Adopting a Multi-faith Orientation in Theory and Practice

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Abstract

In the global world of the 21st century, it no longer suffices to speak of an interfaith world. The language and communities of those engaged in faith-based work has shifted to reflect a diverse and multi-faith population. Yet, many of the symbols and much of the language of faith-based work in the United States, and in particular in the world of pastoral education, remains rooted in Judeo-Christian language, symbols, and expressions. Through a study of the perceptions, beliefs, understandings and expressions of the language and meaning of multi-faith in the context of a faith-based organization that is shifting its language from interfaith to multi-faith and diverse, this study will illuminate the ways in which one faith-based organization in pastoral education attempts to expand its own understanding of faith-based work as it shifts from an interfaith model to a multi-faith model. Analysis of the data will suggest ways in which other faith-based organizations can grow their inclusivity of faiths by suggesting the needed language, beliefs, and understandings of faith diversity that support such shifts.

Keywords: interfaith, multi-faith, multi-cultural, faith group, association
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my incredible, loving wife Karen, and our three wonderful children, Tali, Shira, and Ilan.

When I first began this process, I did not really know what to expect and how long the journey would be for me and for my family. Through the course work, assignments, and multiple drafts, they have encouraged me to press on and supported me by giving me the time to read, research, and type away.

I would like to thank Karen for being my inspiration and my cheerleader throughout this journey. Her support and willingness to pick up the many other pieces of our daily lives made this all possible. Karen’s passion for scholarship was contagious and was a great motivator for me throughout this process. I also want to thank our children for their support and encouragement, for inspiring me to pursue my dream, and for pushing me to the finish line.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my loving and supportive parents, Gail and Butch. Thank you for being role models, for showing me the value of hard work, and for the gift of a wonderful education. I appreciate your financial and moral support that enabled me to reach this point.
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Lastly, I want to acknowledge ACPE for allowing me to ask the hard questions and to delve deeply into the culture of the association. Thank you to Dr. Trace Haythorn, ACPE’s Executive Director, for your support and encouragement and for being a thought partner in my work.
Chapter 1

On a typical Tuesday afternoon in a Southern region city, the chaplain on call is asked to visit a patient who has just checked in for open-heart surgery to clear a blockage in an artery and to insert a stent. The chaplain, a devout and practicing Presbyterian Minister, is a Board Certified Chaplain, having received the requisite training in spiritual care. The patient is identified as a practicing Buddhist.

Upon arriving to the patient’s room, there is an immediate disconnect—the chaplain’s training and her own practice has been in the Judeo-Christian tradition. While the ideals of spiritual care and chaplaincy are designed to teach chaplains how to minister to people of all faiths by engaging with them in their belief structures and theologies, the reality on the ground is that both the patient and the chaplain must begin a “dance” together as they begin their conversations, dealing with the fact that a patient of a minority religion will bring certain perceptions to the symbol of a hospital chaplain and the chaplain will not necessarily understand how to approach and best serve the patient.

Background History of Clinical Pastoral Education

Having roots dating back to the early 1900’s, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) was founded in the Christian tradition by Anton Boisen. The original idea of CPE was to infuse theology into the practice of medicine, with proposals calling for a year of clinical work for all theology students. Throughout the next forty to sixty years, various organizations, each with a slightly different take on the meaning and implementation of CPE would be created, ultimately resulting in a merger that created the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) in 1967 (Leas & Thomas, n.d.).
The initial group of CPE Supervisors (Educators), and for much of the history of CPE, were predominantly male, White, and Protestant Christian. In the mid 1970’s, women started to join the ranks of CPE Supervisors and in 1981, the Racial Ethnic Minority network of ACPE was established to provide leadership in recruiting African-American and Hispanic students and supervisors (Leas & Thomas, n.d.).

Today, although there are significant numbers of women, minorities and religious traditions represented, the foundational underpinnings of the ACPE remain steeped in the Judeo-Christian model, with a bias towards Christian theology and practice, thus affecting the overall educational experience of students as well as the functioning of the association as a whole. There are two main areas where this seems to have the greatest impact: 1. the scheduling of regional meetings, which are often scheduled on weekends, which are Sabbath days for several religions, as well as during significant Jewish holidays (Fr. S. Mathew, personal communication, August 17, 2016) and 2. The way in which Supervisors teach clinical pastoral education, which according to student complaints (G. Smith & M. Jones, personal communications, September 26, 2017), is grounded in Christian theology, leaving little room for alternative viewpoints.

We are living the 21st century, in a time that is increasingly focused on the global nature of our world. However, the language and communities of those engaged in pastoral education and pastoral practice have not shifted to reflect the diverse, multi-faith population they serve, both as students and as educators. Many of the symbols and much of the language of faith-based work in the United States, particularly in the world of pastoral education, still remains rooted in Judeo-Christian language, symbols, and expressions. This focus, while steeped in many years of heritage and tradition that should not be lost, needs to shift and grow from an interfaith model to a multi-faith model that will better reflect all those involved.
An example of rootedness that remains is that within the certification process, students are obligated to write a set of papers that address theories for supervision in the areas of personality, education, and theology. A Jewish student’s papers were not accepted as complete because the theology he shared was not understood or accepted by the readers, all of whom are Christian. According to the student’s Supervisor (J. Harper, personal communication, September 2, 2017), the feedback from the reader panel demonstrated a clear bias towards Christian theology and a lack of understanding of Jewish theology. After engaging in education of the reader panel, the student’s papers were accepted, but it remains an uphill battle for students whose backgrounds are different from the essential Christian viewpoint.

In the realm of professional chaplains, Sheikh, Gatrad, Sheikh, Panesar, & Shafi (2004) concluded that there are distinct and “appreciable differences in reported hospital chaplaincy provision to patients and staff for members of Christian and non-Christian faiths” (p. 95). The most significant areas of difference were in access to space for worship and the number of chaplaincy staff as well as each individual’s background, which in turn affected the quality of chaplaincy care to patients who are not Christians. “Hospitals represent a kind of “multi-spiritual melting pot,” and patients spiritual and religious beliefs have grown and expanded and the distinctions between individual beliefs and practices have become less clear (Schmidt & Egler, 1998, p. 240), thus requiring a shift the nature of chaplaincy education programs to address this.

Even though much of pastoral care today has shifted from a religious-based service to one of universal appeal, it has clear limitations when used with patients who affiliate with non-Judeo-Christian religions. Abu-Ras & Laird (2010) recognized a need for an imam when Muslim patients needed a specific ritual, or in “life and death” situations. Schmidt and Egler (1998) suggest that end-of-life discussions, rituals, and prayer with Muslim patients require specific
religious knowledge of Islam. They suggest that chaplains must go beyond generic services that are based on “formal” common ground, but that often lack the “content” required or requested by Muslim patients (Schmidt and Egler, 1998). Other scholars argue that the separation of individual “spirituality” from religious community and religious practices is not possible within an Islamic framework (Rassool 2000; Stoll and Stoll 1989). Furthermore, the sick patient’s perception of illness and death is the conventional Islamic response of acceptance and understanding of God’s will, whereas general spiritual counseling focuses on the challenges facing individuals. Although Muslims are expected to seek appropriate care and treatment for their illness, Athar (1993, 1998) points to the Islamic belief that illness atones for sins and that death is part of the journey of life.

Hospital chaplains, who are trained in clinical pastoral education, reflect on their own perceptions, concentrate closely on what they are offered by the patient, listen “inwardly” to what they “feel” and offer the patient their perceptions in return. It is clear, however, that a “one size fits all” approach to chaplaincy as generic interfaith spiritual care based on implicit, contemporary Protestant values will present challenges in providing spiritual care for minority populations (Burns, 2007).

Furthermore, as training programs and professional organizations are also rooted in these values, everything else is developed, as there is an inherent pre-disposition to this particular philosophical tradition and action based on what individuals know and do rather than on what the world around them expects from this foundation.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research study explored the ways in which one faith-based organization in pastoral education has attempted to expand its own understanding of faith-based work by shifting from a
model of interfaith education and practice towards a pluralistic, multi-faith approach, which is
designed to be inclusive of students and educators across diverse faith traditions and practices.
This study examined the ways that conversations about diversity and inclusion inform the
ministry to patients of diverse backgrounds, belief systems and allow space for the integration of
different approaches to spirituality, as well as the enhanced ability to educate students who have
diverse backgrounds, belief systems, and approaches to religion and spirituality.

A qualitative study, employing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)
methodology, allowed this researcher to explore the beliefs, understandings, and attitudes of
several key members of the association around their self-articulation about the organizational
mission as a multi-faith association and the impact that these views and practices have on the
organization and its culture.

A ‘‘one size fits all’’ approach to chaplaincy as generic interfaith spiritual care based on
implicit contemporary Christian values will present challenges to those who are working in
multi-cultural and multi-faith settings. For those who wish to work successfully in these settings,
individuals need to acquire a wealth of cultural knowledge, which will expand their own
theoretical and theological understandings so that they can have an appreciation for and the
ability to provide the patient that is not like them with a genuine approach and context. (Gestrich,

Significance of Research Problem

The employment of chaplains/spiritual care providers is growing at a significant rate in
the United States as health systems and hospitals are beginning to appreciate the connection
between an individual’s health and well-being and their spiritual care (Tongco, 2013; Erler,
2014, Marin, et. al. 2015). The nature of religion and people’s beliefs, attitudes and involvement
in religion have shifted in recent years, sometimes away from “traditional” religious frameworks and into a more spiritual, aesthetic realm, with individuals embracing various elements from different religious practices in addition to the faith tradition in which they were raised (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The shift in religious beliefs and practices has fostered the development of a religious landscape that has become increasingly difficult to define. There are a variety of denominations from different religious traditions, each with various degrees of affiliation and participation, crossovers and combinations, atheistic, agnostic, and spiritual secularism, and others. The question for the field of clinical pastoral education is how to accommodate this religious diversity without having a clear foundation or common ground from which to work (Ganjevoort, Ajouaou, Van der Braak, De Jongh, & Minnema, 2014).

As CPE programs continue to expand to meet the growing need for chaplains and spiritual care providers, it is incumbent upon the ACPE, as the organization that accredits the institutions of learning and certifies the educators, to lead the process of shifting the underlying assumptions of practice and education that have driven the field for so many years. The association, as the pacesetter, must reflect carefully upon its mission, philosophy and practice to assess the ways in which it must move its members, and thus itself as a member driven organization, to expanding the ways in which it provides for the education of future Supervisors and conducts its programs and practices to ensure that it actively promotes a multi-faith model that not only allows individuals to join and be a part of the activities of the association, but requires the multi-vocality of religious traditions to most effectively carry out its mission.
Deficiencies in the Evidence

The majority of scholarly articles written in the area of multi-faith chaplaincy (Gatrad, Sadiq, & Sheikh, 2003; Schmidt & Egler, 1998) are focused on the growth and identification of non-Christian traditions and generally propose a combination of strategies to address the shifting religious and spiritual landscape. These strategies include hiring specific-faith oriented chaplains to address the needs of specific patients and developing a broader training program for all chaplains so that they can fulfill a generic role if needed (Gatrad, Sadiq, & Sheikh, 2003).

However, a general conclusion of this genre of the research is that with the proliferation of multiple religious and spiritual identities of patients and of those providing pastoral/spiritual care, it is difficult to identify the training needed to address the multiple beliefs and practices. In addition, it is clearly a challenge for chaplains to provide spiritual care to individuals who hold beliefs that are different from their own (Schipani & Bueckert, 2009). The research touches upon the notion of increased cultural and religious education for spiritual care providers, but the practical realities of time and economics have made this a difficult task to accomplish. More than the challenges of time and money, though, is the need to develop a shared understanding of the role of religion and spirituality in the modern world, and how we increase the breadth and depth of the education that we provide for our chaplains as faith-based guides for all people (Gatrad, Sadiq, & Sheikh, 2003).

Relating the Discussion to Audiences

Living in the 21st century also brings additional opportunities and challenges to the field of spiritual care. Barriers to cultural sharing and knowledge building can be removed through the use of technology and it is no longer feasible, nor desirable, for a prominent association to remain an insulated, educational community that does not leave room for other voices, including
those representing multiple racial, cultural and diverse ethnic identities, in its thinking and practices. As the largest accrediting and certifying association, the ACPE has the potential to expand its reach and lead a transformation of the field of spiritual care as it evolves to embrace a true multi-faith educational perspective and practice.

Chaplin and Mitchell (2013) argue that spiritual care should not be solely in the hands of the chaplaincy staff, but rather all healthcare professionals need to be aware of its importance and be able to provide it on at least a basic level, for all patients. This of course would require additional training, both in preparation programs as well as in professional development opportunities.

**Positionality Statement**

The membership of the ACPE, although on the path to becoming more diverse, is currently dominated by older, white, Christian males. In recent years, there has been an influx of white females, most of whom identify as Christian as well. The addition of people of color, of various ethnicities and of different faith traditions are all relatively recent in the association’s history. Because of this demographic make-up, the lay leadership of the association is predominantly white, Christian males and females. There are some minority representatives in the mix, but these have evolved more from a token status rather than naturally selection through the membership.

Prior to the current Executive Director who began his tenure approximately three years ago, the association was always led by one of its own, a CPE Supervisor. The shift away from this model in hiring the current Executive Director was a move that has broadened the view of the association to allow for new, innovative thinking and new models of governance to enter the arena. When I was hired approximately three and a half years ago, I was the first Jewish
individual to work in the national office. The national office staff is more diverse at this point than ever before, however, of the five senior professionals in the office, four are white, one is a person of color; four are Christian and one is Jewish.

As I came into my position at the ACPE, I was the victim of subtle anti-Semitism and there were people who were challenging my ability to the job solely based on my being an observant Jew. These interactions spawned my thinking and enabled me to experience first-hand the nature of the way the association functions for the majority of its members, the white, Christian majority. I quickly learned that there was an unstated, normal pattern for conducting business and it followed the patterns of religious observance of the majority of the membership when the association was established. As others came along in its development, slight shifts were made to accommodate individuals’ needs, like having dietary needs met for gatherings, but that is looked at similarly to one who suffers from allergies and needs special foods. Other than this, in order for individuals who had religious beliefs and practices that were different than what was being done, it was incumbent upon the individual to make adjustments or allowances if s/he wanted to participate in the life of the association. This could be done by arriving early or late for meetings due to travel restrictions or sometimes missing conferences because they were scheduled on holy days for a particular faith tradition.

As a national office staff member, I came into this position with the full knowledge of how the association functioned, but also with the promise that as a faith-based organization, full accommodations would be made for me in order to maintain my religious practices. While this is a step in the right direction, it is a small step in that it is not a widespread practice for all in the association. Since my arrival, the general conversation about whether or not the ACPE is “user friendly” to people of varied faith traditions and backgrounds seems to have shifted to the
forefront, along with questions of the impact the culture and character of the association has on engaging a more diverse population as well as shifting its function from an interfaith to a multi-faith perspective.

My own personal identity is somewhat wound up in the conversation, but only in a way that gives me the perspective of the minority that is struggling to find its place. As an observant Jew, being aware of my surroundings and knowing how to navigate them so that I can maintain my identity has been something I have been faced with for much of my life, however, having previously worked in the world of Jewish education, it was not an issue for me in the same way that it is now. Additionally, I am an employee of the association and not a CPE Supervisor, and thus I have a different role, one of a disinterested third party who was hired for a particular programmatic position. My engagement with this issue is a professional one, in that the attitudes and perspectives that might be uncovered will not affect my ability to function in my role as an “outsider,” but will hopefully help to guide the thinking and growth of the association towards creating a more inclusive model.

**Research Questions**

This research study examined the beliefs, understandings, and expressions of the notion of multi-faith perspectives in the context of a faith-based organization that is in the process of shifting its foundational model of interfaith beliefs and practice to a more apt model of diverse, pluralistic, multi-faith perspectives and practice. The word *interfaith* is often used to indicate dialogue between individuals, who are rooted in separate traditions (a Christian talking to a Muslim, a Buddhist talking with a Hindu, a Sikh talking to a Jew); a *multi-faith* orientation seeks to be rooted in multiple perspectives. Thus the research questions were:
1. What are the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors who
would participate in the process of shifting the symbols, language, and
practice from interfaith to multi-faith?

2. How do the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors reflect a
paradigm shift of organizational culture?

Throughout the study, the terms chaplain and ACPE Supervisor are used. All ACPE
Supervisors are chaplains; among those who have become certified as supervisors, many
continue to function as chaplains in addition to serving as educators. Thus, even though a
supervisor’s primary role is to be an educator for students and future educators, they are
still chaplains as a significant part of their training and professional identity.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

**Symbolic Interactionism**

This study was grounded in two important theoretical frameworks that served to explicate
the understandings and beliefs of the participants in the research. The first framework was
symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism examines the meanings emerging from the
reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on
the question of which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people
(Aksan, Kisac, Aydin, & Demirbuken, 2009). The primary tenets of symbolic interactionism
are grounded in the assumption that humans should be regarded in the context of their
environment (Benzies & Allen, 2001).

Arguably, the most important theorist of symbolic school of thought is George Herbert
Mead. Mead was a pragmatist and believed that symbols are used as a means for thinking and
communication (Ashworth, 2000). Mead focused on how people communicated with one another
in their daily lives by means of symbolic interaction and how they created order and meaning from these symbols (Korgen & White, 2007). Hebert Blumer, who was a student of Mead, was the first one to use the symbolic interaction term. For that reason, he is also considered the founder of symbolic interactionism.

According to Blumer (1969), humans create meaning that is attributed to objects, events, and phenomena and is thus imposed on events and objects by humans. In symbolic interactionism, a strong focus is on how we interpret our circumstances and choose one course or “line of action” over another (Oliver, 2011). For example, when a chaplain who is wearing a clerical collar enters the room of a patient, the patient will have an immediate reaction. Similarly, a crescent moon and star are the international symbol of Islam, but separate from each other, they are items in the night sky. The cross, a deeply significant symbol for Christians is merely two lines or bars in the shape of a “t.” (Barkan, 2011). To those not of the Muslim or Christian faiths, these symbols will hold different meaning and may evoke emotions based on experiences. Individuals and society are in a constant state of flux as our definitions of each moment shift through the continuous dialectical process of interpretation and action (Oliver, 2011).

**Individual behaviors and interactions.** According to Benzies and Allen (2000), symbolic interaction is grounded in three basic assumptions. First, people act because of the meanings that things have for them, not the objects themselves, but the meanings that are attributed to the objects. Underlying this is the idea that an individual’s world is interpreted using symbols (language) in the process of interaction. People then act based on the meaning that is derived from symbolic interaction (Benzies & Allen, 2000). For example, the Bible is a book and a symbol of religion and faith in God. Many will treat the Bible differently than other books,
sacred or profane, because of the way in which they have interpreted what the book stands for and what it means to them. This does not take into account the interpretation of the words contained within it, but rather just the book itself, as a religious symbol.

Second, the meaning of a symbol or object for an individual emerges from the ways other individuals define things (Benzies & Allen, 2000). Symbolic interactionists assume that individuals are able to interact because they have agreed on the meanings attached to things in their environment. For instance, when a member of a church is attending a service, there is a common understanding of the rituals and the objects that are used as for these rituals. Participants in the service have learned a shared understanding of the rituals, the meanings associated with the symbols and rituals and how the rituals are performed.

Third, and perhaps most important for this research project, is the idea that meanings change within an interpretive process (Aksan, et al., 2009). Meanings are assigned and modified through an interpretive process that is ever changing, subject to redefinition, relocation and realignments (Blumer, 1969). For example, with immigration and increased mobility, the nature of religion in our communities has shifted. Historically in the United States, when one spoke about religion or the Bible in the public sphere, it was undoubtedly in reference to Christianity. Today, although this is often still the case, there are many arenas where there is an increased awareness of multiple religious traditions. The word “religion” refers to more than Christian traditions and that the Bible refers to more than the New Testament. Similarly, the title chaplain has historically been interpreted as a Christian clergy. Over time, though, first with the addition of a qualifier, i.e. a Jewish chaplain or a Muslim chaplain, the meaning associated with that title has expanded to include people from multiple faith traditions.
In recognizing that people ascribe meaning to objects, one must also acknowledge that these rituals and objects will evoke certain actions and behaviors from individuals. Another element of symbolic interactionism is recognizing the behaviors of individuals who are part of a community. Thus, in addition to learning about and engaging with the meaning of objects and rituals, it is also important to observe how individuals interact with these objects and with each other in relation to these objects, thereby establishing socially constructed relationships. From these observations and interpretations, social bonds are formed (Andersen & Taylor, 2005).

Symbolic interactionism also serves to explain one way those who are viewed in any given religious system as ‘religious leaders.’ The actions of these individuals are often viewed as a symbolic stand-in for the sacred, informing the ways in which lay people behave when they are in the presence of religious leaders. Their actions related to religious leaders, as well as the attribution of meaning to various religious symbols creates the context in which everything takes place.

Abrell and Hanna (1978) highlight the concept of role as an important component of symbolic interactionism. Role is viewed as a social construct used to explore the cooperative behavior, communication, and general relationships existing among individuals and groups. The idea of role suggests that social interaction may be looked upon as a drama with actors playing multiple roles, moving from one to another as they become involved with new social situations or encounters with other actors. Role may be thought of as a guided behavior that is defined by the expectations of others, but always in a flexible state that changes according to the situation and interpretation of such by those involved (Abrell & Hanna, 1978).

The importance of role as a component of symbolic interactionism is in helping to illuminate the ways in which individuals understand the role of clergy and the role of spiritual
leaders in everyday life. Role provides a means of explanation of the language, beliefs, and expectations placed upon the symbolism of clergy, representatives of the sacred, that informs the relationships they have with individuals. It also helps to expand upon the meaning of what “sacred” is and who or what represents it as part of the conversation on developing a system that encourages serious partnerships and understandings of shared importance among and between different faith systems, including symbolic exemplars of these systems, clergy and spiritual leaders (Abrell & Hanna, 1978).

Symbolic interactionism has been considered a powerful framework to guide research that is intended to lead toward an understanding of human health behavior within a social context (Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975). It provides a theoretical perspective for studying how individuals interpret objects and other people in their lives and how this process of interpretation leads to behavior in specific situations (Benzies & Allen, 2000). The researcher using symbolic interactionism is therefore curious not only about the specific meanings that arise but also about how meaning actually functions as a core element in the phenomenon under study (Handberg, Thorne, Midtgaard, Nielsen, & Lomborg, 2014). This study will take an in-depth look at the ways in which the members of ACPE bring their individual understandings of their roles as clergy and chaplains within their own faith tradition and how this informs their behaviors in relation to the association as a whole as well as the socially constructed relationships that have evolved over time.

