involves the Holy Spirit

Nine of the eleven (82%) participants stated that they learned that change involves the Holy Spirit. Dr. J's reflections on the Holy Spirit summarized the sentiments of the participants:

Oh, I think He was in charge. Only the Holy Spirit can give you the courage, confidence to be able to stand up and do that. You have to know that God has told you to do that because you are taking a stand, an unpopular stand and you have to know that you heard the voice of God to do that.

Pastor M further added, "I think timing had something to do with it but underneath it I think the spirit, The Holy Spirit, was allowed. We allowed the Holy Spirit to operate and in many instances remove barriers that we didn't even know about."

Change is Evolutionary, Not Radical

Ten of the eleven (91%) participants stated that they learned that change is evolutionary versus a radical process. When asked about the transformation of the Deacon Board at New Spirit, Deacon H argued that change was *evolutionary*:

And so, when I said it was evolutionary, it's that we moved to, you know, we were able to make that change, this causing, sometimes it could be a very chaotic thing to happen because people don't want to see things changed, they want to see things being remain in the old tradition and there was that wonderful mixture of the old and the new happening at the same time where people could feel comfortable with it happening as a part of the process. That's why I said it was evolutionary because it didn't cause for, it didn't cause people to have to transform their way of thinking from one way to another. It became a part of a process where we grew as part of a family and as a church at large. So that's why I felt where it didn't mean that people have to change their way of being from one, you know from one day to the next that it was part of our growth process, you know. I think revolution as being something where it turns into an upheaval and people changing administration, changing your whole way has the way of thinking. But this was a very smooth transformation I believe and obviously the evidence of it is that it has grown in and been accepted as part of the institution that's all of it. So I appreciated that.

Pastor M shared this perspective that the transformation of the Board was "smooth" and evolutionary. He stated:

I would say that we did not here...do this transition or some might call it transformational process, in a confrontational way, but we recognized there were underlined traditions that were definitely being challenged and changed. And personally I have to prayerfully consider, "How can we do this and make it or have it become almost an obvious growth experience within our own church, with a minimum amount of division or controversy?" Not that we are afraid of controversy, but within the body of Christ we always look at: "How this can be done in a saving, liberating, and reconciling manner?"

Pastor M also articulated that his "own educational experience placed something in my context that I didn't really catch up with until, almost 40 years later and I think may be these kind of experiences enhance our faith and put things in our reservoir that we may not draw from until years later." Deacon B, who expressed

some reservation about the change, confessed that he now believes that “we did the right thing now, more than I did when it happened.” Deacon C acknowledged that the transformation was “hard” and that “change is always difficult.” He learned that if a church takes it “slow” that it can be a good process but he argued that “you don’t want to just push it on people too fast, without bringing them along.”

Chapter Summary

Five major findings emerged from this research into the process by which a Black Baptist church’s all-male Deacon Board was transformed to become inclusive of women. The first major finding concerned the participants’ understandings of faith and critical faith. This study found that the church leaders have varied, but definite, understandings of the concept of “faith”; conversely, these church leaders could not provide a definition of “critical faith” or their concept of “critical faith” was extremely limited.

The second major finding identified the critical experiences that the participants drew upon as they navigated the process of transforming the Deacon Board. The critical experiences included personal civil rights movement experience, indirect (influences from) civil rights movement experience, and prior experiences with women leaders within the church (i.e., female ministers and trustees).

The third major finding recognized the presence of and identified the enablers and barriers that the church leaders confronted during the transformational process. Enablers included preaching, teaching, modeling of transformed ministries, and females showing capacity-ability. Barriers included tradition, sexism, and female opposition, among others.

The fourth finding recognized that there were three relational dynamics working together to effect the resultant transformation of the Deacon Board: that of God/Holy Spirit, Pastor and Deacons. This finding demonstrated that the process of change, at least within the Black Baptist church context, does not only involve the use of “logical” strategies, but it also is dependent upon the movement and work of unexplainable and underlying forces.

Finally, this study uncovered what the research participants learned from their board transformation process. Specifically, the participants recounted that change is ongoing, requires leadership, must be managed, evolves over the course of time, and invokes the presence of God and the Holy Spirit. In the next chapter, the researcher analyzes and interprets the data to make sense of these findings.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order for Black religious organizations to remain relevant in this post-modern and post-civil-rights era, they will need to confront their traditional leadership structures and, in so doing, challenge long-held belief systems. Increasingly, religious institutions within the Black community are responding to internal and external challenges to redefine leadership and emphasize a more egalitarian and inclusive view of church leadership. The challenge to change, however, is not simply a challenge to redefine an organizational structure, but it is a challenge to the very “faith” held by those who have been the church’s most devoted participants. The church highlighted in this study met this challenge. The church leaders in this study engaged in the process of transforming the church’s patriarchal leadership structure to one that is inclusive of the church’s largest constituency—women. By so doing, these church leaders were called upon to reassess their own faith and most deeply-held religious beliefs.

The purpose of this study was to examine what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male Deacon Board to one that is inclusive of female deacons. Specifically, the researcher sought to better understand what this study calls “critical faith learning” and how the Pastor and deacons may or may not have engaged in this type of learning to

transform the Deacon Board. The core research questions were presented, which ultimately sought to address the following key matters:

- (1) How church leaders understood the concepts of “faith” versus “critical faith” and whether they could recognize the occurrence of “critical faith learning” while they engaged in the church’s leadership transformation process.
- (2) Why the church leaders sought to transform the Deacon Board.
- (3) How church leaders went about the process of transforming the Deacon Board.
- (4) What experiences contributed to or hindered this transformation.

In this chapter, the researcher seeks to address the above-stated, underlying premises. This chapter is organized by briefly stating each underlying premise, followed by an analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of relevant findings. This chapter also incorporates the literature review on faith development theory and critical theory as well as charismatic and transformational leadership theories.

Key Analysis #1

How did church leaders understand the concepts of “faith” versus “critical faith” and how did they recognize the occurrence of “critical faith learning” when they engaged in the process of transforming the Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of females?

Understandings of Faith

To begin this discussion on what is “critical faith learning,” the researcher asked the participants to first provide their definition of faith. The researcher assumed that since the study was being conducted with religious leaders who subscribed to a particular faith tradition, they had a definition of faith and would

be able to provide one. Indeed, this was the case. All eleven participants provided a definition of faith. For three (27%) of the participants, faith was defined verbatim as it is in the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” For others (the remaining eight, 73%), the definitions of faith were more nuanced and revealed the various understandings of faith within a faith community: “faith is to believe that through all things...God will bring you out of the storm;” “an internal belief that there is a divine power and guidance in our lives....”

The researcher was not surprised by the participants’ ability to articulate a definition of faith because, as Fowler (1981) premised, humans are “endowed at birth” with faith capacities. More interestingly, however, were the variations in faith definitions that arose in this study. The varied definitions supported Fowler’s (1981, 2001) stage model of faith development—that faith development occurs across a lifetime, that faith development progresses through stages (the stages are provided in Table 1), and that adult learners’ faith development is evident in stages 3-6. In this study, some church leaders restated a Biblical definition of faith that has been oft-cited to and among church parishioners across generations and, by doing so, reflects Fowler’s third stage of faith development (synthetic/conventional faith).¹ By contrast, this study showed that other church leaders had a more personal definition of faith, which reflected Fowler’s fourth stage of faith development (individuated/reflective faith).²

¹Synthetic/Conventional faith is conforming faith, taking direction from popular convention. It balances various conventional demands into a workable synthesis of meaning.

²Individuated/Reflective faith is personally chosen and consciously differentiated from the expectation of others; autonomous.

The researcher found the variability of faith concepts quite intriguing because it affirms the literature on faith development theory—that faith is constantly evolving, changing, and construing new meaning and understandings of one’s environment and world (Fowler, 1986). At this study’s core was the concept that faith is not static or “uniform,” but is a dynamic process that incorporates a plethora of life experiences (Fernhout, 1986). Since all participants were able to provide views of “faith” that were varied and, in some cases, very personal, this study confirmed the researcher’s assumption, based on Fowler’s work (1986)—that church leaders have the capacity and do “critically reflect” upon and change their faith paradigms and belief systems (Mezirow, 2000). That is, each research participant had the capacity for “critical faith learning.”

Understandings of Critical Faith and Critical Faith Learning

In addition to asking the participants to provide their definition of faith, the researcher also asked them to provide their definition of “critical faith.” In this study, the researcher assumed that in order for church leaders to have transformed their all-male deacon board to be inclusive of female deacons, they had engaged in what this study calls “critical faith learning.” The researcher’s definition of “critical faith learning” noted that such is a continual process of critically analyzing one’s faith. Fowler’s (1986) theory of faith development included the concept that one has the capacity for “critical reflection” of self and ideology (p. 37). Applying Fowler’s concept, the researcher assumed that in order for a “critical faith learning” process to have occurred, the church leaders would have a preexisting concept of being critical and evaluative of their faith.

Surprisingly, four of the participants could not articulate any definition of “critical” faith, and out of the remaining seven participants that did provide a

definition, only three of them used language that might invoke “critical theory.” Similarly, since the majority of the research participants seemingly did not have a preexisting definition of “critical faith,” they did not identify “critical faith learning” as evident throughout the transformational process.

Although Fowler’s (1981) stages of faith development included the concept of critical reflection, it was an untested concept (Furushima 1992). Its application, within this study, demonstrated that church leaders, at least in a Black Baptist church context, are unable or unwilling to redefine their concept of faith as “critical faith.” This result may reinforce a criticism of Fowler’s theories articulated by Parks (1992) that for those who are a part of a faith tradition, Fowler’s definitions may put their faith “at risk” (p. 8). This result also demonstrates Ford-Grabowsky’s (1992) concern that Fowler’s focus on stages of faith progression highlights the “human side” of faith without reference to the “divine side.” Indeed, in this study, one of the participant’s responses demonstrated evidence of a disjuncture: “What do you mean by ‘critical faith?’ ...I don’t know how to define critical faith. I mean...faith is faith. Could it be less or more? More critical...or less critical...or can you have degrees of faith?”

Of course, the fact that the research participants could not or would not articulate a “critical faith” definition does not necessarily mean that they did not engage in a “critical faith learning” process. Indeed, as discussed further in this chapter, this study showed just that—critical faith learning was at work. This research suggests that their ability to engage in critical faith but not articulate it might mean this development is occurring at an “unconscious level” (Boyd, 1989, 1991). First, several participants acknowledged their use of critical questioning, thinking, and reflection during the transformation process. This affirms the literature that adults, albeit in a faith community, engage in meaning making

(Fowler, 1986; Frankl, 1984), particularly in their environment or, in this case, their faithworld (Fernhout, 1986).