Because the method employed in this study was IPA, which is grounded in post-modern beliefs about the constructs of subjectivity and human interpretation, the symbolic interactionism theoretical framework holds significance for the lens of analysis of the data. After understanding the symbolic exemplars that exist within fabric of the association, liberation theory, a second
theoretical framework was utilized. This secondary framework provided a lens for exploring the symbols, behaviors, and interactions that are ultimately preventing minority groups within the association from becoming agents of change. This oppression of minority viewpoints, symbols and relationships is what is keeping the association from moving away from its traditional interfaith model to one that is multi-faith and inclusive not only in theory, but in practice.

**Liberation Theory**

Liberation theory has its roots in liberation theology, a term that has its origins in the Latin American experience, and in much of the literature today, has come to represent the experience of dispossessed people around the world (Boff & Boff, 1992). Liberation theology began as a movement within the Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. It arose primarily as a moral reaction to the poverty and social injustice in the region (McBrien, 1994). Development of the term Liberation Theology is credited to the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, who wrote one of the movement's defining books, *A Theology of Liberation* (1971). The Latin American and Church roots can be seen in the principles of critical reflection on oppressive circumstances and actions to change these circumstances (Tate, Rivera, Brown & Skaitis, 2013).

According to Evans (1992), an important implication of liberation theory is that one needs to free himself from either internal or external factors that inhibit the realization of one’s natural abilities. Liberation theory contains elements of theology, as it grew out of the church in Latin America, and it includes elements of psychology as it expands upon how an individual or a group understands oppression. Throughout history, oppressed peoples have adopted the concepts of liberation theory, most notably Womanist and Feminist Liberation Theology, which seeks liberation within the context of male-dominated societies, and Black Liberation Theology,
which seeks to liberate people of color from multiple forms of political, social, economic, and religious subjugation (Evans, 1992).

In understanding liberation theory, one must pay careful attention to the concept of raising consciousness, the process by which people become more aware of themselves and their lives as structured by reality and the nature of the oppression that they are experiencing (Burton & Kagan, 2004). A key part of this process is to empower the reclamation of history, both as individuals and as a people, so that it is possible to place the oppression in the context of individual experiences and pain, which will reduce the likelihood of people engaging in self-blame (Evans, 1992). Martin-Baro (1991) suggests that critical consciousness “is not simply becoming aware of a certain fact, but rather it is a process of change” (p. 227). This means that to become conscious of the reality is to become aware of, and involved in, a process of continual discovery and action related to “truth.”

Raising consciousness, however, is not enough in implementing liberation theory (Martín-Baró, 1994). A group can best make sense of current oppressive circumstances by combining the critical consciousness that arises from reclaiming one’s history and from debunking the myths and false understandings that have been perpetuated as a foundation, with the process of discovering the virtues of their people. It is only made “real” when it is applied to current lived experiences in an effort to liberate one’s self, and others, from certain circumstances (Tate, et al., 2013). Examining the intersection of reflection and action together is another way to describe truth that exists in the present moment. “Actions are more important than affirmations in liberation theology, and what one does is more expressive of faith than what one says. In this context, everything becomes meaningful that mediates the possibility of
people’s liberation from the structures that oppress and impede their life and human development” (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 26).

Conclusion

Together, the theoretical frameworks of symbolic interactionism and liberation theory provided distinctive lenses through which to understand the symbols, relationships, and behaviors that characterize the current state of the association. These understandings and frameworks enabled the researcher to identify both the real and perceived obstacles that have contributed to the dissonance between the association’s self-proclaimed vision as a multi-cultural, multi-faith association and its actual practice. The frameworks also allowed the researcher to highlight ways that the association can advance its desire to act as a multi-cultural, pluralistic, and multi-faith association that reflects the diverse composition of the membership. These insights enabled the researcher to highlight clear areas of opportunity for this association and other similar associations engaging in processes of self-reflection and strategic thinking.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I will examine the meanings of interfaith and multi-faith contexts along with some of the language and symbols that are used in each, with a focus on how this influences the current organizational culture of ACPE and the paradigmatic shift that needs to take place. I will then explore educational approaches to pluralistic, multi-faith and liberal educational philosophies that will serve as a foundation for thinking about the educational role that ACPE Supervisors play in teaching future chaplains, a understanding the distinction between single-perspective education and pluralistic, multi-faith education is key to transforming the nature of the association and bringing multiple voices to the conversation. I will then explore the history of the practice of chaplains, including the expansion of the role from the military to healthcare and other settings, the roles chaplains can play as change agents in the areas of healthcare and spiritual care, and the ways in which the organizational life of chaplaincy education has grown in the United States and the chaplain’s role in bringing change to ACPE. Lastly, this chapter will explore some of the facets of organizational change as a frame for influence that the structure and make-up of the association has had on its practices and identify key factors from the literature that will prove to be an essential component of any necessary process of change.

Interfaith or Multi-faith?

William James, noted philosopher and psychologist, argued that we make our way through life by “establishing norms and practices that provide social stability, physical safety, and answers to basic questions of existence: Why am I here? What am I to live for? How ought I to live?” (Alexander, 2015, p. 20). Big questions, such as these, are historically what people perceive as ultimately important or real, and are often thought of in religious terms. As an association that has a stated purpose of educating chaplains and future educators of chaplains, it is incumbent upon on
the ACPE to provide opportunities for students to further develop answers for themselves and at the same time, foster an environment that encourages dialogue to promote greater understanding of perspectives other than one’s own, for answering these questions.

Faith traditions have a particular focus in their teachings and practices; stories speak to specific people and events in their lives and in the lives of their families and communities. As the ACPE is striving to create a multi-faith, pluralistic environment, a key challenge to address, then is how to create room for a variety of perspectives and educational space to learn about them. To foster this, curricula must include exploration of faith traditions other than one’s own. It further follows, that exposure to and study of alternative traditions and practices can help to illuminate one’s own practices as well as serving to promote mutual respect of different backgrounds.

Education is at the core of the ACPE’s purpose (ACPE, n.d.).

In general terms, education can be understood as an accumulation of what is taught and learned…Education, therefore, involves initiation in the traditions of reason, morality, meaning and creativity deemed most valuable within the context of particular concepts of the good, which are constituted at the level of entire communities (Alexander, 2015, p. 61).

Another layer of educational experience involves its relation to the culture or tradition in which it initiates. Ideally, education should not only transmit old ideas, it must generate new ones. It should draw on the past but should also push the limits and examine and critique all associated assumptions (Jackson, 1986). Specific to the purpose of education within ACPE, education should therefore be defined as, “the art, and perhaps sometimes also the craft, of initiating people into communities
with visions of the good through study, practice and celebration…not promoting or overcoming ideological interests” (Alexander, 2015, p. 62).

The education of chaplains and future Supervisors has its foundation in direct, relational encounters with others, with a particular focus on receiving individuals with all that they bring, rather than trying to influence the other, either with majority view or with their own individual perspective. Educators are obligated to ensure that each individual’s beliefs and practices, or more broadly, that minority perspectives are not pushed out of the way. The Supervisor must foster an environment that not only allows multiple perspectives to be shared and debated, but also encourages that exchange. These individual and group encounters serve to define behavioral norms and expressions by which inter-personal relationships will function. It is the hope that this will also enable everyone to engage with and relate to one other, as well as to participate in the process of fostering new understandings. In the right environment, this happens through the sharing of stories, customs, and traditions that are expressions of each individual’s knowledge and practice (Alexander, 2015). To do this well, though, requires holding oneself back rather than jumping in, an act of limitation rather than assertion, of self-control rather than influence over others (Noddings, 1984).

A particular challenge faced by the ACPE today is the advent of more broadly defined spiritual perspectives that are not grounded in traditional, religious ideologies. Students enrolling in the ACPE’s educational programs, as well as the general population that is being served by chaplains, who embrace non-traditional, religious ideologies and practices, has grown since the original inception of Clinical Pastoral Education as a discipline. With its roots in Christianity and relatively slow development of inclusion of other major religious groups found in the United States, Clinical Pastoral Education is now grappling with the need to embrace the ideologies and
perspectives of additional mainstream faith traditions. Additionally, the societal embrace of individual perspectives on religion and religious practice has led to the proliferation of individuals who identify with multiple faith groups, consider themselves spiritual, but not religious, and who view religion from a variety of traditional and non-traditional perspectives (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Educators must embrace the concept of human agency, the notion that one must “influence intentionally one’s functioning and life circumstances” (Bandura, 2006, p. 164). Those responsible for the creation and functioning of educational environments must have a firm belief that the “students we are educating and those charged with educating them are free to choose what and whether to learn, are capable of understanding basic distinctions relevant to that learning, and equally capable of misunderstanding them” (Alexander, 2015, p. 98). If human agency is not a core assumption of the educational process, then students and educators are not likely engaging in conceptions of education from a variety of perspectives, but rather they are participating in a process of indoctrination. The key difference between education and indoctrination from the perspective of the educator is an ethical one, involving the suppression or avoidance of evidence (Snook, 1972). Educational programs and fundamental theological programs that do not fully embrace the idea of human agency inhibit a students’ ability to become agents of their own attitudes and assumptions, making multi-faith and pluralistic education nearly impossible. Taylor (1989) argues that in order to become educated one must be a part of a community that lives and practices the idea of human agency in its norms. Education in a multi-faith context must create a community that embraces multiple perspectives and outlooks and encourages dialogue between and amongst its members as they work to create individual meaning and meaning for the group as a whole (Alexander, 2015).
An additional component of education in a multi-faith context requires the exposure to multiple conceptions of key concepts and ideas within the areas of study rather than focusing on a single point of view. This is further highlighted in the distinction between the concepts of training and education. A training orientation generally has a solitary focus that would be too narrow to allow one to be able to acknowledge fallibility or error, as with only a single, task driven orientation, the only way to identify that something is wrong is by means of a contradiction. Whereas in an educational model, there is exposure to multiple perspectives, which allows one to be able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of a variety of perspectives (Looney, 2006).

Fostering an environment that not only allows, but also encourages, expression of multiple perspectives is a difficult task and has been a challenge historically on multiple fronts. Most democratic countries, like religious communities, were founded and developed based on a particular expression of culture, belief, and practice. Yet, within each of these communities, there lies the challenge of educating and engaging minority populations whose belief systems, practices, heritage, and even language may be different from that of the majority. As in democratic societies that were founded to promote equal rights for all citizens, educational environments that claim to be multi-faith and pluralistic must also address the issues of equal rights of all of its members, which includes equal attention to the specific beliefs, practices, stories and cultures of the minority groups as well as of those in the majority (Tamir, 1995).

**The Historical Role of the Chaplain in the United States**

The establishment of the role of chaplain in the United States dates back to The Continental Congress when it established chaplains as an integral part of the Continental Army on July 29, 1775. On May 1, 1789, in one of its first acts, the House of Representatives elected the Reverend William Linn, a Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia, as the official Chaplain
of the House (Office of the Chaplain, n.d.). In addition to opening proceedings with prayer, these chaplains provide pastoral counseling to congressional members, their staffs, and their families; coordinate the scheduling of guest chaplains, who offer opening prayers; arrange and sometimes conduct marriages, memorial services, and funeral services for congress, staff, and their families; and conduct or coordinate religious services, study groups, prayer meetings, holiday programs, and religious education programs, as well.

Since primarily serving in the military, chaplaincy has expanded into many aspects of today’s modern life. As will be explained in the following sections of this chapter, the growth of Chaplaincy as a formalized field of work and study came to fruition in the years between the two world wars. From these developments, the desire and need for Chaplains in a variety of settings has grown exponentially. Although most people think of hospitals when the word chaplain is mentioned, chaplains are found in areas of daily life, including educational institutions, police and fire departments and every major industry where people might seek spiritual guidance.

Although the term chaplain initially referred to members of the Christian Faith, the title has now been adopted by other faith groups as well, although not dating as far back as the chaplains who were appointed by The Continental Congress. The first United States Jewish military chaplain was appointed during the Civil War. A few individuals were engaged in Jewish chaplaincy in prisons or hospitals by the late 19th century. However, a professional field of Jewish chaplaincy in health care, geriatric centers, and other civilian settings did not emerge until the mid-20th century, following World War II. In the post-war era a number of major American Jewish communities established local chaplaincy programs for hospitals, nursing homes, mental health facilities, and other institutions (Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains [NAJC], n.d.).
When chaplaincy was first created as a professional field, it was seen as a less desirable arena for the practice of ministry, often attracting those who had difficulty obtaining other positions. Chaplaincy also quickly became an area where women were able to practice ministry in ways that was previously not endorsed by any of the major religious bodies. In the military, although a woman served as a chaplain during the civil war, her official status was never recognized. It was not until almost 100 years later in 1973 when the first female chaplain was commissioned (Doyle, 2014). Today, the majority of Board Certified Chaplains identify as members of the Christian faith tradition and dominate the professional discourse in the field. The advent of chaplains from faith traditions outside of the western world has created challenges and opportunities for those currently in the field and for those wishing to join this area of ministry (C. Pape, personal communication, August 28, 2015).

The Beginnings of Formal Programs of Education for Chaplains

Having roots dating back to the early 1900’s, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) was founded in the Christian tradition by Anton Boisen. The original idea of CPE was to infuse theology into the practice of medicine, with proposals calling for a year of clinical work for all theology students. Throughout the next forty to sixty years, various organizations, each with a slightly different take on the meaning and implementation of CPE would be created, ultimately resulting in a merger that created the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) in 1967 (Association for Clinical Pastoral Education [ACPE], n.d.).

The idea of providing seminarians with clinical experience was first set forth in 1913 at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Prior to this time, any practice of chaplaincy was conducted based on an individual’s particular religious and theological training. It was not until 1922, however, when four students were accepted into a Social Work for
Theological Students in Cincinnati. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) formally began in 1925 as a form of theological education that takes place in clinical settings where ministry is being practiced (ACPE, n.d.).

Anton Boisen is considered the pioneer of the Clinical Pastoral Education movement. He believed in the first-hand study of human experience as a way to challenge seminarians to think theologically. What he called reading “the living human documents” was a necessary supplement to classroom training in the seminary experience. Early writings of his were about using the parish as a laboratory for training and a parishioner in need was the focus of learning; one’s seminary education served as the basis for theological studies (Leas, n.d.).

In 1930, Boisen joined with others in forming the Council for the Clinical Training of Theological Students, which would expose students for extended periods to people suffering illness and crisis, mainly in mental hospitals (Hart, 1994). Later, in 1932, the Council for Clinical Training of Theological Students was created. CPE expanded to the Boston area and thus growth served as the nucleus for the Institute for Pastoral Care which was incorporated in 1944 (Leas, n.d.). With the formation of the Institute, additional training centers were added, the publication of a professional journal, *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, began and archives and a research library were established. Later that year, the first National Conference for clinical education was held and from this conference, a book was published in 1945 that articulated the development of clinical training and standards for clinical training. Simultaneously, the National Lutheran Council was growing its involvement in clinical pastoral training and reached out to the Institute prior to the second annual conference to discuss relationships and the adoption of national standards for training and the recognition of students who had successfully completed
training at accredited centers. In 1957, the Southern Baptist Association for CPE was created and it added several training centers (ACPE, n.d.).

During this time, the clinical training movement was beginning to be recognized in the broader theological education community when the American Association of Theological Schools sponsored a study reflecting on the state of theological education. The clinical training movement was described as one of the most influential movements in theological education. The continued growth in interest in this field was primarily due to two factors: the growing demand for ministers to have preparation in counseling and a new emphasis from theological schools upon student self-discovery of motivation and kind of understanding of people that would enable them to serve in a contemporary world. (ACPE, n.d.)

**The Development of a Professional Field**

The day-to-day life of a chaplain/spiritual caregiver is filled with intense, often dichotomous emotions. Within the world of CPE, there are practitioners who have completed programs of CPE and in many cases have worked to earn Board Certification, and there are the Supervisors, those who have chosen the path of becoming the educators of future chaplains and Supervisors.

The idea of an organization for professional chaplains, which would later lead to the development of a national certification process, was first discussed in 1939 at the annual meeting of the American Protestant Hospital Association, after which a Commission to Study Religious Work in Hospitals was established. In 1950, common standards were adopted and the certification process of chaplains officially began. At the same time, a similar conversation among chaplains employed in psychiatric hospitals was taking place. In May 1948, the Association of Mental Hospital Chaplains was formed and in 1968, this association had created
standards and began to certify chaplains on an interfaith (Catholic, Jewish, Protestant) basis, with CPE required as defined by the three faith groups. This was the first interfaith certification process (Association of Professional Chaplains [APC], n.d.).

In the 1960s, the notion of the certification of women in the profession of chaplaincy grew, leading to an increase in the number of Catholic sisters seeking certification in the 1970s, as it was felt that there was a standard of equality in ministry. Military chaplains also became interested in certification. In the 1980s, in a boon for the certification movement, the Commission for Hospital Accreditation agreed that hospitals should be obliged to provide some process for meeting spiritual needs of patients. This growth was spurred on by the fact that Medicare reimbursements were available for hospitals with chaplains. In 1998, these organizations merged and created the Association of Professional Chaplains, which now serves as the primary Certification body in the field (APC, n.d.). Additionally, two denominational groups offer Board Certification that is specific to their denomination, NACC (The National Association of Catholic Chaplains) and NAJC (Neshama: The Association of Jewish Chaplains).

The craft of “doing” chaplaincy is different than teaching others how to do chaplaincy. The primary group that is responsible for the providing programs of chaplaincy education and the Supervisors who are certified to educate in them is the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). There are smaller associations that have distinctive missions that are more narrow in scope for their educational programs and thus do not claim to serve people from multiple faiths in their educational processes.

The learning process of CPE is one that requires each individual to come to terms with his/her own identity, to understand it and to know how and when to use it in their work with both students and patients. The formation of one’s identity is based on individual experiences,
spiritual connection, and the influence of one’s teachers, mentors, and spiritual guides from their CPE learning processes. Thus, one’s experiences and identity formation are a key part of how one practices ministry, how s/he teaches CPE, and the ways in which s/he both perpetuates and contributes to the identity of the association and the ways the association functions (ACPE, n.d.).

**The Professional Association of CPE Educators**

In October 1967, after several years of joint discussions and planning, the four groups merged into the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. at a meeting in Kansas City, MO. The organization modeled itself on Presbyterian polity, establishing three commissions: Standards, Accreditation of Centers, and Certification of Supervisors of clinical pastoral education. Since 1969, it has been on the Federal Government's Department of Education's Commissioner's list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies/associations in the field of clinical pastoral education. This merger brought together the four existing ruling bodies for clinical pastoral education, but did not necessarily integrate the various views/perspectives of each group. Yet, as subsequent generations of supervisors came of age along with the further development of Standards for certifying supervisors and the accreditation of centers developed, the differences narrowed (ACPE, n.d.).

Since the beginning of the certification of supervisors, and for the majority of its history, the Certified Supervisors were all male, mostly Protestant Christian, and almost all white. In 1974, there were two female certified supervisors. Most of the major faith groups in the USA are counted among supervisors - Protestant, Roman Catholicism, Jewish, and Islamic. In 1981, the Racial Ethnic Minority (REM) group was formed to provide leadership in recruiting African American and Hispanic students and supervisors. There is much debate about the efficacy and appropriateness of the need for REM as a network, as although it is active, it functions primarily
as an association within the association, and has not been fully integrated into the fabric of the association or into the leadership. REM and minority group representation has increased the overall diversity of the association’s leadership, but has not made any significant strides in the area of inclusivity (ACPE, n.d.).

As a rather exclusive group of practitioners, the ACPE has kept a tight control over its training programs and those who are admitted to be a Supervisor. However, as the association has grown and as religious diversity becomes an increasing demographic variable, individuals are entering CPE training with different life experiences and different beliefs and practices. While these individuals are articulate, thoughtful, and committed to the values and outcomes of the association, there is an ethos, an underlying set of assumptions with which people operate, that are preventing the association from transitioning to the multi-faith entity that aspires to be. The mission of the Association is clear in its desire to be a multi-faith endeavor, but observation of current practices and the composition of the representative leadership will show the dichotomy between the association’s aspirations, written materials and the realities on the ground (ACPE, n.d.).

**Chaplains in Today’s World**

Although primarily associated with hospital settings and patients who are facing end of life issues, the field of chaplaincy has seen significant growth in today’s modern society. As stated earlier, chaplains were a fixture of the military and were generally ordained clergy without specific training for the areas of pastoral or spiritual care of groups and individuals. Today, however, chaplains hold positions as spiritual coaches, caregivers and pastoral care providers in the entertainment industry, in the corporate world, in schools and institutions of higher learning, and of course in hospitals and hospice locations.
In the healthcare setting, The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations has affirmed that all involved in healthcare plans should receive training on the value of spiritual assessment and since 2005, has required organizations to include a spiritual assessment to determine how the patient’s spiritual outlook can affect care and treatment (Cadge, Freese & Christakis, 2008). In a recent study in the *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, several benefits of chaplain visits were cited that included giving hope to the patient, helping to tap into their inner resources and making their hospitalization easier, all of which contribute to a patient’s physical recovery and overall well-being (Marin, et al., 2015). Although the data on the efficacy of a chaplain in healthcare settings and for spiritual outcomes for patients is limited, what data does exist offers a strong argument for integrating spiritual care into a patient’s treatment plan as well as to provide for continued research in this area. As has been intuitive since The Continental Congress, the data shows that understanding and providing for a patient’s spiritual needs is an important element of an individual’s care that can help to address the natural mixture of anxiety, fear and hope that often marks the experience of a patient who is facing serious illness and who may need to make difficult medical decisions. Professional chaplains, also serve as integral members of healthcare teams as they care for staff members, in addition to the patients, and work with them on the stresses of patient care that they experience (APC, n.d.).

Mitroff and Denton (1999), in a groundbreaking study of spirituality in organizations, emphasize that employees are seeking to integrate their personal and work lives and that their search for meaning, purpose, wholeness, and integration, both at work and at home, is a constant, never ending task. Being aware of employees’ spiritual needs contributes to a healthy organizational culture. Professional chaplains who attend to the spiritual needs of these
individuals not only help them cope in the moment, but ultimately serve to empower them to recognize the meaning and value of their work in new ways.

Professional chaplains have specialized education in utilization of spiritual resources with which to engage patients and clients who are often struggling with a particular issue. Chaplains are required to maintain confidentiality and are professionally accountable to their religious faith group, their certifying body, and the hospital or setting in which they are working. Although chaplaincy is often perceived as a Christian-based endeavor and the majority of chaplains are affiliated with a Christian denomination, the charge of a professional chaplain in today’s world is to minister to individuals of all faiths and backgrounds, regardless of their own orientation; a chaplain is obligated to refrain from any promotion of a particular set of beliefs or practices (VandeCreek & Burton, 2001).

**Key Elements of Organizational Change**

Beyond the content of changes that will take place, careful attention must also be demonstrated for the process of change. Understanding the factors that come into play with change processes are an essential part of understanding the dynamics of change. In this study, two primary areas will help to understand the context within which changes are occurring and the potential ramifications on the fabric of the organization. These areas are the cultural system and the political system (Edmonds, 2010).

Culture can be defined as, “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (“Culture,” 2005). The majority of ACPE’s members have been working as CPE Supervisors for many years and were integral to the development of the association’s mission and current culture. Identifying and understanding the association’s unique culture and its emergence, is critical to embarking upon the transition from
a Christian oriented association to one that is multi-faith in both its written materials and its practices. As a rule, Supervisors are a close-knit group who have created community through shared experiences in the educational process as well in the certification process. Some are open-minded and willing to take risks, as long as careful attention is paid to the morale of the larger group and to individual emotions (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

The reactions of the membership to cultural change can be categorized into a response system that will be impacted by the cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes. Cognition is a rational process (Carr, 2001) and will enable the Supervisors to develop ideas of understanding and thoughts about the change they will experience. However, Bartunek (1993) argues that a change does “not occur in a cognitive vacuum” but involves feelings that make change difficult and painful. The affective process is inseparable from cognitive processes, playing a critical role in perception, decision, and behavior (Damasio, 1994). For ACPE Supervisors who have a tremendous focus on the relational aspects of their role in ministry, understanding the impact of the affective processes is essential if any cultural change process is to be effective. It is the affective process, and for many, a grief process, that will ultimately inform their individual opinion and evaluation of any cultural changes they are experiencing (D. Johnson, personal communication, August 12, 2015).

The cognitive and affective components are inseparable and participants in a change process must be able to think and feel about the changes that are taking place. Individuals need evaluate the changes for themselves, for their colleagues, for their students, for their individual institutions and for the organization as a whole. Their evaluations will be largely based on their own personal experiences, but as educators, their experiences will be greatly informed by their
understanding of the process, the assessment of the changes and how everything is communicated to them (Bartunek, 1993).

In addition to the cultural system and associated processes, the political system is another lens through which to view the change process. For many, an overt transition to a multi-faith perspective will cause political uncertainty throughout the association. This will happen due to each person’s individual philosophy and approach to change. Whether or not the membership accepts and embraces the transition, this process will likely create multiple camps, possible with deep divides, and current alliances will shift. Loyalty that was previously directed towards the long-standing mission and culture will need to be redirected. Individuals and groups representing the old and the new will probably struggle for power to exert their influence as there are voids that will naturally be created by the change process and there will likely be a redistribution of power among Supervisors (Tichy, 1983).

For everyone involved in change processes, transparency is an important element of implementation. According to Fullan (2008), “Transparency concerns assessing, communicating, and acting on data pertaining to the what, how, and outcomes of change efforts” (p. 93). Burke (2008) suggests in his four phases of change, that face-to-face meetings are essential to the successful implementation of any major change. Utilizing face-to-face conversations will serve the organization well as the members like to function in a relational way and to interact with one another. For any major change, it is important to give various constituents a place voice to their concerns, to add information for the further development of the process and to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss the impending change (Gilstrap, 2007). Understanding the change process is essential for creating buy in, as “making change work requires the energy, ideas, commitment, and ownership of all those implementing improvements” (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005).
According to Lewin (1947), the association has embarked on a process to unfreeze that which was in existence, i.e. to begin the process of transformation to a multi-faith context. The critical psychological process in unfreezing is concerned with the motivation for becoming different (Marcus, 2006). While there may be tension surrounding the unfreezing and the beginning of the transformation process, unfreezing is a necessary step towards moving the association in a different direction. The next step is to engage the membership in charting a journey that imagines the future of the association after a major shift in philosophy. This exercise must provide a safe space for everyone to be open, honest and to share their fears and concerns as well as their joys and expectations (Burke, 2008). The transition can be messy and will have high points and low points, but these are crucial elements in the association’s effort to implement change, as without this journey, the association will merely end up in the same place (Lewin, 1947).

Once the change process is underway, the more challenging phase is continued sustainability of what has been changed, both during the process, as well as after the process is complete. Organizational culture and identity are thrust into the spotlight once the transformation is complete, thereby allowing the association to return to business as usual, hopefully with a new focus and outlook. One key way to help ensure sustainability once the changes have taken place is to develop, prior to the start of the change process, a strategic plan that will follow the transformation and then focus on the maintenance of the newly formed philosophy and orientation (Ferrari, Bottom & Gutierrez, 2010).

Conclusion

Chaplains have a 3,000-year-old history that dates back to the days of the Bible. Originally a role developed for those who were not affiliated with a particular church location, the role of the chaplain has grown from merely an ordained clergy person to an individual who
has participate in specific training in area of Clinical Pastoral Education as an additional component of their theological studies. Chaplains serve a unique role in the lives of many individuals, particularly in situations of illness, near death experiences, and crisis that occur. It is at these times that individuals often express a strong desire to connect or reconnect with their religious roots and desire interaction and dialogue with a trained chaplain.

As an educational organization, ACPE’s mission is to educate the chaplains who will serve at these times and be ready and available to embrace the individual, who will have significant knowledge of the individual’s faith background and will have the ability to engage the individuals as they embrace their spiritual foundations. Having been founded in the Christian faith tradition and with most of its members falling into this category as well, ACPE is endeavoring to transition its function and practice to be in alignment with its stated mission as a multi-faith association. Similar to other faith based organizations in the multi-faith arena, addressing how the association reflects the beliefs and practices of its members while at the same time paying special attention to a diverse and changing educational environment is a primary challenge.

As discussed above, the term interfaith refers to personal beliefs and interpersonal activities that involve dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of different religions, rather than synthesizing new beliefs. The term multi-faith, however, implies the embracing of multiple philosophies and practices as all being equal, going beyond tolerance for the other and with each faith, race, gender, and ethnicity enjoying inclusive participation in leadership roles and day to day functions of the association.

Beyond the scope of the daily life of a chaplain, the key elements of organizational change are at play. The association is made up of practitioners; yet, the business of the
association is not the same as the daily practice of providing spiritual care or education to future supervisors. As a member driven association, the identity of the association is bound up in its members. For many of the older members of the association, their professional and often personal identities are bound up in the identity of the association. This element of the context will need particular attention, specifically in understanding and responding to the affective elements of organizational change processes.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter conveys an overview of the research design, methodology, and the participant selection process for the study. Procedures for data collection, storage, and the confidentiality of the qualitative interviews conducted are discussed below. Lastly, a discussion of the trustworthiness and reliability of the data gathered as well as the protection of the identity of the participants is shared. The section concludes with an exploration of my role as the researcher as it relates to this study.

Research Design and Methodology

The employment of chaplains/spiritual care providers is growing at a significant rate in the United States as health systems and hospitals are beginning to appreciate the connection between an individual’s health and well-being and their spiritual care (Pew Research Study, 2015). The nature of religion and people’s beliefs, attitudes and involvement in religion have shifted in recent years, sometimes away from “traditional” religious frameworks and into a more spiritual, aesthetic realm, with individuals embracing various elements from different religious practices in addition to the faith tradition in which they were raised (Pew Research Study, 2015).

As CPE programs continue to expand to meet the growing need for chaplains and spiritual care providers, it is incumbent upon the ACPE as the organization that accredits the institutions of learning and certifies the supervisors/educators to lead the process of shifting the underlying assumptions of practice and education that have driven the field for so many years. The association, as the pacesetter, must reflect carefully upon its mission, philosophy and practice to assess the ways in which it must move its members, and thus itself as a member driven organization, to expanding the ways in which it provides for the education of future supervisors and conducts its programs and practices to ensure that the model being employed is a
multi-faith model that not only allows individuals to join and be a part of the activities of the association, but requires the multi-vocality of religious traditions to most effectively carry out its mission.

Living in the 21st century also brings additional opportunities and challenges to the field of spiritual care. Barriers to cultural sharing and knowledge building can be removed through the use of technology and it is no longer feasible, nor desirable, for a prominent association to remain an insulated educational community that does not leave room for other voices, including those representing multiple racial, cultural and diverse ethnic identities, in its thinking and practices. As the largest accrediting and certifying association, the ACPE has the potential to expand its reach and lead a transformation of the field of spiritual care as it evolves to embrace a true multi-faith educational perspective and practice.

This research study examined the beliefs, understandings, and expressions of the notion of multi-faith perspectives in the context of a faith-based organization that was in the process of shifting its foundational model of interfaith beliefs and practice to a more apt model of diverse, multi-faith perspectives and practice. Thus the research questions were:

1. What are the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors who would participate in the process of shifting the symbols, language, and practice from interfaith to multi-faith?

2. How do the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors reflect a paradigm shift of organizational culture?

These questions were grounded in a qualitative research methodology that utilized the research tradition of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a tradition that “is a dynamic process with the active role of the researcher who influences the extent to which they
get access to the participant’s experience and how, through interpretative activity, they make sense of the subject’s personal world” (Smith Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2014). Through personal, one-on-one interviews, and a qualitative research design employing the IPA methodology, the researcher was able to examine the uniqueness of each individual’s situation and to recognize that each person developed his or her own reality based on his or her life experiences. This reality is a subjective phenomenon that influenced the way the individual viewed the world, made decisions, and acted in both personal and professional settings.

This methodology was selected over other methodologies because it enabled the researcher to understand stories of the participants involved and what about those stories informed the development of the ACPE, the creation and development of its current identity and the factors that contribute to its current state of transition from an interfaith model to a multi-faith model. An IPA study allowed for rich descriptions of lived experiences and provided opportunities for the researcher to identify emerging themes as they related to the phenomena experienced and then to conduct an analysis of the intersection of the themes with the current realities (Smith Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

**Research Tradition**

Research that conveys and interprets the experiences of others is naturally associated with an interpretive phenomenological study. This methodology was selected over other methodologies because it shared the stories of the participants involved. Using IPA methodology encouraged the collection of rich descriptions of lived experiences that were then interpreted by the researcher. The interpretation of these stories was based on the emerging themes as they
related to the phenomena at hand. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), for example, define phenomenology “as a philosophical approach to the study of experience . . . [that] shares a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all of its various aspects, but especially in terms of the things that matter to us, and which constitute our lived world” (p. 11). An IPA study is concerned with the phenomenological aspects of data where the key focus is in exploring the experience in its own terms. It is identifiable as a ‘bottom up’ approach (inductive) and rather than setting out to prove a hypothesis, it attempts to provide detailed insight of the subjective world of the participant through the reflected personal experience of the subject (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005).

The primary concern of IPA researchers is to bring forth first-person accounts of experiences and phenomena that are rich and detailed. From this, it is understood that the findings of an IPA study are recognized as the interpretation of the researcher, as it is about the researcher attempting to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their experience, what Smith (2003), calls double hermeneutics, which Giddens (1984) defines as “a mutual interpretative interplay between social science and those whose activities compose its subject matter” (p. 348). Sayer (1992) has a simpler way of explaining the concept. He defines it as a “social phenomena can be changed intrinsically by learning and adjusting to the subject's understanding” (pp 28-29).

It is assumed in an IPA study that the researcher is interested in learning something about the participant’s psychological world. Smith (2003) suggests that this may be realized in the process of identifying beliefs and constructs that emerge from an individual’s narrative. It might also be realized when the researcher demonstrates that the individual’s story is an integral part of his identity. The meaning derived from the narrative of the interview is central to the data; the
aim of discerning meaning is to understand the content and complexity of the narrative itself rather than to focus on the number of times a specific item or idea is mentioned. Because of the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes, the researcher is in a better position to capture the complexity and the richness of the identity issues that the association and its membership are facing (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

**Participants, Recruitment, and Access**

As a rather small, exclusive association to which people gain full membership only through completing the internal educational and certification processes, the number of participants were few, allowing for an in-depth exploration of each individual’s experience. In keeping with the tradition of IPA, this was a more purposeful sampling, which helped to identify a closely defined group for whom the research question will be significant (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The research sample was limited to five individuals who the researcher felt could best articulate the history and development of the association that informed their understanding of the challenges that the association is facing in transforming its philosophy into practice. The individuals chosen represented a sampling of the base of power and authority that currently exists within the ACPE. Each of the participants was able to share the important story of their own identities and understandings of the association, which were invaluable in interpreting the data.

The participants selected were those who could be known as the “elders” and who had been commonly identified by their peers as individuals who best personified the association and those whose names were invoked when discussions took place about the essence and the identity of the association and how it does its work. They were the individuals, without whose blessing and approval, change could not happen. As such, their experiences and perceptions were
essential in understanding the history of the ACPE and how it got to where it is today. Characteristically, the participants were all Christian and White; two were women and three were men. This deliberate choice of participants helped the researcher to focus on the historical development of the association to understand the current status and practice. This perspective provided insights as to the challenges and stumbling blocks that are hindering the full-fledged embracing of multiple faith traditions, as well as racial and gender diversity.

As a project that will challenge the association and its current practice, it had the potential to be perceived as threatening to some individuals. As one who has had no formal CPE training, it was important for me to demonstrate the purpose, as well as the intended outcomes of this research with the participants, as they serve to inform the basis for the project.

Identified individuals were approached personally with a phone call to be invited to participate in the study. During that phone call, prospective participants were given an overview of the study. The conversation was followed up with a written letter (Appendix A). Individuals had the choice to participate or not, with no negative repercussion for making that decision. During the initial introductory phone call, potential participants were invited to ask any questions or share any concerns they had. It was my hope that individuals were honored by their selection and that they would see this as an opportunity to ensure their legacy and inform positive change rather than as a threat to what they have worked to create over the years. The working assumption was that all of the individuals involved, and the association as a whole, genuinely desired to transition from the current interfaith model of functioning to a modern, global, multi-faith model and that through participation in this project, there would be an opportunity to encourage and assist this growth to happen. As CPE, and the teaching of CPE, is a highly individualized endeavor and that potentially discriminatory perceptions may be articulated
during the interview process, careful consideration was given to ensuring the confidentiality of the individuals who agreed to participate. Each interview was conducted in a private setting.

**Data collection**

This study utilized a semi-structured interview format, which addressed the basic concerns of an approach such as IPA. The researcher developed questions to pursue in the interview process, but as a key goal is to delve deeper into the story of the individual, each interview progressed based on the responses given, and thus each participant was able to introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of. In this relationship, the participant was perceived as the experiential expert on the subject and should therefore was allowed maximum opportunity to tell his or her own story (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 58).

This format of interviewing allowed the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue; once the initial questions were asked, the researcher’s follow up questions were altered based on the participants’ responses. Therefore, the researcher was able to probe more deeply and into other interesting and important areas that arose as a part of the conversation. A semi-structured interview facilitated the opportunity to develop a strong rapport between the researcher and the participants, allowed a greater depth and breadth of subject matter, and allowed the interview to go into potentially unique areas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The interviews took place face-to-face or by video conference and were recorded with audio only. The audio portion of each interview was then transcribed by a third party for later analysis. Each participant had a single, one-hour interview that was followed up with a brief summary conversation and some additional questions.
The interview (Appendix C) for each participant was scheduled to take place within a specified period so that all interviews were completed within the same general timeframe. The interviews, whether conducted in person or online, were held in a space that was comfortable for the participant. At the conclusion of each interview, the recording was transcribed by a third-party transcription service. For IPA, the level of transcription is generally at the semantic level: one needs to see all the words spoken including false starts; significant pauses, laughs and other features are also worth recording (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

After the first round of interviews are completed and transcribed, there was an initial review of the transcripts. For this study, the first round analysis of interviews was be done via In Vivo coding by hand, which enabled the interviewer to capture the voice of the participant. In Vivo coding also helped to identify themes that were critical for the next stage of analysis (Creswell, 2012). The initial review also generated common themes and questions that were utilized in other interviews and in follow up conversations. In addition to probing deeper and inquiring about additional narrative, the second conversation was used to confirm and validate the stories and experiences that were shared initially.

As an additional component of data collection and verification, individual transcripts were sent to the participants for review and editing, if necessary, to ensure that messages and stories that were shared with the researcher were not misconstrued or misinterpreted. Participants had the opportunity to provide clarification and edits, but not to redact any of the conversations that took place or to view the analysis done by the researcher to this point.

**Data storage**

Recordings of interviews were stored on a private, password secured, online account. The password was not made available to anyone. The transcription of the interviews was done
by a third party vendor that provides transcriptions of oral interviews on a professional basis. These documents were stored on a password-protected laptop while they were being used.

To ensure confidentiality after the process, the recordings of the interviews were deleted upon verification of the accuracy of the transcription. Following the completion of the research project and its acceptance by the committee, the transcription files were also deleted and all hard copies were shredded.

**Data Analysis**

Data Analysis in IPA involves various stages where the first stage is the reading and re-rereading of the text. It is at this stage that a researcher will need to be familiarized with the account. This means engaging in an interpretive relationship with the text as suggested by Smith (2008). At this stage, the researcher’s initial thoughts and observations in response to the text will be recorded. It is a free textual analysis and there are no rules regarding what is to be commented upon (Smith, 2008). The aim of analyzing the transcript of each participant’s interviews is to understand the content and the complexity of meanings derived from the narratives rather than simply a measurement of the frequency with which they appear throughout the conversation. While the researcher is attempting to capture and articulate meaning conveyed by the participants, he is striving to learn about each one’s mental and social world. These meanings are not necessarily transparent – they are gleaned through a sustained engagement with the text and an intense process of interpretation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

For this study, key analysis of interviews was done via In Vivo coding (King, 2008) by hand, which enabled the interviewer to capture the voice of the participant. From a process perspective, the transcript was read a number of times and was annotated with items of interest.
or perceived significance from what was shared in the interview. The initial stage of analysis required close, multiple readings of the transcript in order to become as familiar as possible with the narrative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) state that best practice in the art of analysis calls for an initial look at the transcript of one interview of one individual before moving on to examine the others, following an idiographic approach to analysis that begins with specific examples and slowly works up to, more general categorization or claims. This form of analysis is iterative and involves a close interaction between reader and text. The researcher utilizes interpretative resources to make sense of what the person is saying, while at the same time continually checking one’s own sense making against what the person actually said (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) define the second stage of the process of identifying the label themes that characterize each section of the text of the transcripts. The researcher documented emerging themes in chronological order, the order in which they were shared by the participant in each interview. After repeating the process for each of the participant transcripts, the researcher focused on the ways in which the stories and themes from each participant were similar, but was also being careful to note the differences. Great care and attention was given to identifying repeating patterns while also leaving room for new issues that emerged during the rest of the process. From this, it was possible to see connections and overlaps among the emerging themes as the list is developed.

The third stage of the process according to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), introduced basic structure into the analysis. The themes identified earlier were utilized to develop a higher-level order as the researcher started to make sense of the emerging themes and possible connections between them. The result of this stage was a honed list of themes that could be
further organized for comparison and integration with ideas and themes that emerged from the analysis of the remaining interviews.

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) describe the fourth stage of the process as creating a summary of the structured themes from the data, together with the quotations that illustrate each theme. As recommended by Smith (2008), only themes that capture something about the quality of the participants’ experience of the phenomenon under investigation are to be included. This was largely influenced by the researcher’s interests and orientation in line with the hermeneutic tradition of declaring the researcher’s presuppositions (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The last part of the process was marked by the beginning of writing the narrative (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Throughout the process of writing, themes were expanded upon, explained, illustrated, and compared with the narratives of the other participants. The final version of the narrative included quotes from the individual transcripts that served to support the emergent themes. As cautioned by Smith (2008), there was a need to distinguish clearly between what the participant said and the researcher’s own interpretation of it. To address issues of rigor, participants were asked to check data and recording.

**Data Collection, Storage and Management**

Data collection, storage, and management are important in any study (Creswell, 2012). Data was collected by the means of semi-structured interviews with a maximum of five participants identified based on the criteria. Interviews were conducted in person or via video conference at an agreed upon time. Allocated time for each one-on-one interview was approximately 60 minutes. As the meetings were conducted via video conference, the interview was recorded with an online platform.
The interviewer took time to review the questions and the order of the questions to ensure a smooth delivery as well as smooth transitions with the participant. The interview began with introductions to the study and to the interviewer. The researcher affirmed that the interview was being recorded for future transcription. Each interview began and ended with profound thanks for each of the participants for being a part of the study. It was also explicitly stated that the learned information was only going to be used for the purpose of the research project and that there was no intention to cause harm or discomfort for the participants. Each interview was carefully scheduled and spaced appropriately to avoid fatigue on either the part of the researcher or the participant. This enabled the researcher to focus on each individual conversation and to be attentive to the individual’s needs (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Each participant had the right to request to stop the interview, to pause the recording or to withdraw from the study at any time in the process. At the conclusion of the interview, the participant was notified that the recording would be kept in confidence and stored in a safe location that was only accessible by the researcher. When the transcription of the interview was completed and verified for accuracy by the researcher and the participant, the audio recordings were destroyed. Except for a professional, third party transcription service, only the researcher had access to the recordings. The recordings were kept on the researcher’s password protected computer and paper copy of the transcriptions were stored in a locked file cabinet drawer in the researcher’s office. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms of participants’ names and any identifying characteristics.

**Trustworthiness, Quality and Verification**

Concepts of trustworthiness and quality can be constantly challenged in qualitative studies. In this IPA study, it was critical that the data and its methods were triangulated to ensure
that the data was transferrable between the researcher and participants. It was important to test if data could be confirmed rather than seeking the data to be objective (Creswell, 2012). Data in qualitative research will not be validated, but rather verified as accurate. Verification in qualitative research can have multiple meanings. In this study, the major concept was to understand the phenomenon behind the experiences that the participants in the study have had throughout their long and rich history with the association that have informed the ways in which the association has developed its philosophy and practice as an interfaith model as juxtaposed with the association’s spoken and written intention to be a multi-faith association. The researcher spent extensive time with each participant in order to gather a rich description of each individual’s experiences. Following the interview and transcription processes, the participants were asked for their feedback on the accuracy of the data that was collected and verified for intent and meaning. This process ensured that the participants had an active voice in ensuring the accuracy of the data analysis process and the reporting of the data in the findings. This practice ensured that each participant’s voice was accurately heard and that the reliability of the data collected was high.