Second, critical faith learning in the Black church context occurred through a different medium, other than the medium of “critical theory” or “rationality.” Dirx (1997) argues that “rigid adherence to an agenda or curriculum mitigates against expression of soul” (p. 85). The participants in this study saw their faith as connected to their “soul” and rebelled against any notion or terminology that may have tried to hinder that which is free and used to “open spaces.” As Dirx points out in reference to the soul’s desire for freedom, “the soul thrives on open spaces within the experience. Soul often meanders and wanders its way through our individual and collective lives, producing uncertain, ambiguous, and even messy situations” (p. 85). Notwithstanding, the lack of an articulated “critical faith” definition was indeed a revelation for the researcher. Additionally, the question of critical faith might possibly have mitigated their expression of soul.

This finding led the researcher to ask: *What could explain the lack of an articulated critical definition of faith?* It may be that the assumption that adults “progress” through stages of faith development may be culturally offensive to some who see their *faith in action* every day and have devoted themselves to serving within their faith tradition—and in the Black church tradition, in particular. Furushima (1992), who questions the universality of Fowler’s faith development theory, states: if “the universality of faith development theory is to be claimed, then cross-cultural data would need to be gathered and analyzed within the existing stage and aspect schemes” (p. 215). Further, it may be that the lack of a “critical faith” definition merely reflects the church leaders’ experience that faith is not demonstrated by the “native [structural] capacities one has” but rather “what one does with them” (Dykstra 1986, p. 60). When, as here, one simply asks someone if they have in a sense “progressed” to critical faith, the answer will

likely be “no,” as demonstrated in the written PIDI answers and interview responses. However, a different result emerged, as this study learned, by posing critical incidents and asking probing questions (Brookfield, 1990). According to Brookfield (1987), critical incidents prompt “respondents to identify an incident” and “concentrate on describing particular happenings” (p. 97). The researcher used the critical incident technique and in doing so learned that church leaders had indeed engaged in critical faith learning, even though they appeared to be unfamiliar with the terminology or did not explicitly think in these terms.

As a result, the research suggests that while eleven participants were unable or unwilling to define their critical faith through further questioning, it became evident that they did in fact engage in critical faith learning. Thus, this finding supports Fowler’s notion of faith learning and development and this research study’s premise of critical faith learning and development. Faith and critical faith, in this sense, is an ongoing process that occurs rationally and unconsciously and involves what Dirkx (1997) has called “connected” or “soul learning.”

Key Analysis #2

Why did the church leaders seek to transform the deacon board?

In this study, the researcher sought to understand why the Pastor and the deacons decided to transform their church’s all-male Deacon Board to one that is inclusive of female deacons. This question was important for the study because it would address the impetus and purpose for the transformation as a whole.

Incongruity

Understanding that the heart of this study involved the attempt to understand the change in the church's existing power structure to include women, who historically had been left out of this faith community's leadership paradigm, the researcher focused on the literature by critical theorists to address these important questions about hegemony (Brookfield, 2005; Gramsci, 1988; Horkheimer, 1982). Critical theorists, such as Horkheimer (1982) and Brookfield (2005), posit that the "critical" aspect of critical theory is the emphasis on human emancipation and liberation from the circumstances [systems, structures] that enslave them. As Horkheimer (1995) maintains, critical theory "is not just the theory of emancipation; it is the practice of it as well" (p. 233). The researcher believed that by transforming the Deacon Board, an instrumental power structure within this Black church, the women would find some measure of "liberation."

Critical theorists, however, have a different view of what is the impetus for change or transformation that did not seemingly fit within the context of faith development or the church communities such as the Black Baptist church studied here. Indeed, critical theorists argue that change or transformation is often precipitated by: (1) an environmental crisis; (2) a revolution within new management; (3) an intentional management shake-up within an organization (Argyris, 1977); (4) a disjuncture (Jarvis, 1987); (5) a discontent (Fay, 1987); (6) a trigger event (Brookfield, 1987), or (7) a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). However, in the context of this study, a sudden crisis or trigger event would be unlikely. Instead of a "sudden" transformation, it occurred gradually over time as one's faith beliefs grew from mere incongruence to eventually a dilemma. Incongruence, in this sense, occurs when something is not in harmony with one's beliefs, while a dilemma is not only something that is merely incongruous but requires one to make a decision between unfavorable

alternatives. In this sense, critical faith learning commences when one's faith beliefs are *incongruent* with those of the church or one's faith community. This is not a dilemma, but an evolution.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher found that there was incongruence, which led to the transformation of the Board. The incongruence was evidenced by (1) shifts in leadership paradigms outside the church community that were not reflected within the church and (2) the church's teaching of inclusion and egalitarian principles in the midst of its failure to demonstrate such principles in the constitution of its leadership. To the researcher's surprise, however, incongruence was not the prevailing precipitating factor. Not one research participant cited anything that could be construed as "incongruence" as the reason why they decided to transform the Deacon Board. Instead, based upon the findings, transformation was precipitated by a number of factors, principally that of time, which will be examined more closely below.

Time in a Changing Context

When the researcher asked the participants why the Pastor and deacons decided to transform the all-male Deacon Board to one that is inclusive of female deacons, seven of the eleven (64%) participants emphasized the importance of time. One deacon stated that "with Pastor M being the progressive person,...it was just a matter of time before women were selected to the Deacon Board." Certainly, this was a revelation for the researcher. Unlike critical theorists who emphasize that transformation or perspective transformation is sudden or is the result of a crisis, a trigger event, or a disorienting dilemma (Brookfield, 1987; Fay, 1987; Jarvis, 1987; Mezirow, 1991, 2000), the researcher discovered that these sudden notions posited by critical theorists were disavowed because time was a

factor. As another deacon noted, the transformation was not something *revolutionary*, but *evolutionary*:

That's why I said it was evolutionary because it didn't cause for, it didn't cause people to have to transform their way of thinking from one way to another. It became a part of a process where we grew as part of a family and as a church at large. So that's why I felt where it didn't mean that people have to change their way of being from one, you know from one day to the next that it was part of our growth process, you know. I think revolution as being something where it turns into an upheaval and people changing administration, changing your whole way has the way of thinking. But this was a very smooth transformation I believe and obviously the evidence of it is that it has grown in and been accepted as part of the institution that's all of it. So I appreciated that. (Deacon H)

Given her response, the reason for the transformation had less to do with something that *had happened* versus something that was *already happening*. In this sense, people were growing in their beliefs, even though the decisions to act upon those changing beliefs and transform the board were not the result of some radical event, crisis, or movement but rather the generative process of time.

The deacon's statement that she "appreciated" the way the transformation evolved is important because it alludes to the risk church leaders face when trying to implement change before the congregation is ready or before the congregation "has grown" to a point of maturity to be ready for the change. This is particularly important because Yukl (2006), a leadership theorist, cautions that some organizations may not be ready for a radical change. He advocates that leaders should not make "radical change" if no "obvious crisis exists and many members see no need for change" (p. 261). Given that the deacon said that she "appreciated" that the process was "evolutionary," it demonstrated that, because of the evolution of time, it was easy for the Deacon Board to assimilate and embrace this radically new way of thinking and being without a crisis or creating one.

For example, an affirmation that the church leaders and congregation were ready and pleased with the new female deacons occurred during the deacon ordination service when, according to Deacon G, people started “yelling” and saying, “It’s about time.” The transformation process occurred because, as the most-senior deacon stated, “So everything changes. Time for things. Time for all things. So, I think it’s time for a woman to be a deacon.”

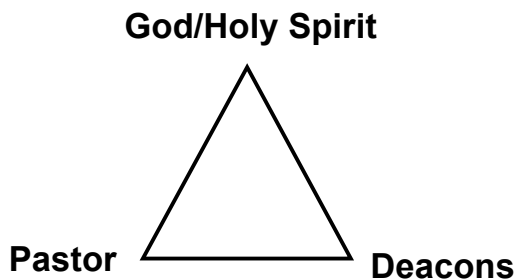
Although the element of time as integral to this significant change in the culture of the diaconate seems to contradict the implications of suddenness that many transformation theorists suggest (Brookfield, 2005; Mezirow, 1991, 2000), there is strong indication that the process of change is more consistent with Boyd’s (1989, 1991) theory of the way change occurs. Unlike the sharp and conscious event that is suggested and often expected, Boyd suggests that as changes in the environment occur, they are impacting our awareness and catalyzing dialogues between our conscious and unconscious selves. This researcher suggests that this internal dialogue was possibly set in motion by factors in the environment like the increasing presence of women in leadership positions. Moreover, time created the conditions for the dialogue between the Pastor’s unconscious and conscious self (Boyd, 1989, 1991) as well as those selves of the deacon members. Based on Boyd’s theory, it is this dialogue, which occurs over a passage of time, that creates the condition for this change to occur.

Key Analysis #3

How did the church leaders go about transforming the Deacon Board?

To better understand how the transformation of the Deacon Board occurred, one has to explore a major finding that emerged from the study: the dynamics of God/Holy Spirit, Pastor, and Deacons. The researcher believes that this triadic relationship (see Figure 3) is important because it underscores the three fundamental dynamics that resulted in the transformation. The three essential dynamics are relationships between: (1) God and Pastor; (2) Pastor and Deacons; and (3) the Holy Spirit and Deacons.

Figure 3: God/Holy Spirit, Pastor, and Deacons

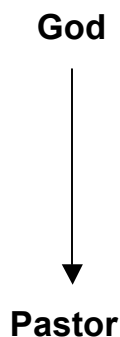


God and Pastor = Charismatic Leadership/Authority

When the researcher asked the participants “how” the transformation of the board occurred, all eleven (100%) emphasized that the transformation commenced with the vision the pastor “received” from God (Weber, 1947, 1968), and during the course of this study, all articulated some belief that the pastor was unique or had an extraordinary relationship with God (as depicted in Figure 4). Reflecting on Pastor M and his transformational “vision,” one deacon stated, “God speaks to him and in doing so, as the pastor of the church, then he implements the vision that God provides to him.” Another deacon stated, “Some

people wouldn't be able to see what the shepherd sees." As a way of confirming the pastor/shepherd's unique relationship with God and supporting the belief that God endows the Pastor with a unique vision, another participant stated, "I have learned that with the right kind of leader, people will accept a radical change and can become comfortable with it." This something special translates into the people believing and accepting that the pastor's vision for the church is actually ordered by God. As such they are willing to follow the pastor's leadership. This type of leadership that the research describes as pastoral authority is closely aligned with a model of leadership that the literature depicts as charismatic leadership (Weber, 1947).

Figure 4: God and Pastor



In essence, at one point or another, all of the research participants acknowledged the presence of charismatic leadership/authority. This is particularly noteworthy for the study because the researcher initially explored two areas of literature: faith development theory and critical theory. However, after sifting through the findings and engaging in analysis, it became clear that additional literature was needed in order to properly analyze the findings and add to the body of literature regarding faith development and critical faith learning.

Charismatic leadership, as first articulated by Weber (1947), seemingly explains the multiple references to Pastor M as the one who receives the vision from God (as depicted in Figure 4). According to Weber (1947), a leader only becomes a leader when others agree to accept, submit, and legitimate the authority of the individual. Yukl (2006) further states that charismatic leaders are endowed with extraordinary “gifts” and “supernatural” qualities. In the case of this study, Pastor M would be the charismatic figure because he was viewed by the parishioners as being “endowed with exceptional qualities” and as one with a “divine, supernatural or superhuman” quality. For instance, one deacon said:

The Lord gives him the vision and direction for the church. He, in turn, is the shepherd; he’s a spokesman. He brings the Master’s program to the church through the official board. That’s the way I understand it, and then we, in turn, accept what he says because we are not called to be leaders or to be pastors.

To the outsider, this type of deference may seem to place a lot of power in the pastor’s hand; however, the followers accept his leadership in a way that is consistent of the manner described by the charismatic leadership literature (Weber, 1947; Yukl, 2006). Still others affirmed their willingness to “follow” Pastor M because they believed he “has the interest of the people at heart.”

However, the researcher learned that while the aforementioned qualities were attributed to Pastor M, there was one element to the charisma that was missing—a crisis. According to Weber (1947), a leader only becomes a leader when (1) there is a crisis, and (2) a leader emerges with a radical vision that offers a solution to the crisis and attracts followers who believe in the vision. In this study, there was no reported crisis that led to the transformation of the Deacon Board. Nevertheless, Pastor M possessed and was attributed charismatic authority. One reason for this authority may be because the Pastor, like Jesus, may be viewed as possessing “magical” or supernatural powers

(Weber, 1947, 1968). When discussing charisma within a religious context, Weber (1968) argues that it:

must not be forgotten for an instant that the entire basis of Jesus' own legitimation, as well as his claim that he and only he knew the Father and that the way to God led through faith in him alone, was the magical charisma he felt within himself. It was doubtless this consciousness of power, more than anything else, that enabled him to traverse the road of the prophets. (p. 254)

While it is not the intent of this researcher to commit blasphemy by saying that the Pastor was or resembled Jesus, the literature does affirm that there is a danger and “risk” with charismatic leadership (Bryman, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Yukl, 2006), specifically as it relates to followers deifying leaders and unconsciously following their vision and direction.

Another intriguing finding emerged that further highlights the important leadership role assumed by the Pastor in this study—that of “prophet.” The church presented in this study was a Black Baptist church and, like many other Black churches, charisma played an important role in how Pastor M was perceived and in how the vision he cast was received (Morris, 1984). Pastor M knew how to demonstrate charisma and maintain it in order to cast vision, lead, and ultimately effectuate change within the church. In this study, besides possessing charismatic leadership/authority, the role of the pastor appears analogous to that of the “prophet” proffered by Weber. Weber (1968) states that a prophet is someone who is understood to be “a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment” (p. 253). Pastor M, in this case, was the bearer of charisma and the proclaimer of the religious doctrine. Like Weber’s “prophet,” Pastor M demonstrated charismatic leadership in a variety of ways, discussed further below, such as preaching, teaching, counseling, and exhibiting his personal gifts.

Lastly, another finding that emerged was that of pastoral authority.³ All eleven (100%) of the participants emphasized that pastoral authority played a decisive role in the transition. This study found the concept of “pastoral authority” to be an overriding and pervasive form of leadership throughout the Board transformation process. Although the religious term “pastoral authority” is seemingly not included within the existing charismatic leadership literature (Oates, 1997), the concept is very analogous, and this researcher believes such should be included in any future studies on the subjects. Table 16, in Chapter IV, highlights these pastoral authority concepts, strategies, and methods and underscores how Pastor M employed them to direct the transformation of the Deacon Board.

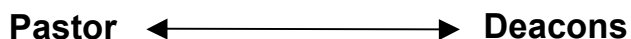
Pastor and Deacons = Combination of Charismatic and Transformational Leadership Styles

Another critical dynamic that the researcher contends contributed to understanding how the change occurred was to be found in the relationship between the pastor and deacons. As stated in the previous sub-section, the pastor’s relationship with God is needed to authenticate him as God’s official representative (Weber, 1968). Similarly, in order for change to take place in the church, the Pastor had to develop a relationship with church leaders and inspire them to embrace and ultimately take personal ownership of the vision placed upon him. This relationship is consistent with Weber’s (1947, 1968) recommendation of charismatic and prophetic leadership. Unlike the pastor’s

³Pastoral authority is a leadership concept that asserts that the pastor of a religious congregation is called by God to serve God’s people and, as a result, possesses certain authority or leeway to implement the will of God. In order for pastoral authority to be effective, followers (members) submit to the leadership and direction of the pastor. The following Biblical scriptures serve as the foundation for this authority: Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1; and Titus 1:7.

relationship with God, the pastor's relationship dynamic with the deacons was perceived to be more equal and welcoming. Hence, as noted in Figure 5, the relationship between the pastor and deacons was not vertical and hierarchical; but rather the relationship was perceived to be horizontal and more relational.

Figure 5: Pastor and Deacons



These findings reinforce the literature concerning transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978; Weber, 1947; Yukl, 2006). According to Burns (1978) and other leadership theorists (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Sashkin 1988; Yukl, 2006), transformational leaders must be able to define and articulate a vision that mobilizes the followers' energy and resources to reform institutions. Although charisma is a trait often found within transformational leaders, transformational leadership differs in that the ultimate result is to inspire the followers to internalize and take ownership of the vision (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 2006). This study assumed that transformation occurred as a result of the church leaders engaging in critical faith learning. While critical reflection and questioning were certainly a part of the transformational process (Brookfield, 1986, 1987, 1990), the findings demonstrate that the Pastor's vision, leadership, and desire for the church leaders to "take ownership" of the vision may have been what stimulated the critical faith learning process.

In this study, the Pastor's leadership was demonstrated in a variety of ways. The methods of leadership are almost analogous to leadership guidelines proffered in the literature (Sashkin, 1988; Yukl, 2006). The researcher maintains that because the transformation of the Deacon Board was smooth and did not cause an upheaval within the church, it must be attributed to the strategies and

methods employed by Pastor M. The following pastoral-led strategies and methods, which are comparable to those identified in charismatic and transformational leadership studies, also worked to bring about the transformation of the Deacon Board.

Charismatic and Transformational Leadership Strategies

First, as mentioned previously, teaching and preaching were very instrumental in the transformation process. Burns (1978) states that transformational leadership seeks to raise “the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). In the case of this study, Pastor M engaged the Board not just on Sundays, but during weekly Bible study and special trainings and retreats with the deacons. These efforts paid huge dividends and allowed him to develop the necessary relationships in order to prepare the church leaders for the transition of the Board. Thus, when the announcement was officially made, the church leaders were less prone to publicly question the Pastor’s judgment. Although teaching and preaching have been recognized by Weber (1968) as a “prophet’s” method of applying a charismatic leadership style, this study recognized that these methods could also be employed within a transformational leadership paradigm as a “dramatic action” to emphasize the value in embracing inclusive and egalitarian principles (Yukl, 2006).

Second, the Pastor’s ability to lead and intervene was also important within the transformation process. The church leaders in this study recognized that the Pastor was willing to take a stand on the issue of gender inclusion and also take the “flak.” By leading and intervening, if needed, Pastor M was able to develop deeper relationships and trust with the deacons that ultimately aided in the transformation of the board.

Third, the researcher discovered that Pastor M's ability to plant seeds and cast vision also aided in transforming the Board. As noted earlier, all eleven (100%) participants shared the view that over the course of time, Pastor M planted seeds within the minds of the church leaders and later cast a vision that reinforced the seeds that had already been planted. Although the board transformation was a long process, several participants believed that it began with "seed" and "vision." This finding reinforces Sashkin (1988) and Yukl's (2006) leadership guidelines, where vision plays an integral role.

The deacons trusted Pastor M and were familiar with his leadership. While not everyone may have readily embraced the change of the Board, they at least embraced the concept. Indeed, this model of educating is similar to banking education, which Freire (1972) criticized. As noted earlier, the medium through which learners gained knowledge may have been different (i.e., preaching, counseling, practical theology, etc.), but the general concept was not. The way in which Pastor M was "intentional" in helping the deacons learn his "understanding of the gospel" is consistent with what Freire categorizes as the banking approach. Also, as Freire describes, Pastor M modeled what change should look like by bringing in clergy like the Drs. Ella and Henry Williams. This was done repeatedly until church leaders saw what Pastor M saw or until through their own reflection they embraced the change that was before them. Although Freire was critical of the banking education system, what this study revealed is that such a system can be utilized successfully (at least in the Black church context) to bring about an egalitarian result.

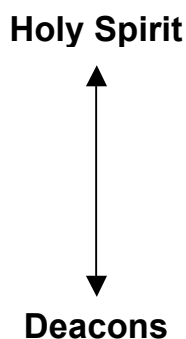
Additionally, since this form of education and learning is the basis for charismatic and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Weber, 1947; Yukl, 2006), there could be negative effects. As noted earlier in the literature and in this chapter, there is a potentially "dark side of charisma" (Yukl, 2006, pp. 259-

261). Moreover, Oakes (1997) argues that because many individuals often follow charismatic leaders uncritically, they potentially endanger themselves and experience the dark side of charisma. Fortunately, this was not the case with this study. Nevertheless, the potential for positive and negative responses to the vision is there.

The Holy Spirit and Deacons

The third and final dynamic that led to the transformation of the Deacon Board is between the Holy Spirit and Deacons (see Figure 6). Seven of the eleven (64%) participants cited the movement of God and the Holy Spirit as a major factor in the transformation of the board, and nine of the eleven (82%) of the participants believed that the Holy Spirit and God served as ultimate change agents for the transition. The church leaders articulated these views of the Holy Spirit in various ways throughout the study, including statements such as: “I would feel that the Holy Spirit was there helping us accept new challenges, and the Holy Spirit would help us see that this is the way that we should move our church in the 21st century”; “if it is of God the change will be made. If it is not of God, things will move on and then you pray about it and let God handle the

Figure 6: Holy Spirit and Deacons



rest...whether the change occurs or whether your concerns are implemented by the pastor [or not], it is what the influence of God makes on the individual.”