**Conclusion**

This research study explored the ways in which one faith-based organization in pastoral education has attempted to expand its own understanding of faith-based work by shifting from a model of interfaith education and practice towards a pluralistic, multi-faith approach, which is designed to be inclusive of students and educators across diverse faith traditions and practices. This study examined the ways that conversations about diversity and inclusion have informed the ministry to patients of diverse backgrounds, belief systems and have allowed space for the integration of different approaches to spirituality, as well as the enhanced ability to educate
students who have diverse backgrounds, belief systems and approaches to religion and spirituality.

The primary research questions are:

1. What are the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors who would participate in the process of shifting the symbols, language, and practice from interfaith to multi-faith?

2. How do the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors reflect a paradigm shift of organizational culture?

These questions were grounded in a qualitative research methodology that utilized the research tradition of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a tradition that “is a dynamic process with the active role of the researcher who influences the extent to which they get access to the participant’s experience and how, through interpretative activity, they make sense of the subject’s personal world” (Smith Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Use of this methodology allowed this researcher to explore the beliefs, understandings, and attitudes of several key members of the association around their self-articulation of the organizational mission as multicultural and multi-faith and the impact that these views and practices have had on the organization and its culture. The results of the study suggest ways in which this faith-based organization, and other faith-based organizations, could expand their inclusivity of multiple and diverse faiths, by suggesting possible language, attitudes and beliefs, practices and knowledge of faith diversity which support such shifts.
Chapter 4: Report of the Research Findings

Research Questions

This research study was designed to explore the ways in which one faith-based organization in pastoral education attempts to expand its own understanding of faith-based work by shifting from a model of interfaith education and practice towards a pluralistic, multi-faith approach, which is designed to be inclusive of students and educators across diverse faith traditions and practices. This study examines the ways that conversations about diversity and inclusion inform the ministry to patients of diverse backgrounds, belief systems, and allow space for the integration of different approaches to spirituality, as well as the enhanced ability to educate students who have diverse backgrounds, belief systems and approaches to religion and spirituality.

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Participant Profiles

There were five individuals who were interviewed for this study, all of whom were ACPE certified Supervisors. Three of the participants were male and two were female. All of the participants were long-standing certified Supervisors, with an average tenure of approximately 30 years in the profession. Additionally, all of the participants were ordained in various Christian traditions and all participants identify as heterosexual and white. This group
was intentionally chosen as representatives of the traditional power base in the association and as
representatives of the leadership model that has been in place since the founding of the
association in 1967. While the composition of the leadership has expanded to include women
and some minority representation, it is not truly representative of the membership of the
association.

**Steve.** Steve was raised in a religious, United Methodist home and was very active in his
church as a young child. He remembers his calling to ministry coming when he was 15 or 16 at
summer camp. He was ordained in the United Methodist tradition in 1974 and although he took
his first unit of CPE the following year, his career goal was to become a pastoral counselor.
Steve was not accepted to a doctoral program in pastoral counseling, so he decided to enter into
parish ministry. Although he did well, Steve did not feel that it was a good fit, so he asked
himself, “Where have I had the most fun? The most fun I’d ever had was doing CPE and I
realized that I couldn’t be a student forever.” Steve then entered full time supervisory training in
1983, became certified as an Associate Supervisor in 1986, and then a CPE Supervisor in 1991.

According to Steve, when he was in the Supervisory process, ACPE was male dominated
and Protestant. More specifically, he said, “the region was a good old boy network, if you
weren’t white and male, you were a second-class citizen.” There were women supervisors and
while they were gaining authority, there were most definitely battles between men and women
and there was a lot of hostility between them. For example, Steve recalls a meeting where his
supervisor was supposed to become of the region. There was a female supervisor who “led an
uprising and pushed him out. It was making me cringe there was so much anger in the room.”
There were enough “sympathetic males that basically they didn't vote him in.” Interestingly, he
could not recall the outcome and who was ultimately elected, but just the events of the meeting itself.

This tension and hostility between male and female supervisors was often displayed in public, at ACPE meetings:

> It was quite shocking for me as a naïve supervisor who thought I was entering the world of heaven! I’d been in the parish and I thought the parish sucked, as it had a lot of problems, but I thought ACPE Supervisors are the liberals, the ones on the cutting edge who have their stuff together.

In Steve’s mind, ACPE was known for being more liberal in its practice than the established church practice. Rather than seeing acceptance and equality, Steve saw the promulgation of a male-dominated institution that he thought he left behind when he left the parish. Ultimately, he experienced the dichotomy between his own individual experiences and those of the greater association.

Steve’s individual training was a different experience, as he described his supervisors as being, “kind, nurturing, positive people” who were very focused on his growth and development. However, once Steve began his involvement on the regional level, he experienced an epiphany of sorts in realizing that because he was a white male, he was going to have a seat at the table; he would have to work his way into the “boys’ club” and had to “earn” his way there, but he would be able to do it, whereas the non-white Supervisors are not even in line to get a seat at the table. Steve reflected that at one regional meeting, “I was really angry because they weren't listening to me. I was so angry and then all of a sudden it came over me that if I just keep my nose clean, in a couple of years, I'm going to be leading that meeting,” and then after a brief pause, he acknowledged that in reflecting on that meeting, he was part of the problem. Steve’s
understanding that he would one day be welcomed as a leader was, in retrospect, dampened with the realization that others in the room did not have the same opportunity.

**Susan.** Susan was an active child in her church, the Presbyterian Church USA. Her parents were very active and Susan was christened into the church a mere few weeks after she was born. In her youth, Susan participated in the children’s choir and was part of the youth group.

Susan’s initial calling to ministry was when she was 15 or 16 when there was a problem with the pastor in her church and Lay Witness Mission was called in as his way to cover up some fraudulent activity. Because of this and her feeling that her church was being transitioned into an Evangelical church, Susan began attending a United Methodist Church on her own, without her parents’ permission. Susan began singing in the choir there and took voice lessons from the choir director’s wife. A primary influence on Susan was that the women were beginning to be accepted into ministry, opening the door for her to consider that calling in her life.

She remembers preaching at a youth service and feeling as if God was calling her into a preaching ministry. This was a hard sell for her parents, as it meant attending a church related college, but her parents finally acquiesced. Susan shares that her call to ministry is either renewed or diminished on a daily basis. At the time of her entry into seminary, women in ministry was unique, particularly in the Midwest community where she lived. Upon receiving her ordination, Susan became the first woman to be appointment in a nearby church as the senior pastor and thrust into the fast track of leadership within the denomination. However, the demands and expectations of the parish ministry were not really what she wanted. As she was figuring out what to do, friends of hers asked, “Have you ever thought about taking CPE?”
Susan’s journey into CPE was a therapeutic one in terms of her vocation and career. In it, she learned a lot about herself and others.

Susan was certified as an Associate Supervisor in 1986 and became a CPE Supervisor in 1988. She describes her certification process as trying to join a men’s club fraternity and one had to be liked by the men in order to become certified. She did not recall having any women on her certification committees. In terms of religious diversity, there were very few in her own experience who represented diversity beyond the Christian tradition.

When asked about the possible reasons for the lack of diversity, Susan replied

I think geography plays a lot into this. It's very hard for us to recruit supervisors who are other than white. We’ve all said, that we really need something other than white leadership. Either female or male. We need ethnicity. And we’ve put out some feelers and people want to stay where they feel they have more community.

Susan highlighted an important aspect of human nature, the notion of belonging and feeling as part of a community. This is intensified when members of minority groups, both racial and faith-based, as most individuals prefer to affiliate with like-minded people who share a similar culture, practice, and values system. Therefore, Susan’s assertion that geography plays into the lack of diversity is true on the local level for individual centers and possibly for regional gatherings. Although the local geography is a challenge for expanding diversity, as the association is a national presence, there are opportunities for continued growth.

Susan describes herself as one of the more moderate to conservative folks in the association, but feels that her views of diversity and how she acts in her professional setting were greatly impacted by the work that ACPE has done in this area. Additionally, Susan’s reflection of her experience in ACPE, is that

The ACPE gave me a way to be myself and to express my ministry and my compassion and my call. In a way that was much more congruent with who I
knew myself to be. And that, that is freedom to me. That is home to me. So there's a very emotional bond with even those I don't know but who say they are an ACPE supervisor. That they've passed the test. Whatever those tests are, we are bonded now, in ways that we weren't bonded previously.

In her reflection, Susan credits her certification process in ACPE with giving her a way to express herself in an authentic way, one that provides her with greater freedom than she felt she would have had if she remained in the traditional structure of the church. Additionally, her successfully certification process gave her an immediate sense of community and relationship with others who successfully completed similar journeys. Susan’s reflection was very personal, about her individual experience as a white woman, which serves as a backdrop for how she views her work and the current state of the association.

**Kristen.** Kristen grew up in a family that was very active in her church, which was part of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ faith tradition. Kristen’s life was very focused around the church. She described that all of her important role models were pastors and other committed lay people. She did not know that life could be any different from the way she was living. Although Kristen was ordained in the Christian Church Disciples of Christ tradition, she switched over to the United Church of Christ (UCC) shortly after her ordination. For her, “The UCC was a little more to the left of center, a little more liberal about some things and the social justice focus was a little stronger.”

Kristen’s call to ministry came when she was around 13 years old. After taking an orientation to CPE course in seminary, Kristen determined that this was the right path for her ministry. When she was younger, she had a dream to be a missionary, but she realized that was a little far-fetched during her educational process. The primary ministry that women were able to be a part of at that time was limited to that of a Christian educator. However, being confined to that path felt restrictive for Kristen, where CPE was an opportunity to participate in a more
inclusive ministry. For example, she said, “with CPE, there were no barriers or limitations for me to fully participate in ministry—I could teach and I could provide pastoral care. I had more opportunities.”

Kristen felt that her certification process was sheltered from the larger association. She did not know any other women supervisors, but she felt very supported and felt that she had a very good educational experience. The one area that proved challenging for Kristen was that the phrase that was used at the time for certification was, “you proved your balls,” in essence showing that you were an “adult” and “able to join the men’s group.” Kristen remembered that there was one female on her committee and recalls that, “she was the harshest person in the group, that she remained totally silent until the end of the session and then came in very critical.” She also said that ACPE at the time was “pretty much a men’s club, yet there were exceptions who treated me like a real person, and a supervisor and a peer.” In sum, Kristen’s experience was unique to her and for the time in which she became certified, and although she was not aware at the time, was actually reflective of the approach of the larger association towards the certification of women.

For Kristen, the growing religious diversity has been an eye-opening experience and one that she has embraced as a learner, even when it has made her uncomfortable at times. For instance, she said, “You kind of, lose your footing if you went into this…before I became aware of that [diversity] or it impinged upon my world, because I was well-grounded in my faith and I knew what ministry was about.”

Kristen notes that for her and many of her colleagues, acceptance of different faith traditions came about by necessity based on local population, as she lives in the western part of the country that seems to have a greater diversity of faith traditions than the middle part of the
country. Therefore, the nature of CPE programs and the functioning of the ACPE Supervisors in these areas can differ greatly from other areas of the country. This focus on geography mirrors what Susan shared as a factor in the lack of diversity in other parts of the country, i.e. the Midwest, and highlights the question of the importance of diversity for the association as a whole, leading to the question of whether or not the association has a mandate to increase diversity or if it is a by-product of external factors.

**Jacob.** Jacob was raised an only child in a small southern town where involvement in the local church was a regular activity. He was ordained in the Baptist tradition shortly after high school graduation at the age of 19, and upon graduation from college, became a student pastor. He continued on to receive his theological training and became an ACPE Supervisor in 1967, the year of the merger of the four major pastoral education institutions.

Jacob’s upbringing in a rural area of the country where his life revolved around the church, contributed to his desire to serve his community. For Jacob, his calling to ministry was clear from an early age, one that he accepted excitedly and pursued it through service to ACPE as well as through serving as a pastor in a variety of settings. In addition to CPE, Jacob was also trained and specialized in the areas of mental health and drug and alcohol addiction.

When Jacob became a Supervisor, he described ACPE as a “White/Anglo/Saxon/Protestant (WASP) and male dominated association that had a love-hate relationship with the established Christian Church and their respective denominations.” He elaborated that ACPE was founded by Christians in the Protestant tradition. The individuals who established the ACPE were committed to their denominational affiliation, but for a variety of reasons, did not feel that they “had a place to practice their ministry” within the formal structures of the Church. As other participants have noted, becoming an ACPE supervisor was a way to
practice their ministry in a manner that was authentic for themselves, remained connected to their denomination, but were not be limited by their denominational rules and expectations. At the time of its founding as an educational association, the primary drivers of the ACPE’s development were the theories of John Dewey’s experiential education, Sigmund Freud’s understanding of the human psyche, and religious perspectives of Protestant Liberalism.

**Brian.** Brian was raised in the northeastern part of the country in the Episcopal tradition. Brian was very active in the youth group of his church and developed a relationship with a seminarian who was running the youth group. It was during Brian’s 11th grade year that he was prodded to think about going into the ministry by the seminarian. Brian said,

> He just gently kept persisting and at some point, I can’t pin it down exactly, but at some point in 11th grade, maybe half way through, I started saying yeah, I think maybe that is something I could do or that I would be…I never said feel called to, but [it was something I] would want to take on.

As Brian was positively influenced by a religious leader in his church, his recollection highlights the relational aspects that are inherent within faith-based communities and the influence this can have on individuals and the choices they make.

Brian attended seminary right out of college and he took his first unit, the requisite unit for ordination, of CPE during his first year. On a personal level, he knew that since he had started seminary so young and right out of college, that he needed to have some kind of experience other than academic before he went out and started ministry. More specifically, he recognized that his lack of maturity would likely influence his pastoral functioning negatively and that he needed to give himself some additional time and experiences to grow. After looking at several options, he decided upon CPE. Brian enrolled in a residency program and through it, was very drawn to chaplaincy, and ultimately to becoming a Supervisor, as he was able to finally see a direction for his ministry.
Brian’s foray into the certification process took place primarily at the local level, in his center, so he was not fully involved of the culture of ACPE at that time, but there were some definitive things that he observed. Brian saw the culture as elitist as he shared,

In a way, that frankly appealed to me because I think supervisors though of themselves as the best of the best. We are people who have gone through PhD equivalent training and education. We have a level and depth of self-awareness and the ability to make use of that in our work. That is, like Superman, far beyond that of mortal men.

In other words, Brian not only appreciated the challenges inherent in the certification process, but also seemed to relish in the fact that becoming a supervisor was not necessarily attainable to everyone who wanted to do this. This attribute made it a more attractive option to Brian and created a bond with others who achieved this status.

Brian also identified that he entered the certification process at the end of the “radical, anything goes, denominational refugee culture” that was part of the establishment. He notes that there were still elements in terms of some sexual acting out and that there was a prevalent notion of “CPE is my church” along with an emphasis on “counter-cultural living. At national meetings, Brian noted that every region had a hospitality suite “that was open the whole time so that one never had to buy booze at all.” Although the environment contained remnants of the “old days,” there was emerging and important conversations about the inclusion of women, which brought about a “challenge to the culture to stop being so macho and chauvinistic.”

**Summary.** The profiles highlight some of the unique characteristics of each of the participants, sharing their own spiritual journeys and certification process as a backdrop of what was happening on the national scene. First as individuals entering the certification process and later as leaders of the association, the participants are viewed as those who have been, and continue to be in a position of authority and power within the association, and thus have the
ability to influence association’s pathway, starting as a Christian-based association, the gradual acceptance of minority groups and faith traditions, and ultimately to the realization of a multi-faith orientation, both in the written materials of the association and in its practice.

Further, it is the perspective of the participants that will also inform how the current culture developed into what it is today. As past leaders of the association and representatives of the current power base, the profiles and experiences of each of the participants also provide insights into the magnitude of the paradigm shift that has begun, but not yet been fully realized, with greater clarity as to some of the hurdles that currently exist.

The Earlier Culture – The late 1970’s and early 1980’s

The participants interviewed for this study become part of the ACPE as Supervisors as early as 1967, but primarily in the late 1970s and early 1980s, making them among the more veteran, active Supervisors today. Among the participants, there were similarities as to what each observed and experienced as hallmarks of the earlier culture: issues related to gender, sexuality, and racial and faith group diversity. Jacob describes the founding of the ACPE as being led

By Christians in the Protestant tradition. Centers of learning were primarily located in protestant/denominational hospitals or in mental institutions that were staffed by protestant Christian chaplains. The founders had a “love-hate” relationship with the established Christian Church and their respective denominations.

In other words, as described by Kristen, Supervisors “Were often people trying to get a little more freedom from the restrictive bonds of their denomination and to find a way to do ministry without it feeling so tied up, [so] constricted.”

During the 1970s and 1980s, the ACPE was also influenced by various philosophical traditions. For example, as mentioned earlier according to Jacob, “The early founders bought into
the philosophy of John Dewey’s experiential education, the religious perspective of Protestant liberalism, and Freud’s understanding of the human psyche.” Jacob further reflected that since its inception fifty years ago and well into the early 80’s the ACPE had a very limited vision and scope and was essentially White/Anglo/Saxon/Protestant (WASP) and male. Implied in his statement was the acknowledgement that as an association, ACPE’s movement towards faith group diversity has been stagnant, with its practice essentially continuing to reflect that of a singular, Christian perspective.

All of the participants equally acknowledged the beginnings of ACPE as being a narrowly focused association and that this fit with the realities of the time in which they were living. There was also a common theme of the association being reflective of the greater society in that if it was acceptable in society, then it was acceptable for ACPE. Kristen shared an example about ACPE being reflective of the greater society, saying

I don’t know if in the Bible Belt people ever think about, oh it’s Rosh Hashanah, so we shouldn’t schedule something, because the culture around them is overwhelmingly Christian. I don’t think that it’s intentional to be exclusive. For a few it may be, but it is essentially a lack of awareness and ignorance.

The essence of this view as shared by several of the participants, which serves to keep the ownership of responsibility for the practices of the association removed from those who have the ability to influence change. This reinforces the notion that there has not been a clear mandate or design for the association to be inclusive of multiple faith traditions and in racial and gender diversity.

As society began to change, so did ACPE. The female participants of the study made their way to ACPE and to chaplaincy because it was the more progressive, more welcoming path to ministry. More specifically, Susan shared, “Many of us found a home in the ACPE, as we
found more freedom for diversity in ACPE then we ever found in our own church.” As such, in their eyes, ACPE represented something different from the establishment. However, as noted earlier, this was a common theme for the male participants as well, but in a slightly different variation, in that they were not necessarily seeking acceptance or a pathway to ministry, but rather a ministry with like-minded, progressive values that was welcoming and open. As, Jacob said, “The ACPE should be a community in which all are welcome and recognized for their unique contributions in caring for one another and others.”

**Welcoming Women as Supervisors.** As the participants in the study came of age, the first issue related to inclusivity and change within the association was related to the welcoming of women, the roles they could play and the struggles and tensions they faced. Jacob highlights the fact that, “In 1980, there were 800 CPE Supervisors and none of them were female.” Adding the historical perspective, he shared that the first woman to serve as a Regional Director was appointed in 1983 and the first woman to serve as President of the ACPE was elected in 1992. Steve noted that ACPE “was certainly a male dominated, certainly protestant organization.” Susan reflected that, “while the ACPE was welcoming to women, it was clearly a men’s club, a fraternity. The men had to like you to certify you as a Supervisor.”

All of the participants recalled that there were women supervisors, both in their training centers and as part of the certification process. However, the number of women was small enough that each person was able to identify exactly who was there and how many other women were involved on any level. In sum, the certification of women as supervisors was a radical paradigm shift in culture of the ACPE, making the three women participants in this study trailblazers for future women. Many would characterize this cultural shift as a positive
disruption that was essential for the growth of the association, even though it necessitated the changing of certain accepted norms in the certification process.

Although ACPE was generally viewed as a progressive haven for the participants, it did not always turn out that way. For example, for Steve, experienced a lot of hostility between men and women at both regional and national meetings. He recalled a regional meeting where a female supervisor led a challenge to the group that resulted in a male candidate for chair was pushed out of the election. His takeaway from that meeting was not the candidates or their abilities, but rather the tension that existed between the men and women as women joined the ranks of the male supervisors. This is important as even though women were welcomed as supervisors within the association, their voices were generally oppressed, and they were not given the same opportunities as the men.

*Marginalization and discrimination against women in the ACPE.* The women participants described marginalization based on gender as a part of the ACPE. Kristen reflected that,

> I’ve always said that the culture of CPE when I came in was sexualized. We used that sort of imagery and terminology in our training, in our relationships, and there was a lot of smoking and drinking and carousing around. I think those all reflected the culture at that time.

In other words, although women were becoming supervisors, there was an acceptance and a promulgation of the notion that they were entering a boys’ club and that in order to become part of the club, one needed to not only accept these tenets, but also embrace them. When Kristen described her certification process, she said that as a woman it was obligatory for her to “prove her balls,” in order to become a supervisor.
Sexual discrimination was also described in the experience of one of the participants. Susan shared an experience that happened when she took her first unit of CPE at a center in the Midwest. She was a seminary student at the time and during the unit, the supervisor there was sexually inappropriate towards her. By her own admission, it took a while for her to move beyond it all. She opted not to pursue any legal course of action for herself, but it raised her awareness as to what was going on at the time both in local centers as well as at national meetings, where there was an environment of promiscuity by the male supervisors that was deemed acceptable. Therefore, even though women were invited into the club and certified supervisors, they were often the victims of a sexually charged environment and unwanted sexual advances, creating a professional environment in which it was challenging to function.

Response to women and women’s empowerment within the ACPE. In response to stories like Susan’s and women moving into leadership positions, there was a concerted effort to shift the culture and practice as it relates to welcoming women as supervisors at the association level. Brian remembers the proliferation of workshops on women’s empowerment and accepting women as equals within the association when he began attending national meetings. He recalls that

Women were leading workshops on feminist theory, particularly as it applied to what we were doing in CPE and just generally, I think, beginning to challenge the men to open up and to be as inclusive as they say they wanted to be.