Thus, the transformation of the Deacon Board occurred not solely because of some *internal* factor (i.e., critical reflecting and thinking), but rather because of some *external* factors—one’s relationship with God and/or the Holy Spirit. The researcher believes that this finding was important because it underscored that leadership transformation was possible not merely because of the pastor’s leadership and use of various teaching/learning strategies (i.e., preaching, teaching, counseling, modeling, etc.), but rather because of something that Dirkx (1997) describes as “extra-rational.”

When devising the “critical faith learning” concept, the researcher anticipated that applying critical theory to a faith context without accounting for the spiritual, external, or ambiguous would be limiting. As the study demonstrated, transformation of one’s faith belief and obtaining the desired change within a religious organization might not occur without an openness to the extra-rational methods or “soul” (Dirkx, 1997) as well as the “Holy Spirit” (Cone, 1999; Payette, 2003). Dirkx (1997) states that: “To truly grasp the holistic nature of learning in adulthood, its mystery and messiness, we need a way of seeing that keeps learning embedded in the concreteness of everyday life” (p. 81). Moreover, Dirkx says that when we attend to the matters of soul “we are seeking to live deeply.” As a result, he argues that:

Viewing our experiences through soul draws our attention to the quality or dimensions of experiencing life and ourselves, to matters of depth, values, relatedness, heart. It has to do with authenticity, connectedness between heart and mind, mind and emotion, the dark as well as the light. (p. 83)

Dirkx states that “soul” from this perspective “locates learning neither as a product of individual will nor the powerful forces of sociocultural structures.

Rather, learning is understood as a process that takes place within the dynamic and paradoxical relationship of self and other (Dirkx & Deems, 1996; Ruether, 1995) (p. 83).

The “other” for Cone (1999) and Payette (2003) is the “Holy Spirit.” Cone (1999) defines the Holy Spirit as “the power to hear and do the truth as lived by the people” (p. 391). Payette (2003) defines it in biblical terms as a “guide.” Using the Gospel of John and 2 Corinthians as a scriptural reference, specifically John 16:13⁴ and 8:32⁵ and 2 Corinthians 3:17⁶, she states: “When adults engage the critical reflection process, the Spirit is present to guide one not only into truth, but also gain insight into false assumptions and unbiblical beliefs” (p. 7). Moreover, she maintains that adult learners “are not biblically transformed by just understanding the logic and reason of the Christian faith, but by personally encountering the living Truth” (p. 9). This view was affirmed in this study because many of the participants attributed much of the transformation to the participants’ “encounter” and “engagement” with the Holy Spirit. Gormon (2001) states that it is the work of God/Holy Spirit that “calls” people of faith into “consciousness” (p. 47). Thus, the researcher maintains that the transformation of one’s faith belief is not solely a step-by-step, rational process, but also a spiritual or extra-rational process within a faith community.

This finding is significant because it invokes the works of Royce (1912), Niebuhr (1962), and Fowler (1986), who emphasized the important relationship

⁴John 16:13: “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (New International Version).

⁵John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (King James Version).

⁶2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (New International Version).

of the centers of supraordinate values. For the purpose of this study, the centers of supraordinate values are God and the Holy Spirit. Just as the center of supraordinate values governed the triadic relationship (see earlier Figure 2) as articulated by Royce (1912), Niebuhr (1962), and Fowler (1986), God and the Holy Spirit govern the relationship that it has with the Pastor and the deacons. Thus, the conclusion of the relationship is the same: a higher power is able to influence, persuade, change, or transform one's faith perspective.

The extent of the impact (or perceived impact) of the "Holy Spirit" upon the church leaders, however, was surprising to the researcher. As mentioned previously, some participants not only identified the Holy Spirit as having a role within the transformation process, but they also identified the Holy Spirit as the *ultimate* change agent. This finding was a surprise to the researcher because the study assumed that a process of critical reflection (rationality) was the primary means by which leaders transformed their "faith worlds."

Key Analysis #4

What are the experiences that contributed to and hindered the transformation of the Deacon Board?

There were a plethora of experiences that contributed to and hindered the transformation of the Deacon Board. Some of the contributing factors were experiences from the civil rights movement; critical leadership transformations; spirit of love; all-inclusive church; witnessing of male deacons; preaching, teaching, and practical theology; modeling of ministry transformations; critical faith questioning; thinking, reflecting, and learning; movement in the religious community; and females showing capacity/ability. Similarly, there were a number of barriers, including community destroyers, Biblical proof-texting, spirit of

negativism, female opposition, invisible and silent opposition, tradition, and male mindset (sexism). Some inhibitors and contributors to faith development were external (from outside the church), and some were internal (from within the church). Fowler's (1996) understanding of how faith develops, grows, and changes seemingly explains the prevalence of the multiple enablers and barriers within this study. He states: "Pressures for change come both from within and from without—from internal processes of trying to "keep [their] balance," and from external influences that impact and threaten the balance [they] try to maintain" (p. 72). According to faith development theory, faith is an active process (Fowler, 1986; Parks, 1991). There are those who work to enable its growth, while others seek to stifle, inhibit, or destroy it. Faith grows and develops as the believer is challenged and encouraged, affirmed and crucified, and hated and loved.

Although multiple enablers and barriers to the transformation process were identified, the findings suggested that there were three key experiences that emerged: the civil rights movement; critical thinking, reflecting, and questioning; and prior experiences with women in leadership roles.

Civil Rights Movement

A key experience that contributed to the transformation of the Deacon Board was the church leaders' involvement in the civil rights movement (Frazier, 1974; Morris, 1984). Seven of the eleven (64%) cited personal civil rights experience and its influence on their openness to equality not only among the races, but also gender. While the civil rights experience itself was instrumental and informative for church leaders, having this experience alone was not enough to implement change.

The findings in this study highlight that *having* knowledge and *knowing how to use* knowledge are two different understandings. In the case of the

transformation at New Spirit, many of the church leaders had accumulated direct experience and knowledge from the civil rights movement. They could recount the many stories of how they marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, participated in sit-ins at lunch counters, or were arrested and jailed for leading peaceful protest, but what made the difference at New Spirit was not just *having* the knowledge or experience of the civil rights movement, but rather *knowing how to use* that knowledge and experience to advocate for change and equality within a traditional Black Baptist church. This is important because the central issue for the church leadership, particularly the Pastor, was: How do you implement change, and in this case gender change, without destroying the fellowship? This was the pressing issue before the Pastor and deacons as they considered how to transform the Board and keep the Board and church both intact. Morris (1984) seems to suggest that “experience is often crucial to performance, and most ministers who became charismatic civil rights leaders brought a great deal of experience with them into the movement” (p. 8).

In order to effectuate gender change within the church, Pastor M stated that he “took a page out of [his] civil rights experience.” It is likely that Pastor M utilized the civil rights movement and related experiences because the deacons understood Blacks’ struggle to obtain racial equality and inclusion as citizens of the United States of America. Similarly, Pastor M drew from his civil rights experience to draw a natural and progressive comparison to the efforts to obtain gender inclusion with the Deacon Board. The use of the civil rights movement experience was effective as another tool within the Pastor’s charismatic leadership arsenal that validated his gifts, vision, and authority within the church leaders’ minds (Weber, 1968).

Critical Thinking, Questioning, and Reflecting

The deacons themselves began to critically question, think, reflect, and learn from the teachings of Pastor M. Six of the eleven (55%) cited critical thinking and reflecting as a contributor to the transformation. This was a particularly interesting development since an overwhelming majority of the church leaders in this study could not provide a clear definition of “critical faith,” yet by acknowledging the fact that they had engaged in critical thinking and reflection during the transformation process, they had essentially been engaging in “critical faith learning.” Again, this finding affirms critical theory literature, which states that adults are lifelong learners and do and are able to make meaning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000).

Prior Shared Experiences with Women in Leadership Roles

The prior experience of integrating female clergy and female trustees within the church also served as an important enabler to the transformation of the Deacon Board. As Pastor M argued:

Once we made that move with reference to our ministers with the licensing and ordaining of our first female minister, this set the tone and I began to interpret this both in preaching and in teaching and in personal conversations, as really the way things ought be done within the body of Christ. Our first female minister has made such an impression and was so beautifully embraced by the congregation, that even those who might have had some hesitation never say this with any overt opposition and actually, as we taught this directly and indirectly, after a while in a quiet way the conversation became in very informal discussions...when are we going to do this with reference to our boards. The next step was to move with female trustees.

Pastor M established immediate “points-of-reference” within the church by undertaking the processes of bringing on a female minister and integrating females onto the Trustee Board before beginning the process of transforming the all-male Deacon Board to be inclusive of women. The study participants

repeatedly referred to the female minister and female trustees in a positive light, and it became clear that, for some, having these successful experiences of transformation within the church aided the transformation of the Deacon Board.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze, interpret, and make sense of the study's major findings, which were presented in the previous chapter. A summary of this chapter is provided below. In the next and final chapter, the researcher presents the study's conclusion.

In sum, the church leaders in this study articulated divergent understandings of faith and critical faith. Although varied, the definitions of faith were articulated and confirmed Fowler's (1981, 1986, 2001) theory of faith development. The church leaders' understandings of critical faith, however, were limited or lacking altogether. Furthermore, since concepts of "critical faith" were lacking, the church leaders did not recognize the occurrence of "critical faith learning" as they engaged in the process of transforming the church's leadership paradigm. Nonetheless, a critical faith learning process seemingly occurred because each research participant articulated an experience during the transformational process that forced them to confront, question, and/or reflect upon their previously-held beliefs concerning the role of women in positions of leadership within the church.

The Pastor was a charismatic and transformative leader (Burns, 1978; Weber, 1947, 1968) who utilized his gifts and articulated a vision that enabled the Board transformation to be successful. The Pastor was viewed as the spiritual/moral leader and possessor of authority. One of the principal ways that change occurred is because the church leaders recognized the pastor as a "shepherd"

who received his vision for change directly from God. Recognizing the authority granted to him, the pastor employed a variety of strategies to direct the transformation of the deacon board. Some of the leadership strategies were pastor-led and, hence, supported a charismatic style of leadership. Other strategies that demonstrated a transformational leadership style were adopted by church leaders and parishioners and provided a mechanism for them to raise issues and help guide the change process.

There were a number of contributing factors that led to the transformation of the board, principally that of intentional preaching, teaching, and practicing unconditional love as well as the use of prior experiences—civil right movement and integration of female ministers and trustees. This study demonstrated the rare convergence of the charismatic and transformational leadership theories (Burns, 1978; Weber, 1947). In many respects, it was Pastor M who directed the church leaders' learning, but, in the end, the church leaders took ownership of the transformation process and internalized the change experience.

The roles, strategies, and experiences of the pastor and deacons, however, were not determinative. Rather, this study suggests that it was the intervention of the unexplained and extra-rational—God and the Holy Spirit—that touched the hearts and minds of the church leaders and brought about the desired change.

There were several findings that, hopefully, can add to the existing body of literature in the areas of faith development, critical theory, and/or charismatic/transformational leadership. First, this study found that adult learners, and church leaders in particular, are either unwilling or unable to ascribe the label "critical" to their faith perspective; however, they did engage in behavior that questioned and challenged their preexisting faith traditions. Second, this study found that the pastor utilized both charismatic and transformational leadership strategies to guide the church leaders through the change process, which defies the

preexisting literature that these leadership styles were in many ways mutually exclusive (Yukl, 2006). Also, this research study may be particularly informative since this preexisting body of literature did not focus on how charismatic and/or transformational leadership styles can impact organizational structures and processes.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to understand the learning process church leaders engaged in as they transformed their church's leadership paradigm from one that was all-male to one that was inclusive of women. Blending concepts advanced within the areas of faith development and critical theory, this study proposed that church leaders engaged in a "critical faith learning" process to bring about the resultant change. As a result of this research, insights were gained into what a critical faith learning process can look like, in action. The purpose of this study was to highlight the way transformational change occurred in a Black Baptist church and, by doing so, assist faith communities that are struggling to remain relevant in a changing society and to remain true to the egalitarian and humanitarian principles they preach.

In the previous chapter, the researcher provided an analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of research data generated during the data collection phase of the study. Within this chapter, the researcher provides a discussion of conclusions and offers recommendations that may help church leaders, add to the field of adult education and learning, and provide ideas for further research.

Conclusions and Summary of Findings

The study's findings emanated from participants' responses to five research questions, which sought to understand the participants' concepts of faith, leadership, and learning as it ultimately answered the question of how the participants went about transforming the composition of their Deacon Board. The summary of findings and conclusions are presented below.

Conclusion One

Church leaders' understandings of faith are definite and varied; however, their understandings of "critical faith" are limited or lacking altogether.

The researcher concluded that church leaders have various understandings of *faith* and *critical faith*. In the case of *faith*, church leaders have a more definite, albeit varied, understanding. Church leaders do not all think alike or hold similar understandings of faith. As they mature, so does their faith (Fowler, 1981). Their varied life experiences influence their understanding of faith and were reflected in their varied definitions.

On the other hand, *critical faith* and *critical faith learning* were less definite. As one church leader stated, "*faith* is faith." For him, faith was not something that can be "labeled" but simply an expression of one's belief. In this sense, there is no difference between that which is *critical faith* and that which is *faith*. Critical faith, in this sense, means that faith may or may not have been deconstructed in a critical manner. Nevertheless, faith evolves and changes. A person can adopt new understandings of his or her faith, sometimes through critical reflection, sometimes through life experiences, sometimes through teacher-driven learning processes, and sometimes through the "unconscious" (Boyd, 1989, 1991) or "extra-rational" process (Dirkx, 1997).

Conclusion Two

Church leaders who participated in or are familiar with the civil rights movement were able to draw from their experiences to implement change that is indeed radical, but is perceived by the masses as evolutionary.

Church leaders can all draw from their own personal and work experiences to implement gender change and equality in the church. However, an experience that appeared to resonate and have institutional meaning for the church leaders at New Spirit was the civil rights movement. In particular, church leaders drew upon their direct civil rights experiences in order to implement change. As in the civil rights movement, church leaders selected qualified candidates who could not be challenged on merit or ability. Moreover, the civil rights movement provided church leaders, and the congregation for that matter, an immediate reference point. Additionally, church leaders could use the moral argument and ask: “How can we advocate for civil rights in America and preach egalitarian values to larger society when we are not advocating and demonstrating the inclusiveness embodied by Jesus Christ within the church?” This seeming incongruity served as the impetus for change and occurred at a time when pressing questions such as this one could no longer be ignored. This study demonstrated that adult learners—church leaders in this context—were able to rely upon the civil rights movement and other experiences to create change that was radical (previously unheard of), yet through the learning process was perceived by the masses as evolutionary (the next natural progression over the course of time).

Conclusion Three

Faith is constantly evolving and changing as it encounters external and internal factors that are both positive and negative. These enablers and barriers do not stifle faith, but help faith develop, grow, and change.

There were a number of internal and external factors that influenced the participants' faith outlook. Faith is never static. It is constantly under attack and being transformed by both positive and negative forces. As Fowler (1986) notes, faith faces pressures of change from both "within" and "without." Enablers and inhibitors do not destroy or weaken faith, but rather make faith stronger. The adult learners in this study identified several enablers and barriers to their faith learning, including, but not limited to, females showing capacity-ability, critical thinking/reflecting, sexism, and tradition. Key enablers were directed by the pastor/teacher—teaching, preaching, modeling transformed ministries, and fostering a spirit of love and respect. The enablers and inhibitors that church leaders experienced benefited the process. Through a process of nurturing and challenge, faith was allowed to grow, develop, evolve, and eventually change and mature.

Conclusion Four

Change within the Black Baptist church is dependent upon the perception of and guidance by a pastor/leader who exhibits both charismatic and transformational leadership qualities.

The participants in this study were guided through the process of transforming the composition of the Deacon Board by the Pastor. The Pastor was recognized as being "called by God," and, as such, the church leaders allowed him to exercise "pastoral authority." At various times throughout the transformation process, the Pastor utilized charismatic leadership strategies, such as preaching, teaching, and vision-casting, to obtain the resultant change to

the Deacon Board. However, the Pastor also utilized transformational leadership strategies to encourage “buy-in” and ownership among the church leaders. Transformational leadership strategies included fostering relationships with the church leaders, meeting with them, and empowering them to create an atmosphere of camaraderie to conduct their own meetings/retreats and to set their own course.

Conclusion Five

The process of organizational change within the Black Baptist church is not always cognitive or critically reflective, but oftentimes is the result of the movement and work of underlying and unexplainable dynamics—such as God and the Holy Spirit.

Nine of the eleven (82%) participants reported that God and the Holy Spirit—as uncontrollable, external factors—served as the ultimate change agents. Initially, the researcher believed that institutional change occurred ultimately because of critical reflection and thinking. While this may have occurred, it was not enough to effect change in the hearts and minds of the adult learners. In the case of this study, change occurred not solely because of some internal critical factor, but also because of the external God/Holy Spirit factor. Thus, rationality, though important in most instances of change, was not as important when it relates to the issue of faith development within the context of a communal, faith-oriented institution, such as the Black Baptist church. Organizational transformation within the church might not occur without an openness to extra-rational methods (Dirkx, 1997) and the Holy Spirit (Cone, 1999; Payette, 2003).

Conclusion Six

In order for change and transformation to be successful within a Black Baptist church setting, church leaders must understand that change requires leadership, must be managed, is evolutionary (not radical), and must invoke the presence of God and the Holy Spirit.

In order to address the complexity of gender inclusion, church leaders needed a plethora of strategies to implement change. Every church is different, and every church has different approaches to address issues within the fellowship. Thus, change within a Black Baptist church can never be done in isolation. There must be a number of strategies utilized and evaluated as the transformation is implemented. The strategies that were successful to the process of transforming the all-male Deacon Board were the Pastor's teaching, preaching, modeling similarly-transformed ministries, and fostering a spirit of love, and respect, as well as the learners' engaging in critical thinking and reflection, fostering relationships among the Deacon Board and with female leaders, and remaining open-minded to the move and will of God.

Recommendations

The researcher offers the following recommendations based upon the findings, analyses, and conclusions of this study.

Recommendations for Pastors

The role of the pastor in facilitating transformative change within the Black Baptist church is great, and much will rest upon how he or she approaches the change issue. The Black Baptist church is a unique organization in how it is managed—it is completely autonomous, not beholden to any denominational hierarchical structure. As one research participant stated, the pastor acts like a “dictator” in many respects. Understanding this, pastors must recognize that they

play an important role as they determine which strategies to adopt and how they wish to approach church leaders or others who will be participants in the resultant change.

Understanding this, this study suggests that pastors should plan to utilize a plethora of charismatic and transformational learning strategies to facilitate the intended change. Specifically, pastors should engage in methods that are direct teaching/learning strategies (charismatic), which proved to be successful in this study, including preaching, teaching, modeling other ministries that exhibit the desired change, and promoting a practical theology that provides Biblical support and examples of what is sought. Further, above all else, pastors should adopt a transformational leadership style that works to foster an environment of love and respect that serves as the foundation upon which the other strategies can take shape.

Applying charismatic and transformational strategies, pastors should recognize the importance of building relationships or making “relationship deposits” in order to expedite the desired change in the least resistant manner. First and foremost, the pastor must have a strong relationship with God that is recognized by the church leaders. In this study, it became apparent that the pastor was able to bring about the desired change among the church leaders, with little or no opposition, because he was perceived to have a strong relationship with God and to have God working through him. Second, the pastor should foster strong relationships with church leaders, in this case, deacons. The research participants made it clear that they were more likely to agree with or buy into the pastor’s teachings because they “knew” him and could point to examples of how he had ministered to them in their personal lives.

Finally, pastors should prepare themselves for opposition, either direct or indirect/silent opposition. No matter how highly regarded the pastor may be or

how morally right the desired change may be, there will be some who are resistant to change. Pastors should be prepared for this reality and not internalize the opposition or view such opposition as an indication that the desired change cannot be obtained. One strategy the Pastor in this study utilized to prepare for and lessen opposition was to utilize time. While the Pastor could have rushed to implement change, he chose to take his time as he preached, taught, and led the congregation to embrace change. The Pastor was able to make incremental changes that related to the desired transformation over a course of several years. As a result, the church leaders did not vocalize opposition or otherwise disrupt the transformational process. Although there were some church leaders that exhibited silent or internal opposition, due to the Pastor's leadership and influence, this silent opposition was not vocalized or disruptive to the change process.

Recommendations for Church Leaders/Deacons

In order for transformative change to occur within the Black Baptist church, church leaders must be willing participants. Certainly every church leader may not embrace the desired change, but church leaders as an organizational group (i.e., the deacon board) must recognize that they have an important, supportive role to play. Church leaders should recognize that transformation/change is inevitable in some form and represents a natural progression within a dynamic, evolving environment such as the church. The church is not a static organization; rather, it is an ever-changing and evolving institution that must be responsive to its members and, to a lesser extent, society, if it is to remain relevant.