The association’s efforts continued as more women entered the certification process and rose to positions of leadership within the association. However, as the association functions on multiple levels, it was often the case that the regional or local practice carried remnants of past practice, while there was a significant shift in the national practice.
Inclusion of the LGBTQ community. In addition to binary gender, there was also the issue of gay and lesbian supervisors brewing. Brian remembers a meeting in 1980 in Estes Park, Colorado, “It was at that meeting that ACPE went on record as fully supporting the idea of embracing and certifying gay and lesbian supervisors, which was really controversial. Really controversial.” As several participants noted, this was reflective of society, as a few denominations began ordaining gay and lesbian clergy in the early 1970’s. For example, Kristen said,

We do [reflect society] in the areas where the society's much more closed…And that's something I think we've tried to work on. I know we're going to have to work on it for a long time, just like the society around us is having trouble working on it. This sentiment reflects both a justification of the way things are, placing blame on the larger society, but it also acknowledges that it is important to work on, with the assumption being that both individuals and the association need to do this work.

Individual Perspectives on Diversity. In reflecting on the earlier culture of ACPE, each of the participants shared their individual perspective on ACPE’s approach to and embracing of diversity, both on the association level as well as by the individual members.

In his reflection, Jacob’s personal philosophy emerged with his response. He noted that,

The world we live in today is not the world in which I received my calling to ministry and began my career. That which sufficed historically and served us well then often does not serve us well today. It is the obligation of the ACPE to honor and promote our roots, but to embrace the current realities and to do so to the best of our ability.

Jacob notes that his “philosophical” approach has served him well during his career as an ACPE Supervisor and in his opinion, has helped others to move forward in critical areas. He also recognizes that his has been a passive approach to change, one that fostered an “acceptance and tolerance” rather than advocating for what he knew was right.
Kristen used the concept of shifting the language from pastoral care to spiritual care to talk about diversity. She shared,

You kind of lose your footing. If I generalize and look back and try to figure out how I was feeling at the beginning before all this diversity, before I became aware of it or how it impinged upon my world, because I was well-grounded in my faith and I knew what ministry was about. I could train people working with the narrow margin of diversity within the Christian tradition. Or even Judeo-Christian tradition. They don't seem so different at many places. So, to move into more of a generic kind of spiritual understanding of myself and my ministry, that's a stretcher. And I think for a lot of people, that's where they begin to lose that sense of who they are. It's a struggle. You just have to find your feet again.

Kristen’s view is not unique and has been identified by supervisors throughout the association in other settings. It serves to highlight the intersection of the personal and professional identities of chaplains and supervisors, which although not unique to this field, is definitely a prominent characteristic.

Steve’s perspective on ACPE’s approach to diversity can be categorized as one that is reactive and usually from a sense of obligation or necessity. He also focuses on the association in his thinking, rather than on the individual members. He shared,

Having those [diverse] voices pushed ACPE to change, but it really changed out of their white liberal guilt than anything else. I do not feel there is a real mandate to embrace all minorities in ACPE and to do what they have to do for all the different voices that are within the organization, besides give lip service that it's important. I think that's been the issue- that we're more motivated by our white liberal guilt more than we are by proactivity.

Steve is rather critical of the association’s current practice related to embracing minorities. As a past leader, he readily acknowledged and lamented the fact that he was not able to bring about more of a cultural shift. He goes on to share that he sees the association’s approach to embracing others more as an obligation, rather than as an integral part of its practice. He shared,

This [embracing diversity] is something we need to do, rather than this is who we are. So when people break in, people from different cultures and different religions and stuff, they're swimming upstream. There is no pleasant invitation.
I'm gonna speak really bluntly, but all it does is make us feel good about ourselves.

With this statement and approach, Steve also shared that he does not feel that he personally has the knowledge about other cultures and faith groups to know how to change this, but feels that the status quo is not serving the association or its membership well.

Brian spoke more in a big picture perspective about the association reflecting historically, but also acknowledging the dissonance between the association’s views and the embracing of it by individuals, saying,

I think it was more that ACPE had historically always seen itself as being a prophetic voice in the church. I think the idea that we would welcome disparate voices and make them part of us was somehow in the texture of what we were doing. I can't say that it was universally embraced but it just felt like it was in the air.

In contrast to Steve, Brian does feel that embracing diversity is inherent in the texture of the association, even if not an officially state mandate. However, as Brian continued, he shared his personal questions related to the concept of inclusivity.

I think the whole question about are there limits to inclusivity ... At some point, do you become so inclusive that you lose any sort of coherent identity in order to try to fit everybody in? Or at some point, do we say oh wait, no, this is who we are and we can flex ourselves but there are limits? What are those limits and how do we affect them?

In this statement, Brian alludes to the fabric of the association and expresses his concerns about being too inclusive and thus the fear of losing the core identity of ACPE as Brian understands it. Similar to some of the other participants, Brian highlights the fear of losing the past and the uncertainty of what it means to embrace that which is different within the association.

Susan shared that from her perspective, ACPE has always stood on the most progressive side of issues related to social issues. She said, “Many of us found a home in the ACPE, because
we found more freedom from the diversity of ACPE then we ever found in our own church.” Susan’s view also recognizes that CPE, by definition, has its risks, in that it is a highly personal endeavor, so when looking at the issue of certifying new supervisors or attracting new students, she feels that, “You don't want to threaten the people who are buying your product by telling them they have to be accessing of words that they don't know.” In this, she is referring both to institutions that are accredited to offer CPE programs as well as to the majority population of supervisors and students. From her perspective, she needs to speak the language that people will relate to and understand, even if it is not representative of the bigger picture of embracing diversity.

Taking it a step further, Susan posited the question, “Would my hospital hire somebody other than a Christian to be the Director of their spiritual health department? They might say they would be open to that, but probably only because Federal law requires it. However, they would never do that. At least not at this juncture.” In sharing this, Susan highlights some of the dissonance between the association and the practices of its accredited centers in which are supervisors are working.

She also shared, similarly to others, that, “Some of the push back about our [ACPE’s] Christian identity is as much about survival and about fear of losing that which we know very well and that gives us professional comfort, as it is that some individual has decided that it has to be a certain way.” The ideas of losing the past and that which is comfortable to many of those within the association have been key ideas that were lifted up by each of the participants throughout their interviews.

*Summary.* The early culture of the ACPE was marked by the integration of women into the ACPE, first as Supervisors and then as persons able to serve in leadership and was a
deliberate effort of the association. This was a shift away from a male-dominated field. In this shift, it was clear to see many of the difficulties that the association was facing when the establishment was challenged by the inclusion of the “other” which in this case was the welcoming of women and then the LGBTQ community. Interestingly, all of the participants described the ACPE as the more progressive thinkers and the more welcoming religious community. It was also noted that this was the first of several challenges to the current state of the association and that while much of the membership “did not have an issue” with the inclusion of women as Supervisors as well as those who identified as part of the LGBTQ community, but this was nonetheless a major disruption to their day-to-day lives in the association, and therefore was met with both significant resistance and a strong sense of guilt for not being as open to change as they thought they were. While the association has made significant progress since the early years, there is still a lot that needs to be done to become a fully inclusive community.

The data collected through the research study highlights the importance of understanding the individual perceptions of those who represent the current power base of ACPE. Their personal insights and attitudes and their views of the association’s practices in recent history related to diversity are representative of the larger membership of the association. These insights and perceptions enable the deeper understanding and analysis of the current state of the association and the cultural paradigm shifts that need to take place.

Issues of Race and Faith Group Diversity. Following the issues of gender and sexuality, the association then had to address issues of racial diversity as well as faith group diversity. Throughout the interviews, there were occasions that issues of racial and faith group diversity were conflated, and therefore they are included in the same section, with sub-sections devoted to each concept.
One of the issues that arose is the question of whether or not embracing diversity of all kinds is part of the fundamental fabric of the association. That is to say, even though the ACPE was founded with a strong basis in Christianity and the majority of the membership identify with Christian denominations, is there a mandate, or an expectation that ACPE be a multi-cultural and multi-faith association? Steve felt strongly that within ACPE, “there is no mandate to embrace all minorities.” In this statement, he was referring primarily to faith group minorities. However, his statement is not limited to faith groups, as he is also referencing the African American community, which in his thinking, is both a racial and faith-group minority.

Several of the participants noted that the ACPE, as an association, continues to struggle with what it means to embrace diversity in all its forms, but primarily in terms of faith group diversity. The perception is that even though valuing diversity is part of the official statements of ACPE, there is still the lack a mandate to bring the value to fruition. For the most part, whatever takes place in this realm is generally driven by a few individuals, often those who have chosen to serve in the leadership of the association. The membership is often left on its own to determine how, or if, diversity should be a part of their own practice. Jacob aptly notes,

The idealized hopes of who we might become (speaking of the ACPE vision statement) is a declaration of intention which may be followed by a reformation of practice, but it may not be, since it was handed down from above rather than processed from below.

This reinforces the notion that it is not merely a mandate from the leadership that is lacking, but there is also a lack of mandate or sense of urgency from the membership, as this concept is not being raised to the leadership as an issue of real concern.

Addressing Racial Diversity. In reflecting on the issue of race, Kristen noted that the when she was first certified, the make-up of the membership was very “white,” and that from her
perspective, the “African-Americans just had to be good white folks with a dark skin kind of thing.” In other words, African-Americans who wished to become supervisors were expected to embody white Christian culture and to utilize language and customs that may not be regular parts of their current practice. The dominant white, Christian culture of ACPE was not ready to embrace a minority community as equal participants, but there were those who recognized the necessity of moving the association forward in this area.

All of the participants remember the establishment of REM, the Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Network that was established in 1986. While none offered any reason why REM should not have been established, only two of the participants described the culture at the time and reflected on why it was important for the association. For example, Steve recalled being at a regional meeting when he realized that

> As a white male, I can make it. I'm sitting in the row. I really realized that I'm in the row and they're not even sitting in the same row. They gotta jump into the row. That was a rude awakening to me personally. It was a life changing awareness that came to me.

In sum, the regional meetings helped Steve gain an awareness of his privilege. Not only was he aware of his privilege, he also wanted to advocate for others due to his new knowledge. This was not always well received. Steve remembered that one time he “was really angry because they weren't listening to me at a meeting.”

> At the same time, while Steve was frustrated and angry that he was not being heard, he suddenly had an epiphany that if he could “just keep my nose clean; in a couple of years, I'm going to be leading that meeting. Sure enough in a couple of years, I became the Chair of Accreditation, and that for me was a life changing kind of awareness.” In further reflecting on that time, though, Steve also reflected that it was not just the women
or the African-American’s who were being shut out, but that ACPE was a caste system where “one had to prove your worth. You had to work your way up.”

Among the participants, while they described an association that was becoming sympathetic to the issue, Brian also reflected that, “for a big organization, ACPE’s thought pattern was quite small.” The Racial, Ethnic and Minority network (REM) continued to expand its membership, but not without creating additional tensions within the membership. Mentioned by two different participants, REM was described as limiting itself to speak only for the Black Christians in the association, which led to “horrendous meetings where they did Black Revival, which left everyone from other cultures who were sitting there feeling left out.” In other words, REM was expected to capture all minority needs—race and faith. The group was not able to represent the full diversity of ACPE, which left others feeling further marginalized.

Then, for the first time in the multiple conversations, Steve spoke boldly to name the issues of diversity being exacerbated because of white, liberal guilt. “Nobody would engage the leadership of REM around these issues [REM’s limited focus on the Black Christians in the association],” concluding the thought with “this is not [practicing Black Revival that makes others feel uncomfortable] what we stand for as an association.” The result of REM’s unchecked growth and development that was perceived as alienating by many and a lack of response from the Board and leadership, was one of the power plays that have kept ACPE stuck in our old ways, “stuck in that forever pattern of this is the way we [the larger association of ACPE] do it and these are the people who do it [white Christians], so it is the same people over and over again. So you can't get new voices in.” That is to say, that the general reaction to REM was to keep them as a separate group, outside of the fabric and practice of the association rather than to
work to integrate them into the larger association. This created a lot of resentment is still present today.

Another element of the issues related to race can be attributed to the governance structure of ACPE, which according to Steve, “is operated like a white, Christian church, which encourages certain attitudes and assumptions of how things work. However, when the professional leadership changed [from a white male] and the Board hired an African-American woman to be the Executive Director, ACPE was “now being operated like an African American church, which has very loose standards to it, and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense. It's just the way it's run. It's a mom and pop store and who's your favorite customers.”

As Steve states that his comment is not meant to be derogatory, but it is nonetheless a negative description of an African American Church. Although meant to be descriptive, Steve’s comment demonstrates his own lack of cultural understanding and perhaps misinterpretation of how an African American Church is operated. This reflects on the broader issue of cultural competence and highlights the disconnect that exist within the ACPE related to understanding and embracing practices and beliefs that are different from what has been accepted. This lack of knowledge and understanding has greatly hindered the way that the association and its members have functioned.

**Addressing Diversity in Faith Traditions.** Kristen’s reflection on the faith group and racial make-up of ACPE in the earlier years was that,

> Basically, we were all Christian, and huge numbers of Southern Baptists. I think they were the largest denomination. I had a couple Jewish supervisors and a couple African-American supervisors at that time, but very limited numbers. And that's when we were taking in a lot of Roman Catholics, so it became much more diverse in terms of Catholic, Protestant during my early years as a supervisor. Lots of Roman Catholic sisters.
Kristen’s reflection reaffirms that faith group diversity was limited in the earlier years and highlights how some in the association thought about diversity, focusing it primarily within the Christian tradition.

Steve notes that from his perspective, part of the challenge ACPE faces related to faith group diversity is best seen as a function of numbers, which plays out as how much representation a particular faith group has within ACPE. He shared that certain actions and practices have been likelier to cause a stir, “for instance when we have a meeting on a Jewish holiday, we would hear more from our Jewish constituency than if we scheduled a meeting when it's on a Hindu holiday, because we only have one or two Hindus.” This idea is in line with Kristen’s and Susan’s observations that diversity within faith tradition is based in geography, as there are certain parts of the country where minority populations are more prevalent, and thus more vocal when it comes to these issues. In areas where there is not a minority population presence, the scheduling a meeting on a holiday is less likely to be noticed or even a concern.

Brian noted that a key area of ACPE’s functioning, the Certification process, is one of the primary areas where he experienced tensions with faith group diversity. The area of the process that he noted was around the theological piece of a student’s theory papers. An early element of the process requires students to compose, share, and receive approval for a set of papers that articulates the student’s theories related to theology, education, and personality. The papers are reviewed by randomly selected ACPE supervisors. This becomes problematic when the readers either do not understand the theories and philosophies that the students are using, or if they do not agree with them. Brian sees this playing out where students from these different [faith] backgrounds are attempting to think and write coherently about the, broadly speaking, the theology that informs their practice,
they're speaking out of traditions, out of writers, out of religious writings that are unfamiliar to a number of readers and therefore ... the response is often, I don't see Thomas of Aquinas here. I don't see Moses Maimonides. I don't know how to make any sense of this so I don't think this is a very good paper. That's an overstatement but certainly there have been people who have had that experience very much.

As Brian said, the practice has been, and continues to be, that the student has the burden of adjusting his “Thoughts and beliefs to better fit what the readers expect to see, even if those thoughts and beliefs are at odds with the student’s faith tradition.”

Also reacting to the issues related to the theory papers, Susan shared,

Personally I think telling somebody who is not Christian that they don't have Christian after you sin, is inappropriate. It shouldn't happen. There's a lot of subjectivity in the ACPE process, around meeting committees, and who reads the papers. On the other hand, I think otherness gets unduly challenged in subjectivity. Because if the reader really resonates with the person, they are passing that paper a whole lot easier than if it is a very different way of thinking than they themselves have.

Susan’s response introduces the notion of subjectivity into the various certification processes and highlights the inconsistency that exists in the evaluation processes. The challenges brought forward for a student who has a different way of thinking than the evaluators are emblematic of the lack of a common vision for understanding and embracing those from different faith backgrounds are again part of what maintains the status quo. Without a mandate for embracing different faith traditions within the fabric of ACPE, those from the minority traditions will continue to struggle and to feel as though they are not part of a multi-faith association that values their perspectives and voices as future educators.

Susan continued expanding on the topic noting that,

ACPE in my opinion has always been much more open to religious diversities other than Christian, then they are opened to any type of diversity that is like Evangelical Christian. As an association, we have had a harder time embracing those to the ‘right of us.’
Susan’s reference to Evangelical Christians is interesting to note, as it represents the rigidity and the lack of acceptance that many felt within their denominations that led them to CPE in the first place. Openly acknowledging this tension is both important and ironic in that there are those who would argue that ACPE has merely created an exclusive club for those who are progressively like-minded as she says,

We really struggle because, I think the ACPE obviously has values for diversity. But with that really means underneath, is progressive diversity and standing with like-minded people on immigration issues, justice issues, and women’s issues. But when it comes to diversity that might lend us more toward a conservative view, we really have not embraced that... and I’m not suggesting we do embrace it, but we’ve really struggled with that.

Susan’s comment reflects the tension she feels as an individual and as a member of the ACPE as it relates to the embracing of diversity versus the limits of diversity within the association. She acknowledges the value that ACPE places on acceptance, but struggles with the notion that it is limited to “progressive diversity and standing with like-minded people,” which by definition, limits which “other” the association is willing to welcome and which “other” will be excluded. In other terms, it has the potential to cause many to feel unwelcomed, just as folks felt unwelcomed in their denominations, drawing them towards CPE.

Kristen shared that she once had a Pentecostal student “who believed that if you prayed to Jesus, that you could bring people back from the dead. The biblical notion that prayers will be answered.” In the interview, Kristen was clear that she certainly respected his belief and his own individual actions a person of faith, she also emphasized that as an educator of future students, that this was not a belief that was mainstream or that should be shared in a multi-faith and multi-cultural educational environment. For Kristen, and by
extension for all educators of CPE, this represents one of the major challenges of
increased faith diversity among students and informs the notion that particularly within
CPE, personal and professional identities are inextricably linked.

Furthering the ideas of faith group diversity, Kristen shared that from her perspective,
some of what she has experienced relates to the individual setting and the part of the country in
which a supervisor works. She said that

There might be regional areas that are finding things as challenging or find
diversity in faith traditions unacceptable, but the rest of the country does not. Or
most of the supervisors in another part of the country would find that fine. I think
education somewhat feeds into that, because of the education level we want the
students to have. And some of the faith traditions do not have the basic
educational background to be successfully in our educational program. That
makes it tough. You put that with then, a faith tradition that doesn't expect people
to have that educational background, then that makes them tough students. So, I
would come in more with that as the issue than I would just diversity in faith
tradition, maybe.

Kristen’s observations are important in understanding some of the internal struggles that she, and
others have faced when addressing faith group diversity. At its core, CPE has certain theological
educational requirements and expectations. However, with the proliferation of new faith groups,
many of which have alternative paths to recognition as a leader in that group that don’t
necessarily include a similar or equivalent theological requirement, welcoming these students has
created challenges that the supervisors do not know how to address. This challenge serves to
feed the idea that ACPE is welcoming of the “other” if they meet the standards that ACPE has
come to expect in their programs. This assumption is not necessarily wrong or misguided, but
does require further study for the field of CPE.

Synthesis. Racial and faith group diversity has been a perennial challenge for ACPE.
Early efforts included a deliberate attempt to recruit and welcome persons of color and diverse
ethnic and cultural backgrounds through the establishment of the REM Network, which was initiated around the time that the first women were certified as Supervisors. REM’s focus was not necessarily to welcome persons of different faith traditions, but there was an inherent assumption that persons from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds would also come from different faith traditions.

The continued growth of REM has enabled a greater number of persons representing minority cultures to become supervisors. At the same time however, the leadership of REM has shifted its focus to the more narrow purpose of supporting persons of color in the Christian tradition rather than being a space for multiple minority representation. While hailed as a valiant effort, having REM as a group that essentially functions independently and that is not integrated into the fabric of the association has enabled the general membership of ACPE to maintain its ways rather than embracing, welcoming and giving voice to them.

The functioning of REM in this manner is part of the culture of the association that needs to be shifted in order for ACPE to become a multi-cultural, multi-faith association. This paradigm shift is perhaps one of the biggest hurdles facing the association, as the expectations and understandings that have developed about REM, what it is, and how it functions have become ingrained in the minds of the collective. These understandings are often misinformed and misinterpreted, as there have not been any efforts to address the role of REM, what its role and purpose should be, and how to integrate those who have a loyalty and allegiance to REM into the core fabric of the general ACPE community.

One interesting observation noted by the researcher that affects both race and faith group diversity, was the perception that the association (ACPE) is a separate entity that the participants identify as having opinions of its own. This idea contradicts the fact that the ACPE is a
membership-based association and therefore any attitudes and actions of the association are in reality, determined by the membership. Attributing power and authority to the entity rather than to the membership that makes up the entity is creating a false sense of structure that is creating the perception that the membership does not have the power and authority that it actually does, and therefore hinders the realization of the association’s goals.

**The Symbols of ACPE.** George Herbert Mead was a pragmatist and believed that symbols are used as a means for thinking and communication (Ashworth, 2000). Within ACPE, there are not any ‘official’ symbols of the work of a chaplain or a supervisor, but there are the “unofficial” symbols that have been ascribed to leadership within the association. The first, and most notable, is the cane that once belonged to Anton Boisen, widely considered the founder of Clinical Pastoral Education (Nouwen, 1968). The cane serves as a link to the roots of CPE and a connection to Boisen, but among the participants of this research, none was clear as to when the cane became a symbol that was passed to each incoming president upon the beginning of their term. The other widely agreed upon symbol of leadership was inaugurated in 1992 when ACPE elected its first woman president. Brian shared that “Some of the women and friends and colleagues said you know, the cane is a masculine symbol and this is a new day and it's not enough. We need to start with a symbol that speaks the feminine side of this. They came up with a wand.” Brian, who is a past president of ACPE, shared his thoughts on these symbols,

Well, for me, the cane particularly, when I became president, represented continuity. That was a very rich connection for me to make. Okay, that's for me. The wand, I honored it because I understood the impulse that drove its creation and I count the women presidents in ACPE as among my dearest friends so I honor it because of that, but as someone pointed at it, you know, it's just another phallic symbol. I'm not really sure that it speaks to what they intended it to speak to in terms of the feminine side of leadership in ACPE.
Brian’s reflection offered insight into his thinking about symbols and the cache that they have for him. As a past president, Brian very much felt strongly about embracing the past of the association. He felt strongly that it was his role, as the president, to be a link from the past to the present, and ultimately to the future. Brian’s reflection continued and he interestingly noted that

To the membership, Anton Boisen becomes increasingly way, way in the past. When I was coming through, I knew people who had worked with him, who had trained with him. This is just a conjecture on my part. I just think when people see those things being passed on, I don’t think that a lot of students are going oh, that’s just such a powerful moment, isn’t that wonderful?

Acknowledging that the cane and the wand do not necessarily have meaning for everyone, particularly those who are newer to ACPE, he is recognizing his holding on to the past and the symbols that were important to him and his generation, the generation that had a more direct connection to the founder of CPE. Nonetheless, even though these symbols do not necessarily speak to the membership as a whole, as ordained clergy, Brian willingly accepts them as part of the ritual of leadership within ACPE, and they become paramount in his views of the association.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that although the other participants were also past presidents and leaders of the association, few of the them talked about either of these symbols during their interviews. When asked about them in follow up interviews, all acknowledged the cane and wand as symbols of continuity, but also noted that these were really not universal symbols for the membership of ACPE.

Other participants acknowledged that their first thoughts related to symbols were directly linked to their roles as clergy and not necessarily as members of ACPE. However, with further
reflection, each person shared different symbols that came to mind and that had developed meaning for him or her.

Susan described words as symbols for ACPE, defining them as unifiers of the CPE experience and journey. These are not phrases that are posted on bulletin boards or that are published, but when spoken, anyone who has been a part of ACPE immediately connects with the speaker. The two primary phrases are “trust the process” and “hear the story,” both of which speak to the clinical method of learning model that is used to teach clinical pastoral education. The other symbol that Susan highlights are the letters of ACPE, the acronym for the association. In her reflection, she posits that, “she is not sure that people love the letters, but rather how they represent what people are actually afraid of, which is what it would mean to not have the name and how it would cause us to lose identity in the market place.” She then added a bit of foreshadowing which will be addressed later, that “I think that [the fear of loss] is what drives a lot of the resistance to any kind of change of ACPE.”

For Kristen, the symbol that came to mind was a big tent. In her experience, “There clearly was a tent, there was a very wide door, and it was a big tent. Moreover, it was ecumenical in the sense of that term at that time. Lots more diversity than I would have ever experienced had I just stayed clergy in my own denomination doing parish work or whatever.” After first talking about the cane and the wand, Brian then shared that, he feels that ACPE is like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. There’s a promised land that we believe is there and we believe that we are journeying toward it, but, at least from time to time, it feels like we are stuck in the wilderness as there’s no clear sense of direction, that is how we are supposed to get to where we want to go and we feel lost.

Like Susan, Brian attributes part of this to longing for what the older generation used to have, where
they knew very clearly who we are, what it meant to be together and how we celebrated being together. And that’s gone and we don’t really have anything to replace it.

When pressed further, Brian was emphatic that the sentiment he was sharing was not about a return to the time when the ACPE was primarily a white, Protestant, male endeavor, that was not inclusive of others, but rather the time when camaraderie and relationships were more important than organizational structure. He continued and reflected on what he portrayed as the juxtaposition of that notion, sharing that “those who are more contemporary and are really trying to address all these diverse concerns within ACPE don’t necessarily feel connected to one another and aren’t sure how it all comes together.” Interestingly, he is conflating the organizational structure, societal tendencies, and the embracing of diversity, attributing each to the challenges facing ACPE today and lamenting, “Although he has been told there is a promised land, we don’t have a Moses. At least I haven’t seen one.”

It is interesting to note that although the symbols that were articulated by the participants vary in substance and meaning, they all fall into a similar thematic realm and are generally focused on continuity, grabbing hold of the past as there is great fear is losing what it represents for those who were raised in it. The overall view of these symbols, and how they serve to inform understanding of the past was shared as a quasi-justification for why things are the way they are, i.e. this is our past, and we cannot let it go. As each participant described their symbols, they shared wonderful meaning and what each saw as a direction, but continued in an almost lamenting way, that these ideas are not really present today and that things are different, so we need to figure out how to embrace the past while we embrace “others” and welcoming diversity into our midst. The intersection of these ideas is an important factor in understanding the state of the ACPE of today, as it highlights some of the primary challenges that the
association is facing as newer generations of supervisors are coming through the certification process.

**The Current State of ACPE.** Jacob is the leader with the longest history of involvement in the ACPE. He willingly acknowledges that the current mission statement and the values statement are relatively recent in the history of ACPE and makes a very bold and courageous statement that implies a lack of ownership of the general membership. He states,

Both are more ‘wish-statements’ or ‘idealized hopes’ than they are reality; and yet, they are ‘intentions’ and “hopes for best practice” made by a few leaders, adopted by politically correct Boards, and yet to be implemented by the supervisors and hospitals of the land. They may be nothing more than the “idealized hopes of who we might become,” but even that is a declaration of intention which may be followed by a reformation of practice (but it may not be, since it was “handed down” from above rather than “processed from below”).

When pressed further, Jacob is hesitant to indicate if he is speaking from a personal perspective indicating his own, individual feelings or if he believes that he is representative of the association in his musings. He highlights an issue raised earlier in the dissonance between the leadership of the association (however well meaning) and the membership on the matters related to fulfilling the mission and vision of the association both in word and in practice.

Throughout ACPE’s practice at regional and national gatherings, Brian has noted a distinct change that has left him longing for the past. For much of his career with ACPE, Brian fondly remembers participating in worship services that he termed as “all Christian and included communion.” Upon reflection, he noted, “most of us were really comfortable with that, even if Episcopalians were singing Baptist hymns.” Then, as the Jewish folks came in, he remembers people sharing that the worship service did not speak to them all. The first thing that they began to notice,
is that our worship just completely changed in order to become more inclusive. My bias was that most of the time, it was meaningless. I had a hard time getting anything out of it. Broad language and contemporary music that spoke to a very open ended kind of theology and it just didn't have any life in it for me.

Brian emphasized that he longed for a meaningful worship service, as it was a big part of creating fellowship with his colleagues, as it was a common, shared experience. He further elaborated

I can't tell you the last time I've been to an ACPE worship service. I can remember sitting at an opening worship service and I had two or three ecumenical colleagues sitting around me. It was a Black Pentecostal church service. Jesus this and Jesus that. We looked at each other and wondered if this was supposed to be a welcoming worship for all who are attending and we just didn't feel it that way. I think that's been something we have not been able to figure out, which is too bad. I don't know the way out of it. I don't know how you solve the worship thing with the diversity that there is now, with Muslim and Buddhist and other kinds of folks.

Within Brian’s answering the question, he paused to reflect that he could not remember if there was even a worship service at the last conference, as he did not remember seeing it on the schedule or hearing about it from anyone. Author’s note, there has not been a worship service as part of the national conference for at least the past three years, nor has there been any significant or substantive feedback on the idea of having a worship service at gatherings.

In a style more similar to Jacob’s, Steve describes the current culture of ACPE as one of tolerance. He would not characterize it as embracing at all. In his interview, he bluntly shared that his perception of ACPE is “As long as you don’t make me change anything, I’ll tolerate you. I’ll use that word. They don’t tolerate Conservative Christians. They change them. That’s my job to change them according to ACPE.” Although slightly different in tone and word, this sentiment reflects that which was shared by Susan in her interview when she was asked about diversity within ACPE. Steve continued his thought sharing.
I think there is a Judeo-Christian theological context within our organization, there's definitely a feeling of theological superiority. I would describe it as a liberal superiority, where we feel that if somebody has a Conservative Christian theology, we need to knock that out of them. We'll leave that Unitarian alone. We'll leave the Jewish student alone. We will probably leave the Catholic alone, a little bit. But you give us a Fundamentalist, we'll work on that student. That student, they need to change. They need to see the light.

Steve further posits that it is because of ACPE’s liberal tendencies that “we say we need to be open to all of the people who are non-Christians. However, in practice and in the day-to-day life of the association, we still want them to do things the ACPE way.” He noted in a bit of a self-deprecating way that he, and many of his colleagues do not understand other religions in the way they understand Christianity, “I don’t understand Judaism, I don’t understand Hinduism. I don’t understand, but I value that as a way to get to your spiritual end.” This statement highlights a vulnerability in ACPE’s educational program of its supervisors for providing students with a multi-faith, multi-cultural curriculum, as referring to a “spiritual end” clearly articulates Steve’s philosophy of religion, which may not be in concert with the religious beliefs and philosophy of his students.

Brian reflected that there is some level of a disconnect from what goes on at the top leadership level and the perceptions of the membership in their day to day functioning, further reinforcing the notion that there is no mandate for equality in the fabric of the association; the top leadership speaks of inclusivity and equal standing, but these values do not always trickle down to the general membership. In looking at the work of the association, he is surprised by the lack of engagement or even interest of his colleagues. Brian sees the culture of ACPE as open to any individual who wants to speak or seek a leadership role, if one has the skills, the personality, and the respect of colleagues. However, he is quick to note that this is not always the case, as in
the examples with the theory papers, noting again that those to the right of center, i.e.
Evangelical Christians and Jews would likely say that their place in ACPE is not equal.

One of the challenges for the association, according to Steve, is that from his view
I think we tend to be silent when somebody else is doing these things or being exclusive. I don't think we speak up and say, "Wait a second." I see it on subcommittees for Certification. When someone is being a jackass in the committee, the other committee members very often just sit there. They are unwilling to call that person out and say, "You're being a jackass. Quit doing that." I think somehow, it's in our culture that we remain the same.

Kristen hopes that ACPE is able to lead in some ways or that it can be at the front edge in promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion, but she notes there are many people who “can’t change and have certain biases.” From her perspective, she sees that she and her colleagues are much more aware of the need to be appreciative of other faith traditions, of ethnic differences. The culture of ACPE is shifting and the biases are weaker than they once were. Kristen wonders aloud, “are the biases weaker because a generation is moving on or because people are transforming? I think both.”

When asked about the pace at which the shift is happening, Kristen answered that part of the reason that the change is slow is due to insensitivity and ignorance on the part of the membership. She also notes geography and local culture as factors, saying, “I don’t know if people in the Bible Belt ever think about, oh it’s Rosh Hashanah, because the culture around them is overwhelmingly Christian. In other parts of the country, it is natural for supervisors to know about and respect the timing of holidays and other religious beliefs, as our students come from many diverse places. All of the participants, however, noted that the issues facing ACPE go beyond knowledge and sensitivity, and note that much of what they see on a daily basis is a reluctance and resistance to change.
The participants described a very strong culture that does not reflect the intention of the words in the mission and vision of ACPE. As in other areas, the participants had many examples of justification for why the culture is the way that it is today and highlighted the disconnect between the association and the individual members. This tension is not limited to ACPE, but rather to any type of membership oriented association. However, in this setting, it has influenced the overall perception that individuals of have of the culture of ACPE and perceptions of living out its mission of being multi-faith and multi-cultural in both philosophy and practice.

From the leadership perspective, the participants seemed resigned to the fact that things are the way that they are and that while there has been growth and change over time, ACPE is not yet “there.” On more than one occasion, one of the participants spoke about the concept that ACPE is a microcosm of the general society and what is going on within the association is reflective of what is happening in the world around them, so fostering change becomes more challenging. This idea is reflected again in the next section. Some of the participants felt that ACPE has been counter-cultural in the past and has been more open and embracing than the general society, which is why so many have turned to the field of CPE and to ACPE for their calling to ministry.

**Resistance to Change.** Within each interview, the concept of resistance to change was cited by participants multiple times as “probably the most significant” barrier to ACPE realizing its mission and vision. Steve states emphatically that ACPE, as you well know, is entrenched in its beginning model and fights against changing that paradigm. They pay homage at times to the concept of change, but you see it rear its head in the holiday thing; you see it in the Saturday meetings that exclude some of our members.
Kristen acknowledged that both she and her colleagues have had a challenging time with change in the association, but not because they have any fundamental opposition per se. For her it is more about the concept of change in general, “It's having to see yourself differently, or to understand ministry differently. So, that's pretty fundamental for people that have given their whole lives to this endeavor, and now we have to ask ourselves what the heck does it all mean now?” She also cites a lack of exposure to others and new ideas as part of the resistance that she sees, noting that, “we all come out of our own little ghettos and sunlight's kind of, blinding sometimes.” The hardest part, in Kristen’s opinion is that maintaining one’s identity in the face of change, even if you are excited for the change, it is an individual challenge.

Kristen goes on to note, “ACPE is a mirror of society, basically. I don't that think it's intentional that we aren’t welcoming or that we are resistant to change. For a few it may be, but if I look carefully at what’s going on around me, I don't think it's intentional.” She acknowledges that it is likely from ignorance and lack of awareness that people behave in ways that are not open, and what is often marked with desire to change, it is clear that just like society continues to struggle with these issues, that ACPE will also need to continue to struggle. “This is something I think we've tried to work on. I know we're going to have to work on it for a long time, just like the world around us is having trouble and is working on it. I'd like to think we were above all that, but it doesn't work that way.”

Susan attributes some of the resistance to change to be a lack of humility, stating, “I don’t think that we, as "CPE supervisors," have had a whole lot of humility. And I think that we have maintained a dynamic of superiority and maybe that’s because we feel the need to control and protect.” Susan quickly acknowledges that this lack of humility and the feeling of superiority that some exhibit keeps the establishment of ACPE “at kind of arm’s length from anything that isn't
like us” and ultimately hurts the association. Reflecting on a recent conversation in the association, she talked about Hindus and Sikhs who do not use the word pastoral, yet she has seen her colleagues “hold to their love words like pastoral, which holds a specific connotation. It is so defining in terms of some people’s core identity, which generates resistance to change.” She wonders aloud about “talking the talk and walking the walk,” asking the question, “Are we welcome and opening if you have to use our language? Or we’ll take you in if you do it the way we do it and maybe we’ll have a conversation about expanding?” Susan was resigned in her acknowledgement that “this is where the association is in terms of our philosophy and culture. Anyone can join, but were not going to play a new game and we are not going to change the rules to the game.”

Steve was a bit more outspoken in talking about his colleagues and some of the reasons for resistance. “Basically we're myopic. We like to think of ourselves as liberals, but we're just chocolate covered conservatives. We want things just the way we want them. We don't want to change anything.” He shared his observations that when people from different cultures and different religions do get a foot in the door, they are always swimming up-stream. Having grown up in a racially charged times, Steve shared the following example to make his point.

It's like saying I have a Black friend and I can feel good about myself as a liberal. I don't like separate water coolers. But don't make me change anything else. Don't make me change anything in my life. I think that's where we are in our organization. If we're going go to the next level, if we're truly going be inclusive, if we're truly going be leaders, this is the kind of thing that has to be tackled.

Reflecting on the same recent conversation as Susan, in which it was clear that individual identities were being challenged by some of the changes going on in the association, Kristen reflected
If I generalize and look back and try to figure out how I was feeling at the beginning, before all this diversity, before I became aware of that or it impinged upon my world. I was well grounded in my faith and I knew what ministry was about. And I could train people working with the narrow margin of diversity within the Christian tradition. Or even Judeo-Christian tradition. They don't seem to be so different in many places. So, to move into more of a generic kind of spiritual understanding of myself and my ministry, that's a stretch. And I think for a lot of people, that's where they begin to lose that sense of who they are. It's a struggle.

The answer, she posited, is that “one just has to find one’s feet again to get back on solid ground,” which she acknowledged, takes a lot of work and assumes that individuals want to embrace change and diversity. Of the five participants, two were of the mind that resistance was due to the change in general and that with time, people would find their way. One was rather neutral on the topic and the remaining two shared their impressions that the work is too hard for some and that there is not any real motivation for them to change as individuals. Interestingly, when reflecting on embracing diversity and being inclusive, each participant spoke about this with reference to specific faith groups that from their perspective, might struggle in this realm.

Brian’s impressions were that while there were some members of the Baptist and possibly Methodist traditions who would have some theological problems with the increased diversity of faith traditions, but that “given the history and the culture of ACPE was White, male, and Protestant for so long, that the resistance being exhibited was largely due to the notion that culture was being lost.” He further shared that this longing for the culture that folks knew and loved was not a new phenomenon, but rather had been seen before in ACPE’s history when a breakoff organization was established in response to what Brian perceived as “ACPE was becoming more corporate and more professionalized and those who left wanted to be able to swear and tell dirty jokes and screw their students and do all the stuff that they used to do as part of the experience and that they weren’t getting away with.” Brian’s description of the loss of
culture and history was reflected in other’s comments as well. His comment also raises a question related to the value that members of ACPE place on diversity and inclusivity.

Susan summed up this part of the interview with a very telling question and what she things the answer would be. “Would my hospital hire somebody other than Christian to be the director of their spiritual health department? They might say they would be open to that because federal law requires it. But the reality is, they would never do that. At least not at this juncture.” Susan was quick to add that this practice is not intended to be an anti-other faith, but rather a means of promulgating something that was deep in the culture of the institution where she works. From this she characterized some of the resistance she sees about the ACPE’s Christian identity being about “survival and fear; and it is that some individual decides that it has to be that way.”

Recognizing the resistance as strongly grounded in the beliefs and actions of many individuals, Jacob’s response to the question emanates from a theological perspective and emulates Susan’s assertion that resistance to change has a lot to do with a lack of humility. As the supervisor with the longest history in ACPE and the respect of many in the association, he shared, “Hopefully, if enough of us can accept who we are and from where we’ve come and with whom we belong, live and will die, we might find enough humility to accept that we aren’t the only ones who live and move and have our present being before the Ultimate Reality.”

Throughout the interviews, the notion of resistance to change was repeated regularly as one of the primary reasons that the culture of ACPE has not yet transformed to match the words of its mission statement. Some participants felt that resistance to change was as it appeared on the surface, where individuals do not want to change. Others felt that there were underlying reasons for resistance that included a lack of knowledge about others, a lack of individual self-confidence that allow for one to embrace others, and a general lack of interest in understanding
and embracing others. These attitudes seem to be mostly attributable to the older generations of supervisors and in the words of Kristen, “Are in the process of fading away,” and she believes that there is now less resistance from the membership as a whole.

**Looking at what has changed.** Each of the participants was proud to share that they have seen change and movement over the years in relation to diversity within the association. There was a consensus that real change is hard and that it takes a lot of time and effort. Brian noted that while there are always things shifting and changing,

> We, as an association, have found a lot of this harder than we thought it would be, that to really make the tent bigger and bigger means making room for voices that make us really uncomfortable and certainly the REM [Racial, Ethnic, and Minority network] thing was one big example of that.”

For Kristen, the transition to increased diversity has been very slow. She notes that, “When you're in your own community, there is room for a lot of assumptions that aren't necessarily wrong. So, when I'm in a teaching group or with colleagues, they're just, the language I choose.” Kristen’s comment is very telling in that it identifies just how ingrained language and practice is for the individual and how difficult it can be to change, assuming that there is an expressed desire to be open, welcoming and inclusive. Kristen reflected that

> I love the way we wrote that humility was a central point of, I forget what our standard says about cultural humility, but I like that term because I think that's what has happened to me. That is, I just have to be much more interested in or actively interested in what others bring to the group and I do this by asking questions like, what does that mean to you, in terms of your faith tradition? How do you understand that, in terms of your faith tradition? If you're all in the Christian bubble, while there are variations on how people interpret it, they're still coming out of that same book.

When asked about to reflect on the current state of affairs of ACPE in terms of culture, diversity and inclusivity, the participants shared differing perspectives. Similar to references earlier in the chapter, Steve was the most outspoken about the association as a whole and was
quite bold in his assessment and critique of the status quo, sharing that if we really want to change who we are and the way we do things

It cannot be, "Oh, we're open. We're welcoming." Hell the Methodist church is open and welcoming but they are definitely not gonna change, 'cause in the way they do things, they're not gonna let anybody get onboard. So it has to be just like the organization would have never changed if we hadn't taken the first step to say, "It's gonna change. It's gotta change. We're doing this. And then we're gonna look at that.

Steve also attributed the potential to address these issues to the leadership of the association instead of the membership as a whole. He believes that,

It's a strategic issue. ACPE has to decide there's a problem and they have to put resources with some authority to look at the organization as a whole and say, "What do we need to do for this? Is it just making sure we don't have our things on Jewish holidays and serve kosher food or is it much deeper than that? Is there really an issue in our organization for people of different theologies and different world views to get to the table?" That really has to be a strategic kind of ... and then they have to put resources to it and then the resources have to say, ‘and there will be an action after that.’

A salient point emerged from the interviews that informs the conversation, and it is not a unique phenomenon to ACPE, but often to many membership-based professional associations—that there is a disconnect between the membership and what is happening on the ground in some areas of the association and what is happening in other areas. As Kristen shared,

In our area, our students are so diverse. If we accepted that diverse people actually could become hospital chaplains, then that was the first step towards inclusivity. Then we said, ‘How do we responsibly work with these students who are not like us? And probably more importantly, how do we work with ourselves so that we're capable of doing that?

What Kristen describes is from her perspective and probably reflects the perspective of those with whom she works in her geographic area. Steve argued that while this is a start, “if there's not a clear mandate from the board, you're just whistling Dixie, you're peeing in the wind. You can do stuff, you can do all the stuff and then nothing will come from that. The board or
somebody has to strategically say, ‘We are not living up to what we say we do.’” Susan adds to this sharing that we “tend to continue the status quo in our daily practice. Whereas our verbiage and maybe our edges are more of a welcoming inclusive piece.”

As members who have held significant leadership positions in ACPE, the participants were asked to talk about the current state of the association, and the future related to these issues. Susan was the most accepting and forgiving of the association, sharing the most positive approach to the challenges facing ACPE. She shared, “I am proud of our association for how we have struggled with the issues. I think we could do a better job then we have done. But I don't know that ... and I think there's an openness to that.” Susan’s overall outlook on diversity and inclusion was quite positive. Her perspective reinforces how individuals are struggling to reconcile the tension between holding on to the past and what was comfortable, and embracing something that is new and different, and potentially uncomfortable. In Susan’s words,

I think diversity is where our life is and where vitality is. And that what holds us or pulls me or us back from full embracing, is fear, scare, and desire to protect something. Whatever that is. But yet, when I consider my life and relationships. It's with people who are diverse from me that I have had the most enjoyment and growth and stimulation. It's not about sitting around all together in sameness. And so if there's a challenge or whatever, it's pursuing the vision of diversity. It is not a straight path and it is not an easy path. However it is rich with blessing and opportunity, and worthy of the cost that it takes. I would not ever want to say let’s back away from that in any way.

Kristen also acknowledges the tension, reflecting that, “Occasionally, it's more uncomfortable, so that sort of feels like a little bit of a downer,” but readily acknowledges that this is something larger than any individual member, as

Change is inevitable; the changes go on whether everybody likes them or not. So there is a, I think, a broader sense that we try to be open. We just have to struggle with the grief and loss of what was, as that which is new is not as familiar, it's not as comfortable, it's not the way it used to be.
Brian reflected that the status of the association is in a constant state of flux and something is always changing. He observed that,

We, as an association, have found a lot of this harder than we thought it would be, that to really make the tent bigger and bigger means making room for voices that make us really uncomfortable. I think the more conservative, evangelical, Pentecostal folks who are coming through were really saying we don't buy all of this and that's tough, you know, how to incorporate.

Brian’s acknowledgement corroborates Susan’s earlier statement that the association prefers to engage with liberal, progressive diversity than with the conservative, right-of-center populations. This is likely because many came to CPE and to ACPE as a way to escape the rigidity and lack of acceptance for progressives that originated from the more conservative groups.

Jacob framed his perspective a little differently than the others, sharing his opinion that the current mission and vision statements of ACPE are really more

Wish-statements and idealized hopes than they are reality; they are good intentions made by a few leaders, adopted by politically correct Boards, and yet to be implemented by the supervisors and hospitals of the land. They are a declaration of intention, which may or may not be followed by a reformation of practice.

Jacob’s statement is more reflective of the association as a whole rather than reflective of an individual member’s perspective, once again raising the potential disconnect between what he termed the “politically correct Board” and the membership. The nature of his reflection is further strengthened by the fact that of the participants, he has been involved with ACPE since its inception, at a time when there was a significant level of autonomy offered to individual supervisors to practice and educate, as they desired.

Even though a supporter of inclusivity and one who enjoys his individual determination, Brian wonders what the implications are for inclusivity, sharing that for him and for others with
whom he has spoken, they wonder if there are “limits to inclusivity...At some point, do you become so inclusive that you lose any sort of coherent identity in order to try to fit everybody in? Or at some point, do we say oh wait, no, this is who we are and we can flex ourselves but there are limits? What are those limits and how do we affect them?” Brian’s comments highlight the tension that is felt by many in the association; it is an obstacle towards integration into the culture and fabric of ACPE.

Kristen closed her interview sharing that she sees reflection as a primary, core value of ACPE as an association. It is our obligation to “keep reflecting on what we are doing. Keep learning, and anticipate that we're going to look different, both in terms of what people look like, but as an organization, that we will look different, and that's not a bad thing.” She noted further and summed it up quite well that as “hard as it is to give up our little security blanket, this should be core to who we are. If we think we can provide spiritual care to anybody and everybody, we'd better know how to learn to live with anybody and everybody, and learn from them.” The question remains, however, is this sentiment and philosophy shared by enough members of the association so that it can become part of the fabric of ACPE or will ACPE remain as it has been for people who do not fit the traditional models?
Chapter 5: Discussion of the Research Findings

This research study endeavored to explore the ways in which one faith-based organization in pastoral education is attempting to expand its own understanding of faith-based work by shifting from a model of interfaith education and practice towards a pluralistic, multi-faith approach, which is designed to be inclusive of students and educators across diverse faith traditions and practices. This study examined the ways that conversations about diversity and inclusion inform the ministry to patients of diverse backgrounds, belief systems and allow space for the integration of different approaches to spirituality, as well as the enhanced ability to educate students who have diverse backgrounds, belief systems, and approaches to religion and spirituality.

A qualitative study, employing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology, allowed this researcher to explore the beliefs, understandings, and attitudes of several key members of the association around their self-articulation about the organizational mission as a multi-faith association and the impact that these views and practices have on the organization and its culture.

Significance of Research Problem

The employment of chaplains/spiritual care providers has grown at a significant rate in the United States as health systems and hospitals are beginning to appreciate the connection between an individual’s health and well-being and their spiritual care (Tongco, 2013; Erler, 2014, Marin, et. al. 2015). The nature of religion and individual beliefs, attitudes and involvement in religion have shifted in recent years, sometimes away from “traditional” religious frameworks and into a more spiritual, aesthetic realm, with individuals embracing various elements from different religious practices in addition to the faith tradition in which they were
The shift in religious beliefs and practices has fostered the development of a religious landscape that has become increasingly difficult to define and to navigate. There are a variety of denominations from different religious traditions, each with various degrees of affiliation and participation, crossovers and combinations, atheist, agnostic, and spiritual secularism, and others. The question for the field of clinical pastoral education is how to accommodate this religious diversity without having a clear foundation or common ground from which to work (Ganzevoort, Ajouaou, Van der Braak, De Jongh, & Minnema, 2014).

As CPE programs continue to expand to meet the growing need for chaplains and spiritual care providers, it is incumbent upon the ACPE, as the organization that accredits the institutions of learning and certifies the educators, to lead the process of shifting the underlying assumptions of practice and education that have driven the field for so many years. As the pacesetter for the field of chaplaincy education, ACPE must reflect carefully upon its mission and philosophy, and how together, they inform the practices of the association. It must look carefully at the ways in which the association can engage the membership in developing programs and practices that promote a multi-faith model that not only allows individuals to join and be a part of the activities of the association, but also requires the multi-vocality of religious traditions. Doing this successfully will enable ACPE to effectively carry out its mission.

This research study examined the beliefs, understandings, and expressions of the notion of multi-faith perspectives in the context of a faith-based organization that is in the process of shifting its foundational model of interfaith beliefs and practice to a more apt model of diverse, pluralistic, multi-faith perspectives and practice. The word *interfaith* is often used to indicate dialogue between individuals, who are rooted in separate traditions (a Christian talking to a
Muslim, a Buddhist talking with a Hindu, a Sikh talking to a Jew); a *multi-faith* orientation seeks to be rooted in multiple perspectives. Thus the research questions were:

1. What are the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors who would participate in the process of shifting the symbols, language, and practice from interfaith to multi-faith?

2. How do the understandings and experiences of ACPE Supervisors reflect a paradigm shift of organizational culture?

Through interviews with persons who have been certified supervisors for many years and who have served in leadership roles within the association, the study aimed to discern the underlying philosophies and perceptions of the association and to glean insights into the past and current cultures and how these impact the association’s capacity for living out its mission.

In sum, several prominent philosophies emerged in response to the research questions. For ACPE Supervisors, there is an inextricable integration of personal and professional identities. Both of these influence the way the participants see themselves as well as their work in the association. Another philosophy that emerged was the dissonance between the association and the individual members, specifically in understanding the source of authority. The third underlying philosophy was a combination of grasping on to the past, the history with which many of the supervisors spent their lives developing, couple with a strong resistance change. The last philosophy that emerged was one of a perception of theological superiority, represented by the Christian traditions.

In concert with a close examination of the participants’ perceptions related to faith group diversity, gender diversity, and racial diversity, these philosophies informed the
magnitude of the paradigm shift in culture that the ACPE has undertaken. Although faith group diversity was a primary focus, the other key issues are integral to the participant’s understandings, as with a multi-faith approach to education and practice, there is a need to address gender and race as a part of that process. There was general agreement that change is good for the association, but hard for many of the members. The cultural paradigm shift within the association has at times, been at odds with societal shifts, has served as the progressive leader for various faith groups. However, there were several instances where the association was reflective of the larger society and in thus the culture did not shift. The examination of these issues highlighted the importance of these issues to the work of the association and the need for the association to continue its efforts to address them.

**Discussion of the Findings in Relationship to the Theoretical Frameworks**

This study was grounded in two important theoretical frameworks that served to explicate the understandings and beliefs of the participants in the research study who would be key players in the process of shifting the symbols, language, and practice from an interfaith approach to a multi-faith approach and how their understandings and experiences reflect a paradigm shift of organizational culture.

The first framework used, symbolic interactionism helped both to identify the symbols, practices, and interactions and the meanings that come from them to better understand the culture of the ACPE, how it developed, and to provide context and background for knowing some of ways in which the culture evolved over time. This framework also provided insights as to why certain parts of the culture have not shifted over time, which leads to the second framework, liberation theory. In this study, using liberation theory provided a framework that looked closely at the challenges that the association is facing due to the understandings and experiences of its
members from a cultural perspective, providing insights as to why the association has been unable to implement a paradigm shift in their culture.

**Symbolic Interactionism.** Symbolic interactionism examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin, & Demirbuken, 2009). The primary tenets of symbolic interactionism are grounded in the assumption that humans should be regarded in the context of their environment (Benzies & Allen, 2001).

According to Blumer (1969), humans create meaning that is attributed to objects, events, and phenomena and is thus imposed on events and objects by humans. In symbolic interactionism, a strong focus is on how we interpret our circumstances and choose one course or “line of action” over another (Oliver, 2011). Participants in the study each talked about the various symbols and rituals that helped them to define the ACPE. The basis of these were clearly rooted in Christian tradition and assumed particular relevance for those members who easily identified with them. Experiences with these symbols evoked emotional responses from the participants, but it was also noted by the participants that reactions to and appreciation of the named symbols would likely differ among members of various faith traditions. Individuals and society are in a constant state of flux as our definitions of each moment shift through the continuous dialectical process of interpretation and action (Oliver, 2011).

Symbolic interactionism also serves to explain one way those who are viewed in any given religious system as ‘religious leaders.’ The actions of these individuals are often viewed as a symbolic stand-in for the sacred, informing the ways in which lay people behave when they are in the presence of religious leaders. Their actions related to religious leaders, as well as the
attribution of meaning to various religious symbols creates the context in which everything takes place.

Abrell and Hanna (1978) highlight the concept of role as an important component of symbolic interactionism. Role is viewed as a social construct used to explore the cooperative behavior, communication, and general relationships existing among individuals and groups. The idea of role suggests that social interaction may be looked upon as a drama with actors playing multiple roles, moving from one to another as they become involved with new social situations or encounters with other actors. Role may be thought of as a guided behavior that is defined by the expectations of others, but always in a flexible state that changes according to the situation and interpretation of such by those involved (Abrell & Hanna, 1978).

The importance of role as a component of symbolic interactionism is in helping to illuminate the ways in which individuals understand the role of clergy and the role of spiritual leaders in everyday life. In the context of this study, role has served to illuminate the ways in which certain expectations were set in the association and by whom, i.e. male vs. female, Christian vs. non-Christian. Understanding the concept of role provided a means of explanation of the language, beliefs, and expectations placed upon the symbolism of clergy, representatives of the sacred and the ACPE, that informed the relationships they developed with individuals. It also helped to expand upon the meaning of “sacred” and who or what represents it as part of the conversation related to the development of a system that encourages serious partnerships and understandings of shared importance among and between different faith systems, including symbolic exemplars of these systems, clergy and spiritual leaders (Abrell & Hanna, 1978).

**Individual perspectives on the ACPE.** Symbolic interactionism has been considered a powerful framework to guide research that is intended to lead toward an understanding of human
health behavior within a social context (Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975). It provides a theoretical perspective for studying how individuals interpret objects and other people in their lives and how this process of interpretation leads to behavior in specific situations (Benzies & Allen, 2000). The researcher using symbolic interactionism is therefore curious not only about the specific meanings that arise but also about how meaning actually functions as a core element in the phenomenon under study (Handberg, Thorne, Midtgaard, Nielsen, & Lomborg, 2014).

This study took an in-depth look at the ways in which the members of ACPE bring their individual understandings of their roles as clergy and chaplains within their own faith tradition, as well as their gender and faith group roles, and how these identities have informed their behaviors in relation to the association as a whole as well as the socially constructed relationships that have evolved over time.

Although the participants described the ACPE as “the more progressive thinkers and the more welcoming religious community,” as compared to their individual denominations, the early years of ACPE were symbolically marked by white males, primarily of a Protestant faith tradition. Societally, religious leadership was also male dominated as a profession, so the archetypal symbol for a religious leader was an older, white male. As the participants in the study noted quite often, “ACPE was certainly a male dominated organization” and while it was welcoming to women, “it was clearly a men’s club, a fraternity.” The lack of women as supervisors, whether due to ACPE structure or societal norms, was a clear statement in the role of religious leaders as well as the role of female clergy within ACPE. The association had developed a symbol of continuity for its leadership that incorporated Anton Boisen’s cane, passing it from one leader to the next.
As society began to shift and women gained greater acceptance in religious leadership roles, the ACPE was also more open to shifting the symbolism to be inclusive of a white female religious leader. This was seen as a “male symbol of leadership” and thus for the first female president, a wand was added as representative of women in leadership. Another symbolic element, though, was that both male and female were still white and still of Christian faith affiliation, which was contradictory to the “big tent” notion that some of the participants used to describe the ACPE.

The symbolism of the “big tent” is one that resonated for the participants, again noting that for them, ACPE was progressive and welcoming. However, within the big tent, it became apparent from the comments of the participants that while the tent was big enough to integrate everyone, the reality is that the tent became a symbol of affiliation with ACPE, but with the establishment of REM, the impetus to integrate fully was no longer there. The symbolic nature of the white and Christian descriptors did not need to change as long as there was room in the tent for the others to do their thing—almost as a parallel play situation. Taking it further, with the increased number of diverse faith traditions, the main part of the tent remained the stronghold while the periphery was open to all. To join the middle, though, as one participant noted, the “African-Americans just had to be good white folks with a dark skin kind of thing,” and those of different faith traditions often had to adjust their “thoughts and beliefs to better fit” what others expect to see and hear even when “those thoughts and beliefs were at odds with the student’s faith tradition.

A paradigm shift in culture. The symbols related to ACPE that each participant described as having meaning for them fell into a similar theme that highlight the power that one ascribes to symbols. The roots of the association represent the ways in which the participants
were raised and educated as supervisors and thus, regardless of the meaning or perceived meaning of the symbols, their practice and their expectations of the association follow from these symbols—they have ascribed meaning to the symbols that define their interactions with their fellow members and with the association. The symbols also inform their individual actions, providing a context and framework for how they view the current state of the association and what they think the association can and should do moving into the future. As a whole, the older generation of supervisor is reticent to let go of the past or to shift the symbolism that is ascribed to ACPE, even though they speak emphatically about the need to engage diversity and to not only be tolerant of others, but to be welcoming.

This is further highlighted within the generational divide of the supervisors, between those who are the long-time supervisors and those who have found this ministry more recently. The religious identities of each group are distinct, with the former being more wrapped up in the traditional views of the church and hierarchy, whereas the newer generation views their calling to ministry within a different context, one that has evolved and broadened within society. The newer generation of supervisor does not identify in the same way with the symbols of the past. Symbolic interactionism provided a particular lens into the history of the association that has defined the current state of affairs; the newer generation of supervisors is different in their understandings of the mission of the association and their approach. The challenge for them has not only been to find their voices amidst the larger, more established leadership that is comprised of the long-time supervisors, but the fact that they have not been allowed to join the conversation. They have been oppressed by the elders and for the future of the association, must be liberated to join the ranks of leadership.
Liberation Theory. Liberation theory has its roots in liberation theology, a term that has its origins in the Latin American experience, and in much of the literature today, has come to represent the experience of dispossessed people around the world (Boff & Boff, 1992). Liberation theology began as a movement within the Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. It arose primarily as a moral reaction to the poverty and social injustice in the region (McBrien, 1994). Development of the term Liberation Theology is credited to the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, who wrote one of the movement's defining books, A Theology of Liberation (1971). The Latin American and Church roots can be seen in the principles of critical reflection on oppressive circumstances and actions to change these circumstances (Tate, Rivera, Brown & Skaitis, 2013).

According to Evans (1992), an important implication of liberation theory is that one needs to free himself from either internal or external factors that inhibit the realization of one’s natural abilities. Liberation theory contains elements of theology, as it grew out of the church in Latin America, and it includes elements of psychology as it expands upon individual and group understanding of oppression. Throughout history, oppressed peoples have adopted the concepts of liberation theory, most notably Womanist and Feminist Liberation Theology, which seeks liberation within the context of male-dominated societies, and Black Liberation Theology, which seeks to liberate people of color from multiple forms of political, social, economic, and religious subjugation (Evans, 1992).

As noted earlier, ACPE was a Christian, White, male dominated association. The feminist movement had a tremendous influence over the association, which ultimately led to the acceptance and inclusion of women as supervisors and as leaders within the association. While the association has made great strides in this area, there are still those who feel that there is
significant work to be done, as they believe that acceptance is not the same as equal footing, which is what is ultimately desired by the women in the association. In other areas, though, the association has not yet achieved this level and that is of great concern as it relates to the mission of the ACPE and its future.

Oppression within the ACPE. Within the structure of ACPE, racial and faith group minorities are oppressed populations, as the leadership and power base of the association are comprised primarily of white persons whose religious backgrounds and practices fall within the Christian tradition. In this setting, the word “oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society” (Heldke & O'Connor, 2004, p. 5). Within leadership, there are groups that include people of color; none of the current leadership roster includes faith group representation other than mainstream Christian. In looking at the possible reasons why the leadership is formed this way, there are multiple perspectives, each of which leads to an area of discussion that could be a topic for future sociological study of its own.

First, participants noted that the association itself perpetuates the lack of faith group diversity by the way in which it schedules its leadership meetings. These meetings often begin or require travel on a Saturday, which is prohibitive for observant Jews and Seventh Day Adventists. By scheduling meetings in this way, the association is potentially sending a message that their observances are not in harmony and forego either your observance or do not become involved in the leadership. This has been further perpetuated on the regional level, as described by Steve and Brian, where meetings have been scheduled over holy days for various faith groups, sending a similar message.
Second, there is a perception that voices other than the ones who have been at the table are wanted. This plays itself out in two distinct ways. The first is that ACPE was described as a fraternity, a club in which a person must work their way in to earn the right to be heard. Very often, membership in this ‘club’ is a long and arduous journey that begins with a successful certification process outcome. Achieving this first step allows for one’s entry into the club, having now shared a common, challenging experience. As noted by Steve, as a white Christian male, he knew that if he bided his time well that he would have the opportunity to be heard, to be a part of the conversation. However, he readily acknowledged that others who are different would not have as easy of a time in doing so. The same applies for leadership positions in the association, as although they are in theory open to the entire membership, as the regions are often choosing who is representing them, there seems to be a similar pattern in the selection of white Christians who are selected.

Third, ACPE’s primary responses to the challenges to the status quo was to establish task forces to examine the issue and to recommend changes or new pathways to address the concerns. The result of several of these task forces was the establishment of the Racial, Ethnic, and Multicultural Network, an LGBTQ Network, and a Jewish Supervisors Network. The option to establish a network is open to anyone in the membership, but for other minority groups, there is not a significant interest in establishing one. While the networks have been an adequate response to the concerns they sought to address, the reality is that they have further served to maintain the status quo when it comes to the culture and inclusive nature of the ACPE by creating separate spaces for each group rather than making it a part of the fabric of the association. In practical terms, REM has come to represent primarily African American supervisors, as they have defined their own culture that is not readily accessible to other minorities. REM was given a seat on the
Board to have representation there and has established its own invitational gathering that is separate from the rest of the association’s activities. According to the participants, this was allowed, encouraged, and funded because of the “white, liberal guilt” felt by many in the association.

It is a reasonable conclusion that the association has much work to do in order to liberate the voices of the minority groups as well as the newer generation of supervisors. The establishment of networks that provide space for minorities to gather is a good start, but unless these groups and the voices that are being shared within these groups are both encouraged and allowed to leave the periphery and join the central conversation, the association cannot fully live up to its mission of being a multi-faith, multi-cultural association.

Discussion of Findings in Relationship to the Literature Review

The challenge of multiple faith perspectives. A particular challenge faced by the ACPE today is the advent of more broadly defined spiritual perspectives that are not grounded in traditional, religious ideologies. Students enrolling in the ACPE’s educational programs, as well as the general population that is being served by chaplains, who embrace non-traditional, religious ideologies and practices, has grown since the original inception of Clinical Pastoral Education as a discipline. With its roots in Christianity and relatively slow development of inclusion of other major religious groups found in the United States, Clinical Pastoral Education is now grappling with the need to embrace the ideologies and perspectives of additional mainstream faith traditions. Additionally, the societal embrace of individual perspectives on religion and religious practice has led to the proliferation of individuals who identify with multiple faith groups, consider themselves spiritual, but not religious, and who view religion from a variety of traditional and non-traditional perspectives (Pew Research Center, 2015).
As an association, ACPE has been committed to its origins in the Christian tradition. Using this foundation, ACPE has traditionally functioned in an interfaith manner. The term interfaith is referring to beliefs and interpersonal activities that involve dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of different religions. In educational practice, the foundation is Christian and this serves as the lens through which content and experiences are provided for the students, and the student’s faith group and practice can be in dialogue, but is not equal. The term multi-faith, however, refers to the embracing of multiple philosophies and practices, with each one equal to the other. In a multi-faith educational setting, the foundation is one that embraces all beliefs and practices, leading to inclusive participation in leadership roles and day to day functioning of the association.

Through the interviews, it became clear that there is a dissonance between the written materials of the association that proclaim it is a multi-faith and multi-cultural in its educational programs and what actually happens out in the field. As the participants noted in their interviews, there is no mandate to embrace minority groups into the fabric of the association and since the largest group of members are Christians, the majority has determined the focus over time. ACPE is an effective interfaith educational endeavor, fostering dialogue, understanding, and appreciation of different religions. However, it stops short of being multi-faith in that the practice of the association is not to embrace others’ philosophies and practices as being equal.

In the examples provided by the participants, there are fundamental areas of practice that merely tolerate others, as Kristen shared, “African-Americans just had to be good white folks with a dark skin kind of thing” and as Brian discussed related to understanding different theories and philosophies, the refrain of, “I don't know how to make any sense of this so I don't think this is a very good paper” which then led to the practice that the student has the burden of adjusting
his “thoughts and beliefs to better fit what the readers expect to see, even if those thoughts and beliefs are at odds with the student’s faith tradition.” These ideas and practices led to the creation of the culture of ACPE that we see today, one that perpetuates the past and is limited in its willingness to engage in a multi-faith approach to teaching and learning.

**Organizational culture as a barrier.** Culture can be defined as, “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (“Culture,” 2005). The majority of ACPE’s members have been working as CPE Supervisors for many years and were integral to the development of the association’s mission and current culture. Identifying and understanding the association’s unique culture and its emergence, is critical to embarking upon the transition from a Christian oriented association to one that is multi-faith in both its written materials and its practices. As a rule, Supervisors are a close-knit group who have created community through shared experiences in the educational process as well in the certification process. Some are open-minded and willing to take risks, as long as careful attention is paid to the morale of the larger group and to individual emotions (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

This idea was affirmed through the interviews where several of the participants described the ACPE culture as a fraternity or a boy’s club to which it was not easy to be admitted. Susan said it well when she shared that, “there's a very emotional bond with even those I don't know but who say they are an ACPE supervisor. That they've passed the test. Whatever those tests are, we are bonded now, in ways that we weren't bonded previously.” This common bond is strongest among those who were among those who fought to get into the boy’s club, as their “acceptance” into the club was a significant accomplishment not only because they “passed the tests” but because they were a part of a minority group working to gain acceptance. The path towards
certification today, although quite rigorous, does not appear to create the same bonds as it once did for individuals who have gone through the process. Although the process is still fraught with subjectivity and inconsistency, it is a kinder, gentler process than it once was.

The bond that was created upon achieving certification was further fostered by the commonality of the backgrounds of many of the supervisors. The creation of REM and other networks enabled the creation of parallel groups that formed their own bonds based on the achievement of attaining certification, but also because they were part of a minority group who had reached this destination. For these folks, the next step is to ensure that others like them are able to achieve certification as well. The establishment to which they were admitted was not concerned with their integration into the fabric of the association, but rather that the association be seen as enabling minority groups to attain success with the certification process.

Difficult accepting and moving forward with change. Bartunek (1993) argues that a change does “not occur in a cognitive vacuum” but involves feelings that make change difficult and painful. The affective process is inseparable from cognitive processes, playing a critical role in perception, decision, and behavior (Damasio, 1994). For ACPE Supervisors who have a tremendous focus on the relational aspects of their role in ministry, understanding the impact of the affective processes is essential if any cultural change process is to be effective. It is the affective process, and for many, a grief process, that will ultimately inform their individual opinion and evaluation of any cultural changes they are experiencing (D. Johnson, personal communication, August 12, 2015).

Lack of desire for change. For all of the participants, there was an acknowledgement of grief about the changes occurring within the association. Changes have been taking place on both on a governance level as well as through increasing diversity and engagement of
underrepresented groups. Throughout the interviews and analyses of the conversations, discerning the underlying feelings and philosophical approach of each participant was a challenge. In several instances, it was difficult to know if participants were speaking for themselves as individuals or as members of the association, which has served as a co-creator of their individual identities. Within their reflections, it appeared that they too were also unsure as to the distinction between the voice of the association, the voice of the membership and the voices of individual members.

On the meta level, the issues of change and how individuals and the association relate to change are very much at the forefront of the challenges. According to Lewin (1947), the association has embarked on a process to unfreeze that which was in existence, i.e. to begin the process of transformation to a multi-faith context. Although it can be characterized as an association-wide endeavor, the lack of a mandate or strategic plan to accomplish this makes it a challenging task, as the critical psychological process in unfreezing is concerned with the motivation for becoming different (Marcus, 2006). What emerged from the interviews was the notion that the participants did not feel a strong motivation for the association to become something different. Individually, participants cited reasons why they needed to expand their thinking or learn about something different because they had a student who did not fit the typical mold or there was a unique situation for their employment. Overall, however, until asked the questions during the interviews it appeared that they had not really given voice to this as a concern. That is not to say they were not aware of the issues or that problems and challenges existed, but as past leaders and currently active members, this was not on their agenda.

Desire to create change, despite comfort levels and support. The agenda for change has been driven by external circumstances rather than from within the association. That is to say,
that as the religious landscape is changing in a rapidly changing world; individual practitioners within the association have had to adjust their thinking and the ways in which they educate their students. For some, this has been the sum total of their experience related to this and they have chosen to exempt themselves from association activities and leadership and instead to focus on their local educational programs. For others, their own adjustment has led to wanting greater engagement and leadership opportunities within the association, yet depending on their individual circumstances, their voice is not yet welcome. Still for others, there is a strong desire to take what they see and are experiencing in the field and to bring it to the association and they have the ability to bring about change. In all cases, it is incumbent upon the leadership of the association to not only allow these voices to be heard, but to embrace and encourage the diversity that these voices will bring in the desire to build upon all that ACPE has accomplished.

_Two views of change._ There is a tension in the association between those who are grieving change and those who feel that change is long overdue. These changes include a shift in the organizational and governance structures as well as a movement to embrace the diversity and multi-faith aspects of the association. Those who are grieving the most are generally the older generation who are strongly rooted in their personal and professional identities and who created the association into what it is today. Those who are ready for change are generally representative of marginalized or oppressed groups within the association who see the association and its functioning in very different ways. Their personal and professional identities although well integrated, are not bound up in the organizational identity of ACPE, so the notion of change is welcome.

_A multi-faith organization managing multiple identities: Organizational, personal, and professional._ As the professional association for CPE educators, the ACPE struggles with
multiple identities. The association itself has goals, objectives, and standards which its membership is expected to follow to remain as a member. However, in addition to being a prominent part of a member’s professional identity, the ACPE has also been a key part of many member’s personal identity. This conflagration of professional and personal identities provides clearer understanding of the ways in which the culture of the association has developed and how it has reached this point in time.

The historical development of the field and the shaping of the association is greatly informed by the fact that throughout its history, CPE was viewed as the liberal ministry that was welcoming to many more than the main denominational groups. Although more progressive and more welcoming than some of the religious establishment at the time, it was only in a limited context, leaving many minorities and non-Christian faith groups on the outside. Because the organization’s professional culture was intertwined with its members’ personal identity, members used the ACPE to satisfy their need for belonging and “fitting in” and this then became an exclusive culture with a limited perspective on embracing diversity.

Limitations

This study was focused on a particular segment of the population of ACPE Supervisors. This was a deliberate choice, as the intention was to learn how the culture developed to what it is today. This was through the experiences of some of those who were integral in its establishment. Although a limited focus was used in the selection of the participants, the data reveals a variety of perspectives, making it possible to glean an in-depth accounting that enabled several themes to emerge.

As all of the participants held some kind of leadership role in the recent past of the association, each brought a perspective that was intertwined with his/her view of leadership and
responsiveness to trends and patterns in the general society. Additionally, often those who willingly assumed leadership roles brought a different perspective on issues than the general membership. These participants provided for responses that often reflected a larger perspective than the average member might have on a particular situation.

The biggest limitation of this study was that the population was representative of the more senior generation of supervisor, which provided a unique view of the past that illuminates the present. However, it would be important for an area of future study to define a population that represents the future of the association to understand their thoughts, feelings, and ultimately their actions related to the continued growth of the association, which includes what the association could do to move towards a multi-faith, pluralistic model within its activities.

**Implications for Educational Practice**

This study provided insights into the workings of a faith-based association that has a goal to expand its practice from an interfaith model, the way in which it has functioned since its inception more than forty years ago, to a multi-faith, multi-cultural model that is reflective of its membership and the changes in society related to religion, faith group affiliation and practice. Although focused on a specific population within the association, the data that was collected provides insights that are applicable to the association as a whole. The data revealed several key items related to understanding organizational culture through symbolic representations and how this informs the association’s practices and beliefs. A deep understanding of the ingrained culture also provided insights for some of the reasons that minority populations have not been fully integrated into the fabric of the association.

Through its day-to-day functioning, the association conducts its business in accordance with the membership agreed upon norms. These norms come out of the educational and faith
group backgrounds of its members, creating a familiarity and a comfortable environment for those who believe similarly. In examining theories of culture and change through the theoretical frameworks of symbolic interactionism and liberation theory, the analysis of the data supports the current literature in organizational change, highlighting the association’s reliance on the rituals and symbols that have been established as well as a general resistance to embracing others’ philosophies and engagement.

As written earlier, the initial efforts and commitments of the association although well intentioned, have not gone far enough to welcome additional voices into the conversation. The initiatives undertaken so far, namely the Racial, Ethnic, and Multi-Cultural Network, created a group within the larger group, but not necessarily one that promotes equality for its members. As a result, the majority population is still writing the association narrative and the minority populations are participating as notes in the margin, still having their voices, practices, and beliefs oppressed by the majority.

The data further highlights the need for a comprehensive plan for addressing these issues. The plan should include educational components for the supervisors so as to begin the process of expanding their understandings of other faith groups and their role in ACPE, thus evaluating the symbols that represent this work, an association-wide commitment to not only tolerating other faith groups, but embracing them and liberating their voices so that they become integral to the functioning of the association and its mission. Understanding and implementing a plan like this is transferable to a variety of settings and fields where there has been a dominant culture and practice and an expressed desire to bring about change.

**Practitioner Significance.** Change in any capacity is hard. For ACPE and its membership, shifting from an interfaith model to a multi-faith, pluralistic model is challenging
on many levels as the culture of ACPE and the processes that one goes through to become a supervisor member of ACPE are intense and rooted in its history. Through the voices of several key leaders of ACPE, several themes and ideas emerged that can provide guidance for ACPE as it looks to the future as well as other faith-based organizations.

First, ACPE supervisors’ professional and personal identities are shaped by their experiences first as students and then while in training to become a supervisor. As clergy members, their individual identities are informed by their faith tradition and transformed through the certification process. When ACPE was created, nearly everyone had a similar belief in faith and practices. This served to create the path and perspective that its members and leaders bought to the association and built upon the Christian roots of CPE.

Second, societal shifts in the nature of religion and religious identity as well as shifts in gender roles pushed ACPE’s culture to examine itself and to open the door towards greater inclusivity. ACPE’s reputation was that it represented the progressive arena within religious circles, that it was open and allowed women to pursue their calling in ministry, which several denominations were not yet doing. Further advances brought about the welcoming of the LGBTQ community and people of color, along with other minority populations. However, the welcoming was perceived as conditional—people were accepted as long as they behaved and believed like everyone else. The association was described as tolerant to minority populations, but not truly welcoming and embracing. The common denominator that allowed these groups to be a part of the ACPE was the fact that they were all identified within the larger Christian faith community. This enabled the shifts taking place to be manageable for the association.

Third, the world in which we are living today is vastly different than it was at the time of the formation of ACPE and even ten years ago. The role of religion and religious affiliation has
changed, as the general population’s view of membership in religious institutions has waned and more people are identifying outside of the mainstream faith groups. Those groups who were once part of the majority are now seeing that minority groups are growing both in size and in stature, and are expecting to be part of the establishment.

Because of these themes, what has emerged from this study is the idea that supervisors in ACPE are struggling with the idea of shifting from an interfaith, Christian oriented model for their work and their functioning to a multi-faith, multi-cultural model. From the data, it emerged that there are several key reasons for this struggle that the association can take steps to address. First, many supervisors lack the necessary education to understand the non-Christian faith traditions, as there are many and they are sometimes vastly different from their own Christian understandings of religion. Second, the professional and person identities of supervisors is challenged when they are asked to step outside their comfort zones to educate and engage those who have a different theology and background. For those who have been practicing in the field for a significant amount of time, this is more of a challenge as their practice has not changed or shifted very much and therefore they are less comfortable with change at this stage of their careers.

A third element of the struggle is the delineation between individual members and the association. Each individual supervisor is able to embrace and welcome all individuals in their local programs and it is up to them to determine the best educational path for their students. However, if a student wishes to become a supervisor, that is no longer just a local endeavor, but rather a national one that often creates obstacles for students who come from a minority group, as the leadership and representative bodies are generally populated with the more established supervisors, the ones who seem to be struggling the most with change.
As the association continues to address this issue, it must be cognizant of the fact that its certification process continues to perpetuate the status quo, as those who are mentoring and making decisions related to certification are often those who established the system and are not as comfortable with change and giving voice to others. As supervisors come through the ranks, they also tend to supervise and do things in the ways in which they were taught, as they do not have a tool set to do things differently. As such, the association would do well to embark on a radical shift in pedagogy and structure to bring all of the voices into the work of the association and to provide a safe environment where all can work together for change.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study was a small, yet robust sample of the membership of the ACPE that enabled this researcher to understand the culture practice of the association from the viewpoint of its veteran members. However, as the professional field for which ACPE was established has shifted since its founding, it became clear that the association also had to shift its beliefs and practices to remain of value to its membership and to the field.

In reviewing the data, the intersection of personal and professional identities was a prominent take away. While it is commonly expected that one would not separate one’s personal identity from what one brings to the professional realm, the interdependence and integration of this for the membership of ACPE was quite strong, leading to curiosity about this for religious leaders in general. Additionally, from an organizational perspective is this unique to the field of religion and religious education? Is this a function of the individuals who are drawn to religious calling? Alternatively, is the intersection of personal and professional identities a concern for all professional membership associations?
From this study, a few additional questions arose as well as other areas of potential research that would enable greater insights and understandings to emerge:

- What is the role of education in transforming organizational culture?
- Can/should members be engaged in learning about organizational change in addition to their studies for the field?
- How does the general society’s view of religion and religious affiliation affect the work of the educators/supervisors and of the association?

**Conclusion**

The employment of chaplains/spiritual care providers is growing at a significant rate in the United States as health systems and hospitals are beginning to appreciate the connection between an individual’s health and well-being and their spiritual care (Tongco, 2013; Erler, 2014, Marin, et. al. 2015). The nature of religion and people’s beliefs, attitudes and involvement in religion have shifted in recent years, sometimes away from “traditional” religious frameworks and into a more spiritual, aesthetic realm, with individuals embracing various elements from different religious practices in addition to the faith tradition in which they were raised (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The shift in religious beliefs and practices has fostered the development of a religious landscape that has become increasingly difficult to define and to navigate. There are a variety of denominations from different religious traditions, each with various degrees of affiliation and participation, crossovers and combinations, atheistic, agnostic, and spiritual secularism, and others. The question for the field of clinical pastoral education is how to accommodate this religious diversity without having a clear foundation or common ground from which to work (Ganzevoort, Ajouaou, Van der Braak, De Jongh, & Minnema, 2014). More specifically for
ACPE, as the primary educational association in Clinical Pastoral Education is how to embrace this diversity and to integrate it into its core fabric, both in philosophy and in practice.

As CPE programs continue to expand to meet the growing need for chaplains and spiritual care providers, it is incumbent upon the ACPE, as the organization that accredits the institutions of learning and certifies the educators, to lead the process of shifting the underlying assumptions of practice and education that have driven the field for so many years. The association, as the pacesetter, must reflect carefully upon its mission, philosophy and practice to assess the ways in which it must move its members, and thus itself as a member driven organization, to expanding the ways in which it provides for the education of future Supervisors and conducts its programs and practices to ensure that it actively promotes a multi-faith model that not only allows individuals to join and be a part of the activities of the association, but requires the multi-vocality of religious traditions to most effectively carry out its mission.

Enabling this transformational change will require a concerted, consistent, and sustained effort on the national association level to welcome and engage the voices of all of the various faith traditions who are currently part of the ACPE as well as those who wish to become a part of the field of chaplaincy and chaplaincy education. A shift in the foundational philosophy and practice of the association will both enable those individuals who are ready to embrace the diversity in their local centers to do so and it will provide the impetus for others to begin the process.

**Personal Reflection**

When I set out to do this research project, I had a vague idea of what I might learn in the
process, but now that it is done, I realize that I underestimated the intensity of what I was going to learn as I delved into the research. The most interesting part of the research process was conducting the interviews with the participants, each of whom portrayed a unique identity within the association. As I got to know each participant through the interview process, I developed a greater understanding and appreciation about the association, which has given me insights into some of the challenges that I see in my daily work.

One of the challenges that I found in the interviewing process was the multiple aspects of my roles. I am considered an outsider to the world of CPE, so even though I work in the national office, there is a perception that there are concepts and ideas that I will not relate to or understand. The primary effect of this was that in a one instance, I felt that I could not delve deeper or ask a further question about a statement as it might have caused the participant to curtail further engagement. As I did not push further in this situation, there is not a concern for the validity of the data collected, rather just an area that will not be explore further at this time.

The general results of the research study showed the deep-seeded thoughts and beliefs of a specific generation of members related to their craft of teaching chaplaincy, working within a professional association for this craft, and perhaps most importantly, the intersection of each person’s personal and professional identity. The ideas they shared and the expectations that each had were a reflection on the general society, both at the time each became a certified supervisor as well as today. Their approach to their work shifted over time due to necessity, but seemingly not from desire. This was a bit challenging for me as the researcher, as it was disappointing to for me as I perceived from some to be a resignation to this is what it has to be rather than what a great opportunity it could be.

The other side, however, as I think about next steps in in the association is that the
younger generations of supervisors do see the opportunities; the issue is that their voices are often oppressed, as I shared in my research. I believe that the association is in a place now where change is possible, and in many instances, desirable. There is a liberation of voices and new voices are being heard. The association is beginning to see a shift in culture and even though there is still some resistance, many are welcoming these opportunities for change. Moreover, they are recognizing that if there is not real and substantive change, that the association will no longer be sustainable.

Through this project, the insights I have learned provide me with perspective on the issues and helps me to understand the unspoken thoughts of persons who do not seem to be able to embrace others and to expand the ACPE community. My role as the researcher has served to enhance the work I am doing to bring about change and my role as a change agent gave me the ability to understand the participants.
References


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doi:10.1177/002234090105500109


doi:10.1007/s11606-011-1781-y
Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Email

Dear ACPE Supervisor,

This is Marc Medwed and I am writing to follow up to our phone conversation. I am looking for volunteers to take part in a research project as part of my doctoral thesis in Northeastern University’s EdD program. You are being contacted by email because you are a certified ACPE Supervisor and have been a part of the ACPE and its history for many years. The purpose of this research is to explore the thoughts and beliefs of ACPE Supervisors related to the lack of congruence between ACPE’s About Us statement which reads, “The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) is a multicultural, multi-faith organization devoted to providing education and improving the quality of ministry and pastoral care offered by spiritual caregivers of all faiths through the clinical educational methods of Clinical Pastoral Education,” the stated core value: “Diversity and inclusion - demonstrated through cultural humility, attentiveness and collegiality,” and the current practices of the association which are strongly grounded in and driven by Christian traditions.

This research is important as the ACPE’s promotional materials clearly state its intention and desire to be a multicultural, multi-faith association, yet the current leadership structures, practices and day-today functioning do not model these ideals. The purpose of the study is to conduct and in-depth look at what, in the view and perceptions of veteran ACPE Supervisors is creating the dissonance between the stated intentions and the actual practice. The research project will involve one 60 minute face-to-face or web conference audiotaped interview where participants will be asked to describe their thoughts, perceptions and beliefs related to your past and current experiences an ACPE supervisor and an additional 60 minute follow-up face-to-face or web conference call during which I will seek additional information or clarification based upon initial responses. This will also provide opportunity for participants to expand on any previous responses.

If you volunteer for this project, both conversations will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you. Your participation in the study and your identity will be kept completely confidential and follow Northeastern University IRB guidelines. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not volunteer for this study, you will not be contacted again regarding this research.

If you decide to join the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form at the first interview. I will send it to you only if you decide to volunteer. The consent form will discuss the study, as well as your rights to participate or not. Please email me at medwed.m@husky.neu.edu if you would like to volunteer to participate or if you have any questions. Per Northeastern University IRB, emails sent to any other email address must be deleted with no response. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this study.

Marc Medwed
Appendix B: Unsigned consent document

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies, Graduate Programs in Education

Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator, Corliss Brown Thompson; Marc Medwed, Student Researcher

Title of Project: Adopting a Multi-Faith Orientation in Theory and Practice

Request to Participate in Research
We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of the study is to conduct and in-depth look at what, in the view and perceptions of veteran ACPE Supervisors is creating the dissonance between the stated intentions and the actual practice.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project. The study interview will take place at a time and location convenient for you and will take about 45-60 minutes. A follow-up interview of not more than 30 minutes will also take place after the initial interview, at a time and location convenient to you to review the transcript and clarify any of the responses, if necessary. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to reflect on your thoughts and beliefs about your experiences as an ACPE Supervisor.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help us to learn more about the obstacles that the ACPE is facing as it strives to create congruence between its written materials and actual practice.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Marc Medwed at 770-609-7287 or at medwed.m@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson, the Principal Investigator, at co.brown@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

You may keep this form for yourself. Thank you.

Marc Medwed
Appendix C: Interview Questions

Warm-up and General Background
1. When did you first receive your calling to ministry?
2. In which faith tradition did you grow up?
3. In which faith tradition were you ordained? If faith tradition is different, what were the determining factors in your decision to change?
4. When did you become an ACPE supervisor?
5. Why did you choose to pursue Clinical Pastoral Education as your ministry?

Overview Questions
1. How would you describe the culture of ACPE when you were first certified as a Supervisor?
2. How would you describe the culture of ACPE as it currently exists?
3. How would you characterize what is different in the ACPE today?
4. What meaning or symbol is most often ascribed to the role of Chaplain? Of Supervisor? Of the ACPE as a whole?
5. Describe what you see as the drivers of the day-to-day functioning of the ACPE.
6. Have you experienced or perceived a shift in the way the ACPE functions?

On the ACPE website, we proudly say that, “The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) is a multicultural, multi-faith organization devoted to providing education and improving the quality of ministry and pastoral care offered by spiritual caregivers of all faiths through the clinical educational methods of Clinical Pastoral Education”

1. What does this statement mean to you?
2. In what ways are those understandings similar/different to yours?
3. What is most important to ACPE in terms
4. Are all faith traditions equal in ACPE? In theory? In practice?
5. Have you experienced or perceived a shift in the way your colleagues view the mission/practice of the ACPE in terms of being multicultural and multi-faith?

Final Questions
1. In your experience, is the ACPE a multicultural, multi-faith organization that serves people of all faiths?
   a. If yes, please give me some examples of this in action.
   b. If no, please describe some of the factors that contribute to your opinion and what you think needs to happen.
2. Is there anything else you would like to add that I did not ask?

Thank you for your participation in this interview. I will be in touch within the next few weeks to schedule our follow-up conversation and I will bring a copy of the transcript of this interview for you to review.