Further, church leaders should adopt the concept of pastoral authority and recognize that the pastor operates under God's direction and, as such, should be given the leeway to implement changes as he or she sees fit. Certainly, the

pastor is accountable to the church for his or her actions, but in most situations, implementing the pastor's vision is necessary for churches to remain relevant and not stagnant. In this study, pastoral authority played a key role among the church leaders. The Pastor's relationship with God authenticated him in the minds of the deacons, and, upon recognizing him as the "Shepherd," the deacons were willing to support the Pastor's vision of female inclusion within the Deacon Board.

Church leaders should also work to build or deepen relationships with other church leaders to facilitate transformative change. For example, in this study, senior deacons built relationships with younger deacons that yielded positive dividends. When younger deacons who were initially resistant to female inclusion learned that senior deacons, who were highly-regarded and well-experienced, were embracing the change, the younger deacons deferred to the senior deacons' leadership. Further, senior deacons also built relationships with female leaders, such that when these female leaders were chosen to become the first female deacons, the senior deacons knew them and could validate them to others who were initially resistant. This type of learning is what Daloz (1999) calls mentoring. In order for change to be implemented, church leaders must identify critical mentors and receptive mentees.

Finally, church leaders should recognize the importance of remaining open to the will of God and movement of the Holy Spirit. The Pastor's relationship (or perceived relationship) with God was instrumental in facilitating the transformative process. However, church leaders must also work to strengthen their own individual and group relationships with God and not merely expect the pastor to be the sole recipient of God's will. Church leaders should foster a spirit of love, openness, and prayer to allow them to recognize what God would have them do.

Recommendations for Female Leaders/Test Cases

The female leaders that were chosen to become the first female deacons bore a great responsibility and ultimately played the decisive role in the transformation's success. Female leaders, or others who will be the "test case" for the desired change, should recognize that, as the "first," you will be challenged and tested—and the resistance may come from unlikely sources. As one female leader who later became one of the first female deacons acknowledged, she expected great resistance and prepared herself mentally for that fact. As such, she was pleasantly surprised when (as a result of the work of the pastor, movement of God, etc.) she did not experience the level of resistance she had anticipated. However, she did experience resistance from an unanticipated source—other women. Investigating the underlying reason(s) for the opposition of females to other females was beyond the scope of this study; however, this researcher did learn that such unanticipated opposition may surface, and, as such, female leaders should prepare themselves for all modes of resistance, even from seemingly unlikely sources.

Conversely, female leaders should also recognize that they may receive support from unlikely sources. For example, a female leader who ultimately became a female deacon shared that she received the most support from a senior, male deacon who she had expected would be less supportive of including females on the Deacon Board. It was his support, his use of standing, his experience, and his mentorship that guided her through the deacon training process and, later, her deacon work.

There were several lessons learned from the female leaders that could provide insight to other learners. Undoubtedly, female leaders will be tested, but the research demonstrated that in order for female leaders to overcome the challenges they faced, they showed capacity and ability. Further, instead of

directly fighting the battles, sometimes it was better for the pastor or leadership to fight the battles because of their trust. These female learners recognized that it was not necessary to fight every battle or meet every challenge directly. These learners further learned that transformation took time—instead of trying to force people to accept them, they showed capacity over the course of time through prayer, service, and commitment, among other things. In doing so, these female learners demonstrated what a female leader could look like and should look like.

Female leaders should seek to build and foster relationships with well-respected, highly-regarded church leaders who have influence over others who may show resistance (i.e., senior deacons). The female participants in this study set themselves apart in the minds of the Pastor and church leaders because they had taken the time to build relationships with a cross-section of persons within the church. These females were “beloved” by the church membership, including the church leaders, because they had a proven history within the life of the church and dedicated themselves to forging relationships within the church.

Finally, female leaders should prepare themselves to be the best, most-qualified for the position sought. Although it may not be fair, female leaders who became the first female deacons had to be “the best” in order to lessen resistance. As the Pastor pointed out, he took a page from the civil rights movement—he chose female leaders who were the most qualified and most beloved within the congregation to be the “test case” for change to increase his likelihood of success. Thus, female leaders should ensure that they are the most involved, most known, most experienced, and most spiritually grounded to prepare themselves for the prospect of obtaining a position within the church that traditionally was not open to them.

Recommendations for the Field of Adult Education and Future Research

Throughout this study, ideas for future and related research were recorded by the researcher. The following presents pertinent areas for future research recommended by the researcher, all of which are an outgrowth of the research evident in this study.

This study focused upon gender inclusion within the context of the Black Baptist church, specifically the integration of females within an all-male deacon Board. Due to the dearth of research within the context of the Black Baptist church, there is a need for similar studies within the context of the Black church that focus on the adult learning process of inclusion of other underrepresented groups. For example, research can be conducted that focuses on age-inclusion and generational diversity—understanding the process for integrating young leaders into positions of power and influence within an organization that is dominated by more senior leaders.

Second, research is needed that examines how leaders who exhibit a charismatic and/or transformational style utilize those styles to impact processes and structures (as mentioned by Yukl, 2006). This study identified charismatic and transformational leadership strategies that were utilized by the Pastor to guide the change process. However, the pastor/leader was not the intended focus of this study, and more research is needed that focuses on his/her role within a learning context.

Third, further research should be conducted on how extra-rational methods and ambiguous or “spiritual” concepts—such as God and the Holy Spirit—impact the adult learning process. These are concepts that are difficult to quantify, but they are real in the hearts and minds of some adult learners and may provide further explanation for how processes work, how organizational change results, and how some adult learners learn.

Fourth, there is a need for studies to focus on the narratives of women within the church—who they are, what they learned, and how their stories can be helpful to others, particularly other women, who seek to find female representation within the church's power structure. What would the stories of these females—representing a historically underrepresented, if not oppressed, group within the leadership of the Black church—have to say about the role and place of adult and continuing education?

Finally, since there is a dearth of research within various cross-cultural contexts, there is a need for studies that focus on learning strategies for transformative learning among other African-American communities but within other contexts—beyond the Black Baptist church. For example, there is a need to study whether some of the findings and dynamics that were present within this study could translate to other contexts such as institutions of higher learning with a large population of African-Americans—for example, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Personal Reflections

This study presented the researcher—a male pastor of a Black church—the unique opportunity to understand the adult learning process and key dynamics at work when institutional change is sought within the Black church. Challenging deeply-held beliefs and developing faith is not an easy undertaking, but there are moments when such challenge to change will be necessary to reach egalitarian goals and to remain relevant in an ever-evolving society.

As a pastor, I was struck by how much influence the Pastor in this study wielded over the church leaders. He was a charismatic and transformational leader who used both strategies to guide the church through the change process.

Indeed, the church leaders were ready for change because they had undergone their own processes of reflection, but the pastor bore a great responsibility.

The women who became the first female deacons also bore a great responsibility, and they each demonstrated their own “charisma.” Change within the Deacon Board, the bastion of lay leadership power, would not have resulted if it were not for them. In this sense, this study showed me that yes, the pastor fulfills a special role within the church organization; but, we are all special and each have something great to contribute if given the opportunity to do so. Upon completion of this study, this pastor/researcher is reminded of the words in the song “I Know I Am a Child of God,” which was sung by Deacon G at her ordination service as one of the first female deacons:

I know I am a child of God...I know I am a child of God. Although I move so slow. Although I move so slow. I wait until the Spirit comes. I wait until the Spirit comes. And move at God’s command. And move at God’s command.

According to Deacon G, after she sung this common meter-hymn,¹ she believed that the Holy Spirit was moving “across the congregation.” For her and many others within the congregation, this experience and transformation for the Black Baptist church was “just awesome!”

¹Common-metered hymn is a type of singing that combines words, singing, humming, praying, and meditation.

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Appendix A: Subject Consent Form

TEACHERS COLLEGE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP
ADULT LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Teachers College, Columbia University

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

RESEARCH TITLE

Church Leaders Engaging in Critical Faith Learning: *A Case Study of How Women Became Ordained Deacons in a Black Baptist Church*

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

Kevin R. Johnson, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York, is conducting a study of critical faith learning strategies. Specifically, the purpose of this research is to examine what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all male Deacon Board to one inclusive of women. To achieve this objective, the research design includes collecting information from pre-interview data and critical incident questionnaires as well as conducting in-depth interviews with research participants, which will last approximately 90-minutes and be digitally recorded, transcribed, and imported a password protected software database.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The potential risks associated with participating in this study are minimal and only include as much risk as any typical interview or questionnaire. It is possible that some participants may feel a sense of discomfort in conveying their spiritual and/or personal views of women as deacons. The risk of discomfort, however, should be minimized since the researcher will be the only person who will see/review the data and will not share data or findings with the leaders and members of the church. Moreover, there are no extrinsic benefits to subjects, since participants will not receive any remuneration for their participation and they will not be identified or "credited" in publications or articles. Participants, however, may experience the potential intrinsic benefits of: (1) assisting with a study that is focused on an underrepresented context – the Black Baptist Church; and (2) providing other church members, leaders, and religious educators a blueprint for creating gender-inclusive leadership paradigms.

PAYMENTS

There is no remuneration for your participation in this study.

DATA STORAGE

Data will be collected to ensure confidentiality. All digital recordings and written materials will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet. Only the researcher will have access to the materials. Moreover, the participant and church's names will also be disguised to ensure confidentiality.

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Protocol # _____ Consent form approved until _____ IRB Signature _____

TEACHERS COLLEGE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
 DEPARTMENT OF ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP
 ADULT LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation will take approximately 20 minutes for the pre-interview data and critical incident questionnaires, and 60-90 minutes for the in-depth face-to-face interview.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED

Results of this research will be used primarily for the purposes of writing a doctoral dissertation at Teachers College, Columbia University. Additionally, this research may be used in educational conference presentations or published educational journal articles.

Participant's Rights

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his professional discretion.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily release or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I consent to being audio/digitally recorded, and understand that the recordings will be used by the researcher only.
- If any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the researcher, who will answer my questions. The researcher's phone number is (914) 376-4016 and email is kri4@columbia.edu.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research participant (subject), I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, Box 151, 525 West 120 Street, New York, New York 10027. Additionally, the dissertation advisor, Professor Lyle Yorks, may be contacted at (212) 678-3820.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- By signing this Subject Consent Form, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Protocol # _____ Consent form approved until _____ IRB Signature _____

Appendix B: Pre-Interview Data Inventory (PIDI)

PRE-INTERVIEW DATA INVENTORY

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1) What is your gender?
 Male Female

- 2) What is your age?

- 3) What is your religious affiliation and denomination? (i.e., Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, Non-Denominational, etc.)

- 4) What is the highest level of education achieved? (Please check one)
 High School Some College B.A./B.S. M.A./M.S. Ph.D./Ed.D. Other

- 5) What is your household income? (Please check one)
 Under \$15,000 \$15,000-24,999 \$25,000-\$44,999 \$45,000-\$64,999
 \$65,000-\$99,999 \$100,000+

Background Information

- 1) What is your current job position and title?

- 2) Do you have any civil rights history or have advocated for civil rights? If so, please list and describe.

- 3) Do you hold any leadership positions in the church? If so, how long have you served in this position(s)?

Faith Information

1) What is your definition of faith?

2) What is your definition of critical faith?

3) Is it possible for one to be critical of one's faith beliefs and traditions? If so, how does one engage in such activity?

Understanding of Deacon Board Transformation

1) What is your understanding of the role of deacon?

2) To the best of your knowledge, what experiences or events led to the transformation of the Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?

3) What experiences or events hindered this transformation?

4) What experiences or events contributed to this transformation?

5) Please describe what surprised you most about this process?

6) Please describe what surprised you least about this process?

Appendix C: In-Depth Interview Protocol

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1) In order to begin, please share with me, to the best of your knowledge, what experiences or events led to the transformation of the Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?

2) What experiences or events hindered this transformation?

3) What experiences or events contributed to this transformation?

4) Please describe what surprised you *most* about this process?

5) Please describe what surprised you *least* about this process?

6) Think of the most significant or critical incident that occurred as the Deacon Board was being transformed; one that stands out in your mind as being representative of learning for the Pastor and Deacons.

Please describe the incident including context, church relevance, how you or the leadership approached the incident in terms of thinking and actions, how this reflects competencies and/or changes in thinking produced by the church leaders, and how this learning impacted on the transformation of the Board.

(Probe for very specific examples of actions, thinking, assumptions, how those assumptions have changed, and documentation of impact. Get respondent to explicate the linkages.)

Having discussed this incident, what, if any, other incidents/examples come to mind? How else have you learned during the transformation of the Board?

7) Assume you were the Pastor or Chair of the Deacon Board. If you were able to make any change, at all, in terms of transformation of the Deacon Board process, what would that change(s) be?

8) Now that we have discussed the process, I would like to ask you a few questions regarding how this experience has impacted your faith. Specifically, how has this experience forced you to reflect critically upon your faith, beliefs, and religious traditions? What have you learned from this experience?

9) From this experience, what critical faith learning strategies do you believe the church leaders have developed that may be helpful to other religious organizations?

Appendix D: Interview Template

R1. Transformation Precursors—Inclusion of Women

Why did church leaders transform their Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of women?

Q10. In your own opinion, please share with me why you believe the Pastor and Deacon Board decided to transform the Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?

R2. Barriers and Enablers

What experiences contributed to or hindered this transformation?

Q2. What experiences or events hindered this transformation?

Q3. What experiences or events contributed to this transformation?

Q3a. Pastoral Authority

Q3b. Holy Spirit

R3. Transformation Process

How did this transformation occur?

Q1. In order to begin, please share with me, to the best of your knowledge, what experiences or events led to the transformation of the Deacon Board from being all-male to inclusive of female deacons?

Q4. Please describe what surprised you most about this process?

Q5. Please describe what surprised you least about this process?

R4. Learning Strategies

From this experience, what critical faith learning strategies have church leaders developed that may be helpful to other religious organizations?

Q6. Think of the most significant or critical incident that occurred as the Deacon Board was being transformed; one that stands out in your mind as being representative of learning for the Pastor and Deacons. Please describe the incident including context, church relevance, how you or the leadership approached the incident in terms of thinking and actions, how this reflects competencies and/or changes in thinking produced by the church leaders, and how this learning impacted on the transformation of the Board.

Q7. Assume you were the Pastor or Chair of the Deacon Board. If you were able to make any change, at all, in terms of transformation of the Deacon Board process, what would that change(s) be?

Q8. Now that we have discussed the process, I would like to ask you a few questions regarding how this experience has impacted your faith. Specifically, how has this experience forced you to reflect critically upon your faith, beliefs, and religious traditions? What have you learned from this experience?

Q9. What have you learned (i.e., critical faith learning strategies) from this experience/transformation that may be helpful to other churches across the nation?

Appendix E: Letter to the Pastor

Date

Participant's Address

Dear _____:

It was a pleasure to speak with you on yesterday, and I thank you again for allowing me to use New Spirit as the site for my dissertation research. As you already know, I am a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, and am interested in finding out ***what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male Deacon Board to one inclusive of women***. Given that there is very little or no information available on this subject, it is my intent to explore this phenomenon, and add to the body of literature on faith development and learning. Hence, I am very excited about this project, and believe that it will make a significant contribution to the ecclesiastical community and literature.

In order to begin this study, I am asking you to assist me in purposefully sampling (selecting) persons who participated and experienced the transformation of the Deacon Board. Obviously, you will be one of the participants, but I will also need a list of names and contact information of 10-12 Deacons including:

- 1) the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board at the time of the transition;
- 2) the first round of female deacons of the Board; and
- 3) three male deacons who *agreed* and three male deacons who *disagreed* with the proposal to transform the Board.

Attached is a template that may be helpful in selecting the aforementioned participants. Once I receive this list, I will immediately contact them to formally ask for their participation in the study. It is my intent this month to forward the necessary forms and questionnaires to all participants, and next month to conduct a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview with each participant.

Lastly, you will note that in this packet I have also included a personalized formal consent letter as well as Subject Consent Form and Pre-Interview Data Questionnaire (PIDI). The Subject Consent Form explains the study and your rights as a participant. The PIDI Questionnaire is an instrument I am using to collect pre-data. Please thoroughly read the Subject Consent Form, and if you agree, kindly return this information to me along with the PIDI Questionnaire.

If you should have any questions about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and thank you in advance for allowing me to use New Spirit as my research site.

Respectfully,

Kevin R. Johnson,
 Doctoral Candidate
 Teachers College, Columbia University

Appendix F: Formal Consent Letter

Date

Participant's Address

Dear _____:

I am contacting you to ask for your help with a new research project. I am a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, and am interested in finding out what critical faith learning strategies church leaders have developed to transform their all-male Deacon Board to one inclusive of women. Given that there is very little or no information available on this subject, it is my intent to explore this phenomenon, and add to the body of literature on faith development and learning. Hence, I am humbly writing you to request your participation in this study.

If you agree to participate, your involvement will take (1) approximately 20 minutes to complete the enclosed Pre-Interview Data Questionnaire, and (2) 60-90 minutes for a face-to-face interview which I will schedule with you in the weeks to come. Note that the face-to-face interviews will take place where the participants live and will be arranged at a time and place convenient for you. Please let me know by phone or email if you are, or are not, willing to participate in this research study. There is, of course, no penalty should you decide not to participate or to later withdraw from the study. If you agree to participate, read and sign the Subject Consent Form, and place it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided.

Lastly, please complete the attached questionnaire and enclose it in the envelope. Your responses will be kept absolutely confidential. Once I receive your response, I will contact you within a week to schedule the face-to-face interview.

If you should have any questions about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon and thank you in advance for considering to be apart of this research study.

Respectfully,

Kevin R. Johnson,
Doctoral Candidate
Teachers College, Columbia University

Appendix G: Coding Scheme

1.0 Understandings of Faith and Critical Faith

Critical Faith

Faith

2.0 Critical Experiences

Critical Leadership Experiences

female ministers

female trustees

Influence of Civil Rights Experiences

Other Significant Church Experiences

Personal Civil Rights Experience

3.0 Barriers and Enablers of Transformation

Barriers

Biblical proof-texting

community destroyers

female opposition

invisible and silent opposition

male mindset (sexism)

pastoral authority

spirit of negativism

tradition

Enablers

all inclusive church

congregational support and

sanctioning

movement in religious community

movement of God and Holy Spirit

pastoral leadership and authority

preaching, teaching, and practical

theology

showing capacity-ability

spirit of love

structured process

witnessing of male deacons

4.0 How Transformation Occurred

Church Leaders as Critical Learners and Followers

critical faith questioning
 critical learning within the body of Christ
 critical praying and singing
 critical seeing
 critical thinking and reflecting

Pastor as Critical Teacher and Leader

critical pastoral leading and intervention
 dictator
 man of God
 modeling of ministry
 transformations
 pastoral authority
 seed-planting and vision sharing
 teaching and preaching

The Holy Spirit and God as Ultimate Change Agents Timing (general)

5.0 What Church Leaders Learned

Change Involves the Holy Spirit

Change Is Aided by Prayer, Singing, and Meditation

Change Is Evolutionary, Not Radical

Change Must Be Managed

Change Questions, Reflects, and Dialogues

Change Requires Pastoral Leadership

Change Requires Preparing Followers

Change Strengthens Faith

Learning and Development Are Ongoing

Recommendations for Transformation

Appendix H: Coding Sample

Name: Pastoral Authority

Description: Pastoral authority has its roots Acts 20:28; 1 Th. 5:12; Ph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7. Pastoral authority teaches that God-called pastors have authority over the assemblies. Other Christians are to submit to this authority. When a person honors and submits to a pastor, he/she is not submitting merely to a person; but submitting to the Lord and Chief Shepherd of the church.

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon A> - § 2 references coded [2.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.82% Coverage

¶62: I think – I don't think they should challenge his authority. I think they can explain, ask him for a more explanation as to how we're doing this and this kind of thing, but I don't think we should challenge his authority.

Reference 2 - 1.26% Coverage

¶249: He brings the Master's program to the church through the official board. That's the way I understand it, and then we, in turn, accept what he says because we are not called to be leaders or to be pastors. They are children by God, and we feel that he has sent him for such a time in this – to New Spirit, to lead this people, and we accept that.

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon B> - § 2 references coded [2.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.90% Coverage

¶48: Pastoral authority...I think as far as the church...the spiritual experiences go... in our Baptist church I think...you know. His authority should be...in or under direction of higher authority. It should be either Shepherd over flock, and so he's got the authority to marry people, to counsel people. Then he is got the authority to dictate to us and service... we need to do and all __ get a little more space to it, you know. Do some of those pastoral things such as baptism, and so I think. He got it. He is the Shepherd and I, you know, respect the authority. That he is head of the years of my experience.

Reference 2 - 0.79% Coverage

¶154: Deacons...I think deacons are selected at... as you know the pastor selects the deacon. They knew only deacon for... in the church that you have selected and you serve at the pastors...as he would have served, at his direction, and so serve under the pastor ...

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon C> - § 1 reference coded [2.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.67% Coverage

¶49: Hmm.. well I haven't heard that term or description but I guess I would say that may be that's true. There is some authority that the pastor has to move and operate. Not only some of the business aspects of the church but definitely the spiritual aspects of the growth and development of that church. I mean one clear thing that we talk about is that in the Baptist faith that the deacons are not the pastor's boss. That's not our role to boss him around and to tell him what to do. Some people don't interpret it that way and I have been told that by a couple of folks but I don't think that that's our role. He is accountable to God and that's where it all stops. So I'd say, yeah he does have some authority if I was probably... I don't think I can compare to a private business, because even if you compare, I don't think you can compare a pastor to a CEO of a company because the CEO of a company usually reports to a board, ok, so there are some

comparisons that we can make on certain occasions, but on this issue, I would say that is the authority that's given to pastor and there's just really no mechanism that really challenges that currently.

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon D> - § 2 references coded [1.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.47% Coverage

¶61: The pastoral authority is one that, it would pass them off, you know he is going to do the right thing. You know that he is true follower of God. He is a very ... even you know all this.

Reference 2 - 0.63% Coverage

¶61: Likewise with his being the Pastor of the church he has the ability to do what he thinks is best for the church because it turns out best for the church most times. Now nobody gets it right 100% of time. But he is right more times than most people.

<Documents\Interviews\E. Deacon H> - § 5 references coded [3.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.97% Coverage

¶67: **INTERVIEWER:**

¶68: Let me ask this question, what is your definition of pastoral authority?

¶69:

¶70: **E. Deacon H:**

¶71: Well I think that I believe that that is the right to be able to set policy, to be able to provide guidance, to be able to make decisions about how processes happen within the church or within the board or within individuals as part of keeping new organization together. Also to be able to provide I think the spiritual guidance to make a board move or to make an individual or congregation move forward in the way that it should so if you see if ... I believe that if the pastor sees someone or something going in a direction that is not the right one.... that he does have the authority to, you know, to redirect it and to provide some additional guidance or other options for that. And I think that that authority also is necessary to lead a deacon board. The deacon board provides support and guidance to the pastor but he also has the authority to lead us as a group for the betterment of the church and for our own spiritual guidance. So, I think that's a primary thing that should happen.

¶72:

Reference 2 - 0.62% Coverage

¶77: Well...you know the idea of challenge can be done in a respectful way I think if there is a point, but it's also a point of discussion, it's not a point of trying to eliminate or take away someone's authority to make a decision. I think as a deacon board or as a deacon we can bring up points but the pastor is the ultimate authority in the church.

Reference 3 - 0.39% Coverage

¶85: pastor is seen as the authority and people you know they defer to his thinking and his vision because we trust in that. It goes back to what I was saying before we trust them that happening and that is for the good.

¶86:

Reference 4 - 0.22% Coverage

¶252: **E. Deacon H:**

¶253: Yeah, it was a long, and some of my co-workers were very anxious to get started and pastor was just, you know.

Reference 5 - 0.74% Coverage

¶253: a lot of it was internal to the pastor and he would design the classes, he was moving ahead but I think that may be now after six years it's I am sure that they've got it done, they've done it since then but you know to put in writing the process for the orientation for deacons and I think that...

¶254:

¶255: **INTERVIEWER:**

¶256: So it was not in writing.

¶257:

¶258: **E. Deacon H:**

¶259: At that time it wasn't. I believe it is now.

¶260:

¶261: **INTERV**

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon E> - § 1 reference coded [0.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.19% Coverage

¶259: So anything you know what Pastor M wanted to do, he do it here.

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon F> - § 1 reference coded [3.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.25% Coverage

¶142: Pastoral authority is that ability of the pastor to implement change, to – with the help of his deacon's board, he's one that is the overseer of the church and his authority to implement change and to make things right for the congregation.

¶143:

¶144: **Deacon H:**

¶145: How important was pastoral authority for the transformation of the deacon board from being all-male to female – to inclusive of females?

¶146:

¶147: **Deacon F:**

¶148: You know, I really don't know what happened in those meetings, but I can believe that he had a lot to say about the process and the fact that he was going to include the female deacons as part of the deacon board. I wasn't there, but because of the leader he is, I would think that the people who were in place then were receptive to his idea. I don't think they had any problem with it at all. The majority didn't have a problem.

¶149:

¶150: **Deacon H:**

¶151: But how important is pastoral authority? Do you think –

¶152:

¶153: **Deacon F:**

¶154: I think –

¶155:

¶156: **Deacon H:**

¶157: Go ahead.

¶158:

¶159: **Deacon F:**

¶160: I think it's an important thing. I think it's an important – it's important to have, to have the authority, but I don't think that it was a railroad approach in this case. I think it was just a presentation, an idea, and then the people were receptive to it, and I think that's the type of pastor we have. He didn't necessarily want to exert any authority, per se, but I think he had to present the idea, and the people received that.

¶161:

<Documents\Interviews\Deacon G> - § 2 references coded [4.03% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.21% Coverage

¶61: Well pastoral authority to me is if you are the pastor of this church, then you have a right, you know, to ordain female or male... or female ministers or trustees. I think that gives you the right. I know you need to probably have the head of the deacon board, head of trustee there with you to make some decision, but I think that a true minister or pastor has been called to, you know, to be a pastor. Then I think they listen to their heart to see what God explained to them, and I think Rev. Pastor M is quite a good example of that because there are some of the things that happen, you know, he does it with such authority, that it doesn't matter to him if you like it or not. Most probably, he prays first, you know and like that... you know, I mean Thomas ___ say he's seen it, so he has idea of what _ life is all about, idea of what's going to make the church run. It would permit the church move to a new transition and so women ask you to help this transition goal, because men, you know, they need to be balanced out, so something like that came through and not been his authority of being a pastor of this church and you being a pastor of your church and you feel that you have that obligation to make a statement. So lets have an authority being the Pastor and then to make a statement. Then your authority, you would think that if you suggest something to the congregation or to the officers, that they should be able to back you up, because it's just like you leading Mile, you are not going to leave him in his own direction, you have parental authority, you know. I'm not telling you to do, I hate that do or die statement, because the kids will let you do it now, ok. You can do but I can't do it, you know. So it's like that same type of authority. He is our pastor. He is our father. He is our leader. So somebody has to have that authority to make decisions for this family or for the church. So I think pastoral authority of a pastor is making the right decision for your family so.

Reference 2 - 0.82% Coverage

¶68: In the same way with Pastor M, with you and your family, you know church family, somebody has got to make the decision and when your pastor bring it to you, if you are the pastor, you got to run it through your board and they got sit down and decide how to take it to the church, you know, Rev. Pastor M bring things to the deacon board and talk to us about it, get a vote on it, then he'd bring it to the church and that's the same with the family. Most often he has that authority, you know, same with the family.

¶69:

<Documents\Interviews\Dr. J> - § 2 references coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.67% Coverage

¶46: :

¶47: In the Baptist church it's a dictatorship...you told me I can be candid and I will not be shy of that. What the pastor says is it. Too often pastors are kings and I hope that females won't be the same. I talked to Reverend Chris and I said don't be the queen, just be the pastor.

¶48:

Reference 2 - 1.05% Coverage

¶59: That's a big question. I guess there are some things come only by prayer. It's like how do we get to the... I don't know how we got away from that biblical model of Joshua to end that. Some might have been because of cultural, historical situations that the pastor, for African American churches, was the one place where you were the boss and that position just developed in that way. But I don't think that it's the way that it was meant to be.

<Documents\Interviews\Pastor M> - § 2 references coded [6.15% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.73% Coverage

¶118: Through the years, New Spirit has had great respect and commitment to strong pastoral leadership. I didn't establish that. I found it here and sought to build on it without abusing it. And, I think the next pastor, after myself, will find that tradition very much alive. Therefore, pastoral initiatives, pastoral insight, and pastoral leadership are not exceptions here, but they are expectations with a history for that. Therefore, recommendations, programs, projects, and initiatives that are brought and presented by the pastor are generally welcomed by the congregation, even if they are not able to pay for it all the time. And, I think that is something to be considered with reference to initiating change in a congregation.

Reference 2 - 4.42% Coverage

¶444: So that foundation has to be seen I think and embraced. However, the critical question comes, how do you minister to people who have a nontraditional gender, sexual orientation and my position there has been, that we need to keep it out of partisan politics and keep it in the spiritual realm and there by give ourselves, the authority, the moral authority, to teach and direct and I don't need a constitutional amendment to do that

¶445:

¶446: **Interviewer:**

¶447: Right.

¶448:

¶449: **Pastor M:**

¶450: If two women come in to my study and say we want to get married, I don't need to go to the constitution.

¶451:

¶452: **Interviewer:**

¶453: Right

¶454:

¶455: **Pastor M:**

¶456: Therefore, I don't want a constitutional amendment because once you... and I tried to explain this to some ministers, and once you put it over here you take it out of the authority of my office and then the lawyers have to argue over it... and that decision might become binding whereas if the amendment wasn't there.

¶457:

¶458: **Interviewer:**

¶459: Right.

¶460:

¶461: **Pastor M:**

¶462: I wouldn't...my authority would not be up for discussion. But I think this is something that's not going away and the gay and lesbian movement is not going to allow it to go away and to the conservative politicians in the right wing, they are not going to let it go away either. But if we are not anchored in such way that we are not apprehensive or intimidated, when the subject comes up I think then we can deal with and I think these kind of experiences in going through the process both of critical thinking and critical change will enable us to deal with it... with calm reasonableness, whether opposition is the global one or not. So in this I think every kind of significant change equips us to deal with other things that might frighten us further down the road but then we discover that we have been prepared, we have been armed in ways that we didn't even realize we were being equipped to deal with.

¶463:

<Documents\Interviews\Rev. W> - § 3 references coded [1.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.20% Coverage

¶34: I believe that a pastoral authority would mean that the pastor has the right to make executive decisions.

Reference 2 - 0.59% Coverage

¶34: his or her decision is sound and has been driven by prayer and some divine intervention... and trusting that they would trust him. However, if it doesn't go that way with that board then he may or she may take the right to overstep that and invoke that change regardless of that because they have pastoral authority....

Reference 3 - 0.90% Coverage

¶34: It gets to be a very edgy area because I think that we have to be able to make decisions as pastors. We have to be able to overrule some things that we know are not necessarily the best look at it... but we have to stay on the side of the fence where we are fair and not humanist and we are not prejudiced by what I want or what I think the better good cause for... so pastoral authority would have to be a keen awareness of the better good as that applies to God not to ones self.

¶35: