Leaders and Spirituality - A Case Study

Thesis presented to the University of Surrey in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2002
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost this research project and thesis are dedicated to my wife, Maryjo Scrivani. Without her it would never have started and without her encouragement and continuing support, even after her own direct involvement ceased, it would have been all but impossible to complete.

Thanks go to my supervisors Dr Paul Tosey and Dr Josie Gregory who have guided me throughout. I am grateful to Paul, who took the primary role, for his patience and in particular for encouraging me to develop a critical perspective whilst not drawing premature conclusions.

For consistent and valued support from a ‘fellow traveller’ plus reading and constructively critiquing at various stages I proffer profound thanks to Graham Robinson. Likewise, thanks go to the many friends and colleagues who also offered encouragement along the way and specifically to Yvette Hutchison for her invaluable insights and suggestions at critical stages.

I owe a large debt of thanks to ‘Laura’, the leader who is the focus of my case study, not only for affording me the opportunity to research her and her College, but for doing so with such enthusiasm, encouragement and personal openness.

In thanking fellow researchers and academics with whom I corresponded over the Internet, I would specifically like to acknowledge Dr Judi Neal at the Association for Spirit at Work, Newhaven, Connecticut USA. Her personal commitment to all aspects of spirituality in the workplace and the great value of her ongoing contribution in providing information and support directly and via the Internet has helped me and, I know, many others.

Last but by no means least, my profound thanks go all to those people who took part in the research, giving freely of their time and opening themselves to scrutiny in this most personal of subjects. I have learned a great deal from you.
Leaders and Spirituality

Abstract and summary

Interest in the field of Spirituality in the Workplace has developed rapidly over the past 12-15 years. It is now a topic of burgeoning interest characterised by an explosion in literature, conferences, management teaching and practice, frequently of an aspirational and inspirational nature, with the majority emanating from the USA. Scholarly and academic interest has been evident but formal research is still limited, and dogged by suspicion both of qualitative methodologies and an ill defined subject area.

This thesis explores in depth and from different perspectives a case study of a leader who perceives herself to be highly spiritually motivated and seeks to apply her beliefs in practice within her organisation. The complexity, boundaries and interfaces of the 'spirituality in the workplace' field and the problems of definition are examined and an approach to understanding what spirituality means is offered. An early pilot study considered the meaning and understanding of spirituality. The primary research is in two associated parts: a phenomenological description and analysis of a newly appointed leader, the Principal and Chief Executive of a UK College of Further Education; then, a longitudinal case study (18 months) covering a period of profound change within that College, incorporating data from interviews with seven staff members. A comparison is made between the Principal's management style and interpersonal approach, as espoused by her and as experienced by others. Underlying processes are inferred which consider the impact of a strong leader and the possible links between leadership, power and spiritual influence.

The findings indicate that: spirituality is a highly subjective concept with little commonality of definition – it is argued as being best understood from a phenomenological perspective; there appears to be a significant difference between UK and US in awareness of spirituality among staff within organisations; the literature is unduly optimistic about the consequences of spiritually-inspired leadership; a leader’s spiritual motivation, while not likely to be perceptible to most observers, can have a significant and positive impact on an organisation and, more specifically, on individuals within it; proximity to the leader is highly significant; explicit articulation of spiritual motivation can be expected to provoke significant reaction which may sometimes be negative; leaders who are strongly motivated by spiritual beliefs seem likely to draw strength from beyond themselves.

The impact of spiritual motivation as an additional dimension of competent leadership can not readily be operationalised or quantified. Understood phenomenologically, it is potentially of profound significance to the individual leader, having consequences in the outer world dependent upon personal manifestation.
Chapter 1: Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

Spirituality has always been part of my life, albeit intertwined with religion for much of the time. My working life has centred around organisations of varying types and sizes. After an initial phase of technical enthusiasm, my underlying interest has been in people, and specifically in managing them and helping them develop. The idea that these two areas might be combined to form the focus of a research project had not occurred to me. The concept that a research journey can also be a personal process was not part of my experience. The past five years have changed all that.

The primary focus in this study is Spirituality in the Workplace (or Spirituality in Organisations – the terms are used interchangeably both here and throughout the literature), and within that, examining the impact of leaders who see themselves as spiritually motivated. However, in order to contextualise the topic, this study has developed to be highly complex and multi-disciplinary. It ranges across and includes:

- philosophy, which considers views regarding the human condition
- the psychology and sociology of the make-up of human beings, their development and human interaction
- theology as a basis and background for considering spirituality and religion
- spirituality as a concept in and of itself, and in application
- linguistics and the link between words and meaning
- business organisation and the processes of organisational transformation and change
- leadership as a discipline and the consequences of how it is applied in practice.

As a consequence, I have needed to return repeatedly to the primary research question and consequential questions to keep the study bounded and focused. The many fascinating aspects of this subject area, some of which caused me to detour temporarily, are sign-posted as possibilities for further research. The main thrust represents an in-depth contribution to an area of burgeoning interest, research and practice.
1.2 Purpose and value of the research

1.2.1 Spirituality in the Workplace as an existing field

Spirituality in the Workplace has emerged as an area of focus and attention which has developed rapidly, particularly over the past 12-15 years, and is now a topic of burgeoning interest characterised by an explosion in literature, conferences, practical application and research.

Literature — one well regarded bibliographic index on ‘Spirit at Work’ books, papers and publications contains over 400 citations. In 2000, the Internet bookseller Amazon set up a separate sub-section of books devoted to Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace. The rate of books published has increased exponentially over the past 10 years with similar growth in directly related publications both of a scholarly nature and of more general interest and special issues of scholarly journals.

Conferences — again the range is very extensive with more than 15 conferences in the US and at least 4 in the UK during 2000. These range from the inspirational/practical to the more scholarly based. Many of these are annual conferences, now in their 5th or 6th year.

Practical application — as well as an area of activity for consultants and consultancies, Spirituality in the Workplace is increasingly a topic of wider interest in business. As part of an article in the Harvard Business Review, Laura Nash, the Director for Values-Centered Leadership at Harvard Divinity School, comments ‘Ten years ago, no-one would have predicted the explosion of spiritual interests among the supposed secular business community’; the introduction to an article entitled ‘God and Business’ in Fortune magazine says ‘Bringing spirituality into the workplace violates the old idea that faith and fortune don’t mix. But a groundswell of believers is breaching the last taboo in corporate America’. The subject also forms a major topic in, or sole focus

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1 www.spiritatwork.com
2 The range of focus is also widely disparate, so for example: The Re-invention of Work (Fox, 1994); Spirit at Work – discovering the Spirituality in Leadership (Conger et al, 1994); Business as a Calling (Novak, 1996); Rewiring the Corporate Brain (Zohar, 1997); Liberating the Corporate Soul (Barrett, 1998); Spirited Leading and Learning (Vaill, 1998); A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii)
3 Spirituality and Organisational Transformation (Dehler & Walsh, 1994); A Postmodern Spiritual Future for Work (Bberman & Whitty, 1997); A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace (Mitroff & Denton, 1999i)
4 Over the past 2 years, articles have appeared in specialist HR and Management magazines (Harvard Business Review, HR Magazine, Management Today, People Management, Fortune Magazine) and general press articles in, for example, London Times, Wall Street Journal, Newsweek
6 For example, the ‘Sixth Annual Conference on Business and Consciousness’, Acapulco, Mexico
8 Purely as examples, see: the reference to The Domino Consultancy in Appendix 5; Martin Rutte – www.martinrutte.com; Richard Barratt – www.corptools.com
of, many business and/or management courses". Similarly, in the UK, the National Education Curriculum features spirituality as an area for development.

One of the leading figures in co-ordination of both academic and management research and practice in the USA is Judi Neal, Director of the Center for Spirit at Work, University of New Haven, Connecticut, USA. In considering the field of Spirituality in the Workplace she writes 'Probably one of the most significant events to happen recently is that the Academy of Management http://www.aom.pace.edu, which is the professional organization for professors who teach management and organizational behaviour, approved the formation of an Interest Group on Management, Spirituality, and Religion in 1999. The reason that this is significant is that this is the most prestigious academic organization in the field of management, and they basically decide what is acceptable in the field and what is not. By approving this new interest group, the Board of the Academy is saying that spirituality in the workplace is a legitimate field of study and that research, teaching, and publishing are acceptable in this area.' (Neal, 2000).

Academic research – an estimate of the number of doctoral studies in progress or completed exceeds 25 (since 1990) and the number of Masters theses is considerably greater. The great majority of these originate in the USA. An academic interest group for researchers into Spirituality in the Workplace is active on the Internet.

Although apparently regarded in some academic quarters with a degree of suspicion, Jacobsen confirms that spirituality in general can no longer be considered a new area for research ‘Schneiders again commented [in 1989] on the development of spirituality as a popular topic in current culture and its continued growth as an independent academic discipline’ (Jacobsen, 1994:13). However, some of the basis of this suspicion may be founded in the non-scholarly nature of much of the material and exchange of ideas, particularly on the subject of Spirituality in the Workplace. This situation is beginning to change with the increase in soundly based academic research work but such work still forms a small minority of current activity.

1.2.2 Summary of the research

This study has three components, each of which will be developed in detail in later chapters. The first is a Pilot Study, a Co-operative Enquiry (Reason, 1988) with a group of people involved in organisations and with sufficient interest in the subject of spirituality in the workplace to meet and explore the associated concepts. The second is a phenomenological exploration of a particular leader, the Principal and Chief Executive of a College of Further Education in the UK, who perceives herself as guided and highly motivated by her spirituality. The third is a longitudinal case study, extending over an 18 month period, looking at how this leader intends and perceives that she puts her principles and beliefs into practice, and comparing this with the experience of those working within the organisation. Additional data come

11 The list is very long indeed (see the website in footnote 1). Two examples are: in the UK, 'Spirituality in the Workplace', part of an MBA Organisational Transformation Elective at Cranfield School of Management; in the US, 'Spirituality for Business Leadership', MBA/CEO course run by André Delbecq at Santa Clara University, CA.
12 see www.spiritatwork.com
13 Accessed via www.topica.com which also hosts a non-academic interest group.
14 Schneiders, SM, an academic researcher into spirituality and theology from the 1980's on
from investigations with two other leaders in particular and from the work of other researchers in the field.

1.2.3 The value of this contribution

There is an underlying assumption, sometimes made explicit, that Spirituality in the Workplace is inevitably linked with greater satisfaction at work, more ethical practices, 'better' leadership, and, potentially, greater effectiveness and profitability. There is a limited (albeit increasing) amount of scholarly research throwing light on these assertions, but the nature of much of the work in this area is inspirational and aspirational, which Gibbons notes: 'make[s] great claims generally of a causal nature, which are often not entirely supported by argument or research' (2000:1-6).

Whilst well researched contributions appear from time to time which significantly extend the understanding of this subject area, much of the emergent work and literature does not fall into this category. Such research as is taking place has application across the many related disciplines which it touches. Skelly comments that 'This research is needed ... wherever organisational development professionals are interested in spirituality. Very little of the writing on this topic is of a scholarly nature' (1996:65). In particular, there is an acute shortage of rigorous studies, at a detailed level, of individual cases of Spirituality in the Workplace in practice. Further, of such studies as are available (or under way), to the best of my knowledge none are of a longitudinal nature, seeking to follow development and change over time. Finally, the phenomenological philosophy which underpins this study, whilst presenting significant challenges for the researcher, allows for a profound understanding of the experience of those being researched in their own terms, meeting a need also recognised by other researchers in the field: 'A phenomenological approach might assist in understanding the mental structures through which spiritual beliefs guide attitudes and actions at work' (Gibbons, 2000:VII-73). My specific approach is discussed later in detail.

It is notable that the vast majority of interest and activity in this area originates in America. None of the seminal works on spirituality in the workplace or spirituality and leadership critiqued or referred to in this document are of UK origin except Gibbons (2000), and even then, most of his research was done while a visiting fellow at the University of Wisconsin (2000:1-2); almost all significant Internet websites are American and the dialogue between academic and other contributors on Internet use-groups are, with few exceptions, between non-UK contributors.

Having studied the literature, current research, and current practice I am convinced not only of the validity but also of the value and necessity of academically rigorous research in this area. This study contributes to the field an in-depth phenomenologically-based understanding over time, which is in itself unique and the more so for being conducted in a UK environment. It offers an insight into the impact that leaders or managers who are guided and motivated by their personal spiritual beliefs can have on their organisations and on those who work within them, with particular insights from a UK perspective.

15 For example, Mitroff & Denton (1999ii), A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America
1.3 The specific focus of this research

As explained later, the focus and style of the research changed significantly as a result of the Pilot Study. From that stage on, I sought to:

- identify a leader or leaders who felt strongly guided by spiritual beliefs and convictions in the way they approached and undertook their job
- understand their internal view of the nature of their belief and how they saw it affecting them and what they do
- understand how they considered their beliefs affected what they sought to do in practice in their work environment
- explore how others within the organisation perceived and understood the leader to be acting

In order to do that within a context, there were a series of questions which I wanted to address:

1. How do people understand spirituality?

How might spirituality be defined? How is it understood, particularly by those from a Western Christian background but also by others with a clearly defined faith or belief system, or those with none?

How might I as the researcher define spirituality? How does this accord with the experience of those involved in the research?

2. What are the implications if spirituality is an integral dimension of human beings?

It is a basic belief of mine that human beings have a spiritual dimension as an integral part of our makeup. This is by no means an original concept (for example, Zohar, 1997:10; Covey, 1992:288; Young cited in Bensley, 1991:289). How would the research help in understanding this assertion?

Assuming that spirituality is a primary dimension of human experience, to what extent does this seem to be generally recognised or accepted, particularly by those involved in the research? As a discrete dimension, it should be possible to develop it just as it is with the physical, mental and emotional dimensions. Whilst not looking in detail at how such development might be effected, I proposed to look simply and briefly at how it might be possible to gain an indication of or make an assessment of the degree to which a person is aware of or has consciously developed their spiritual dimension.

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3. What is the relevance of spirituality in an organisational context? What is the impact of spiritually motivated leaders on those within their organisations?

Again, assuming that spirituality is a dimension of each of us, then we inevitably bring this into every setting, including work-related and organisational settings (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Zohar, 1997:11; Skelley, 1991:67). Why is it that in a work or organisational environment, it seems difficult for many to refer to or acknowledge being spiritual, let alone address it directly? How does it affect what we do and how we feel?

How and why do leaders who are aware of and guided by their spiritual dimension bring this into business and organisational life? What is the impact on individuals and on the organisation? In what way is the spirituality of others considered and engaged – if at all? What are the responses of those within the organisation?

Reflecting upon these issues and the aspects which particularly interested me, my research question – the development and modifications of which are traced in the early parts of this document – eventually became:

"Where leaders in organisations recognise, value and are guided by their own spiritual dimension, how does this affect and inform their style and approach in their role? What is the impact on and what are the consequences within their organisations?"

Figure 1 – The Research Question

By ‘style and approach’, I mean how the leader acts generally towards others, and specifically how they go about executing their role as leader: what they do, why and how they do it. Having located a suitable leader, I would be looking particularly at espoused approach(es) to leadership and managerial style, interpersonal style, and how they act as a leader. I planned to compare the leader’s view of themselves, their stated intentions and behaviours, with how those same things are perceived elsewhere in the organisation. There is no inherent implication of evaluating competence, though I expected to be able to reflect on views (including my own) of the leader’s effectiveness.

What this thesis offers is a profound phenomenologically based insight into the inner-world view of a specific leader who sees herself as spiritually motivated. It then compares her espoused-intent and approach with what is experienced by others, over an 18 month period, and infers from observed data some behavioural processes related to her as leader of the organisation. It explores how participants understand spirituality, reflects on the consequences of those views, and reflects on how spiritual leadership might be understood. Finally, it considers the implications of what was studied, for spiritually motivated leaders and spirituality in the workplace generally.
1.4 The problem of definitions

The problem of definitions is addressed in Chapter 2 but from the start, I determined to accept a level of ambiguity which would inevitably arise because of the lack of tight definitions and was encouraged to find support from other researchers in this: 'the challenge of defining spirituality will not abate because it deals with human experience and is “unavoidably ambiguous”' (Jacobsen, 1994: 13). The field exists; the associated phenomena are evident, experienced, discussed, taught and practised; they can be and are being researched – and yet the underlying concepts remain ambiguous. Barnett suggests that this is 'a highly functional ambiguity when used in the context of enquiry' (2000: 564). I was unwilling to accept that imprecise definitions (of spirituality in particular) made for questionable research and determined to proceed despite the lack of clear or commonly agreed definitions, whilst building into the research process a constant questioning of how those involved saw or understood spirituality.

1.5 My personal interest and relevant background

In undertaking the research, my wish was:

- to continue to pursue a lifelong personal spiritual journey of which this research would now be a part
- to understand better the potential relevance of spirituality in an organisational or workplace context
- to seek working hypotheses about spiritual ‘engagement’, particularly in an organisational context, which could be examined further by practical exploration
- to understand whether it might be practical to apply resulting hypotheses in organisations, as a consultant and/or a developer of people, and decide if I might wish to pursue this option
- to produce researched data and analysis as opposed to anecdotal or inspirational material
- in consequence of this research, to encourage others (individuals, leaders and those in organisations) to consider and explore this dimension

From the start, the question of personal interest in the topic seemed important from a motivational point of view. This was strongly re-enforced throughout and confirmed by sentiments which I encountered towards the end of my research ‘it is good to research issues that one cares about greatly, because qualitative research usually requires a great deal of time and effort. Without a strong personal interest in the topic, it would be hard to sustain focus and effort’ (Rosenblatt, 2001: 121). As a framework for this personal interest, my own background, spiritual formation and development are directly relevant to this research and I was aware of the need to explore the potential and actual biases that might exist or arise as a result. In Appendix 3, therefore, I offer a summary of what seem to be the most relevant parts of my own background.
1.5.1 Impact on this research

It will be evident from the summary in Appendix 3 that I approached this research with a background where my own spirituality was largely informed by Christianity, albeit with a wider perspective than once might have been the case. Inevitably, my own understanding and beliefs are an influence upon how I explore, view and interpret data. Periodically, I determined to review these aspects to question my interpretations. Perhaps more profoundly, there may be whole philosophies of life, organisation, management, morals and ethics which I have formulated or intrinsically accept as norms, based on my own background and beliefs. However, in this respect, I am no different from any other researcher and I recognised the need to reflect on and check my assumptions and processes, perhaps with others from a different background or perspective.

I am aware of my personal disposition to link spirituality with religion, or perhaps more accurately, religiosity. This is not uncommon, quite the contrary, but I was aware of the need to be conscious that it is not a necessary link for others. Also, I anticipated that during the research process I might have to re-evaluate my own ideas as to what spirituality is about – which indeed proved to be the case. I welcomed this opportunity since, at the outset, I had the impression that my own concepts were more limited than they might be. As a researcher, I felt the need to guard against value judgements as to what is and is not acceptable to others. However both as a Christian, and in some cases also from a more humanistic psychological point of view, there are various practices which I consider undesirable or in which I would not wish to engage, and/or which I believe may be potentially dangerous in a spiritual or psychological sense. Examples would include practising witchcraft, some New Age rituals and practices, use of ouija boards, fortune telling and divination, and seeking to contact spirits of the dead. In the research process, I was aware of the need to keep an open and non-judgmental mind should these or similar areas be seen by others as useful or desirable, whilst retaining personal integrity in that it would be unacceptable to me to be involved in such practices.

In exploring the background to and history of religious spirituality, I chose to limit this principally to the Christian experience for reasons which are explained in the next chapter. This is in no way to deny the influence of other religions or other paths of spirituality, however I was not setting out to undertake a comparative study. I was also aware that if a significant number of those who become involved in the research had a non-Christian religious background, I may have needed to extend the scope of religious background considerations, though in practice this turned out not to be the case.

1.6 Conventions used in this thesis

Literature references in the text are given as name (year:page number), so: Vaill (1990:46).
Cross references to chapters and sections within this thesis are indicated in a different typeface thus Chapter 4 and section 4.2.

Direct quotations from interviews, or participants comments, are shown in italics, so: ‘This was a difficult situation’.

Where quotations are from a transcribed interview, and where I have intended them to be identified by interviewee, quotations are usually followed by (person/interview number.transcript page number.line number) thus:

‘This was a difficult situation’ (L3.5-26).

However, where the section heading makes it obvious who the interviewee is, the initial identifying the person is sometimes omitted.

For certain interviews which were taped but not transcribed (see section 5.5, Figure 19), a letter indicating the interviewee, and the interview number are given. Thus: (L4).

The phrases spirituality in the workplace and spirituality in organisations are used interchangeably, both in the literature generally and in this thesis in particular. Although recognising that there are workplaces which are not within organisations, I use these phrases to connote those settings where groups of people work for an organisation.

1.7 Statement on Provenance

This thesis makes reference to a joint research project in the form of a pilot study that was appropriated and is incorporated as an early piece of fieldwork. Therefore, in agreement with my co-researchers, this statement is to declare that I, Michael Joseph, submitted for examination a thesis which is wholly and entirely my own work. No part of this thesis was developed, drafted or written by any other co-researcher.
Chapter 2: Research Stance and Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This research is based in the general field of Spirituality in the Workplace. Section 1.2.1 established the specific focus as being a spiritually inspired or motivated leader, the manner and extent to which the leader's spirituality may or may not influence their leadership, and the consequent impact that this may have within their organisation.

The disciplines which inform the field of spirituality in an organisational context are numerous, diverse and individually complex as signalled in section 1.1, and each has its own relevant literature. In the light of this, initially the chapter will:

1. establish the nature of and reasons for the researcher's frame of reference
2. outline the methodological approach from which issues will be examined and interrogated
3. discuss implications for the research

Then, having established how these research and methodological frameworks intersect, it will:

4. define and position the specific issues for research within the broader field
5. examine and critique how the available literature in the field informs and has dealt with the issues relevant to this study

The review in step 5 is informed by Silverman (2000) who challenges the traditional notion that a literature review is an exercise undertaken at the outset to position the research and establish the field prior to commencing other aspects. He argues, in summary, that it should 'combine knowledge with critical thought; involve hard work but be exciting to read; and mainly be written after you have completed your data analysis' (Silverman, 2000:231; emphasis in the original). Wolcott goes further in pointing out the positive gains of 'avoiding the statutory review chapter' stating that 'I expect my students to know the relevant literature, but I do not want them to lump (dump?) it all into a chapter that remains unconnected to the rest of the study. I want them to draw upon the literature selectively and appropriately as needed in the telling of their story' (Silverman 2000:230).

The type of approach advocated by Silverman and Wolcott has been chosen here, principally because it has seemed necessary. Given the publishing dates of the literature, not only has the rate of publication increased significantly during the course of this research, but many texts which would now be considered seminal in this field were not available at the outset. The review of the literature has therefore formed a parallel process with the research. As indicated previously, this research itself is intended to help compensate for the dearth of scholarly investigation in an emergent field. This initial review contextualises the research and establishes key issues: I then return to the literature in the later chapters (Chapters 8 & 9) to discuss
how the research outcomes relate to other literature in the field, and to offer further illumination, critique and additional considerations.

2.2 Research Stance and Methodological Approach

The conceptual framework and philosophical position for this research is based in humanistic psychology, which the Association for Humanistic Psychology describes as a 'value orientation that holds a hopeful, constructive view of human beings and of their substantial capacity to be self-determining'.18 The conviction that intentionality and ethical values are strong among the basic determinants of human behaviour, directs humanistic psychologists in an effort to 'enhance such distinctly human qualities as choice, creativity, the interaction of the body, mind and spirit, and the capacity to become more aware, free, responsible, life-affirming and trustworthy'.18 In considering methods of enquiry, the AHP also indicate that 'humanistic psychology ... is also an approach to scholarship and research [which is] strongly supportive of phenomenological and clinical approaches to the study of the human position in the order of life. It also encourages the discovery of new research approaches which seek to further understand the richness and depth of human beings'.18 This research is consistent with this form of approach and methodological philosophy.

Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:4) suggest that a certain style of scientific enquiry has become the accepted standard or norm not only for ‘doing’ (what they call material progress) but also for ‘knowing’ (epistemological progress): they describe this norm as that associated with the ‘Analytical Scientist’ style (Figure 2). They further suggest that there is a body of support for reconsidering this norm (1978:3), not least because they propose that it is ‘largely the creation and dominance of a particular psychological type of style’ and that there are valid and valuable alternatives based on other psychological styles (1978:4). Their typology proposes alternative and very different ways of enquiry, based on the psychological types of C G Jung (1971)19, with which social scientists may approach science. Jung’s types have two dimensions (which are also the basis for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs-Myers, 1993ii), described in Appendix 1 and referred to at other stages in this research). The first dimension considers the way that individuals typically prefer to deal with information or data, and the second their preferred way of making decisions. Each of these independent dimensions has two antithetical psychological processes that Jung believed cannot occur simultaneously, hence an individual preference for one or the other. The process for dealing with data are Sensing (S) or iNtuition (N); those for decision making are Thinking (T) and Feeling (F). None of these processes have a higher value than any other and do not predicate effectiveness (however defined) of an individual when deploying them.

Those with a Sensing preference (S) particularly value the details and specifics of a situation, prefer senses-verifiable ‘facts’, are attentive to the ‘here and now’ and tend to be of a practical nature. Conversely, iNtuitives (N) tend to be imaginative, interested in patterns and relationship at a ‘big picture’ level; often idealistic they

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18 Internet, at www.ahpweb.org

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prefer to consider what is possible, what might be, and the exploration of novel or innovative points of view.

Thinking (T) decision makers prefer to use what they consider an objective or distanced process based on impersonal, formal or theoretical reasoning. They seek the ‘right’ answer, ‘the truth’ and are more interested in abstract generalisations. Feeling (F) decision makers, on the other hand, value harmony and relationship, seeking to reach person-centred, value-based judgements; empathy, the recognition of individual positions, and personal-ethical value systems are highly significant.

Consequently, Mitroff and Kilmann posit four correspondent methodological approaches to research as indicated in Figure 2, with each representing a specific theoretical framework of enquiry.

![Methodological approaches to social science](image)

*In Reason & Rowan (1981:45), adapted from Mitroff & Kilmann (1978)*

**Figure 2 – Methodological approaches to social science**

Within this categorisation, my personal psychological profile (as illustrated by my Myers-Briggs Type Indicator preferences of ISFJ; see Appendix 1) is aligned with that of the Particular Humanist. This suggests that I have a natural preference for Sensing when dealing with data and Feeling when making decisions – an inference confirmed in practice by observation over an extended period. Mitroff & Kilmann develop the characteristics of each type, including the preferred mode of enquiry for each: those for Particular Humanists (PH) are summarised and reproduced in Figure 3. According to Reason and Rowan, the PH style is characterised by ‘passionate and personal knowledge’ with a goal of producing ‘a kind of social science which will further the development of human growth, awareness, and general welfare’ (Reason & Rowan, 1981:49).
## EVALUATIVE CATEGORIES | ATTRIBUTED CHARACTERISTICS
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**EXTERNAL RELATIONS** | Status of science as a special field of knowledge in relation to other fields | Does not occupy a privileged and special position; may be subordinate to poetry, literature, art, music, and mysticism as older, 'superior' ways of knowing

**INTERNAL PROPERTIES** | A. Nature of scientific knowledge | Personal, value-constituted, interested; partisan activity; poetic, political, action-oriented; acausal, non-rational.
B. Guarantors of scientific knowledge | Intense personal knowledge and experience
C. Ultimate aims of science | To help this person know himself or herself uniquely and to achieve his own self-determination.
D. Preferred logic | The 'logic' of the singular and unique.
E. Preferred sociological norms | Counter-norms to CUDOS
F. Preferred mode of enquiry | The case study; the in-depth detailed study of a particular individual.
G. Property of the scientist | Interested, 'all-too-human', biased, poetic, committed to the postulates of an action-oriented science.

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Figure 3 – Characteristics of the Particular Humanist

Methodologically, I can see that my choices have been informed both by psychological preferences as defined within the Myers-Briggs/Mitroff-Kilmann types, and the aforementioned humanistic values. However, I also note that "the challenge to traditional forms of science become most extreme in the style of the Particular Humanist" (Reason & Rowan, 1981:50). The challenge is reflected, for example, in using a qualitative methodology and the specific choice of phenomenology. Moustakas indicates that phenomenology entails 'systematic efforts to set aside pre-judgements' and to be as free as possible from 'pre-conceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies' (Moustakas 1994:22). In consequence, there is no attempt to develop a specific theoretical position prior to the research itself.

My decision to select and employ a case study may be seen as unusual for a phenomenologically framed study, where the focus is more usually on descriptions which portray the essence of an experience (Moustakas, 1994:13). The rationale for choosing the case study within the overall phenomenological research philosophy is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. I note that a case study is the preferred style of enquiry for PH researchers. It made good sense here because a phenomenological study alone would not have fulfilled the research aims. In particular, I wanted to extend the research beyond the phenomenological study of a leader to consider how her particular stance impacted on her organisation. A case study, which allows for 'participant observation with the added dimension of co-participant' interaction' (Reason & Rowan, 1981:50), offered an effective vehicle for doing this.
It is also true that the research questions and impetus originated in my own spiritual journey. In part, I engaged in the research in order to help me reflect on personal hypotheses based on some 20 years practice in leadership, development and mentoring in organisations. In considering new paradigms of research, Reason and Rowan uphold the value of reflecting the autobiography of the question as central to understanding the place of the researcher in relation to his/her subject, even when using a phenomenological methodology: 'we think it is also desirable to give details of political standpoint, current work and relationships, general way of being in the world or whatever' (1981:xiii).20

Finally, my choice of presentational style also reflects to some degree the preferences of a Particular Humanist (see Figure 3) — 'the preferred form of presentation is then the personalised descriptive account of real human characters'. Thus we have in the PH a style of doing science which departs radically from the AS (Analytical Scientist) norms of detached rationality (Reason & Rowan, 1981:50).

Mitroff and Kilmann propose an interdependence between the four styles of 'doing science' which is potentially enriching. Commenting on this, Reason & Rowan suggest that: 'we must learn to see and appreciate the contributions of others working in different styles' (1981:51). I maintain that in providing a well-documented phenomenology and case study, this research successfully balances and complements the Particular Humanist style. It seems honest to declare both the PH style, which I value and which in many respects I cannot help but adopt, and the source of my research questions. At the same time I have considered the potential weaknesses of the PH approach, and have aimed to generate confidence in the conduct and findings of this study as a piece of academic research. I acknowledge that a study that adopted the PH style fully and wholeheartedly would be valid (certainly in its own terms, as articulated by Mitroff and Kilmann), even though typically it may be more contentious in academic circles. However, my research design has intentionally bridged Mitroff and Kilmann's styles through the objective observation of the phenomenological approach and the systematic case study, alongside personal, subjective involvement and reflection.

Having described my theoretical stance and preferred methodological approach, I move on to consider the relevant literature and issues in the field which are pertinent to my particular enquiry.

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20 This is particularly demonstrated in the case of contemporary feminist research. See Braud & Anderson, 1998; Belenky et al, 1986, and web-sites such as www.qualitative-research.net, www.erraticimpact.com, www.triangle.co.uk.
2.3 Context of literature review and summary of emergent issues

2.3.1 Introduction to the literature review

It has only been within the last decade that serious academic interest has been evident regarding the possible relevance of spirituality to organisations (Biberman & Whitty, 2000:xii). There are some immediately evident issues. One is that the growing volume of literature in the field varies widely in quality, style and focus. Another is that scholarly work and in particular academic research is limited. A third is that application in practice is viewed and attempted in very different ways. Overall, this is still a new field and one of the consequences suggested by Neal and confirmed by my experience is that:

‘In spite of the growing interest, most of the people who are consciously integrating their spirituality and their work feel very alone and have difficulty finding others to talk about this process.' (2000:8).

Some scholarly articles are devoted explicitly to literature reviews approaching the literature from a particular focus or area of interest, for example, Bensley (1991) focusing on spiritual health, Kahn & Steeves, (1993) on spiritual well-being, Dyson (1997) on spirituality as relevant to healthcare, and Neal (1997) on spirituality in management education. However, academic and scholarly based material is a significant minority of the total (Gibbons, 2000:1-6). A further tranche of literature, in which the scholarly content is variable, represents the views and experience of aspiring practitioners in this emergent field. I will indicate that much relevant literature is inspirational in nature, seeking to present a positive and aspirational picture, supported by varying degrees of theory or practical experience. The stance of academe and management development has, until quite recently, been more critical and distanced than supportive and involved (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii:16), so that this practical and inspirational literature has played a significant part in achieving the momentum which now characterises this field. Factors which perhaps mitigate against scholarly engagement include a common theme of undue optimism and unsubstantiated claims of profound transformation (Gibbons, 2000) which I shall address shortly. Whatever the cause, I have experienced ambivalence about this field in these two communities throughout this research.

Since this research considers spirituality in contemporary settings, I also investigated that most contemporary of all current phenomena, the Internet, as a source. One extensive site has been consistently valuable, offering a comprehensive bibliography, an index to research, and a resource list which has developed greatly during this project and is regularly updated\(^{21}\). Of the hundreds of thousands of related sites thrown up by search engines\(^{22}\), only a very few provided insights which were helpful in scholarly or academic terms, although some included articles by practitioners which contributed to building a general background and understanding of what was happening in this area. As a contact medium with other researchers, however, the

\(^{21}\) www.spiritatwork.com

\(^{22}\) www.google.com, for example, throws up 2,400,000 responses to the search parameter ‘spirituality’ and 870,000 in response to ‘spirituality at work’
Internet has been of value and I shall reference at least one exchange of ideas on a specific aspect of this research.

In reviewing this literature it became evident to me that I was disposed to value more highly the works which viewed spirituality as starting from, or at least requiring, an inner journey of development in addition to any attempt at application in practice. Conversely, I was disposed to see as less desirable those works where spirituality was proposed or inferred as a more instrumental attribute for leaders to concern themselves with. This is perhaps unsurprising, particularly taking into account my own preferred psychological preferences, spiritual formation and PH research paradigm. I have indicated in Chapter 4 how I have acknowledged and worked with this as a personal bias.

A number of issues arise from the literature promoting spirituality in the workplace. In particular, a wide range of positive consequences are suggested both for individuals and organisations but there is little substantive evidence or research to support these assertions. A limited number of writings express reservations or concerns about spiritual practices in organisation. The rest of this chapter considers those issues from the literature which I have highlighted as being of particular relevance to my research and I have indicated the points where my own research will seek to add to these views.

2.3.2 Summary of issues relevant to this research

In section 1.3 I formulated the specific focal point of this research as considering the impact of a spiritually motivated leader on her organisation and proposed three particular areas of focus. Within each of these, some additional contingent questions are identified which are consequential to addressing the primary research question. I now isolate key issues which are relevant in the context of this research, using them to interrogate relevant literature in the field and subsequently to shape my own research. I shall also signal a limited number of other important issues highlighted in the literature which are related, but not necessarily central, to the given scope of this study.

2.3.2.1 Understanding of spirituality in the context of this research: concepts and definitions

The first issue is that of the nature of spirituality and how it can be understood and defined in the context of this research. The particular context is the UK workplace and, within that, a specific organisation. Most of the current literature of spirituality in the workplace (including research projects) is located in North American 20th and 21st Century organisational culture which predicates a predominantly Judeo-Christian background when considering spirituality. I will indicate in section 2.4.2 that this is indeed a bias which is apparent in some of the literature and also experienced in practice in business environments. In order to contextualise this background, I provide a brief background of Christian spirituality in section 2.4.2.

In the UK in particular, the same Judeo-Christian tradition is common, further emphasised by the particular role of the Church of England as the established church in this country. However, there is little UK literature to compare with that in the US
to suggest how this influences the workplace environment. Extensive personal experience in the UK business environment would suggest a less overt consideration of God and/or spirituality - a position in some way supported by contemporary UK surveys considered in section 2.5. Since spirituality and not religiosity is being considered here, I shall consider in section 2.4.3 how spirituality might be viewed more widely. Finally, I shall consider the validity of definitions and develop a personal definition for this research in section 2.4.4.

Spirituality is an ineffable concept and reconciling widely diverse understandings is generally considered problematic. I found individual understandings of spirituality to be very disparate, which is a particular concern since it raises the question of definition: 'when we speak of spirituality, what are we talking about?'. Based on field-work, section 2.4.5 proposes a framework or map for locating the various components of spirituality which I developed as a way of positioning widely differing concepts which arose during the research.

2.3.2.2 Conceptualising spirituality as a stage of human development
The second issue relates to the way spirituality can be conceptualised as a dimension of human experience and/or development. Section 2.5 explores examples of human developmental models. Where spirituality is recognised, these frequently posit it as a higher stage or level of development. In contrast, the spirituality in the workplace literature rarely, if ever, views spirituality in this way. I shall explore this difference of perspective, considering the apparent conflict between spirituality viewed as a higher stage of development as opposed to a universal experience.

Although some of the literature addresses measurement, there are fundamental issues in current attempts to objectify and measure spirituality. I shall comment briefly on these in section 2.5.2, indicating why such approaches are inappropriate for this study. However, I did anticipate encountering individuals with a wide range of understandings of, and commitment to, spirituality, and that it would be valuable to compare different degrees of awareness of, or development in, spirituality. I therefore developed and propose a way of doing this which is presented in section 2.5.2, along with indications of how it is used in the research.

2.3.2.3 The relevance of spirituality in an organisational context
Section 2.6 will consider the broad relevance of spirituality in an organisational context and will show that it is a relatively recent consideration which some would consider contentious. This implies that engaging with spirituality represents a significant change in recognising or accommodating a previously unconsidered aspect of employees which in itself may raise tensions between the needs or demands of the organisation and the individual.

To place this in context, I shall consider briefly how organisational change is viewed and what is understood by transformational change. I shall then consider in what way the literature relates spirituality to transformational change (a relationship explored further in section 2.3.2.4). Finally, I consider how encompassing spirituality is seen to impact organisations and individuals.
2.3.2.4 The role of the Leader in relation to spirituality in the workplace

In section 2.7 I first explore the differentiation made in the literature between the concept of manager versus leader, and the implications for spirituality in the workplace. I shall show that the literature consistently asserts the role of the leader as crucial or fundamental to engagement with and acceptance of spirituality in the workplace, often linking this with transformational change. This raises a number of consequent concerns relevant to this research. In particular:

- how leadership is, or may be, distinguished from management and what are the consequences for leaders aspiring to be spiritual?
- spirituality is commonly linked with transformational leadership and transformational change. How is this link represented in the literature and is the association sustainable? What are the consequences for expectations of spiritually motivated leaders?

When considering spirituality, much of the literature does not indicate what people experience and, in particular, little is documented about the inner life of executive leaders (Judge, 1999: 5). In this research project, my wish was to seek greater understanding of the internal world-view of a leader in some depth from a phenomenologically framed exploration, revealing something of the inner perceptions of the leader beyond externally observable behaviours.

2.3.2.5 Assessment of claims made for the consequences of engagement with spirituality – for individuals and organisations

Given the general humanistic stance of this research, it is relevant to reflect on how the literature suggests that spirituality can be considered to affect human beings particularly in the workplace context, and to consider the claims that are made for engaging with spirituality in the workplace. I shall indicate that the bulk of the literature is uncritically and often overwhelmingly positive about the effects of engaging with spirituality in a workplace context. In section 2.8 I explore this issue from the perspective of individuals and organisations, raising a number of questions which are currently unanswered. These will form the basis for questions to be used to interrogate the data from my own case study.

I now move on to consider in detail how the literature addresses each of the above issues.

2.4 Understanding spirituality in the context of this research: concepts and definitions

In section 2.3.2.1 I have indicated that issues of understanding spirituality relevant to this research are:

- individual understandings of spirituality are very disparate, with wide ranging perspectives
- Judeo-Christian influences are significant in North America (where most of the spirituality in the workplace literature originates) and (possibly to a lesser extent) in the UK
- wider influences are becoming evident; definitions vary widely with only
limited agreement or commonality.

Each of these aspects forms a background to my research and is explored further below. Although I have proffered a personal definition of spirituality, my research approach takes a phenomenological perspective, seeking participants’ views and understandings of spirituality. Outcomes from the research are reflected on in Chapters 7 and 8.

2.4.1 Background and understanding of spirituality

Longman’s Dictionary of the English Language (1991) offers definitions and something of the etymology of the word spirituality:

**spirituality**
1. sensitivity or attachment to religious values
2. practice of personal devotion or prayer
3. being spiritual
4. *usu plural archaic* something that in ecclesiastical law belongs to the church or to a cleric as such
5. *taking sing or pl vb, archaic* the clergy as a whole

Expanding on item 3 – spiritual is defined as:

**spiritual**
1. of or consisting of the spirit as opposed to the body
2a. of sacred matters
2b. ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal
3. concerned with religious values
4. based on or related by closeness of spirit
   *<our spiritual home>*
5. of supernatural beings or phenomena

*from Latin, of breathing, of wind – spiritus*

The implication here is that the spiritual, or spirituality, has to do with things which are not temporal or not of the body – somehow disconnected from the material self. It is also evident that these definitions are biased towards linking spirituality and religion where, as Jacobs points out, such separation is common ‘*[Other] faiths have split the material world from the spiritual and .. have had little regard for either the welfare of the material on the one hand or care for the spiritual on the other’ (Jacobs, 1993:159). Despite taking care to focus on spirituality and not religion (or perhaps more accurately religiosity) in the course of this research, when asking people what they understood by spirituality this link was frequently made. Since religious influences have, historically, been the primary route of spiritual awareness and development, this is unsurprising. In the United Kingdom, particularly amongst those whose ethnic origin is within the UK, it is most likely to imply the Christian religion – the Church of England being the official established religion of England. However, this linkage is potentially limiting since, as Jacobsen observes, spirituality is generally perceived to include ‘*a much broader range of experience while “religion” and “faith” are seen as limiting the discussion to experiences that arise in traditional institutions or ways of thinking*’ (1994:4).
Given the phenomenological framework of my enquiry, I took an early decision not to undertake extensive and detailed historical research into traditional spirituality from differing religious and cultural contexts. However, for the reasons already indicated (section 2.2), and since religion emerged as a prime factor in the understanding of spirituality amongst a majority of my research subjects, I reflect briefly on the historical concepts and development of spirituality from the Christian traditions.

2.4.2 Spirituality in the Christian tradition

Christian spirituality has been a primary influence and developmental force in many parts of the world (and significantly for this thesis, in the West) for approaching two thousand years, informing not only religious belief and practice but also the development of laws, morals and ethics of western society as a whole. Since I am not setting out to provide a fully researched history, I have drawn heavily upon the work of Sheldrake (1995) as the basis for the rest of this section. I also reference Cunningham and Egan whose work is directed at people interested in Christian spirituality who seek both some historical context and actual reflection on the historical materials (1996:1-2).

Although the Christian Bible uses the word spirit (pneuma in Greek; ruach in Hebrew) and spiritual (pneumaticos) – most particularly in the Pauline letters, these are not contrasted with ‘physical’ or ‘material’ but with ‘all that which is opposed to the Spirit of God’ – whether this be in the mind, will or body. Thus the view of spiritual living which emerged in later centuries – the separation of human bodily needs (denial of the flesh, rejection of material needs) from spiritual or ‘soul-based’ pursuits – is a misunderstanding of the sense of the original text. A spiritual person was recognised not as someone who turns away from material reality but rather someone in whom the spirit of God dwells. The separation or distinction between spirit and matter was greatly re-enforced by scholasticism, a new philosophical trend in theology which began in the 12th Century.

The Latin noun spiritualitas (spirituality), which is the closest translation of the Greek, did not appear until the 5th Century. The meaning of the word has changed over time, going through at least one phase of being somewhat pejorative. In the sense of which we speak of it today, the English word only came into regular use well into the 20th Century. Consequently, research into previous times has to take into account the different meanings implied by the word at different times in history. Sheldrake suggests that what 'spirituality' seeks to express is ‘the conscious human response to God that is both personal and ecclesial; in short, 'life in the Spirit'” (1995:45).

Tracing the path of spiritual development, during the first millennium at least, the development of, and writing about, spiritual development and biblical exegesis was undertaken almost exclusively by an upper-class and male élite. Theological development, at least up to the 12th Century, was likewise the primary province of male religious houses. In both cases this would have coloured the outcomes in

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23 Philip Sheldrake is Vice Principal of Sarum College, Salisbury, England and former lecturer in Spirituality and Director of Pastoral Studies within the Cambridge Theological Federation
accordance with the accepted values of those groups. After the 12th Century, spiritual life and practice seems to have developed somewhat separately from theology, and spiritual growth began to be understood as an ‘ascent’, where the active life was seen essentially as a preparation for the contemplative life and therefore of lesser value.

The Reformation resulted in differing views on spiritual development in the West, and indeed the Eastern Orthodox churches were already on a somewhat different path. Furthermore, the liberation of women’s experience has also lead to the incorporation of wider values. By the latter half of the 20th Century, Sheldrake (1995:58) suggests that spirituality has generally been seen to have four central characteristics:

- non-exclusivity – open to all; in all traditions including non-Christian
- soundly theologically based but not dogmatic or prescriptive
- not about defining perfection but looking at human growth in the context of a living relationship with the Absolute
- seeking integration of all aspects of human life/experience, not just the interior life

A background and pattern of development such as that above could be compiled for any major religious or spiritual group. Whilst differing in detail, it might be expected to contain much which is thematically common, including encompassing a view of an over-arching power, or force, or deity/deities, which form a principal focus of that group’s understanding or definition of spirituality. The Christian perspective is clear in some of the literature (as examples, Judge 1999, Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii, Conger, 1994). From personal observation it is also evident in the language used both by practitioners and academics in the US. My experience is that these links are not so clear or as frequently expressed in the UK. Although forming a cultural background in both countries, there is a growing contemporary view of spirituality, which I now move on to explore, that is no longer necessarily based in a religious framework.

2.4.3 Wider understandings of spirituality

'Some people consider spirituality their deeply held religious values while others consider their spirituality their sense of purpose and meaning in the world'

(University of Minnesota, Student Handbook)

There are many individuals (some of whom were represented in the pilot study group for this research and, later, in the case study itself) who have no affiliation to, or belief in, any organised religious or spiritually oriented group. Of these, some do not hold any belief in a transcendent power. Others have a belief in a deity, the Divine or some form of over-reaching cosmic power which forms part of their understanding of spirituality, expressed by Dale as ‘that human striving for the transforming power present in life; it is that attraction and movement of the human person towards the divine’.

24 For example, attending the Eastern Academy of Management annual conference in the US, it was noticeable that speakers in plenary sessions and participants in small groups referred to God frequently and easily; they also used related terms like 'blessings' and similar words with a frequency which, in my considerable experience, is not usual in the UK.
(Dale cited in Neck & Milliman, 1994). However, the current concept of spirituality, particularly as related to the workplace, is often seen in much broader terms. Although some spirituality in the workplace literature does address God or the Divine as a component seen by some as fundamental (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii; Judge, 1999, Ch 5; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1998), elsewhere spirituality is considered more widely (Dehler & Neal, 2000; Birberman & Whitty, 1997; Dehler & Welsh, 1994). These wider considerations most usually separate spirituality from religion and often from any concept of God. For example, Cavanagh points out that although spirituality has been rooted in religion historically, its current use in business and in the workplace is most often not associated with any specific religious tradition (2000:154). Skelley takes this further, suggesting that spirituality has ‘to do first and foremost with a universal human capacity for self-transcendence’ which is not necessarily a religious phenomenon (1996:66). By the same token, contemporary spiritual practice can cover a wide range of activities, as Cunningham & Egan observe: ‘The word ‘spirituality’ is today employed to describe everything from New Age practices and therapies to overcome addictions ... to forms of oriental meditation, prayer groups, and retreats in the desert’ (1996:5). Thus the former religious-based view of spirituality, implying separateness or even division between spiritual and temporal (that which is ‘not of this world’ and that which is), this is not the case with contemporary spirituality (Richardson, 1996).

This wider view of spirituality raises issues for research and practice. From a research point of view, great care is needed not to make assumptions about what research participants might consider to be spiritual. This wider view holds the potential for seeing almost anything as spiritual, requiring the researcher to examine in what way any particular manifestation is held to be spiritual. When considering spiritual practice in the workplace, if common ground could be established it could indicate ways of approaching spirituality acceptable to many or all groups. Conversely, the implication is that great care is needed: with the expectation of a wide variety of beliefs and cultures in any organisation there is clearly potential for causing dissent and division where specific spiritual practices or views may be offensive to other groups of staff. This remains a significant issue which formed a background question for my case study and to which I return in Chapter 9.

2.4.4 Definitions of the spiritual or spirituality

Given the widely differing concepts of spirituality explored above, it is unsurprising that the task of deriving a definition for the purposes of research is frequently perceived as problematic. As a contemporary researcher, Jacobsen notes that ‘as one seeks to assess the current situation, it becomes evident that the term spirituality has, in a rather brief time, become widely used but difficult to define’ (1994:9). Another academic comments that ‘The ‘spiritual’ is one of the trickiest areas of human understanding to taxonomise, or in any way in which to make definitions that can be universally understood, or that mean broadly the same thing across different communities’. This problem of definition seems common to all who engage with it, leading some to work around it,

26 King M R, Reader in Computer Art, London Guildhall University, in a 1995 MA essay submission entitled 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Science', via the Internet at http://web.ukonline.co.uk/mr.king/
avoiding precise definitions of spirituality in favour of moving on to discuss it in practice (Dehler & Walsh, 1994:19).

As a background to a review of the field of spirituality in the workplace, Gibbons debates the problem of definition of spirituality and over some nine pages, looking at issues of typology, God and theism, links or otherwise with religion, beliefs and practices, and applying spirituality – particularly in the workplace. He concludes with a personal definition for his research: ‘Spirituality is the search for direction, meaning, inner wholeness and connectedness to others, to non-human creation and to a transcendent’ (2000: II-13).

In considering definitions of spirituality, Rowan warns against the tendency to go for the 'one-two-three-infinity' definition 'where we say “there is the body and its sensations (one), the emotions and feeling and desires (two), the intellect and its thoughts (three), and everything else is a sort of mystical oneness called spirituality (infinity)”' (1993:9). However, an indicator of the inherent ambiguity when trying to be more precise is expressed by a Zen koan which says ‘If you can say what it is, that's not it’ (Myss, 1997:252).

The extension of spirituality into the workplace context further complicates both definition and individual understanding. The topic is a perennial one for Internet based discussion groups. A very few examples which illustrate the range of understandings are:

‘... it is spirituality that provides the desire for change’ (Gail Blackwell, post to Internet Spirituality forum)

'I experience a dimension of life that transcends the self, and thus I see myself as 'spiritual'; and with such a broad definition of spirituality, I experience most people I know as having 'spirituality' ' (Bob Kehr, post to Spirituality forum)

'We define 'Spirituality in the Workplace' using seven principles: Creativity, Communication, Respect, Partnership, Flexibility, Energy and Vision. All seven principles are related; all are important. [Definitions then follow] ‘(Rainbows & Miracles - Spirituality in the Workplace, 1998. Website: www.itstime.com/rainbow.htm)

'A definition of Spirituality in the Workplace might be: a shift from 'work' for individual economic necessities, to a place where individual passions, callings, vocations, can be harnessed into a collective for total personal and community growth' (Post to Spirituality in the Workplace forum)

Freshman (1996) undertook 'An exploratory qualitative analysis of applied definitions of Spirituality in the Workplace' based on e-mail text from an Internet discussion group on Spirituality at Work, supported by a survey and a literature search. In her Appendix C3 she summarises the direct relationships as:

Spirituality is a personal connection to God. The path of spirituality is an aspect of Spirit@Work. Values, ethics and volunteer work are aspects of spirituality (as is) searching for truth (as is) awareness. Spirituality is not religion. Intuition supports work and spirituality.

Higher Purpose is a theoretical aspect of Spirit@Work. Higher purpose leads to guidance. Intuition leads to higher purpose. Higher purpose has aspects that are beneficial and beyond the physical. Service is an example of higher purpose.
My observation from following some of the dialogue on the Internet discussion forums is that there is no commonly agreed definition: people use the word spirituality to apply to almost any aspect of human behaviour or aspiration that they consider positive. Other than in a discussion group specifically set up for and used by academic researchers, I have not found the Internet to be systematically valuable on the question of definition.

In reviewing spirituality in Management Education, Schmidt-Wilk et al, (2000:582) identify three streams of definition in the literature, providing references for each:

i. definitions of spirituality in terms of a personal inner experience, using as an example Mitroff & Denton (1999:83) 'the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe'

ii. definitions focused on principles, virtues, ethics, values, emotions, wisdom, and intuition. Those who embrace this approach perceive that 'the degree to which these qualities are expressed in the behaviours and policies of organisations expresses the degree to which there is spirituality in management'

iii. definitions which link the relationship between a personal inner experience and its manifestations in outer behaviours, principles, and practices

Their conclusion is in concert with my own findings, that 'perhaps one thing writers in this preparadigmatic field agree on is that spirituality is difficult to define!' (Schmidt-Wilk et al, 2000:582).

Pursuing the question of definition further did not seem helpful given my overall research paradigm where understanding of participant's own positions is paramount. I therefore established a personal working definition for the purposes of this research which captured my own sense of how contemporary spirituality could be conceived:

“A fundamental dimension of human beings; the intangible essence or deepest part of ourselves, which is also transcendent, extending beyond the mind, body and emotions; the source of our ultimate sense of purpose, which may seek fulfilment in the Divine”

Even as a personal definition this is incomplete, not least in that it does not fully cover each of the four quadrants of the framework developed earlier (Figure 4). It is more a statement of where I stand, not a proposed definition to be argued against other definitions discussed earlier. From the research perspective, as part of the phenomenological process I shall be ‘bracketing’ this personal stance as I seek the understanding of research participants. I return to it at the conclusion of the research, reflecting on it briefly in Chapter 9.

2.4.5 A framework to encompass understandings of spirituality

Given that spirituality is the primary focus for this research, I experienced some difficulty early on in trying to reconcile the diverse understandings of spirituality that
I encountered, both in the literature and amongst research participants. For example, Chapter 3 describes a pilot study, undertaken at an early stage in the research process. Appendix 8 and Figure 39 and Figure 40 list the very diverse words and concepts which the group felt were associated with spirituality and I have found similar diversity wherever I have explored the understanding of others. I sought a way of encompassing these notions which would be coherent with my theoretical research framework, be in keeping with a phenomenological view, and which might offer a way of representing the diversity of data about spirituality emerging from the research. The result was a four dimensional framework or map which I developed and present in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 – Dimensions of Spirituality**

The *Connection with God, the Divine or a Creator* encompasses the transcendent nature of spirituality seen by some as central to this ineffable concept. It offers the

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27 As an example, whilst running a one day workshop at the University of Bristol for Workplace Counsellors as part of their Diploma course in September 1999, I asked them to consider the question: "What comes to mind when you hear the word spirituality". The feedback of three working groups demonstrated an even wider range of responses than in the research pilot study group.

28 For example, King M R, an academic at London Guildhall University has a website at [http://web.ukonline.co.uk/mr.king/](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/mr.king/). An essay on this site (*God, Science and Jnani: a New Framework*, originally published in *Network*, the Scientific and Medical Network Journal, No 71, Dec 1999) considers the transcendent as having two paths: the devotional and non-devotional, where the devotional path is often associated with religion but the non-devotional path is not.
possibility of avoiding moral relativism by awareness of and encounter with that which is beyond the self and the ego.

The Connection with and Awareness of Self acknowledges the need for constantly developing self awareness as a pre-requisite for having authentic connections in the other dimensions. It can be seen as combining the famous words from the temple of Apollo at Delphi “Know thyself” with the admonition of William Shakespeare “This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man”\(^\text{29}\). Here lies the basis of the way a person perceives and values themselves, the way they project and conduct themselves – the basis for principles, values and ethics – and therefore the way one conducts one’s life.

Connection with Others addresses the way that humans interact with their fellow humans: the value and respect that one has for them which will determine how one acts towards them – principles and ethics in practice. Here, in particular, is much of the practical focus of spirituality in the workplace.

Finally, the Connection with Nature and the Environment. The importance of this dimension seems only selectively recognised in the literature though where it is, it is considered significant (Berry & Clarke, 1995). Jacobs suggests that one reason for this general lack of emphasis is ‘The western secular belief in the supremacy of humanity and of reason .. risks loosing touch with the environment ...[although] ... given the intense relationship which artists and scientists have with the natural world (whether portraying, or analysing it), it must also form a significant part of a psychology of belief” (1993:158-159).

This connection, then, seems to have two facets: the experience – potentially spiritual – of being ‘in nature’ regularly, and the need, in the context of spiritual wholeness, to respect the environment and act accordingly.

This framework has proved consistently valuable, with application at a number of junctures in this research. After the pilot study and later during the case study field work and analysis, I was able to use this notion of dimensions of spirituality to position the diverse concepts of what spirituality might be about. For example, using some of the words referred to earlier which different people used to express what they understood by spirituality, they might relate to the dimensions as follows:

**Connection with the Divine:** link to Divine, source, etc; high order; sacred; more than this world; other worldliness; God; spirit & soul

**Connection with self:** purpose; to be connected as you choose; being who we are; wholeness; beliefs; separateness; intimacy; integrity; way of being; inward

**Connection with others:** totally unselfish giving of yourself; compassion; mutual; intimacy; common purpose; harmony; pan fraternal; joining together; person-centred

**Connection with nature:** beauty; elements: earth, air, fire, water

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29 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1 Scene 3
These same connections are also recognised, in different ways, elsewhere in the literature. Three examples are:

Spirituality is a form of consciousness and activity in which people are aware that they exist in a profound state of interconnectedness (Jacobsen, 1994:5)

Spirituality ... is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through an awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterised by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate (Elkins  cit in Jacobsen 1994:23)

The kinds of things I think of as spirituality include ... the most fundamental meanings of connections with other humans and with the universe ... the ways in which we are in a oneness with others, and a sense of relationship with God (Rosenblatt cit in Gilbert, 2001:113)

It is one way of linking what King (see footnote 26) suggests as being needed: a Western contribution to ‘an enquiry that embraces the inner as much as the outer, a spirituality that embraces the outer as much as the inner’. However, it must also be recognised that any such map or framework may be subject to criticism either as being incomplete, not fully representative or indeed having alternative explanations. For example Jacobs suggests: ‘I doubt myself whether the ability to relate fully and in an equal manner to oneself, to a partner in intimacy or in groups and to the natural world is any more than an ideal picture of a balanced life.’ (1993:159).

Despite potential reservations, this framework did provide me with a way of considering spirituality which is not dominated by a specific aspect. For example some literature lays heavy emphasis on the primacy of principles, values and ethics as indicators of, or routes to, spirituality in the workplace (Kriger & Hanson, 2000; Covey, 1992). What this framework illustrates is that though they may be of great importance, they are neither the only starting point nor the entirety of what spirituality may be about. In a similar vein, it was useful when considering spiritual development, and whether balanced or rounded development might imply proportional development in all four areas. I also became aware that although the dimension of connection with God or the Divine was significant, and indeed primary for some people (myself included), others either did not accept the validity of this dimension or had not considered it significantly. Overall, then, this framework or map offers the potential for encompassing or framing a wide breadth and apparent divergence of what is, or might be considered, spiritual. For the reasons discussed above, it proved a valuable aid to me during this research, although in keeping with the overall phenomenological approach it was not used in any instrumental sense.

In summary, the background to contemporary spirituality in America and the UK is broadly based in a Judeo-Christian tradition with a theistic focus. However, in current times, spirituality is seen to encompass much wider matters, not necessarily based on any concept of God. This seems to be even more the case in the UK than in

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31 Kriger MP and Hanson BJ 2000, A Value-Based Paradigm for Creating Truly Healthy Organisations, based on a paper presented in 1996 to the 8th International Conference for the Society for the Advancement of Socio-economics, at Geneva, Switzerland; in Biberman and Whitty, Work and Spirit, Scranton: University of Scranton Press
the US. Any attempt at definition is problematic and unlikely to be universally or necessarily widely acceptable. I have proposed a framework or map which may be used to indicate how such widely differing concepts can be viewed as being different aspects of spirituality. The consequence for research into this area is that any assumptions or conceptions as to what spirituality means or is about need to be considered carefully – there is no commonality or agreement on meaning. Further, it would seem desirable and prudent to moderate any assumptions about the benefits or consequences of engaging with spirituality in the workplace (section 2.6) by a similar process of checking what is understood, intended and desired. In this research the phenomenological approach will not assume any definitions but will seek to understand participants’ own concepts of what spirituality is and means to them.

2.5 Conceptualising spirituality as a stage of human development

It is consistent with the humanistic stance underlying this research to consider spirituality as an intrinsic human dimension. As such, it follows that the way an individual perceives and engages with spirituality may be subject to development and change in the same way as with any other dimension. I shall indicate from two illustrative examples that theories of development which recognise spirituality as a specific developmental stage tend to position it as a higher order or more advanced stage of development. Implied, or more often explicit, in such models is that spiritual development is contingent upon developing through previous stages first. The relevance to this research is that this view is directly at odds with the literature related to spirituality in the workplace (sections 2.6, 2.8) where, consistently, spirituality is explicitly or implicitly seen both as intrinsic in everyone and as being accessible without pre-conditions on development.

Whilst spiritual development is often described as a path or journey which is specifically pursued, some contemporary UK surveys (Soul of Britain32, Heald, 2000; Brierly 2000, cit in Hay & Hunt 2000) and studies (Hay & Hunt 2000) indicate that for many there is no such developmental path. However, this does not necessarily imply an absence of spirituality. Heald notes that although there is a sharp decline in traditional religious belief in the UK compared with a previous survey in 1990, this survey demonstrates very clearly that there has been a significant rise in the number of people who describe themselves as being “spiritual” (Heald, 2000:1).

It is of primary significance to my research to understand how the participants understand spirituality, and if and how they perceive it as relevant in the workplace. In the following section I consider in more detail the issue of how spirituality may be understood developmentally and otherwise, and the consequences for this research. I will then reflect briefly on the consequent consideration of whether spirituality can be measured or assessed, and whether this might be relevant in this research.

32 Survey in the UK commissioned by the BBC and supported by The Tablet and the University of Nottingham
2.5.1 Spirituality and models of human development

This section first looks at how models of human development which recognise spirituality consider it. It then considers how the specific literature of spirituality in the workplace considers spirituality, highlighting a significant difference in approach.

Taking an example of development from a philosophical perspective, Kierkegaard’s work has been described as ‘especially suited to open a collection on philosophy, religion and the spiritual life because [it] remains for our time a formative critique of the pretensions of the first, the corruptions of the second and the delusions of the third’ (McGhee, 1992: 7). Kierkegaard suggests three stages of development (Gaarder, 1996): the aesthetic stage – living in the moment; the ethical stage – living by the law and consistent moral choices; and the religious stage – the ‘jump into the abyss of [faith’s] seventy thousand fathoms’. Each of these stages, in Kierkegaard’s view, requires a specific decision in order to move on from one stage to the next (Gaarder, 1996:317-318). The third stage is seen as the significant step into spiritual (or in this formulation, religious) development which he believed requires a committed and determined leap if it is to be a significant re-orientation of life.

In a more contemporary developmental model focused on psychological development, Torbert (1991:46) describes seven stages: Opportunist, Diplomat, Technician, Achiever, Strategist, Magician, Ironist. The sixth stage – Magician – is indicative of both a high degree of maturity (developmental but probably chronological to some degree as well) and a stage where spiritual transformation first becomes a likely consideration. The relevance at this juncture is that these stages, which he cross-relates to different political/ethical/philosophical positions, are seen as a progression. His belief is that movement is only possible by development through each stage sequentially: stages cannot be leapfrogged. Further, such a move is not simply migratory, based on chronological development or even increased understanding, but is suggested as requiring a definite decision, commitment and effort to function from a higher state (Fisher & Torbert, 1995). There is, however, little in this analysis which indicates what might cause development, re-evaluation or movement in or through these stages – a concern expressed by Tosey & Nugent (1998) who comment that Fisher and Torbert ‘have not yet to our knowledge, examined examples over time and in depth. Nor do they appear to have looked in detail at how the transitions … can happen’. I shall pursue this point in the next section.

33 I find the model an over simplification. The stages are insufficiently delineated and for many people, the first two stages at least can and do appear to co-exist to some degree. Although there is often some sense of movement from stage 1 to stage 2 as a consequence of chronological and experiential life development or maturation, the stages do not appear to map all that clearly. For example, if the aesthetic stage may be said to represent the early phase of life, it misses all of the self-sacrificing idealism evident in some young people, for example working for the less privileged (voluntary work, VSO, the Peace Corps); the zealous idealism of youthful religious and political adherence; and the intense focus on achieving personal goals in areas such as education, vocational commitment, sports and the arts. Equally, the overlap between phase 1 and 2 is clearly evident: the aesthetic phase is not in any way consistently lived to the exclusion of the ethical stage, although it may be the case that chronological development seems for many people to be characterised by increasing value being placed on moral or ethical issues rather than purely on self fulfilment.

34 Bill Torbert is a widely acknowledged and acclaimed educator, practitioner, consultant and author in leadership & management. He is Professor of Management at Boston College School of Management.
These and other models of development (for example, Wilber 1996; Fowler, 1981) commonly share the theme of stages or phases and share the assertion that stages cannot be bypassed. Even when change is stimulated by some form of extra-ordinary peak experience, Wilber is adamant that although such a peak spiritual experience can happen at any stage of personal growth its impact, however great, only has the potential to move a person on one more stage (1996:150). Each developmental stage (not just spiritual) is considered an essential platform for the next stage:

'If they are to live up to their spiritual experiences, then they will have to grow and develop. ... Spiritual experiences do not allow you to simply bypass the growth and development upon which enduring spiritual realization itself depends' (Wilber 1996:152-153).

This question of the impact of peak experience and of integrating it is of specific relevance since it reflects the particular experience of the leader in my case study. I shall reflect further on this aspect at the data analysis stage.

I have indicated that the literature in my research field rarely engages with this question of spirituality as a discrete stage of human development. In particular spiritual development is not seen as contingent upon other pre-requisite developmental stages. There is a consistent assumption that spirituality is a common human experience accessible to all, though within that there exists the potential to develop further as a matter of choice and potential benefit (for example Judge, 1999). In my own experience also, I have not seen any indication that spirituality is only accessible after integrating other stages of development first. In fact, I have encountered numerous instances where an awakening and development of spiritual awareness has prompted individuals to pursue development of other aspects, such as personal/emotional maturity and improved relationships with others. This disparity of view remains as an issue to which I return, following the analysis of data from my field work.

This research and other sources (for example, Hay & Hunt, 2000) will suggest that for many people the spiritual dimension appears either greatly neglected or at best unconsciously developed. Examining why this might be the case does not form part of this research project. However, if it is so, then this may have a significant potential impact when considering spirituality in the workplace more broadly: widespread lack of acknowledgement of this dimension could be expected to influence how staff relate to spirituality and how they perceive its relevance to the workplace. Case study data will be used to consider awareness and development in the participants and I shall speculate on the wider potential implications for spirituality in the workplace in Chapter 9.

2.5.2 The question of assessment and measurement

In section 2.5 I indicated the reasons for expecting that research participants might view spirituality in widely differing ways, and also have a wide range of degrees of awareness of it. This proved to be the case in practice. I anticipated that it would be useful when analysing data, to have some way of differentiating between degrees of awareness of, or engagement with, spirituality. This would allow the views of individuals to be contextualised in relation to their apparent awareness and engagement. Potentially, it would also allow some comparison of views between
individuals grouped according to their apparent degree of spiritual awareness or development. I sought an approach which would allow a view to be inferred from interview data rather than require direct or specific questioning. There were two particular reasons for this. Firstly, answering questions about personal spiritual beliefs is often considered an intrusion into a personal and sensitive area which is resisted (Zwart, 2000:112-114). Secondly, I was concerned to minimise any tendency for such questions to be answered either to co-operate with or 'please' the researcher – or the opposite, to react negatively to the researcher’s questions.

Some existing approaches and typologies were considered for potential suitability. Ignoring the inherent necessity of using a questionnaire, one possibility would have been to pursue the question of measurement, although given the phenomenological basis of my research such an approach would be methodologically inconsistent. Even so, it could be argued that measurement could be considered as tangentially relevant since this research extends beyond a pure phenomenological study and the issue of measurement recurs periodically in the literature. Following an exploratory examination, I concluded that existing measurement approaches were neither sufficiently discrete (looking specifically at spirituality and not, for example, religiosity) nor had a content validity that would make them a useful way of illuminating my research data. For completeness, I have included a summary of my investigation into this aspect as Appendix 10.

As part of his own research, Beasley (1997) developed a spirituality assessment scale – 30 items on a 7 point Likert scale. This assessment is also used by Zwart (2000) whose work I reference elsewhere in this chapter. However, some of this assessment is based on religion or religiosity – for example, 8 out of 30 questions refer directly to ‘prayer and or meditation’. Given the cautions raised in section 2.5 about notions of contemporary spirituality and specific findings in UK surveys indicating non-traditional views, I judged that this assessment did not meet the needs of this project.

In seeking an appropriate indicator of degrees of spiritual awareness, I wished to fulfil the following criteria:

- address spirituality not religiosity
- allow ease of inference from interview data, therefore not use a questionnaire based assessment
- avoid unnecessary complexity

Fowler’s (1981) stages of faith development seemed potentially relevant. He considers faith to be a universal feature of human existence which, as opposed to belief or religion, is 'the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to the transcendent' (1981:14). The stages of development he proposes are shown in Figure 5. Although essentially based on human biological development, Fowler suggests the stages can be applied more generally. For example, although Stage 3 has its ascendancy in adolescence, he believes that for many adults it becomes a place of equilibrium (1981:172).

Given my criteria above, an immediate concern about this approach is it is neither simple nor straightforward in application: from a partial interview transcript Fowler documents a ‘worked example’ of inferential analysis which covers 17 pages with no clear categorisation emerging. Irrespective of other critiques of the detail of this
typology (Jacobs, 1993), Fowler conflates biological development and related characteristics of human (psychological) development with faith development. Even allowing for some disengagement of biological phase and actual age (as indicated in the previous paragraph) there is still a strong link with human psychological phases of development. Whilst this approach offered an interesting perspective and possible direction for development of a spirituality-related scale relevant for this research, personal experience suggests that the correlation between psychological or personal development and spiritual development is not as close or tight as is suggested here.

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<td>undifferentiated</td>
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<td>puberty</td>
<td>synthetic- conventional</td>
<td>influence beyond family; seeks synthesis and coherence; developing own identity &amp; outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>late adolescent/ early adult</td>
<td>individuative-reflective</td>
<td>critically reflective, establishing own position &amp; responsibility vs others; struggle with relative vs possibility of an absolute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>mid-life</td>
<td>conjunctive faith</td>
<td>wider critical reflection; integration of deeper self, past + present; alive to paradox; potential new depth in spiritual &amp; religious revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'maturity'</td>
<td>universalising faith</td>
<td>attempts transformation of present reality in the direction of transcendent actuality, regardless of personal risk/threats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 – Fowler’s Stages of Faith Development

In a development and simplification broadly based on Fowler’s work, Peck (1997) offers a four-stage model of spiritual growth (Figure 6). However, he cautions that these stages should not be viewed simplistically, not least because superficially, many people might appear to be in a more advanced stage than they truly are (Peck, 1997:249). Additional complexity lies in the fact that Peck indicates that there are gradations within each stage and in the transitions; further, since stages are

35 It should be noted that there is no clear or commonly accepted definition of personal development. Irving & Williams (1999) seek to separate terms linguistically and propose that personal development is that which may be undertaken in order to promote or achieve personal growth. Despite their assertion that the two words development and growth are not synonyms ('development is something that can be planned; growth cannot') this separation and distinction is not one that I choose to make, since semantic inaccuracy does not detract from consideration of the relevant issues here and the distinction is not frequently made when considering these issues in practice.

36 I am suggesting that a person can be personally aware and developed but not necessarily spiritually aware to a similar degree, or at all. In Chapter 9 I reflect on this in more detail with reference to specific leaders. I shall indicate that even where a leader is considered to be effective and psychologically mature (well personally developed), it does not follow that their spiritual dimension is similarly advanced.
developmental, ‘secularists of Stage III are actually more spiritually developed than the majority of religious people’ (Peck, 1997:249). Again, this approach is inherently complex and not easily applied, minimally requiring development of further criteria for categorisation in practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>chaotic, antisocial</td>
<td>primitive stage; superficial belief system; essentially unprincipled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>formal, institutional</td>
<td>following ‘letter of the law’; location of religious fundamentalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>skeptic, individual</td>
<td>predominantly materialistic outlook; often scientific-minded, rational, moral and humane; often sceptical of the spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>mystical, communal</td>
<td>most mature stage; sense of connection to ‘an unseen order of things’ &amp; mystery of the sacred; not rigidly rational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 – Peck’s Stages of Spiritual Growth

I eventually took the decision to derive a more basic assessment of degrees of spirituality which would be easily usable in practice for the purposes indicated at the start of this section and in keeping with the criteria stated earlier. Incorporating indicators which could be either verified by indirect questioning or inferred from comments, the degrees are intended to give an indication of cognition, belief, practice and consequential behavioural impact. In doing this I am aware that the context is specifically situated in Western culture – possibly only America/UK. I also acknowledge the influence of, and parallels with, Fowler’s work in the sense of there being a correspondence between growing awareness of spirituality (spiritual development) and action taken based on that awareness. The outcome is shown in Figure 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Little or no spiritual awareness</th>
<th>- unaware of or not accepting of own spiritual dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- never considered what spirituality is, or means, at a personal level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- generally unable to relate to any experiences as being spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Early stages of awareness</td>
<td>- aware of some form of spiritual dimension within self (and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- may have occasionally experienced events or circumstances as spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- possibly expressing confusion as to what spirituality is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Specific awareness</td>
<td>- specifically aware of spiritual component of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- aware of events or circumstances which are experienced as spiritual; possibly seeks these out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- has reflected on what spirituality and/or spiritual development might mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Some spiritual development</td>
<td>- has actively sought to explore the spiritual dimension of self in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- periodically seeks opportunities for spiritual refreshment or development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- awareness of and possibly following some form of spiritual practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Significant spiritual development</td>
<td>- constantly aware of the spiritual dimension in self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- regularly or habitually seeks and pursues specific spiritual development and insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- way of life informed to some degree by spiritual insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 High level of spiritual development</td>
<td>- committed to a spiritual development path as a high priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- active seeking, studying and self-assessing spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- dedicated to deepening own spirituality by relevant means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- way of life committed to or directed by spiritual insight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Figure 7 – Degrees of spiritual awareness, engagement and practice
Clearly any such approach has limitations. The most significant one that I was aware of when developing it was that there is a mixture of cognitive constructs and behavioural responses which may not necessarily be linked. For example, there may be those who have considered the possibility of a spiritual component in depth but rejected the notion, or who had considered the concept, accepted it but see no imperative to act in any specific way to develop it further. Although there may appear to be some analogous link between these degrees and the stages of human development discussed in section 2.5.1, there is no implication here that access to spiritual development is contingent upon other stages of development.

Despite its potential limitations, this categorisation worked well for what it was intended: it provided a straightforward way to infer from interview data the degree to which a person had engaged with their spiritual dimension. I was then able to reflect on how that might affect their personal stance and understanding of spirituality, and to consider how this might then affect their perception of the spirituality of others. Likewise, some comparison is made in Chapter 8 between leaders of similar style but differing awareness of spirituality. It also provided a basis for me to consider, after each interview, whether I had obtained sufficient data to apply this assessment, and if not, to seek more data in subsequent interviews.

2.5.3 Spirituality and development – summary and reflections

I have indicated that many developmental models propose stages that are consistently suggested as only being accessible sequentially. Enduring change is suggested as requiring specific choice and action. Since spirituality is frequently seen as a 'higher stage', this implies pre-conditions which are necessary before the spiritual dimension can be accessed or developed. This is in direct contrast with the spirituality in the workplace literature which, as I shall demonstrate, does not propose any pre-conditions. It is also at odds with my personal experience.

Humanistic consideration of human development has tended towards considering all human components and their integration and inter-dependence: the term 'holistic' is frequently used to describe this general phenomenon. Of these component areas of human make-up, the most widely neglected – sometimes to the extent of being unacknowledged, unrecognised or denied – is the spiritual.

The issue for this research is that if spiritual awareness and development is only accessible after other stages of development have been negotiated and integrated, then any attempts to engage with spirituality in the workplace will be moderated or limited (perhaps severely) according to the number of people who have reached this (advanced) stage of development. If, however, it is more universally accessible without pre-conditions, then engagement with spirituality in the workplace becomes possible on a much wider scale. In this research, I seek further understanding of this issue by considering the position of the participants: where do the individuals being studied seem to be in their own life development; how aware are they of spirituality in themselves and how has it affected them; is there any indication that spiritual development requires pre-requisite development in other areas?
2.6 The relevance of spirituality in an organisational context

Over the past century at least, many – perhaps most – managers and leaders in organisations have taken a view that personal matters have little or no place in an organisational setting. The focus was most often on effective management and efficient processes, with manufacturing and commercial organisations in particular using Organisational Development (OD) techniques to increase efficiency and competitiveness (Beer & Walton 1994:562). Although Skelley asserts that the field of Organisational Development has long been characterised by a concern for holistic human development (1996:64), in my professional practice I have seen no evidence that this has consistently (or even frequently) been the case; indeed my experience has been that often the opposite is true.

More recently, efficiency improvement techniques like Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continual Quality Improvement (Fisher & Torbert, 1995) have, to a limited extent, given consideration to the people dimension (often re-named as HRM: Human Resource Management37), though this has tended to be a secondary or consequential consideration. However, the gradual advent of more enlightened views of people management in an increasing number of organisations has extended the areas acknowledged to be of relevance in organisations to include considerations of physical and emotional well-being (Dehler & Walsh, 1994:18).

OD has, to a large extent, been overshadowed by and given way to the concept of Organisational Transformation (OT). In seeking to clarify the notion of Organisational Transformation, Ackerman (1997) categorises different types of change:

Developmental Change is about improving a skill, method or condition which in some way does not measure up to current expectations. The focus here is enhancing or correcting what already exists.

Transitional Change involves altering what exists to implement something new. For example, reorganisations, mergers, divestiture, implementation of new technology, products or services. The goals are set and plans executed to implement them.

Transformational Change ‘like the caterpillar turning into the butterfly, is the emergence of a totally new state of being’(1997:48). Unlike transitional change, it is not a process that can be superimposed on an existing operation, and the outcome is usually not clear until it begins to take shape. The new organisational form that emerges takes on ‘a new direction, one that raises its performance capability to a much greater level of functioning, sophistication and responsiveness. It is accompanied by broader awareness, often inspired by having broken through to a greater context and purpose’ (1997:49). The time period is usually extended and most of the variable cannot be controlled, rushed or

37 IPM consultative document Managing the People Dimension 1996
short circuited. Further, transformation ‘is not possible without a leap of faith, individually or organizationally’ (1997:50).

I have indicated the re-assessment over time of those aspects of human makeup deemed to be relevant for consideration in the workplace or in organisations. This reassessment has come to include intellectual, physical and emotional development or well-being but, until more recently, has not generally extended to consideration of spirituality either as a personal dimension related to the workplace or as having organisational relevance: the spiritual has still been, for the most part, meticulously avoided (Brandt, 1996).

For some, the workplace appears to have an inherently negative quality, with considerations of spirit or spirituality a route for a change in the way we think about, talk about and undergo work (Fox, 1994:5). Some see part of the reason for this as originating in religious beliefs. For example Whitehead & Whitehead suggest that: ‘For many Christians, this biblical image [from Genesis] dominates a spirituality of work’ (1998:5), though there may also be other historical reasons (Gibbons, 2000:IV-30-33). However, the situation is not simple: for example the Protestant work ethic (Weber, 1971) holds work as potentially worthy for the God-fearing and therefore having the potential to be a positive influence on individuals and society. In any event if spirituality is considered an inherent dimension of human beings (as I have argued), then this dimension is inevitably brought into the workplace. Further, since as Gibbons points out: ‘people spend nearly half their waking lives at work; a career is the means by which an individual makes their material contribution to the world; and workplaces are a significant source of social interaction’ (Gibbons, 2000:IV-30), it would seem to follow that spirituality must be considered as potentially affecting the situation. Some, like Skelley, go further in arguing that it is an inherent dimension of organisations:

‘Spirituality is already an experienced part of the workplace, whether we acknowledge it or not. As human groups, organizations have always had a spiritual dimension. This spiritual dimension has at best been a well kept secret. At worst, it has been denied and suppressed. Generally, it has just been ignored.’ (Skelley, 1996:67)

Not infrequently, proponents consider recognition and integration of spirituality as being inextricably linked with ‘full potential’ or ‘higher purpose’, which is deemed to be empowering (Fox, 1994), essential to personal satisfaction (Biberman & Whitty, 1997:133), and ‘the only way individuals can attain their fullest sense of growth and contribution’ (Neck & Milliman, 1994:11). Considered in this way, work is seen a calling (Novak, 1996; Fox, 1994) and Whitehead & Whitehead suggest that for many ‘work connects with the spiritual journey through an awareness of personal call. For others the sense of call comes as an explicit awareness that their work life connects with values of larger significance’ (1998:6).

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38 There are limited specific exceptions. These include ‘organisations’ of specifically religious or spiritual groups, for example religious foundations. Also, it could be argued that some religiously motivated employers – such as the great Quaker families in England – had wider social concerns motivated by spiritual/religious beliefs and extending to the spiritual welfare of their workers.

39 Genesis 3:17,19 (NIV) – God says to Adam “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life” and “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food”
Whilst acknowledging the link between work and spirituality as an inevitable consequence of a human spiritual dimension, the focus of this research is not to explore or develop overarching theories about attitudes to work and the nature of the relationship. These fundamental issues, for example the proposition that spirituality or the peak of spiritual development is necessarily defined as achieving one's full potential, may be a route for further research. However even where there is a wish and willingness to consider the value of spirituality in general, and spirituality in the workplace in particular, the broad claims and assertions that are made require the most careful scrutiny and critique if they are to carry weight.

The propensity to lump a wide range of factors under the heading of spirituality is an issue which will be raised at a number of relevant points. Here, a specific concern arises from the equivalence which some make between the engagement of emotions in an organisational context and spirituality. For example, Dehler & Walsh (1994:19) speak of ‘attending to the emotional side of the enterprise - in this case, appealing to matters of spirituality’. This link is unsustainable: these two areas are significantly separate and consideration of ‘matters of spirituality’ is not the same as ‘attending to the emotional side’, which is more correctly addressed as an issue of emotional competence, EQ (Goleman 1996, 1998).

I will indicate in Chapters 6 and 7 that the background to my case study is based in a level of change which relates most closely to the description of transformational change discussed in this section. Organisationally, that change does not include a specific intention to incorporate spirituality, however, I will show that spirituality is inextricably linked with the approach of the leader in this organisation. I propose to examine the views of the research participants to consider to what extent they perceive spirituality to be relevant in the workplace, how they understand its relevance, and then to reflect on how these data illuminate the propositions discussed above.

2.7 The role of the Leader in relation to spirituality in the workplace

2.7.1 Leaders and Managers – a question of definition

The functions and behaviours of managers are frequently perceived or proposed as being different from those of leaders (Coad & Berry, 1998). Defining and separating their processes is done in various ways, however, and without universal agreement. For example, Covey suggest that ‘where there is no manager, there is role conflict and ambiguity ...if there is no leader, there is lack of vision and direction. People begin to loose sight of their mission’ (1992ii:244). He goes on to describe his perception of the differences which can be summarised as in Figure 8. However, Covey acknowledges that management and leadership are not mutually exclusive and that leadership could be said to be the highest component of management (Covey, 1992ii:246). Indeed the title and focus of Covey's book is ‘Principle-Centred Leadership’ but chapter titles include ‘Abundance Managers’ and ‘Shifting your Management Paradigm’.
In common with some others, Fairholm is even more explicit about the differences and indeed the conflicts between the two: 'Leadership, in contrast to management, places a higher emphasis on values: on creativity, intelligence, integrity. Unfortunately, these are the same values and traits managers seek to screen out in interviews in favour of loyalty, conformity and unit cohesion.' Fairholm (2000:115). This must be considered a highly contentious assertion both on the grounds that managers may also value some or all of these characteristics, and also that no evidence is advanced to support the assertion in the latter part of the quote (which, from my experience, is not systematically sustainable).

The resultant confusion amongst the two terms (management and leadership) is common enough in scholarly writings and even more so in less scholarly writings: they are sometimes presented as separate or differentiated, sometimes as overlapping or on a continuum. As an example, the website of the prestigious and scholarly Academy of Management in the United States states that:

'Management is defined broadly to encompass all processes, structures, and behaviors that are related to the work of organizations, as well as the dynamics of industries, economies, cultures, and other environmental forces that affect organizations and their employees.'

This definition clearly encompasses activities and processes that other groups would consider to be associated with leadership.

Despite this confusion, there seem to be some concepts or approaches which may be said to separate functional styles of managers and leaders. Managers are seen as maintainers (or even incremental developers) of effective systems and processes; leaders are seen to be inspirational innovators, holding a vision and motivating others to engage with it. However, these are not definitions: they are both incomplete descriptions and not exclusively the prerogative of one category or the other. Further, since the use of the terms ‘manager’ and ‘leader’ in the literature and in common parlance are frequently used interchangeably, additional contextual information is necessary.

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40 The situation is well illustrated by a Harvard Business Review article (Shapiro EC, Managing in the Cappuccino Economy, Harvard Business Review, Vol 78 No 2, pp177-179) reviewing Chris Argyris book 'Flawed Advice and the Management Trap'. In grouping and differentiating between what he calls management styles, Argyris proposes two groups – Model I and Model II. The Model II style 'Create[s] environments in which people are willing to confront incongruities, debate assumptions, share information, and express feelings'. These are behaviours and approaches which are associated by others with leadership (eg Kouzes & Posner, 1996; Bennis & Nanus, 1985) yet the article and the original book refer consistently to management (rather than leadership) throughout.

41 Academy of Management: www.aom.pace.edu
essential to understanding the intended meaning – perhaps particularly when the word ‘manager’ is used.

Before I explore the possible relationship between leaders or managers and spirituality in the workplace, I shall consider certain paradigms which cast light on what is meant by these words, and the consequent changes that are considered to have taken place within organisations in the more recent past.

2.7.2 Leadership and management paradigms: old & new, modern & post-modern

The concept of a ‘paradigm shift’ in management and leadership styles has been debated for perhaps the past 20 years, although with increasing emphasis over that period (Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Bass, 1985). There are various definitions and lists of characteristics, most having a considerable degree of correlation, which are said to describe the difference in style between old paradigm and new paradigm organisation and management. An example is shown below in Figure 9 which, although simplistic, none the less captures the essence of the differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD PARADIGM</th>
<th>NEW PARADIGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Bureaucratic, linear, cause &amp; effect)</td>
<td>(Quantum Management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>ENERGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTING</td>
<td>MEANING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTROLLING</td>
<td>FREEDOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>FIELDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGING CHANGE</td>
<td>CREATIVITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLES</td>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMAND</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLIANCE</td>
<td>MOTIVATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATERIALISM</td>
<td>SPIRIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>ENTHUSIASM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bugyi, 1998)

Figure 9 – Characteristics of Old and New Paradigm Management

There are numerous problem with such lists, amongst which are:
- the terms used are frequently ill defined or not defined at all
- although there is often a high correlation between the characteristic listed, different approaches and authors use different terms
- whilst conveying a sense of difference between approaches, they are open to criticism and credibility over some specifics, for example, many ‘Old
Paradigm' managers were extremely energetic and some communicated well; some were both motivated and capable of inspiring motivation in others. This particular list (Figure 9) has further omissions, notably that whilst including empowerment by implication, it is not referenced specifically. There is no explicit distinction here between managers and leaders. The relationship, relevance and application of 'spirit' or 'spirituality' to and in such lists is highly variable and not an item of common agreement.

While acknowledging shortcomings of definition and individuation, there does appear to be a difference in style and focus in the approach of 'New Paradigm' leaders when compared with more traditional approaches. This difference is emphasised repeatedly in contemporary writing on leadership (Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1996; Covey, 1994, 1992i & ii; Senge, 1990, and many others). Neal assesses it as including 'moving from competition to collaboration, from an emphasis on the bottom line to multiple measures of success including employee and customer needs, and from fear-based management to creating environments of trust and empowerment' (1997:121). Although the emphasis of new paradigm leadership approaches appear to be directed more towards a creative style which engages people more than it directs them, the questions of if, how and where spirituality fits in is not immediately apparent. In the next section, I extend the consideration of leadership approaches to address the link with transformation, and then move on to consider the relevance of spirituality.

2.7.3 Leaders and Organisational Transformation

The concept of Organisational Transformation referred to in section 2.6 brought with it the concept of a change in leadership style, as Jacobsen observes:

'A watershed mark .. came in 1978 when J M Burns coined the term “transformational leadership.” .. defined as a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation”. To work in an organisation led by a “transformational leader” is to experience “something extra that makes life and labor (sic) less tedious and more meaningful.” (Jacobsen, 1994:1-2).

This further refinement of differentiation between the terms manager and leaders leads to the identification of transactional versus transformational approaches. Coad and Berry (1998) summarise the differences in style as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSACTIONAL</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management by exception</td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent reward</td>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspirational motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idealised influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Summarised from Coad & Berry (1998)*

Figure 10 – Transactional & Transformational Management

However, this categorisation is also imprecise. Coad & Berry point out that early works considered that transactional (managerial) and transformational leadership
were the end points of a continuum, but that later works suggest that they are two independent dimensions and a person could exhibit one, the other, both or neither (1998:165). Dehler and Walsh indicate that a substantial body of literature has emerged proposing transformational leadership as an alternative to the more rational mechanistic transactional leadership approach (1994:20). However, even the term transformational itself is open to a wide range of understandings (Tosey & Robinson, 2001).

In examining the general issues for leadership style, I have established that most scholars and/or practitioners assert a change in approach associated with leadership as opposed to management. This difference is also couched in terms of a paradigm change sometimes referred to as modern and post-modern approaches, sometimes as transactional and transformational styles. The relevance for this literature review, and for this research more widely, is the need to recognise that all of these terms are imprecisely defined and often require contextual information to understand what is intended. I shall indicate in the next section that the literature of spirituality in the workplace consistently seeks to link the consideration of spirituality in the workplace with more transformational styles of leadership. However, Dehler and Walsh warn that this is problematic since: 'the discourse surrounding spirituality and organizational transformation remains poorly explicated in terms of both meaning and relationship with other organizational concepts' (1994:17). The reservations over definition and understanding which I have explored in section 2.4 apply equally to this debate.

2.7.4 Transformation, leaders and spirituality

In the wider literature addressing transformational change and leadership, the characteristics of transformational leaders do not commonly include spirituality. In the literature review for his research thesis, Jacobsen notes that 'the most exhaustive collection of research on leadership (Bass) does not mention spirituality per se as an important trait in qualities affecting leader's values or performance' (1994:33). From in-depth interviews with three prominent practitioner-theorists, Neal reports that 'Spirit was not at the core of any of their change theory and none of their case studies was related to spirituality per se' (2000:10). However, Gibbons suggests some reasons why this may be the case:

'The fact that spiritual leadership does not appear in any of the thirty or more years of research on leadership including numerous factor-analytic studies is worthy of note, although this may say more about those researcher’s preconceptions and methods that about leadership. Spiritualising of familiar organisational concepts (such as leadership) may be a linguistic phenomenon, due to the ascendance of "spiritual talk", rather than representative of any objective spiritual dimension of leadership, motivation or well-being' (Gibbons, 2000:V-51)

Despite this lack of wider recognition of spirituality as a desirable leadership characteristic, in the literature of spirituality in the workplace it is widely promoted as a necessary characteristic (Biberman & Whitty 1997:132). In writing about development of leadership characteristics Judge, having examined spirituality in

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42 Peter Senge, Bill Torbert and Ellen Wingard
43 She does however go on to illustrate that factors were active in effecting change processes which go beyond the rational 'which cannot be scientifically or logically explained" (Neal et al, 2000:10)
executive leaders at length, asserts that spirituality, although elusive, is 'central to executive character' (1999:108).

One of the confusions in this literature arises because of differing approaches to linking spirituality with leadership. Some of the literature considers spirituality as more instrumental, seeking to build spirituality into a list of desirable areas of focus for leaders (ranging from a generally positive thing, to encouraging it as a motivational technique). Elsewhere there is essentially a discourse about spirituality itself, how this might affect the individual leader and the results of putting consequent beliefs into practice. This can be illustrated by some examples. Ackerman suggests that many transformational leaders place a deep value on caring for the human spirit during the transformational process (1997:50): the implication here is on respect for 'spirit' but not necessarily any personal commitment to spirituality. As a practitioner/consultant, Rutte considers that the leader's job is to facilitate the 'discovery' of the spirit (2000:34) — suggesting that the leader's role should go further in being actively facilitative in developing 'the spirit' with the aim of promoting greater personal fulfilment in an organisational context. Others take a different starting point, holding as important the necessity for a significant inward journey of spiritual awareness and development first, which may then be implemented in practice (Delbecq, 2000).

The complications go further with assertions such of those of Vaill that link leadership and spirituality as an unconscious process:

'all true leadership is indeed spiritual leadership, even if you hardly ever hear it put that flatly. The reason is that beyond everything else that can be said about it, leadership is concerned with bringing out the best in people. As such, one's best is tied intimately to one's deepest sense of oneself, to one's spirit.' (Vaill 1990:223-224).

Apart from underlying questions about the validity of such an assertion, there are problems of definition as applied to the key words here. For example true leadership here seems to require that many aspects are present including issues of integrity, respect for others, and lived values and ethics. Even if acceptable definitions could be formulated, there is little scholarship or even observational data to substantiate an assertion such as this, although it may evoke an intuitive affirmation in those inclined to concur with the sentiment.

A further confusion arises because the conflation of concepts is widespread in the spirituality in the workplace literature. One example of this is noted by Fairholm: 'A characteristic of current leadership texts is that they confuse dedication, mission or vision, with spirituality' (1996:12). There is a consequent concern that anything that is considered essentially 'good' or 'valuable' is appropriated as a spiritual attribute or characteristic, which is then reflected as a desirable characteristic of a good leader. I have indicated that just as spirituality is multivariably defined and understood, so is leadership. In consequence, a wide range of causal links between spirituality and leadership may be posited, perhaps depending upon an individual author's own belief, values and concepts. There is little likelihood of being able to support or reject such links from a quantitative perspective, given the highly tenuous and ambiguous relationship between these two concepts. This presents a significant issue for researchers, particularly those using more positivist paradigms. In the case of this research, the approach is inductive: rather than to seek or verify any causal links, I
am seeking to comprehend how the participants understand the concepts and any link between them, grounding this understanding in a case study. The outcomes have the potential to contribute qualitatively to a field where there is still relatively little academic research. From that limited body of research, I shall now consider two sources based on quantitative methodologies which appear specifically relevant – Jacobsen (1994) and Zwart (2000).

Jacobsen explores the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership, seeking to contribute to the paucity of empirical research. He looks particularly at how leaders perceive the role of spirituality in their personal and professional life, using a Delphi methodology and identifies five conclusions for his group of transformational leaders:

1. The word 'spirituality' is meaningful to this group and communicates important and vital qualities to them.

2. Spirituality is very important to them. Despite a diversity of backgrounds and settings, spirituality has played a crucial role in the development of their values, ethics and beliefs and is vital to their ability to be effective in the complexities of their working life.

3. There is a strong inference that spirituality and transformational leadership are related aspects of human experience. ‘The ability to touch people deeply and to evoke a caring, creative and ethical atmosphere in the worksite very likely lies as an outward manifestation of an inward reality. In other words, these leaders are sensitive to issues of meaning, care, wonder etc, in the personal dimension which allows them to be sensitive to these issues in their organisation. ... Their inner and outer worlds are not separate and independent but reflect two dimensions of the same kind of integration.’

4. The realms or boundaries of spiritual and secular concerns are not perceived as separate.

5. There is, however, some support for an alternative view which raises concerns about integration of spirituality into organisations since this may perhaps cause conflict, dysfunction and lack of respect for diversity. The question is raised, but not answered as to whether some ‘respectful form of spirituality [can] be included in our [American] culture that adds to meaning without adding to conflict’.

(Jacobsen, 1994:94-98, emphasis in the original)

These findings support the views of other literature (eg Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Judge, 1999) which suggest that for a majority of transformational leaders, spirituality is both meaningful and important.

In methodological terms, the anonymity and cyclical nature of the Delphi approach seems particularly useful for gaining frank responses from a range of participants and

From an initial list of 12, a panel of 9 experts participated to identify 43 potential participants in the study. These were 'individuals in secular organisations who exhibit traits of transformational leadership'. Of the 43, 21 participated. A questionnaire was used for the first round of data gathering and the results analysed. In the second round, a list of statements was provided, representing the encapsulation of the overall group response: participants were asked to concur or propose a revision. In the third round, the statements – modified where appropriate – were provided for agreement or dissent.
the questionnaire basis reduces or eliminates discussion of other less central issues. From the perspective of my own research, its shortcomings are that it strictly limits the opportunity for a phenomenological understanding of participants, as the researcher does not assess or gain contextual data directly, and it is not possible to extend understanding of participant's responses by dialogue with them; further, it did not seek any data which indicated how leaders' espoused views are experienced in practice.

Zwart (2000) contributes to the very limited amount of quantitative research by looking at the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality. She also considers whether either of these are more prominent in private, public or non-profit sector organisations. The study, undertaken in the Greater Riverside geographic area (California, USA) with 266 leaders who had attended a leadership programme held by the Riverside Chamber of Commerce, seeks to address the questions:

1. What relationship do the dimension of transformational leadership, as identified by Bass & Avolio's (1989) factors, and the dimensions of spirituality, as identified by Beazley (1997), have in common with leaders in the Greater Riverside area?

2. Is there a relationship between spirituality and the sector organization (private, public, or non-profit) the individual works within, as represented by participants in the Leadership Riverside program?

3. Is there a relationship between transformational leadership and the sector organization (private, public, or non-profit) the individual works within as represented by participants in the Leadership Riverside program?

(Zwart, 2000: 66)

In summary, her results (Zwart, 2000: Chapter V) indicated that:

i. Despite what is indicated in the literature, she found no significant relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership within the workplace. The population do manifest one or more of the correlated dimensions of spirituality but these stem from sources other than spirituality.

ii. There was no correlation of data indicating a relationship between spirituality and the sector organisation for which the individual worked. Dimensions of spirituality are evenly dispersed across sectors leading to the conclusion that 'spirituality can be found or not found in any sector organization'.

iii. There was no correlation between transformational leadership and the sector organisation in which an individual is employed. However she acknowledges the concurrence with Bass & Avolio (1994) who 'indicate that transformational leaders behave in a way that results in being models for their followers. Transformational leadership is a personal attribute of leaders and not engendered or nurtured by any one-sector organization'.

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She expresses disappointment about her findings of point (i) above based on expectations raised from the spirituality in the workplace literature. Amongst reflections which seek to find meanings for it she quotes an e-mail from Peter Vaill saying:

'I am wondering these days if it is possible to be an executive of a developed world organization — public, private, profit or nonprofit — and have any kind of an authentic spiritual life. An authentic spiritual life puts the discovery of the meaning of spiritual principles and laws first, and one's action-in-the-world second. I don't know any executives who feel they can afford to do that consistently. I don't know any who feel they can even afford to do it inconsistently! Our ideas of managerial leadership at present are flatly anti-spiritual, thoroughly materialistic, thoroughly based on the notion that the executive's job is to keep the organization going at all costs.'

(Zwart 2000:107)

From the point of view of methodology, Zwart's research is helpful in investigating potential links between spirituality and leadership from a quantitative position. Her results are valuable in pointing up the disparity between assertions which tend to be a feature of much of the literature, and what may be found in practice. In final overall comments, however, she notes the 'sensitive nature of spirituality' and questions whether, because of this, qualitative studies may be more effective in collecting data as individuals may be more open to talking about the topic in person. My study will seek to proffer further reflection on this aspect.

Overall, then, spirituality and leadership are considered in the literature in significantly different ways. Many links between the two are widely proposed but are not evident in the historical analysis of leadership characteristics, nor evident from the limited amount of quantitative research. The application of spirituality from a leadership perspective ranges widely, from instrumental to the living out of personal development and conviction. The objective of such application is proposed as ranging from greater commitment from staff through a wide range of personal and organisational benefits, to profound personal satisfaction resulting from achieving 'full potential' or 'higher purpose'. Methods or processes of putting spirituality into practice from a leadership perspective are much less specifically addressed. Where they are addressed, these range from promotion of principles (Fairholm, 2000; Conger, 1994) to the analysis and/or promotion of overall organisational approaches (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii; Greenleaf, 1997).

Despite the range of considerations and the reservations expressed above, there are strong indications that issues of spirituality are increasingly recognised by leaders and managers, particularly in the USA (Dehier & Neal, 2000; Mitroff & Denton 1999i&ii). Jacobsen found that his leaders identified spirituality as a source of values and meaning (1994:79). 77% of his respondents also considered that spirituality had a strong and vital relationship in influencing their leadership practices (1994:81). He supports this by quotes from leaders such as: 'spirituality and leadership ... "the two go hand in hand", "the starting point for everything I do", "my leadership is grounded in my spirituality" ' (1994:82). Fairholm (1996), researching the importance of spirituality to middle managers, found that when asked about reliance on spirituality in doing work, 100% (sample size unspecified) responded in the highest category 'A Lot'. In looking at the characteristics of spiritual leadership Fairholm considers they

'must include ideas like teaching our followers correct principles and the application of techniques that enable self-governance. ... It is redefining leadership in terms of
service and stewardship' and 'Spiritual leaders are moral leaders. [They] prefer not to compromise, accommodate or collaborate in areas where their core values are at stake' (Fairholm, 1996:13).

Here and elsewhere (for example Zohar, 1997:145-154), the focus is on the spirituality of the individual leader, especially the sense of interconnectedness, which then informs and influences all their activities, personal as well as organisational. Despite caution about equating religiosity with spirituality, the two concepts are interrelated (Judge, 1999:88-93) and management and CEO groups in the USA tend to have a high degree of religious affiliation (national surveys; Judge, 1999:84-87; Mitroff & Denton, 1999i). This may explain the high degree of interest in, and engagement with, spirituality in the workplace amongst US executives. However, Mitroff & Denton note that they appear to differentiate strongly between religion and spirituality in practice:

'They viewed religion as a highly inappropriate form of expression and topic in the workplace. They saw spirituality, on the other hand, as a highly appropriate subject for discussion ... they ... felt it was essential' (Mitroff & Denton, 1999i:83).

I have been unable to locate comparable data from UK executive and management populations. Indeed, a recent UK article summarising research which looked at characteristics needed by leaders to manage change effectively makes no mention of spirituality, though it does emphasise 'realising people's potential ... exciting people to achieve their best' and setting a personal example (Hooper & Potter, 1999:47). I was led to reflect again on the impact of cultural differences between America and the UK, underscored by the lack of UK originated research and scholarly literature addressing spirituality in the workplace, a subject addressed further in section 8.4.2.

2.7.5 Considerations for, and approach to, this research

A primary criterion for this research was to consider a leader explicitly seeking to work in their organisation in a way which is motivated and guided by spiritual principles. I deliberately did not have any pre-conditions or other criteria related to how they might be doing this, but I did seek to identify a leader personally engaged with his/her own spirituality and who saw this as a primary source of motivation. My particular research approach is distinguished by seeking initially a profound phenomenological insight into how the leader understands spirituality, and with what intent this is then engaged with in practice. The wide range of considerations for, and proposed approaches to, spiritually inspired or motivated leadership which I have explored in this section provided strong motivation to ground my research in a particular case which I could investigate in some depth. Without pre-suppositions, the case study phase considers the espoused intent of the particular leader's approach and the impact as perceived by individuals within the organisation. As well as adding researched data and experience of a particular case from this perspective, I discuss in Chapter 8 the extent to which explicit and inductive outcomes may be generalised, along with some more general implications of the findings for the field.

Having explored the issues for leaders and spirituality, I now move on to consider how the literature perceives the consequences of engagement with spirituality, both from an organisational and a personal perspective.
2.8 Assessment of claims made for the consequences of engagement with spirituality – for individuals and organisations

'For many of us, the workplace has become our primary source of community. It is where we spend the majority of our time. It is where many of our friendships and relationships take place. It is where we seek a good deal of our challenges in life. It is where we contribute to our society' (Conger, 1994:1)

The above quotation positions the perception of the significance of spirituality as related to the workplace as it is commonly represented in the literature. There is a further frequent assertion that there is an increasing interest in integrating spirituality with everyday work life (Biberman & Whitty, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999i, 1999ii; Neal, 1997; Brandt, 1996; and others). In addition to the question of just how wide this interest is, the issue here is that wide reaching claims are made for the consequences of such integration. This section examines those claims as they apply to organisations and to individuals, and in so doing raises questions which will be considered later in the analysis of my cases data.

2.8.1 Claims for individual benefits from spirituality in the workplace

The spirituality in the workplace literature indicates, with some consistency, that consideration of spirituality in workplace settings can be expected to be widely welcomed (Neal, 1999; Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii; Novak, 1996). Mitroff & Denton (1999ii) advance reasons for this based on data from a major research project, namely that:

- People do not want to compartmentalise or fragment their lives, seeking rather meaning, purpose, wholeness and integration
- People are hungry for models of practising spirituality in the workplace without offending their co-workers or causing acrimony - and this is not seen as a gimmick or fad
- Generally, respondents differentiate strongly between spirituality and religion: religion is seen as highly inappropriate in the workplace whereas the opposite is true of spirituality

What is less clear is what exactly is welcomed. One repeated notion is that of heightened consciousness of one’s higher self. This consciousness is said to be ultimately aware that the purpose of life and work is spiritual as well as material (Fox, 1994), and will thus result in various benefits which will be evident in the workplace (Heaton, 2000).

Claims are also made for spirituality as being related to motivation (Neck & Milliman, 1994), organisational commitment (Trott, 1996; Neck & Milliman, 1994), creativity (Rutte, 2000; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1998), and personal effectiveness (Schmidt-Wilk et al, 2000). In what he describes as a pre-theoretical overview of Spirituality at Work (SaW), Gibbons (2000) investigates many of these claims at length. Overall, he suggests that although there may be a favourable or positive response from those who see spirituality as important, this will vary as not everyone will be at the same stage of spiritual development and indeed not everyone in an organisation will be spiritually inclined (2000:IV-29). Further, whilst acknowledging research indicating
that intrinsically religious people are more likely to be happier that others, he points out that the assumption in SaW writings that spirituality always makes people feel better about themselves and their lives 'is simply not true' (2000:V-39). In particular, he suggests that spiritual striving can lead to uncomfortable questions, some of which, such as 'Am I devoting my life to something I believe in?', are related to the work environment (2000:V39-40).

Gibbons proposes that the link between spirituality and motivation is complex (2000:V45-47). He points out that psychologists do not generally correlate human behaviour theories with needs theories, hence the number of competing theories of motivation (he cites Kanfer, 199047). Acknowledging that there may be 'a grain of truth' in the proposition that spirituality is linked to a greater sense of meaning and fulfilment, he refers to Trott's (1996) research which suggests a link between spiritual well being (see Appendix 10) and organisational commitment and self-efficacy (which are both motivation-related phenomena). It would seem that there is the potential to confuse two issues here. One, how does spirituality affect individual motivation in the most general sense, ie approach to life, positiveness of attitude, general motivation to participate positively in society (whatever that may mean to each individual in practice). Two, the specific motivation to undertake a particular job in a particular environment, ie motivation at work. Any systematic examination of this proposition would seem to need to consider societal, cultural and spiritual-cultural contexts before it can be examined for particular meaning. My own research will consider how the data from the perspective of individual employees in a particular organisation relate to this proposition.

With regard to the link between spirituality and task effectiveness, Gibbons again asserts that the relationship is complex and that it has not been well researched (2000:V47-50). One aspect is that certain individual practices — such as meditation — may have positive effects which are reflected in positive states of mind in the workplace. However 'the discipline required is substantial and the more dramatic long term benefits take time to develop'. There is little data to substantiate any general or consistent link. Gibbons concludes that individual spirituality may, to some degree, be related to some individual-level outcomes, however he argues that 'the type of spirituality, how earnestly it is practised, and the reasons for practising it are extremely important. This is at odds with the perspective taken in most SaW writings which are unconditionally optimistic' (2000:V-49). Gibbons further suggests that whereas spirituality in the workplace texts widely assume that individual change will precipitate a change in culture, he considers the opposite more likely where 'the prevailing organizational culture will resist widespread efforts to bring spirituality to work en masse and perhaps undermine, or otherwise stifle SaW' (2000:V-54).

The basis for considering these claims for individual benefits from spirituality in the workplace depends on a personal engagement with spirituality. At the outset of this study I was concerned that in over 35 years experience with a wide range of organisations in the UK, I had not been aware of any widespread groundswell of opinion that supported these views. In designing my study, therefore, I was particularly interested to investigate to what extent employees seemed to be aware of

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their own spiritual dimension and, if they were, how they felt it affected them at work.

2.8.2 Potential effects of spirituality in the workplace on organisations

Organisational engagement with spirituality is often viewed as a reciprocal process, so that where the organisation identifies more strongly with spirituality, employees respond accordingly. The consequence of this process is frequently said to move the organisation to a different place and to cause people to function in different ways. For example, Mitroff & Denton (1999ii) suggest that where the organisation values spirituality, employees:

- will be less fearful of their organisations
- will be far less likely to compromise their basic beliefs in the workplace
- will perceive their organisations as significantly more profitable
- report that they can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work - particularly creativity and intelligence

Other writers claim wide ranging changes or benefits for the organisation and employees alike. For example:

'As we bring spirituality to the workplace, a new idea emerges of the role of the individual in the organisation, an idea classically called stewardship' (Fairholm, 1996:14).

'Spirit in the workplace can lead to greater kindness, fairness, even industrial democracy, also known as co-management or power sharing.' (Biberman & Whitty, 1997:135) and 'employees in touch with their spirituality seek to have more input into [management] decisions' (Biberman & Whitty, 1997:136)

'Another benefit is increased authenticity in communication. Increased ethical and moral behaviour is yet another benefit' (Rutte, 2000:33)

Gibbons summarises the frequently claimed organisational outcomes as increased effectiveness (including profitability and more positive business ethics) and what he describes as ‘intermediate outcomes’ related to positive changes in climate, culture and leadership (2000:V-49). However, he asserts that the empirical evidence for any of the above assertions is scant.

Gibbons confirms the view that even where positive potential is recognised, examples of good practice are few: ‘while SAW writings generally recognise the importance of goals, values, HRM practices, the details of workplace features that are least injurious, or most beneficial to individual spirituality have not been specified’ (2000:IV-33). Moreover, even proponents recognise that the ‘conditions for success’ are many, for example Fairholm argues that ‘Success in leading from a spiritual base is conditional on the presence in both the leader and follower, of shared ideals, customs and morals; in a word, on a mutually accepted and desired culture’ (1996:16).

Mitroff & Denton (1999ii) in a seminal contemporary work on the application of spirituality in the workplace examine five ‘models’ of what they consider to be applied spirituality in different types of organisation. These models, together with their example organisation for each, are:
1 — the religious based model. The motivation and ultimate goal is a religious take-over. The example is a Mormon owned organisation.

2 — the evolutionary model, where a crisis ‘is absolutely necessary’ in order to pre-empt transformation which is often led by a ‘hero’. Examples are the YMCA and Tom’s of Maine.

3 — the recovering organisation, typified by Alcoholics Anonymous, often characterised by variants of the 12 step recovery model, each of which is can be translated into a business application.

4 — the socially responsible model, such as Ben and Jerry’s and The Body Shop. Leaders see themselves as having a binding contract with society, embodying social values which will result in good consequences.

5 — the values based model, which seek to function ethically, with strong ‘family values’ rooted in the values, principles and style of the founder. Example - Kingston Technologies.

They conclude that there are very few models for practising spirituality responsibly in the workplace and those that exist are incompletely understood. Further, none of the models are very advanced: each has significant shortcomings, and potential benefits are not quantified (1999ii). None of their examples encompass major corporations. The relevance to this research is two fold. First, since models for practising spirituality are few, my case study has the potential to contribute to the debate. Second, I was interested to consider whether the leader in this study seemed to be adopting an approach which was related to any of these models and how this might develop understanding and practice of a particular approach. I reflect on this further in Chapter 8.

A few sources extend the notion of corporate spirituality into a tool or device for ensuring not just employee satisfaction but a means of improved work performance. These views are exemplified in the following statements:

‘Organisations which offer a higher purpose and empowerment can energize their employees and simultaneously meet the firm’s economic objectives as well as a higher community purpose’ (Neck & Milliman, 1994:11).

‘Full or optimal human development or, to use current business terms, maximising human capital, is another direction for spirituality at work’ (Butts, 2000:26)

This seems to represent a view of spirituality more as a tool for management influence and in Chapter 9 I shall reflect on potential concerns for approaches based on this premise.

Some commentators express explicit reservations about how spirituality is, or may be, applied in the workplace. Jacobsen quotes authors who are critical of attempts to bring spirituality into business activities through the use of ‘New Age’ consultants and workshops, citing from them a number of adverse experiences (1994:52)48. No generic definition or specific characteristics of what these activities might be is identified, nor does he proffer or comment on alternative approaches. He concludes

that taken together, these differing cases and perspectives suggest that there is no consensus regarding the viability of integrating spirituality into leadership and organisational life (1994:53). Other writers articulate specific cautions. For example Cavanagh expresses concerns about coercion from senior figures (which may, for instance, apply particularly to organisation types 1 & 5 above):

'Another limitation of spirituality in business can occur when a particular religious tradition is espoused by a chief executive officer. Some CEOs are so enthusiastic about their own spiritual beliefs that they seem to demand that others embrace the same religious faith. There is then a danger of coercion for some and, for others, favouritism to those with similar beliefs' (Cavanagh, 2000:157).

Within my own case study, I shall be considering data which might offer an insight into these areas. I shall raise issues of conscious and unconscious influence which leaders exert and examine possible benefits and drawbacks of seeking to work explicitly with spiritual principles as a high priority.

In summary, then, wide-ranging organisational and individual benefits are said to result from engagement with spirituality in workplace settings. The expression of these benefits tends to be more aspirational than practice-based: examples of good practice are few and limited in scope, and there is little evidence of a causal nature to support the assertions. Even those disposed to support the premise of benefits acknowledge that a number of factors may need to be present before there is significant chance of real engagement and resulting positive organisational consequences.

Despite these significant concerns, the literature, supported by some scholarly based research, conferences, interest groups and convinced practitioners (see Chapter 1) indicates a significant groundswell of interest in the US and some parallel, though more limited, response in the UK. Such interest seems to be based largely in intuition and/or inner conviction requiring, as in Ackerman’s view of transformational change, a ‘leap of faith’ (section 2.6). In this study, I shall examine the data to see to what extent they may support or contradict the various assertions made. There will be limitations on this process both methodologically (I am not setting out to demonstrate causal links) and in the specifics of the case itself, since any changes which may be in process are at an early stage and will not yet have had chance to permeate the organisation (see Chapter 6). Despite this, the scholarly nature of the research and the fact that the study is based in a UK organisation has the potential to contribute a valuable perspective.

2.9 Summary and Observations

From this initial consideration of the literature I identify five key issues:

1. ‘Spirituality’ is poorly and multivariably defined.
2. The spiritual dimension of human experience is cast by many developmental models as a later stage or hierarchically more advanced, whereas in the spirituality in the workplace literature this is not the case.
3. The relationship between workplace and spirituality is contentious and poorly explicaded.
4. Leaders are often seen to play a key role in promoting spirituality; however, because both 'spirituality' and 'leadership' are variably and ambiguously defined, a wide range of causal or relational links between the concepts can be asserted. The extent to which these links can be tested through research is not clear.

5. Many claims are made for the benefits of spirituality for individuals and for organisations. These claims appear difficult to validate, as the literature is often inspirational in nature and there is little substantiated research.

This study takes the following stance, aiming to contribute to these issues as noted:

- From a humanistic perspective, spirituality is seen as an important dimension of human experience. A personal definition has been proffered. The study takes a phenomenological approach and therefore must be interested in how individuals construe and define their own experiences of spirituality. A framework or map has been developed that positions most concepts associated with spirituality.

- Also from a broadly humanistic perspective, spirituality is seen as a universal experience. It is acknowledged that individuals may experience spirituality to different degrees. An indicative scale has been developed for use during the study as a proposed way of individuating these degrees. The findings will report on the extent to which such individuation appears justified.

- This research is primarily interested in how participants perceive the relationship between spirituality and work, given that it seeks to investigate a situation with a leader who is convinced of, and committed to, developing this link.

- The phenomenological aspect of the study will investigate the leader's own constructions of, and beliefs about, links between spirituality and leadership. The case study will investigate the extent to which participants report awareness of such links, and the relevance of other evidence from the situation.

- The study will also concentrate on the process of spirituality - that is, it will identify how the leader enacts 'spirituality' in this situation, and how others respond to these actions. A limited number of writings express reservations or concerns about spiritual practices in organisation. The points where this research will seek to add to these views have been indicated. In particular, the case study will enable commentary on the extent to which benefits from spirituality could be identified and justified in this situation.

With this outline and with these issues in mind I now move on in the following chapter to consider the first step in the research, namely the pilot study.
Chapter 3: Pilot Study and Impact on the Research

3.1 Research background

Prior to commencing this research, my wife and business partner, Maryjo Scrivani, and I had a strong mutual interest in spirituality and had begun to consider what relevance this might have in organisational settings. Because the nature of the work that we do is focused on personal development, the initial considerations were around how spirituality might be developed in an organisational context and what the impact of that might be. Out of these discussions came the idea of pursuing these questions as a research project.

In January 1997, we were accepted as MPhil/PhD students undertaking a joint research project to consider the impact of spiritual development in organisations. At that time, we planned to look at the relevance of spirituality to organisations, how it could be engaged and developed in an organisational context and what might be the resulting impact. We also faced the issue that although we had the University's agreement to a joint research project, we each had to demonstrate a clear individual research contribution of sufficient weight, though at the outset it was not clear how we might achieve this requirement. The research was undertaken jointly until the end of the pilot study and I have therefore initially written it up as such until that stage. The changes that then took place are recorded and discussed later but in summary, after that time it became my research alone and the focus changed somewhat. I reviewed and revised the questions (as detailed more completely later in this chapter), adopted a different methodology and method, and shifted the focus of the research from developing spirituality to considering the impact of leaders whose spirituality motivates and directs what they do.

3.2 The Pilot Study overview

At the outset, my erstwhile co-researcher and I formulated a brief summary of the questions we felt we wanted to pursue, which are documented in Appendix 7. We agreed that we wanted to be involved in some active way in both the research and in the developments that may result from it and thought at the time that the most likely approach would be some form of heuristic research where 'the researcher also experiences growing self awareness and self knowledge' (Moustakas, 1990). In order to test out this thinking, we decided to undertake some form of collaborative, participative or co-operative enquiry (Heron, 1998; Reason, 1998) with a small pilot study group as a way of exploring the area whilst seeking clarity in approach. We felt that this would: provide a useful way of engaging with the topic and exploring some of the questions we were considering; enable us to formulate the research question(s) with greater clarity; give us as researchers opportunity to understand our own position and pre-conceived biases; and explore a relevant methodology in practice. In addition, we were hopeful that – with the agreement of the participants – we could move on to try out in practice some form of communal, collaborative spiritual development.
Our intention was to establish a group in which we would participate actively, so that it would extend beyond being a Focus Group - 'a carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest, in a permissive, non threatening environment' (Krueger, 1994). Our expectation and plan was that in the early sessions, we would undertake limited facilitation to ensure that the basis of meeting was clear and to encourage inclusion activities to enable speedy and positive group formation, but later become ‘just members of the group’ with no more than equal influence on group activity, direction and ‘progress’. The formation, progression and activities of this group are detailed in Appendix 8 with the outcomes and impact on this research being summarised in the next section.

3.3 The Pilot Study – summary of outcomes

A brief summary of the outcomes of the pilot study group is:

- The group was interested in and engaged with the topic area (spirituality) and was willing to discuss and debate freely.
- There was a wide range of ideas about what is spiritual or what comprises spirituality.
- Many widely differing suggestions were forthcoming for activities to develop spirituality.
- There was marked reluctance to actually engage in most of the activities discussed - talking was fine but commitment to action was avoided in different ways.
- Some of this reluctance, but by no means all, was because of a feeling from the participants that they were ‘helping with [your] research’ rather than mutually seeking spiritual development.
- Attendance at the group was very variable; when people didn’t attend it was almost always for sound reasons though only some were consistent in sending apologies or telephoning afterwards.
- The group never reached the point of drawing conclusions or discussing how explicit focus on the spiritual might affect organisations.
- Setting up and running such a group is complex and difficult; the role of the initiators can easily be ambiguous, especially where they have a personal agenda and even if this is shared openly with the group.
- Group self direction and self responsibility is hard to achieve.

Although we touched upon the issue of the relevance in organisations at various points, there was little substantive discussion and no serious outcomes about this aspect of spirituality.

One particularly valuable consequence of the pilot study was that it prompted and led me to develop the 4-dimension model for understanding spirituality (Figure 4) which is described in section 2.4.5.
3.4 Personal reactions to the pilot study and consequences for this research

The process of setting up and running the pilot study group profoundly affected my approach to this research and contributed in a major way to clarifying my views on methodology and method. I became aware of my increasing unease around the pilot group process and my participation in it. This applied to many aspects, from telephoning people to remind them of meetings or a change of dates, to preparation for the sessions themselves, and in particular to my assumed or implied role within the group. In theory, as a peer group, we (the initiators) had no directive purpose after the first session or two. This was specifically raised with and agreed by the group at the outset – however, given the consequent behaviours and comments in the group there has to be a question about the nature of the assent and our assumptions about what this would mean. In practice, it felt to me as if I or we needed to take some responsibility otherwise the group would not even meet, let alone pursue any particular course. Indeed there were occasions when we did not remind people and only one or two attended. Whilst being aware that this in itself provides valid data, it was not a situation which greatly helped our thinking. It also raised numerous questions about my preferred approach in terms of taking responsibility (appropriate and inappropriate), boundaries, nature of the group and other issues.

At the time, I was aware of an increasing level of discomfort and the fact that this resulted in a less than positive approach to the research on my part, although I was not fully clear about the reasons. In practice, one of the consequences was that the majority of the organising, preparing for meetings and pursuing the data recording processes fell to my partner by default – it felt to her that I was ‘along for the ride’ and was not sharing the initiative and responsibility of a co-equal researcher as we had planned. Although we discussed these issues, it took some time for me to be clear about why I felt as I did and for a period, I was simply ‘acting out’ my discomfort by lack of involvement, except in the sessions themselves, rather than confronting and analysing it.

To some extent, this discomfort could be explained by personal preferences as expressed in terms of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Appendix 1). My preferences are very clearly ISFJ. Significant preference influencers here would be the ‘I’ (Introvert) which makes me more reluctant than Extraverts (sic) to be initiating and maintaining broad contact with others; ‘F’ (Feeling) decision making which seeks to maintain a high degree of harmony interpersonally or within a group (potentially even at the expense of one’s personal wishes); and the ISFJ type as a whole, where common characteristics include a strong sense of duty and responsibility, being organised, and therefore having a liking for orderly meetings. In addition, a personal dislike of conflict (not a preference addressed directly by the MBTI) may also lead to being motivated actively to facilitate group harmony and to be uncomfortable with strong expressions (or even the potential for strong expressions) of dissent. My partner’s own preferences of ENFJ would also indicate a preference for orderliness and organisation, but with relatively greater ease in communication, outgoingness, enthusiasm for new ideas and concepts, thinking best through brainstorming and debate (Rogers, 1997).
Whatever the origins of my discomfort, as a result of this pilot study experience it became increasingly clear to me that I did not want to pursue the research using co-operative enquiry in this or a similar form. The primary reasons were:

- simply not feeling at ease with using this methodology when linked with the subject being researched
- a high level of discomfort with the possibility of being seen as the *de facto* expert and/or leader
- the potential for taking on, or feeling pressure to take on, responsibility for/within the group (however inappropriately)
- unwillingness to take on the practical and organisation aspects, especially where I believed it to be the responsibility of others
- lack of clarity about what such a group might do or what direction it might decide to take, including directions I might find personally unacceptable or in which I had little interest or commitment as a co-researcher
- concern about the problems that the group might raise for people working in an organisation. For example, the potential for emphasising rather than uniting differences in belief systems, or creating a division (or élite) between those participating and those not
- potential 'negative' outcomes as perceived by an organisation, such as people deciding to make life changes which might impact their organisational role, including deciding to leave or change their job.

It took some time for me to clarify and be able to articulate the above reasons for my discomfort which led to a hiatus of some months. I found myself simply avoiding most aspects of the research process, including supervision. I spent some time reflecting on whether I should back out of the research project, perhaps supporting my co-researcher in her progress, especially since she seemed energised by the pilot study and keen to proceed. My concern gradually resolved as I began to identify the causes of my discomfort and in consequence, reconsider the research question, possible approaches to it and the options for different research methods. This process and its consequences, as well as another change of major significance, are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Development of The Research Question, Methodologies and Methods

4.1 Development of the research question and propositions

By early 1998, the focus of my interest in the research remained broadly the same as it was at the outset. However, one significant difference was that I decided not to pursue the question about how spirituality can be specifically developed in an organisational setting: this is a huge issue in itself and begs numerous questions, for example, the relevance and variability of the specific organisational context, what is spiritual, what development means in this context. I decided that it widened the research too greatly and potentially changed its focus. Further, in consultation with my supervisor, I also concluded that to incorporate all my original ideas on the research would make it far too broad a field, necessitating answering numerous implied questions which were individually profound, thereby diffusing the focus and reducing the chance of meaningful observations, interpretations or inferences. I revised my research question (see later in this section), sought to bound and focus it by developing some questions and propositions, and also changed the approach and style of research to be an investigative process, rather than one of participative enquiry.

With this re-definition of the research question and different focus, I recovered my enthusiasm and was able to see a clear differentiation from my co-researcher which would still allow co-operation. However, some 18 months after commencing, she decided to take an extended sabbatical since she was deeply engrossed in re-assessing her own beliefs and spiritual path and felt the need to focus on this exclusively. In the event, she never re-commenced her involvement in this research. By this time, having decided on my own approach, I was prepared and re-motivated to continue to pursue the research as an individual project, with the valuable option of using my former co-researcher as an informed ‘sounding board’ and challenger during my own research progress.

As I refined and tightened the focus of the research, I eliminated some aspects and questions which I have listed as potentially being of interest to others researching in this area.

   i. Is spirituality inherently neutral or can it be considered to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ in some way?

   ii. ‘Spirituality is a fundamental and universal human experience’ (Skelley, 1996:67). If this is so and it is an integral component of humans, are there elements of spirituality that might apply widely or universally?

   iii. How might spirituality be specifically developed in an organisational setting and what might be the impact of attempting this?

Figure 11 – Questions not considered in this thesis
By 2nd quarter 1999, I was well under way with a Case Study looking at a particular leader, her personal beliefs and motivations and the impact on her organisation (Chapters 5-8). Some months into this study, I modified my research question further to reflect more accurately the focus of my research. The existing question implied that the leader would have a specific intent to engage the spiritual dimension of others and that I would investigate the process and the consequences. I concluded that this was an assertion I did not particularly want to investigate: it was not a primary aspect on which I wished to focus, it is potentially very limiting in application (how many leaders might specifically want to do this?) and therefore limiting to potential generalisations of my findings, and is an intent which I felt would be difficult to isolate, demonstrate or infer causal connection.

My interest was much more in examining how the beliefs of the leader – and particularly those beliefs affected by spiritual convictions – impacted upon values, aims and motivation; to look at how she acted in her role and particularly how she related to others; and to examine congruence between her beliefs and behaviour; then to look at how others saw and interpreted her actions and style and finally consider what impact this had upon them. In consequence, I modified the question to its final form as in Chapter 1, Figure 1. Also, I expected to be able to form a view of how spirituality is viewed by the participants and by others.

In considering this research question and the particular case, I became aware that there were some concepts or propositions which are inherent in my thinking and which I needed to recognise explicitly in order to consider specifically but also to avoid bias in data collection and interpretation. They are:

| **P1.** My instinctive assumption would be that recognising and valuing one's own spiritual dimension is enhancing, a 'good thing', for leaders and individuals. |
| **P2.** I believe that developing spiritual awareness is inherently valuable; also, it seems highly likely that it will directly inform the way individuals (including leaders) act and behave. |
| **P3.** It is my experience that when acting over time in a non-congruent fashion - that is, in a way which is not aligned with personal values and beliefs - this is at best detrimental to the individual and at worst both evident to and detrimental to others. I expected to find that this would be the case for anyone to whom these conditions applied. |
| **P4.** When acting out of personal motivation that is spiritually inspired, this is likely to be evident in some way and to be highly motivational for others, touching them at some deeper level than might otherwise be the case. |

**Figure 12 – List of Propositions**

I reviewed these propositions at various stages in the project in order to remind myself not to allow them to exert a disproportionate influence. This was done most explicitly at three points: when constructing questions in the case study (see later),
when analysing the data and seeking to draw conclusions and at the conclusion of the analysis when drawing inferences from the study. During this time, I also began to refine my methodological approach.

4.2 Consideration and development of methodologies

'It is important that researchers ask themselves several questions: What sort of knowledge is being sought and from which paradigm? For what purpose is the knowledge being acquired? For what form of application will this knowledge be used? After clarifying such questions, selecting a paradigm, methodology, and methods will follow naturally' (Gregory, 2000)

4.2. Academic acceptability of qualitative methodology

From an early stage, my preferred way of engaging with the issues was via a qualitative methodological approach. Thus, I was faced with both the question as to the academic acceptability of qualitative research generally and, potentially, scepticism about the validity of this particular field. The experience of other researchers was not always encouraging: 'qualitative methods are used only to a limited degree. Universities and business schools often oppose their use and classify them as second rate' (Gummesson, 2000:1). In some quarters there seems to exist a degree of prejudice against qualitative studies involving moral, ethical and spiritual considerations as being 'too soft, too nebulous and too ill informed for serious academic study' (Mitroff & Denton, 1999:84). Indeed, the same researchers suggest that 'probably the major impediment to our knowledge of spirituality in the workplace comes from the institutions expressly devoted to furthering knowledge: business schools in particular and the academic community in general' (1999ii:16). One possible reason for this is suggested by Jacobsen as perhaps in some measure being due to 'Freud's skeptical (sic) views of religious experience [which] continue to have profound influence in academic circles' (1994:18). Beyond the immediate area of the Human Potential Research Group (within the School of Educational Studies) at the University of Surrey, (Guildford, UK) I did sometimes experience this ambivalence and I encountered it in at least one of my interviewees later in the research process. In general, however, such prejudice has not been significantly evident during this research project. None of the latent or explicit issues about the subject or methodology have changed my own view of their validity and importance, though I have come to understand some of the concerns more clearly and reflect on these at various points, particularly in section 8.1.

4.2.2 Early Consideration of methodologies

Before the pilot study, there was no clear choice for a specific methodology – indeed, the research question itself was far from clear. I felt that a qualitative approach fitted best with the subject area, my chosen research paradigm (Chapter 2) and my preferred personal style although consideration of incorporating quantitative approaches for some aspects was not ruled out, incorporating the notion of methodological eclecticism (Hammersley, 1997). In practice this never became appropriate.

Originally, thoughts on the approach had been strongly oriented towards some form of Co-operative Enquiry. Here, those being researched (the subjects) and the
researchers themselves become co-researchers (Reason, 1988). Ideally, all those involved would jointly decide on the subject of the research, the methods, take joint responsibility for activities, and collect and reflect on the results. The general plan had been to find one or two organisations that would be interested in allowing engagement with a group of people as co-researchers, to consider and develop spirituality, and to look at the consequent impact on individuals and their organisations. Neither the specific process nor content was clear and I had expected that the pilot study would help resolve these issues. However, given the profound unease that I felt as a consequence of my experience with the pilot study (see section 3.4), I became strongly aware that this was not the way I wanted to undertake the research.

4.2.3 Developing considerations

After the pilot study, the broad subject area was clear and my research question was well advanced, however my consideration of methodology had changed significantly (see sections 3.4 & 4.1). I had made a clear decision that my preference was to study one or more organisational settings to understand more about the phenomenon of 'spirituality in the workplace' and in particular to see how this was effected in practice. Although apparently a more distanced approach than the more intimate joint and equal engagement of co-operative enquiry, I still perceived it as likely to result in a high degree of involvement on my part, expressed well by Gummesson 'A true scientific approach is intimately personal; it is an approach to life, a search for truth and meaning. We do not find the truth and meaning in social life by watching the world from a distance .. isolated in ivory towers, just reading what well known philosophers and authorities have said' (2000:xii).

One way of doing this would have been via ethnography, traditionally the methodology used for the analytic studies of the lives of isolated indigenous peoples by anthropologists but increasingly used in 'at home' settings (Toren cit in Richardson, 1996). Although possible, the scope of an ethnographic study and to some extent the process led me to reject it. Most often it is specifically 'self-consciously historical and comparative' (Toren cit in Richardson, 1996:103), requiring field-work by participative immersion in the day to day lives of the people and where the involvement, reactions and responses of the participant observer are an essential component of the data. Schwandt summarises how ethnography is distinguishable from case studies and descriptive studies: 'it is the process and product of describing and interpreting cultural behaviour' (1997:44; underlining in the original text). The analysis involves knowing as much as possible about the people being researched, their history and life experience and how this plays out in the processes of the setting being examined.

In my study, I wanted to observe more than to participate, and to focus on the behaviours and responses of participants in a more 'action and reaction' way. Inevitably, I would come to understand something of their history and background and may well wish to incorporate some of these data into subsequent analysis, but it is not my primary interest to seek explanations based on the background of individuals within the group. Contemporary ethnography is more specifically 'directed towards the analysis of contemporary collective processes as these are manifest in the day to day relations between particular persons'; it is 'oriented towards an
understanding of the processual nature of life' (Toren cit in Richardson, 1996:103,111). Here the focus is on understanding the culture, systems, meanings and processes of those being researched, in their specific setting, with the researcher actively participating. It would seem possible to adapt this approach, for example to consider an organisation as a community and indeed to focus on the cultural aspects of spirituality in the workplace. Although overlapping with what I wish to look at, a specifically ethnographic approach seemed to make insufficient provision for investigating and understanding concepts and experiences like spirituality, and their meaning for the individual.

Given that I am looking at how spirituality 'works in practice' in the workplace, one way of doing this would be through Grounded Theory. Here the researcher generally approaches the subject with little or no preconception of an existing theory. Glaser & Strauss suggest that a typical approach is 'the study of interactions in a given environment as related to the social context in which they occur' (1967). The data may be gathered in a number of ways and may well be unstructured. In an iterative process involving sampling and analysis, the researcher interprets the data, developing a model or paradigm which is then further tested and developed.

The experience of the pilot group and other avenues of research suggest that approaches to the subject field (spirituality in the workplace) are highly individual, being heavily influenced by personal belief systems and personal preferences of participants and/or organisations (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii). With my preferred style of observing what approaches leaders use in practice and then investigating the impact on others, this would conform to the proposition of 'little or no preconception of an existing theory'. However, to fulfil the requirements of Grounded Theory would require the development of a theory from accumulated data and then testing that theory in some way by using it within the researched organisation and preferably in different organisations also. Firstly, I had a concern that, given the diverse understandings of and plurality of views on spirituality - coupled with even more diverse approaches in practice - development of a grounded theory would, at best, prove exceedingly difficult even within a single organisation. It would also have questionable validity elsewhere. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, even though Grounded Theory could well be used as an approach to this investigation, the way I wanted to consider the research questions was not with the intention of producing a generalisable theory and I felt that Grounded Theory was not an approach which met my needs sufficiently well.

Phenomenology emphasises subjectivity and is specifically focused on the collection of all kinds of descriptive data related to experience of the phenomenon. Moustakas suggest that these data then allow for 'a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience... The aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have [it].' (1994:13). This approach allows the person being researched to explain the experience as it affects them and for the researcher to consider these data either on their own, or amalgamated with the experience of self and others. Of the variations possible with this type of approach, transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) seemed promising and relevant to the general subject areas. It is based on the work of Husserl (see details later). It is transcendental 'because it adheres to what can be discovered through reflection on subjective acts and their correlates'
(Moustakas 1994:45) and is of particular value when dealing with subjects concerned with 'experiences and processes that extend beyond the personal and individual, that go beyond the usual limits of ego and personality' (Braud & Anderson, 1998:37). The same authors suggest that it provides a qualitative method 'that can more appropriately and faithfully address rich, significant, and complex human experiences' (1998:240) which can be considered as related to transpersonal psychology which 'seeks to delve deeply into the most profound aspects of human experience, such as mystical and unitive experiences, personal transformation, meditative awareness, experiences of wonder and ecstasy, and alternative and expansive states of consciousness' (1998:xxi).

As I would be seeking the views and experience of those being researched and may wish, at least to some extent, to reflect on other factors – particularly 'other human experiences' – influencing them, there are similarities with Heuristic Enquiry. However, this latter is more correctly limited to, and concerned with, the co-researcher’s personal experience since 'the investigator must have had a direct personal encounter with the phenomenon' (Moustakas, 1990:14). The outcomes are about the meaning that the researcher makes of the phenomenon and data to the exclusion of any consideration of how history, art, politics, or other human experiences account for and explain the meaning of the experience (Moustakas, 1994:19). Although I have had ‘personal encounters’ with leadership of varying kinds, with organisational life, with spirituality and a personal spiritual journey, in the way I was now considering the research I would not share the specific experience of those being investigated. Further, I was clear that, to some extent at least, I wanted to reflect on the impact of external factors and possibly other related experiences.

A further complexity in the choice of methodology – or what increasingly seemed more accurate, the development of a suitable composite methodology (Moustakas 1994:104; Flood 1999, elaborated on later) – is Moustakas’ identification of common features in Ethnography, Grounded Research, Hermeneutics, Empirical Phenomenology and Heuristics, namely:

1. recognising the value of qualitative designs and methodologies, studies of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches
2. focusing on the wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts
3. searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations
4. obtaining descriptions of experience through first person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews
5. regarding the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behaviour and as evidence for scientific investigations
6. formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher
7. viewing experience and behaviour as an integrated and inseparable relationship of the subject and object and of parts and whole (Moustakas, 1994:21)

I felt increasingly certain that I wanted to take a phenomenological stance, although applying this methodology strictly would not allow for incorporation of a more
structured and comparative approach that I anticipated using with some of the data (such as considering the intent of the leader and comparing this with the experience of others). I was clear that I wanted to look in some depth at a leader in an organisational setting and although still unclear about specifically how to reconcile my overall methodological philosophy, I felt strongly that I wanted to adopt a Case Study approach (or a Case Study strategy – Yin, 1994, my italics) as a way of investigating my research question in a particular situation. The case study design and how I pursued it are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 (Case Study Design, Process and Data Analysis). The confusion around philosophy resolved itself gradually, as a result of considerable focus on it with further reading and reflection, and in the next section I present my clarified position and the reconciliation of the different methodological requirements into a composite which felt was suitable and effective for my specific study.

4.3 Methodological approach – underlying philosophy

Phenomenology is ‘dedicated to describing the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness without recourse to theory, deduction or assumptions from other disciplines’ however, it is neither a uniquely delineated philosophical approach nor an explicitly defined methodology. Schwandt describes it as ‘a multifaceted philosophy that defies simple characterisation because it is not a single unified philosophical standpoint’ (1997:114). Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), considered to be the founder of modern phenomenology (Flood, 1999:92), ‘developed a philosophic system rooted in subjective openness’ (Moustakas, 1994:25). It is important in my context to note that for Husserl ‘phenomenology is both a method or practice and a philosophical discourse about the nature of metaphysics and epistemology’ (Flood, 1999:93). From his work, at least three paths of development can be traced:

- Philosophical phenomenology developed in the thinking of Edith Stein, Adolf Reinach, Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel and to some extent, Max Scheler.
- The Existential phenomenology of Heidegger, and then Gadamer (hermeneutics) and Sartre and de Beauvoir (existentialism).
- Sociological phenomenology as seen in the work of Moritz Geiger and Alfred Schutz (ethno-methodology).

This latter approach is particularly of interest for me. It shows how such areas as religion and spirituality can move into the anthropological framework by referring to ‘what is there’ or in Husserl’s famous phrase a return ‘to the things themselves’ [Zu den Sachen] (Flood, 1999:93) – as opposed to looking at a specific belief system – thus being able to consider a transcendental phenomenological view unaffected by issues of dogma. This was of particular concern for my study since, as I anticipated and found in practice, many people link spirituality and religion and I did not in any way want to address issues related to specific beliefs, dogma or religious practice.

49 Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology, Internet – www.phenomenologycenter.org
A key concept in Husserl's approach and phenomenology generally is intentionality which refers to the internal experience of being conscious of something to which the mind is directed (which for Husserl could be something real but may also be imaginary). 'By turning our 'inquiring gaze' inwards to our own psychic life, every experience can be subject to phenomenological reflection.' (Flood, 1999:94). For example, consider the experience of delight at sitting in a dimly lit room watching a candle. The candle is the object of the intentional act - its perception in consciousness - but there is a non-objectifying quality which is my feeling of delight.

Every intentionality comprises a noema and noesis. The noema is not the real object but the phenomenon, not the candle itself but the appearance of the candle which varies depending on various factors such as when it is perceived, from what angle, with what previous experience, all of which vary for each individual. The noesis is the underlying meaning which the experience holds for the individual, thus I might have previously experienced pleasure in a similar situation before, perhaps a candlelit dinner with a partner. If, however, I had on some occasion been tortured by having my hand held in a candle-flame, then my noematic meanings would be different because of my noetic experience. These two aspects lead to the textural (noematic) and structural (noetic) dimensions of a phenomenon which allows me to understand the meaning for an individual (Moustakas, 1994:28-32; Flood, 1999:94).

I was on a train one day, reading and trying to understand the significance of how these two aspects functioned in practice, when I overheard a man say to his companion "Have you seen his haircut? He had it cut short all round. It looked stupid". This seemed to highlight the issues perfectly: there is no 'logical' link between the two statements 'he had it cut all round' and 'it looked stupid'. There was no way, without questioning the person in some detail, to understand what led him to draw this conclusion and upon what it was based. I could apply my intuition and advance possible reasons for his thinking (one use of the process of imaginative variation) but without his input this would have been highly speculative. In the same way, with my research, I wanted to enter the individual 'frames of knowing' of each participant to understand how they perceived what was happening and what meaning or explanations they attached to it, using this data as the basis for comparison and, ultimately, drawing interim conclusions.

This, then is the basic philosophy guiding my approach to the research and data collection.

4.4 Issues with phenomenology

There are issues with using transcendental phenomenology, some particularly relevant given my overall approach. A general concern is whether it is truly possible to bracket as part of the epoché (explained more fully later in Figure 13): it is difficult, some would say impossible, to be the 'blank canvas' that the process posits. Despite careful preparation and deliberate acknowledgement, then setting aside of presuppositions, the researcher or observer must inevitably apply judgements (conscious or otherwise) and evaluations both encountering the data in this first instance and analysing it later. Further, in discussing phenomenology in the study of
religions, Cox points out that "the observer must select which aspects are important and which are not. A certain emphasis results from this election which later influences the understanding of the .. activity itself" (1992:26). Even the way that a question is phrased may demonstrate bias or pre-conception, or encourage the respondent to answer in a particular way. As a universal concern in phenomenology, this is offset first by seeking to be aware of, and being explicit about, pre-existing biases, and second by asking questions or obtaining data in as many different ways as possible. Cox suggests that epoché
'is best understood as an attitude towards .. phenomena which recognises and admits that the scholar begins from certain perspectives and predispositions. The attitude sought is to try to minimise the observer's admitted and recognised preconceptions in order that a fresh look at .. phenomena may yield new insights and achieve greater understanding' (Cox, 1992:26)

Another issue is that, strictly speaking, the phenomenon is decontextualised and dehistoricised. Although in my case it should be possible to take this position initially when considering the 'internal' views and perceptions of the leader, I cannot and did not wish to exclude these perspectives completely when looking at the overall circumstances of the case, the intent of the leader, and the interactions between the leader and others. By the same token, while traditional phenomenological studies avoid looking at causal, consequential and tangential issues, I wish to be open at least to noting, if not necessarily analysing, such factors.

In looking at phenomenological methods in the context of the study of religion (some of which consideration is relevant here) Flood concludes that this method alone 'is inadequate for understanding religions because it entails a particular philosophy of consciousness' and argues that such description 'needs to be located within narrative, which disallows a reduction to essences" (1999:91,115-116). I found this highly valuable as it articulated reasons for the struggle I was having moving from a philosophical stance to a methodological approach in practice. Specifically, I had been finding it difficult to reconcile my wish for openness and a non-evaluative approach - which in traditional phenomenology disallows consideration of contextual conditions - with my wish to use a case study as a vehicle, since much case study method focuses on empirical analysis and is frequently strongly contextual (Yin 1993, 1994; Stake 1995).

The question of language itself is also an issue. Flood references Derrida in suggesting that 'there can be no distinction between meaning and an independent existence, for the being of the world is largely constituted by language. ... Objects within the world are determined through the web of linguistically and culturally constructed meanings, grounded in history, rather than through pre-existing distinctions' (Flood 1999:101). This makes a pure phenomenological approach impossible since 'rather than the notional value-free discourse which is the claim of phenomenology, we have the competing narratives and critiques stemming from those narratives, which indicate that all representations of the world are historically and linguistically mediated' (Flood 1999:104). He cites an example in religious terms: 'Paying attention to the 'facts' of a religious statement (such as 'Jesus died for our sins') while at the same time being agnostic as to their truth content or relation to existence, creates an immediate tension if the claim of phenomenology is that an accurate understanding of religious statements can be made by this method ...[because] there is a

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limit to the degree to which the religious statement is understood' (Flood 1999:102). He goes on to suggest that the researcher is left with a choice of an ‘insider discourse’, which accepts the link between meaning and being, or an ‘outsider discourse’, which denies the link. Whilst some compromise is achievable, he considers that a strictly phenomenological approach is impossible especially in a ‘thick description’ since ‘once interpretation and judgement come into play – which they inevitably do fairly quickly in even the most basically descriptive account – then these interpretations and judgements are formed within the context of a wider method which implicitly entails the values of secular reason and explanation’ (Flood 1999:103). However, I would argue that one can use a phenomenological basis, accepting the limitations and modifying the methodology appropriately: ‘[this] critique of phenomenology ... suggests that the inquiry [into religions] can be reflexively aware of its assumptions and limitations, and rather than a proclaimed value free description, can consciously bring to its object paradigms external to it’ (Flood 1999:223).

In my case, I am not primarily researching the phenomenon of spirituality itself (or religion), so some of Flood’s issues are not such a significant concern. However, they emphasise the need to be even more clear about my own particular biases and interpretations of language, especially since, given my strong personal interest in the subject area, I might be disposed to be more of an ‘insider’ than an ‘outsider’. The issue of needing to locate phenomena within narrative is highly relevant and one which I needed to factor into my practical methodological approach, particularly by the construction and style of interviews to seek (as far as possible) non-directive openness. Overall, I felt that Flood’s reflections gave strong support for working from an overall phenomenological perspective while developing a composite methodology suitable for the situation.

4.5 Clarification of methodologies and approach

I experienced significant confusion in clarifying my methodological approach. The key to resolving this was the realisation that much of this confusion was the result of there being two distinct aspects which the research was examining. One was to do with internal or intra-psychic concepts (‘spiritual dimension’) and the consequences for personal action (‘how does this affect and inform ...’). Initially I wanted to understand in some detail the inner-world view and meaning of spirituality for the leader and how that affected what she intended to do in practice. The second aspect was to compare the leader’s perception of how she carried out the role in practice with participants’ perceptions (‘What is the impact and what are the consequences ...’), allowing for reflections on what happened from her perspective, from the perspective of others in the organisation, and from my view as the ‘outside researcher’. There was no intent to establish a theory or to examine findings primarily in terms of other organisational constructs – for example theories of organisational structure, change processes or management styles.

Braud and Anderson’s observation that ‘developing research methods uniquely relevant to exploring the transformative dimensions of human nature has not received focused attention, [so] researchers and graduate students tended to borrow research methods from the positivistic paradigm, rather than create their own’ (1998:28) prompted me to reflect more thoroughly on how I could amalgamate methods into one most suitable for my
own research question and approach. Developing and critiquing early versions of the diagram of the overall research design (Figure 15) provided a vehicle for gaining significantly greater clarity. In particular, I realised the complexity of undertaking a case study as a research strategy whilst at the same time being interested in viewing much of the data from an essentially phenomenological standpoint. Indeed, at an advanced stage one member of the academic faculty suggested that case studies and phenomenology were not mutually compatible (although this was followed up by further input that supported the possibility, given my specific approach). I was now much more fully aware of the issues and still felt confident that this approach was appropriate and would work effectively. I was encouraged by Moustakas’ assertion that ‘Every method in human science research is open ended. There are no definitive or exclusive requirements. Each research project holds its own integrity and establishes its own methods and procedures ... ’ (1994:104) and by Flood’s approach and experience, examined previously, of adapting ‘pure’ phenomenology for the purposes of studying religion (1999).

I became increasingly clear about the dual nature of my process. For the leader in particular, I wanted to understand in some detail and from a phenomenological stance her internal-world constructs, including an insight into her views, values, beliefs and motivation. I then wanted to understand how she perceives that these translate into practical application of her views and beliefs, including how she believes others respond to or are affected by her. Using a case study strategy, including examination of the social setting and interactions relevant to my research question, I would then seek to understand what actually happens in the ‘field’ between her and the other players, comparing her understanding with the views of the other participants. Even in this case study phase, I would still seek to understand the positions of the participants from an essentially phenomenological standpoint, although the ensuing comparative analysis is not itself a phenomenological process. Finally, I planned to use data obtained from other sources to provide further perspective and triangulation.

4.6 Phenomenology in practice

The principles, processes and methods central to transcendental phenomenology are enumerated by Moustakas’ (1994:58-59) as:

1. focused on the appearance of things just as they are and free of all pre-conceived biases
2. concerned with wholeness, examining from every angle and perspective to achieve a unified vision
3. seeking meaning from appearances and arrives at essences through intuition, and reflection, leading to ideas, concepts, judgements and understandings
4. committed to descriptions of experience, not explanations or analysis
5. rooted in questions that give a direction and focus to meaning, and in themes that sustain an inquiry, awaken further interest and concern, and account for passionate involvement with whatever is being experienced
6. recognising that what I see is interwoven with how I see it, with whom I see it and with whom I am

7. awareness that every perception begins with my own sense of what an issue or object or experience is and means, but inter-subjective reality is constantly part of the process

8. acknowledging that the data of experience, my own thinking, intuiting, reflecting, and judging are regarded as the primary evidences of scientific investigation

9. requiring careful and detailed construction of the research question, both to capture my attention and guide the process

In particular, this seemed to provide a thorough and appropriate way of engaging with data about the internal view of the leader as related to spirituality, her responses and the consequences for her.

More generally, this process also seemed well suited to most of the issues I wanted to consider in the study as well as making provision for gathering the views of both the leader and those affected by her actions. It allows for all parties to express their subjective experiences and for me to incorporate my own reflections and intuitions. However, there are some aspects which fit less well. I felt uncomfortable about point 4 for example, since I anticipated incorporating both comparison of views, some degree of analysis and reflections or postulations. Similarly at point 8, I envisaged using information both from the literature review and contemporary research and thinking to illuminate my own reflections. Also, as previously discussed, it seemed unlikely that I could achieve complete phenomenological openness (point 2) which, strictly, concerns itself with the whole entity, examining it in as many ways as possible to produce a 'unified vision' but without applying judgement. However, within those bounds, I felt that applying this principle would work well in practice.

The core processes of applying transcendental phenomenology practically are summarised by Moustakas (1994:33-36) in Figure 13.

![Figure 13 - Core processes of transcendental phenomenology](image-url)
The basis of phenomenology is to represent as fully as possible the relationship between the external perceptions and internal perceptions, memories and judgements (noema and noesis). The starting point is epoché (from the Greek, meaning ‘to stop’ or ‘hold back’ (Cox, 1992)) – also known as bracketing. This requires the researcher to eliminate any suppositions, explanations or evaluative process (‘intellectual suspense’), concentrating only on the ‘raising of knowledge above every possible doubt’ (Moustakas 1994: 26, 47). Essential in this stage is the concept of empathy (Einfühlung), ‘the ability to enter into the life of another ... the ability to walk a mile in another’s moccasins’ (Flood, 1999: 93) – which implies non-evaluative receptiveness.

Phenomenological reduction is the capturing in textural language ‘just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such’ (Moustakas, 1994: 90). Every statement is initially deemed to have equal value before being clustered and reduced to the textural meanings and invariant constituents – known as horizontalising the data. The result is then subject to the process of imaginative variation where different ways of encountering the data come into play. Considering as many meanings as possible, using most particularly the intuition of the researcher, and employing a variety of techniques, this ultimately leads to a structural synthesis of the phenomenon. Moustakas describes the final step as ‘the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole’ (1994: 100).

In the next section, I move on to consider how I developed the case study as a vehicle within my overall methodology.

4.7 A Case Study approach

The foundation of my case study design and approach is heavily influenced by the work of Yin (1994) and Stake (1995) modified by my overall phenomenological stance.

Concerns and prejudice about qualitative methods in general and my subject area in particular have been aired earlier. Case studies in particular seem to meet with a mixed reaction as an academic research process and are not always positively viewed. Gummesson (2000) comments that only a minority of business schools accept and promote case study research, but he advocates their value in the strongest possible manner as an excellent tool in management research. Yin (1994: 15) points out, with multiple examples, that case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research and from his list of ‘at least five different applications’ two are of particular relevance here:

☐ to describe an intervention and the real life context in which it occurred
☐ to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes

Case studies can be undertaken in various ways and Yin considers them a preferred approach where, amongst other factors, ‘the researcher is wanting to answer ‘how and
why' questions, when there is little control over the events being studied and when the situation is a real-life study of contemporary phenomenon' (1994:9). These criteria fit well with my preferred approach and many of my proposition questions. Further, there is no doubt that this area is well described as a 'contemporary phenomenon' as already established. However, in order to make sense of other aspects, such as what spirituality means to the leader, data would be gathered during the interview process but would then be more appropriately examined from a phenomenological stance.

'The essence of a case study ... is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result' (Schramm\(^\text{51}\) cit. in Yin, 1994). This forms a significant part of what I am attempting to do. Stake (1995) groups case studies into three categories:

- **Intrinsic** case studies - where there is little choice since this is the specific and particular phenomenon and example that the researcher wants/needs/has to study
- **Instrumental** case studies - where the use of the case is to understand something else or something broader, using this case as an illustration
- **Collective** case studies - where several examples are taken and used to understand the phenomenon more broadly

My case here will be an instrumental study, since my expectation is that pursuing my research questions in my particular case study environment will produce understanding, reflection and analysis which will have relevance more widely. Further, as a qualitative study it has characteristics which specifically differentiate it from a quantitative case study (Stake, 1995:37):

- the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of the enquiry
- the distinction between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher
- the distinction between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed - 'the function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it'

One of my starting assumptions was that any practical application of spirituality in organisations is likely to be idiosyncratic, dependent on pre-existing history and culture, and affected by the stance of the person or people leading any process involving it. This fits well with Yin's assertion that 'you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions - believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study' (1994:13), although I recognise that I am also trying to look at a broader phenomenon (spirituality in organisations or the workplace), a particular aspect of it (the impact of the leader), and a specific example of that aspect. In selecting an organisation, I would in effect be selecting the ultimate purposive sample - a single case - on the basis that 'it possess certain specific features of great interest to the researcher' (Braud & Anderson, 1998:56). The specific features here would be the style or approach of the leader, what is attempted and

what happens as a result. This does not mean that the outcomes of a case study can not have significant relevance for organisations other than those being studied. A case study is rarely, if ever, the basis for statistical generalisation, being a study of a single event or circumstance rather than a single or small number of statistical samples (Yin, 1994). However, Stake also contends that the researcher should not need to defend the typicality (1995:4). Whilst also acknowledging that a single case study seems a poor basis for generalisation, Stake points out that in practice smaller generalisations regularly occur throughout, and that larger ‘grand generalisations’ can also occur especially where the case shows something that previous generalisations have not, and which therefore modifies the previously accepted situation (1995:7). Further, my intention was to consider other situations and data (the work of other researchers, data from other leaders) to provide both comparison and a wider perspective.

In looking at research into religion, Flood (1999:66-67) highlights the difference between naturalist and non naturalist explanations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURALIST</th>
<th>NON-NATURALIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasises causes</td>
<td>Emphasises rules and meanings in the social world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g religion as economic (Marxism), unconscious drives (psychoanalysis), genetics (socio-biology)</td>
<td>Insider accounts (phenomenology) – [within the horizon of theological assumption (theology)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14 - Naturalist & non-naturalist approaches (Flood 1999:66-67)

In my situation I am looking at spirituality with a non-naturalist focus, not seeking to establish causal relationships, so that generalisation of human experience is likely to have greater validity. Other proponents of case studies would go further, for example, in looking at research into management and change using case studies, Gummesson asserts that ‘if you want an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of change, you need not study a large number of cases’ (2000). Although not studying change as a process in itself, I will be looking at the effect of leadership approaches and decisions in a situation of profound and extensive change. I contend that even a single longitudinal case, particularly supported by other data, can provide a major contribution to the body of knowledge in this area. Any potential generalisation is likely to be a valuable addition to the general field, particularly given the very limited research data in this area.

The detailed case study design and execution processes are covered in Chapter 5 (Case Study Design, Process and Data Analysis).

4.8 Non case study data

Whilst accepting the validity of data from a single case, I felt that it would afford me additional data and other perspectives if I could incorporate other non case study
data. I sought to do this most particularly from literature (see Chapter 2 and other sections), the work of other researchers (see section 2.4), from my own experience, and involvement in areas related to this research (primarily reviewed in Appendix 5 – Other Research Related Involvement). In addition, in the process of seeking a suitable organisation for my case study, I encountered one Founding Partner whom I interviewed and another Chief Executive, Bill Lucas, who felt that spirituality was important to him personally and who was willing to be interviewed over a period of time. I undertook a series of five interviews with him between June 1997 and April 2001 and the data from these interviews allows some degree of triangulation with data from the main case study, offering the perspective of a comparable leader in a different organisation. I also held informal discussions with other senior managers on an opportunistic basis. These data are summarised in Appendix 5, section Ap 5.1.

4.9 Summary and overall research design

'A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study' (Yin, 1994).

Overall then, my research philosophy is based in transcendental phenomenology. Specifically, in practice, I am adopting a dual process. Firstly, I consider from a phenomenological standpoint the internal or inter-psychic views of how the leader views spirituality and its impact upon her both generally but more specifically in a work context. An extension of this – and a bridge to the second phase of the process – is to understand how the leader translates these inner beliefs into practice: her espoused approach to her role. Secondly, using a case study as a vehicle, I seek to understand what the leader believes herself to be doing and how this is experienced by others working in the organisation – a comparative process leading to observations and inferences. This latter does not form part of a pure or traditional phenomenological process but the epoché and horizontalising phases are followed, together with data reduction, to derive at least a textural synthesis. Imaginative variation is applied and the consideration of data from the comparison and analysis phase still owes more to the underlying philosophy than to social or organisational constructs.

I am satisfied that my overall design and methods form a sound basis for investigating my research question(s), though no claim is necessarily made for universal applicability of such a methodology, especially bearing in mind Gummesson’s warning that 'when people claim that their method has universal validity or that its quality is superior to all other forms of research ... they have mistaken rigorous research for intellectual rigor mortis and the dictates of fashion' (2000:17).

The major components of the final design are shown in the diagram on the following page.

52 See section 5.7.3 for further explanation
OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN

CASE STUDY

- Interviews
  - Principal/CEO
  - Interviewee 1
  - Interviewee 2
  - Interviewee 6
- Other Data

WORK OF OTHER RESEARCHERS

TRIANGULATION & COMPARISON DATA

Data Analysis

key themes (internal)

key themes by person

textural descriptions

- analyse
- compare
- contrast
- note
- comment

text-/structural phenomenological description by theme

Linear D.A

other considerations and ways of viewing data

outcomes assertions inferences contribution

areas for further

observations reactions reflections learning

Figure 15 – Overall Research Design Diagram

Methodological Philosophy

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Chapter 5: Case Study Design, Process and Data Analysis

5.1 Design issues

Of particular concern was to consider as many design issues as possible before commencing data collection in order to be clear about the focus of the study and how the resultant data would answer the research question and the subsidiary questions or issues.

Yin (1994) enumerates five significant components of case study research design:
- What is the study question?
- What are the propositions (if any)?
- What will be the unit(s) of analysis?
- What is the logic linking the data to the propositions?
- What are the criteria for interpreting findings?

The first three were particularly helpful in establishing the basis to proceed. The fourth was less relevant since my approach does not seek to establish logical links between propositions and data. In any event, he notes that the last two are specifically lacking any clear ‘state of the art’ guidance on process, which was encouraging since establishing ‘criteria for interpreting findings’ proved to be extremely difficult to formulate prior to undertaking the study and analysing the data. The first three components fit together as:

![Diagram of initial case study design components]

Figure 16 – Initial case study design components

5.1.1 The study question and approach

As already stated my research question finally evolved as:

"Where leaders in organisations recognise, value and are guided by their own spiritual dimension how does this affect and inform their style and approach in their role? What is the impact on and what are the consequences within their organisations?"
The basic question leads to 'how, what and why' questions – what is it that I am interested in answering or reflecting upon – though they do not indicate what will actually be studied. As listed earlier, these are:

1. How do people understand spirituality?
2. What are the implications if spirituality is an integral component of human beings?
3. What is the relevance of spirituality in an organisational context? What is the impact of spiritually motivated leaders on those within their organisations?

For an instrumental case study the issue or issues are dominant, not the case itself (Stake, 1995:16), so issue statements or questions help both to organise the study and maintain focus on the area of interest. To do this they should not be too broad, and Stake further recommends developing hypotheses and goal statements to sharpen the investigative focus and limit data gathering to that which is relevant (1995:16). However I decided that given the way I wished to approach data gathering – using epoché, being open to what I found – I would not in fact do this, but would consider the propositions as listed in Figure 12 and use these as a guide to formulating questions. Though further emic (internal) issues were expected to and did emerge from within the study (for example the influence of proximity to the leader), a wide variety of etic issues (some highlighted by the pilot study, some considered in the literature review and subsequent reflections) provided a valuable perspective for considering the basic study questions.

This process of progressive focussing can be seen as

Questions ⇒ understanding (informed by literature review & pilot study)
 ⇒ restatement of issues; tentative assertions (etic issues)
 ⇒ exploration and observations (emic issues emerge)
 ⇒ emergent themes; assertions
 (applicable within this study and more widely)

I specifically planned to gather data on how those involved view, experience and define spirituality. I further planned to understand to what extent the leader involved is motivated by her own awareness of spirituality. Also, by observing the choices, decisions and methods used to make spirituality relevant in the organisation, I would be concerned with what is attempted in practice and what the effects are as perceived by different parties.

5.1.2 Propositions and Topical Questions

Here the need is to focus on those areas which should be examined within the study, although they are subject to modification during the process since as Stake points out 'case study fieldwork regularly takes the research in unexpected directions' (1995:28). The more propositions, the more bounded the case. They are also called topical questions by Stake who further suggests producing primary and secondary questions to cover
the anticipated needs for information. The main areas of question in this study will be:

- What is the Principal/Chief Executive's understanding and view of spirituality?
  - How does this affect her life generally and in work particularly?
  - How does she seek to work differently as a result of this orientation?
- What is the organisation like for those who are part of it:
  - what kind of a place was it and is it?
  - what does it feel like to work there?
- Who and what are the major influencers of the general working environment?
- How does the Principal see herself, her actions and behaviour?
- How do others see the Principal?
- If the Principal is seeking changes in the way the organisation functions as a result of her beliefs,
  - why is she seeking to make these changes?
  - for whose benefit?
  - with what desired outcomes?
  - what are they planning to do?
  - are those affected involved and if so how?
- How do others perceive the issues in the previous section. What effect are the proposed changes having on these others?
- Do they perceive any link between their understanding of 'spiritual' and what they see happening?

5.1.3 Units of Analysis

Units of analysis need to be related to the way the initial research questions have been defined (Yin, 1994:22). Thus since my interest is in observing and understanding behaviour of the Principal and how this is perceived, I shall not be attempting to understand issues such as her theoretical management approach, education and training, desired competencies etc. I anticipated that the primary units of analysis and the embedded units would be:

1) the attitudes and intent of the leader:
   - the beliefs of the leader; her interpersonal style and approach to dealing with people
   - the view of what is considered spiritual and how she believes this is reflected in her process(es)
   - what the leader is seeking to do in and with the organisation

2) the understanding of all participants of what spirituality is and its relevance in the workplace

3) the impact of the leader on the organisation and the people within it, especially where the nature of her actions are ones which she would consider 'spiritual' or deriving from spiritual concerns, issues or motivation:
- the past and present way the organisation operates
- the views and beliefs of the participants in this study about the leader's style
- what they deduce from this
- how they experience it working in practice

In addition, since the case study is longitudinal, I would be looking at change in these areas over a period of up to 18 months.

In theory, each unit of analysis may call for a slightly different research design and data collection. Examples in this instance include the use of questionnaires, case study data from interviews, other data such as personal perceptions and intuition.

5.1.4 The logic linking data to propositions

In using a case study in the way I planned to do, there is no ‘logical’ link between the data and the propositions: the key lies in eliciting data which illuminates the proposition. It is neither possible nor desirable to pre-judge what pattern or picture the emergent themes are likely to show, particularly since there may be change over time. Further, it was not my intention to be able to attribute observed factors to a specific cause.

The study would attempt to understand the Principal’s view of her motivations for acting in a particular way but also to understand prior and current socio-cultural settings in the specific organisational environment, particularly as relevant to relationships between the staff and Principal, and the subjective ‘feel’ for ‘what it is like to work here’. I would be seeking to understand from those within the organisation their perception and experience: if they felt that the Principal’s initiatives were, for example, just the latest idea in a repeating pattern of ‘good ideas’ or were in some way significantly different. In addition, data would also be sought on the management processes adopted towards issues affecting staff and the communication process which informed those involved.

A further consideration is whether any process of change is involved here and if so, who is initiating it, why and with what impact. For example if a leader initiated change motivated by some spiritual principle, there could be a range of responses. Even if these responses were positive, it would be important to recall the well researched phenomenon, observable and experienced by anyone with significant organisational experience, that focusing attention on an issue frequently results in an immediate, if temporary, improvement in related feelings about, and response to the issue. Case study data would have to be considered in the light of this phenomenon,

53 As an example, we could expect that any CEO, MD or HR Director might be strongly motivated by his/her own personal beliefs and also a commitment to their organisation. In seeking to act in a way which either is spiritually motivated or has a spiritual component, what is the leader seeking to do: fulfill their own beliefs? seeking to improve the organisation in any way possible? hoping for improved operational effectiveness? enabling personal fulfilment for staff? There are multiple possible levels of links where one or more of these factors influences another - and where those links, if they exist, may or may not be consciously acknowledged.

54 As an example from my own experience, during a period of delivering personal development workshops in a small engineering company there was considerable dissatisfaction as a result of
though the longitudinal nature of the study should be valuable in eliminating very short term effects. However, this is not a study looking primarily at change and I am not attempting to consider or develop any theories of organisational change. At various points in the study, I had to remind myself of this to avoid being diverted by potentially interesting issues which were more to do with change than with my specific research questions.

Although I had earlier decided that it would not be a specific question for the study, I did have some interest in the issue of assessing whether any actions truly ‘engage’ the spiritual dimension of those affected, however difficult that might be to assess. My instinctive assumption – bias perhaps – was that, minimally, changes made as a result of ‘spiritually motivated’ factors could be expected to improve the subjective feel of ‘what it is like to work here’. This would raise the question of whether people are simply happier working in a ‘better’ environment and respond accordingly, or whether they are affected or even motivated as a result of their own spiritual dimension being more engaged than previously.

5.1.5 Criteria for interpreting findings

Given my aims for the case study and the overall phenomenological philosophy of my approach, I did not feel it possible or appropriate to define specific criteria. The purpose of the study (vindicated in practice) was: to obtain data which a) would allow a clear understanding of how the leader – the Principal & Chief Executive – perceived herself particularly in the role of leader/manager, and the intent behind her actions in this role and b) would enable a comparison of perceptions between the leader and other staff. I was clear that I did not want to turn the project into investigation of change processes nor the impact of differing leadership styles nor how style might be defined and categorised in different ways, but rather to investigate the subjective experience and interpretation of those involved.

5.2 The Field

When looking at the case study specifically, the question ‘what is the field of study’ can be illustrated graphically as in Figure 17 overleaf.

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excessive heat levels in summer (and the converse in winter) caused by a thin, uninsulated roof, covering an elevated work area. This was further aggravated by lack of management response to numerous complaints, resulting in a reduction of morale and production error levels starting to rise by a small but noticeable amount. The management eventually agreed to the formation of a joint working party to investigate options for dealing with the problem. As soon as this happened there was an immediate improvement in morale and over a very short period of time, error levels returned to normal. This situation persisted for some time, despite the fact that the working party was very slow in going about its business and that no firm promise of change had been made.
5.3 Pre-case study preparation

"... to overcome the barriers to theory development, ... prepare for your case study by ... reviewing the literature ... discussing your topic and ideas with colleagues or teachers and asking yourself challenging questions about what you are studying, why ... and what you hope to learn' (Yin, 1994:29)

The optimism and ubiquitous claims in the literature of spirituality in the workplace (addressed in Chapter 2) had the effect of making me even more keen to engage with a ‘real life’ example by commencing the case study. The primary questions I wanted to address were clear to me, having been focused and refined as a result of the pilot study and subsequent reflection. However, as also discussed in Chapter 2, there was a considerable amount of directly relevant literature which only became available as the case study was in progress, so that literature review formed a parallel activity throughout the research period. I found that, in the main, this was helpful as it provided stimulation and a perspective on emergent views of the field (for example, Fairholm, 2000; Biberman & Whitty, 2000 & 1997; Mitroff & Denton 1999ii), parallel research to my own (Judge, 1999; Gibbons, 2000; Zwart, 2000; Bruce, 2000) as well as a growing awareness of the introduction of the subject in management education (Delbecq, 2000; Barnett, 2000; Dehler & Neal, 2000). In particular, Gibbons was most helpful in ordering and articulating the issues and concerns in the field generally, and Mitroff & Denton in identifying overall structures of spiritually led organisations. These helped me shape some questions during data collection (a significant example being those seeking any differentiation between good leadership and good spiritual
leadership) but were also of value later during the analysis phase in making sense of the data. I found, however, that I also needed to be disciplined in that each new perspective could potentially have made some change to the direction or focus of my study but, as time went on, critiquing new literature re-enforced the value of my own work and the in-depth, longitudinal approach I was taking.

As for the other areas, these were under regular consideration throughout. I maintained periodic dialogue with my former co-researcher, debating and discussing ideas as they developed and getting critical input on a number of aspects, particularly my own motivation and biases. When she withdrew from the research project, this dialogue became less frequent but was also more searching since she had not paralleled my step by step progress and was therefore able to question from a more detached point of view than previously. This was a valuable complementary process to regular supervisory input. From before the case study I was also engaged with the internet debate, particularly that of the academic research user-group, and have been in direct contact with some individuals.

In addition to the pilot study described earlier, I have been involved in two other systematic approaches and numerous ad hoc or opportunistic situations described in Appendix 5.

5.4 Selection and setup

I spent some time seeking to identify and approach an organisation which would be interested in co-operating with this style of research at senior management level. The selection would be made on the basis of opportunity, together with an assessment of suitability from an exploratory meeting with a senior manager and an agreement in principle from the organisation to co-operate. I was encouraged by the pragmatic approach to selection of instrumental case studies recommended by Stake to 'pick cases which are easy to get to, hospitable to our enquiry' (1995:4).

One primary criterion was to look specifically for a leader motivated by his/her own convictions of the importance of the spiritual, which limited the possibilities considerably. One promising leader was unable to support the research process as a result of the small size of the organisation and their current economic difficulties and another because the timing was not felt to be right for them in their development. Eventually I obtained an introduction to a College of Further Education where the Principal/Chief Executive appeared to fulfil my criterion and was positively disposed to consider participating in the research.

As with previous approaches to Chief Executives, I was highly aware of the need to establish a good basis of relationship with the Principal from the outset. Gummesson comments on this, saying: 'consideration must be given to the personality of the researcher ... which in many instances will prove of decisive importance to the outcome of the assignment. Personal characteristics such as intuition, creativity, vitality and human understanding are essential' (2000:75). Based on a long track record of effective business and professional relationships I felt reasonably confident about being able to achieve this simply by being myself rather than through any 'techniques'. If the
process went ahead, she would also be a prime contact and facilitator for my project, through whom I would gain access to other staff. 'You also need informants to help you locate people to interview and observe. Without at least one efficient and benevolent informant, you are lost in an unfamiliar setting' (Gummesson, 2000:33). I planned that the initial discussion would cover introducing myself, understanding her position and - if then appropriate - outlining my plan and seeking her permission to proceed. Ideally we would explore a form of contract between us, covering such issues as:

- the area or phenomena to be studied
- how the data gathering would be done, with whom, where, when, under what circumstances
- issues of confidentiality at a personal level - that is for individuals being interviewed in relation to their colleagues or manager, but also covering use of their data in a dissertation; and at an organisational level - access to and use of company information, undertakings on the use of sensitive data and conclusions in published documents
- duration of the study
- access to information and any limitations on it

In the event, I had an initial (tape recorded) meeting with the Principal (who is also the Chief Executive) of the College which became an extended discussion which went well beyond the bounds of gaining provisional agreement, into covering some of her personal background relevant to the research. Based on this initial encounter, I found her to meet my criteria very well indeed. She personally was hugely positive and enthusiastic about the possibility of me undertaking such a case study in the College and agreed to discuss this with her Executive Team, asking me to submit a Proposal for the research (see Appendix 2) on the basis of which she would seek their agreement for me to proceed.

I received formal agreement from the Principal on behalf of the College Executive and arranged a brief meeting to confirm my approach for the case study project and to discuss selection of candidates for interview. The selection process was not obvious. In my first meeting with the Principal we talked briefly about how I might make a selection but she was keen not to influence my choice unduly. I felt I wanted to interview perhaps two of her Executive Team - people who would have a high degree of contact with her - and selected two possibilities based on her brief summary of each team member, initially choosing the Personnel Director and an Assistant Principal. I decided to wait until their interviews when, if I felt it appropriate, I would seek their recommendations for other interviewees, based on a set of criteria I had developed. It was always going to be impossible to get a representative selection as there are in excess of 350 teaching staff, full and part time, and a complement of auxiliary staff of various sorts. A pragmatic decision was to limit the number of interviewees to 6, given that I was planning to conduct an interview approximately every 4-5 months over a 12 to 18 month period.

My criteria for selection were:
- people with differing levels of exposure to the Principal
- differing seniority in College terms
- differing duration of working at the College
- at least one non academic member of staff

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I decided at this stage not to include part time staff nor to attempt any gender balance.

5.5 Collection of data

Over the agreed period of time the major source of data would be structured or semi-structured interviews, each of which would be audio taped and transcribed. Despite Stake's assertion that 'Audiotaping is valuable for catching the exact words used but the cost in making transcripts and the annoyance for both respondent and researcher argue strongly against it' (1995:56), I felt that I would be unable to capture adequately the complexity of interview data without recording it and that extensive note taking would run the risk of being inaccurate, incomplete and too obtrusive in the process of dialogue. In the event, I used recording equipment with a good quality and unobtrusive microphone, which did not seem to cause any evident problems. The comment about cost proved well founded!

Initially, I envisaged a series of interviews with the Principal:
1. to assess and define the research area, understand how she saw the situation and decide who else within the organisation I would need to interview.
2. to understand her own background, motivation objectives and views.

With the other interviewees, I would cover broadly similar areas to those for the Principal. Additionally, I would be trying to make a subjective assessment as to how 'spiritually aware' each appeared to be (as related to the degrees of awareness in Figure 7) and how this affected them in their role.

I anticipated a circular or cyclic pattern to this part of the data collection, expecting to use information from individuals to formulate questions for other individuals, to illuminate the views of each. For example, a manager may believe that s/he is operating in an open and empowering way but this may not be the experience of other staff. I might then decide to feed back examples to the manager to understand her/his position. In any event, the questions asked in the second and subsequent cycle of interviews would depend on analysis of data from the previous round. I was aware of the need for clarity around my role which I saw specifically as a researcher, later highlighted in Gummesson 'in using qualitative methods, the borderline between the academic researcher and the management consultant becomes blurred' (2000:2).

Throughout the process, I anticipated the need both to enquire after and to collect appropriate additional data from a wide range of sources including publicly available material, such internal and restricted access documents as could be made available, personal impressions, and attending meetings. These would be reviewed as they were acquired, in order to know if any of the interview questions needed to be modified in the light of other information acquired.

This process is shown diagrammatically in Figure 18.
The College was undergoing a process of voluntary redundancy, due to come into effect early in 1999. I developed and submitted for approval a questionnaire to be sent to those taking redundancy, asking a limited set of questions about the College and the comparative style of the principal. With minor modifications, this received approval and the final form is in Appendix 2.

5.5.1 Interviewee selection

I had a second interview with the Principal to explore with her specific areas of her background, beliefs, motivations and approach. Again this was a long interview (18 pages of transcript) and covered in depth the areas that I asked about. She was frank and very ‘open’, being willing to answer all my questions in considerable detail.

Subsequently I interviewed the two candidates from the Executive Team and decided that they would be well suited as research contributors in as much as they seemed co-
operative, forthcoming and frank. At the end of each interview, I sought recommendations from each for further potential interviewees, using my pre-established criteria. I also added another criterion, which was to seek a subjective view of how positive or otherwise a candidate was likely to be in their views of change in the College and of the Principal herself. I did this to try and avoid excessive bias in selecting people positively disposed to change, or to the style of the Principal. Of the five additional people proposed I selected four, and all expressed willingness to be involved.

5.5.2 Interview planning and early experience

Planning the first round interviews caused me some apprehension. This was largely because of my wish to ‘get it right’, including:

- establishing a good rapport so that people would ‘open up’
- not revealing my own views and biases
- asking ‘good’ questions to elicit relevant data

but also simply because it is a demanding process for the interviewer and one which I had not experienced before.

Although Stake (1995) suggests that ‘Qualitative case study seldom proceeds as a survey with the same questions asked of all correspondents; rather each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell’, I decided that for the first round at least, the same basic questions would be addressed to each interviewee but the interview style would be such that if related issues were raised, then I would pursue them. The basic set of questions for each round is detailed in Appendix 2. For rounds after the first, I also sought some commonality in the questions but reviewed the first round interviews for each person, to question and develop further any themes which they had introduced.

I saw the initial interviews as key to establishing a relationship with each interviewee but found this a very demanding requirement given the circumstances. Moustakas notes that ‘Often the phenomenological interview begins with a social conversation ... aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere’ and ‘the interviewer is responsible for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively’ (1994:114). However, I felt that great care was needed to limit the social nature of the conversation since artificially extending this time with issues not connected to the research would have been incongruous and unsettling, and to begin exploring the issues in an unstructured way would potentially reduce the quality of the data collection. Further, I wished to appear as neutral as possible on the subject matter (beyond expressing my interest in it generally) in order not to prejudice interviewees’ responses later. In practice, some of the interviewees had been primed with the background and the fact that, if they chose to participate, interviews would be recorded; others had not had any information at all. Generally, the approach I took was to explain my own background briefly and a little about my research in general terms, before seeking their permission to proceed and switching on the recording equipment. The duration of most interviews ranged from around 25 minutes to 40 minutes since some candidates were more loquacious or forthcoming in their responses, which affected the length of the interview. In all cases, it felt that I managed to establish sufficient rapport for interviews to proceed smoothly.
Following the initial interview with the Principal, I completed and tape recorded four rounds of interviews over a period of 16 months with all participants except one who left the College after the second round of interviews. Despite attempts to contact him both by third party messages and in writing, he did not respond and I was unable to speak further with him. Finally, I had informal contact with the Principal and three of the interviewees some 20 months after the start of data collection.

I gave an undertaking of confidentiality to each interviewee — essentially that no sensitive information would be ascribed to an identifiable individual nor would be used elsewhere in the College or in other contexts. I subsequently had concerns about maintaining this level of confidentiality when it came to presenting the data in this document. Although the College itself is not identified, there is probably sufficient data for an informed person to deduce its identity, and from a description of certain interviewees in unique positions, to identify individuals. However as soon as I started to analyse the data it became apparent that there is relevance in knowing which interviewee made certain comments. All had agreed to be involved in the research and a number made it clear that they were giving me views which they had already made public so the way I resolved my concern was to group data without individual identification where I felt it to be either very sensitive or where individual identification might seem a particular concern for an individual.

My impression was that in all but one case, interviewees were very open and honest, not obviously censoring any comments. One interviewee was very cautious indeed about answering each question and especially those which related to the personal characteristics of individuals. From his replies he appeared either to be profoundly unaffected by differing personal styles of individuals in general, or did not wish to acknowledge such effects, or was unwilling make comparative comments to me. There may also have been some caution arising from the fact that he himself is an experienced supervisor of quantitative theses and indicated that he had doubts about qualitative methods of collection and analysis.

5.5.3 Interview schedule and status

The interview schedules are detailed in Figure 19.
Figure 19 – Case study interview schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>INT. 1</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>INT. 2</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>INT. 3</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>INT. 4</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>INT. 5</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>29.10.98</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>6840</td>
<td>7.12.98</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>10900</td>
<td>23.4.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>8110</td>
<td>16.11.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>8560</td>
<td>17.5.00</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>7520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>10.2.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>3650</td>
<td>9.7.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>2790</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>10.2.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>7240</td>
<td>30.6.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>4340</td>
<td>15.11.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>5400</td>
<td>9.5.00</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>8.3.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>3570</td>
<td>7.7.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>4510</td>
<td>15.11.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>5480</td>
<td>9.5.00</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>8.3.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>3540</td>
<td>7.7.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>4370</td>
<td>24.11.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>6180</td>
<td>25.5.00</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
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<td>y</td>
<td>6840</td>
<td>30.6.99</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>4100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25.5.00</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TR - transcribed?
y - yes. Hard and soft copy available
n - not transcribed

* Informal discussion held 21.3.2001. Also with Laura on the same date

There are certain events in the life of the College which formed a natural point at which to do some rounds of interviews. These were: October 1999 when the number of student enrolments became known and the College financial position for the year could be estimated more accurately and post February 2000, when the vital and high profile five year external assessment of the College was complete.

In the later interviews, data saturation was occurring with less new or significant data being added. In particular the ‘change over time’ data was almost exclusively about the changes taking place in the day to day processes of the College. Additional data on changes observed in Laura were almost insignificant. As a consequence I took a decision not to transcribe these later interviews. My process was to listen through them twice, incorporating any relevant data directly into my manuscript on the PC. I then listened through them a third time after completing the first full draft of the thesis, to be alert to any additional relevant data.
5.6 Non-interview data collection

5.6.1 Questionnaire returns
Disappointingly, only two questionnaires were returned from people who had taken redundancy (see section 5.5). These provided insufficient data to undertake any significant analysis.

5.6.2 Other events and observations
On 29 January 1999 and again on 9 July 1999, I attended staff meetings. These were held in a hall in the College and attended by approximately 250 staff on each occasion. These allowed a first hand experience of the style of the Principal in these circumstances.

5.6.3 Documentary data
I accumulated various documentary data pertaining to the College.

There is a College Internet website from which I took printed copy and which I checked periodically for changes.

During the early stages of this case study, the College was undergoing a major consultation process for its Recovery Plan to determine how it should be re-organised, meet its financial deficit, and position itself, given the statutory changes in Further Education. I was given copies of various confidential statements and the consultation questionnaire pertaining to this exercise.

The College’s Vision Statement was under review and revision when I started my study. I have three progressive levels of revision of this document, resulting from a process of consultation.

Over the period of the study I built a database of other relevant documents, which includes the re-organised management and delivery structure, College External Assessment report for the last assessment in 1995, Investors in People external report and the College External Assessment report for February 2000.

I also met informally with the College Chaplain.

5.7 Data Analysis: from theory to practice

‘There is no particular moment when Data Analysis begins’ (Stake, 1995)

During data gathering phase, as I contemplated the process of data analysis, my major focus was the case study interview data, both because this is my primary data source and because of its sheer volume. I was, however, also conscious of the significance of data from other sources and in particular my interviews with leaders/managers in other organisations detailed in Appendix 5.
Considering more specific approaches to analysing the interview data and considering the case study database of other data, I was discomforted by reading Yin’s comment that ‘Too many times, investigators start case studies without having the foggiest notion about how the evidence is to be analysed’ (1994:102). Although it would not be true to say I had ‘not the foggiest notion’ it would be accurate to say prior to the point of commencing detailed analysis, I had much less clarity about the detail of the most effective and applicable ways of looking at the data than any other aspect of the process thus far. Faced with the imminent requirement to do just that, I spent some while clarifying my approach.

Traditional views of analysing even qualitative data often seem to be based on models of scientific analysis derived from methods used in quantitative studies (Schwand, 1997:5). I noticed a tendency in myself to think that scientific-type logic and sequential analysis might be ‘best’ or ‘more valid’ – perhaps a result of my general science and technology based background, and my historical professional work as a consultant and manager. Whilst some of my anticipated comparative analysis falls within this paradigm, I was clear that I wished to consider data more widely for some of the concepts I wanted to explore in this study. In my more current professional roles elsewhere – particularly when working as a mentor, coach and counsellor – I have learned to consider or encounter data from a wider and less structured perspective and from different frames of reference, and to develop greater trust in my intuitive judgement to exploring meaning. However, most of my experience of engaging with data in this latter way is based in inter-personal interaction and the particular challenge of capturing the phenomenological essence more completely in written form derived from interviews felt considerable.

5.7.1 Phenomenological data analysis

I began the process of analysis and data presentation in the customary way of traditional phenomenology, considering the ‘internal view’ or ‘personal world view’ of the key subject – Laura, the Principal and Chief Executive of the College. With my approach however, I am not a co-researcher and Laura is the only subject for whom I would be pursuing this more complete, specifically phenomenological picture. This picture provides a sense of who she is, the background to her views on spirituality, how she understands spirituality, the effect on her attitudes, values, motivation and approach to life generally, the impact on her role (as Principal) as she perceives it, and why she goes about performing it in the way that she does.

Moustakas illustrates two particular practical processes for phenomenological analysis. The first (after Van Kaam) lists every expression in the transcript, clusters them, checks the invariant constituents against the transcript and then builds an Individual Structural Description and a Textural-Structural Description and thence develops a composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience for all co-researchers. The second (after Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen) starts with the researcher’s individual descriptive experience of the phenomenon, records all relevant statements, clusters and reduces them into themes, produces a textual description, a structural description and thus a composite. This is then repeated for
each co-researcher and finally an *integrated universal description* of the experience is produced (1994:120-122).

In this instance, since I am producing a singular description, the steps of producing composite descriptions do not apply. I therefore developed an approach modified to meet my requirements, following the basic processes: horizontalising the data (giving equal value to each relevant statement), clustering the statements into themes and eliminating overlap and duplication, and from this producing a set of thematic textural descriptions to give an insight into Laura’s ‘internal perspective’. In presenting the data, I decided to utilise the output from this stage (thematic textural description) in its entirety, since it provides the clearest view of Laura’s position on the subject themes. Then, applying the process of Imaginative Variation, I set about looking at the meanings behind the textural descriptions to develop a structural description showing what Moustakas describes as *‘the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced’*(1994), including these as extensions of the textural descriptions. This phenomenological presentation provides the background ‘internal view’, with the rest of the data from Laura being treated similarly to the other participants in the case study. Appendix 9 contains an illustration of this process in practice using extracts from the actual data.

5.7.2 Analysing other data

*‘The analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies’* (Yin, 1994)

The case study data *per se* (as opposed to the phenomenological presentation for Laura) needs to be considered in somewhat different ways. Although, as discussed earlier, the overall approach to the data will be to understand the perception of the individual participants from a phenomenological perspective, I did not propose to produce a full phenomenological analysis for each person but rather to develop a view of their individual position on selected issues. Following this I would then represent their joint position(s) on the thematic topics – primarily a textural description – before undertaking an overall analysis. Presenting the data in this way allows an internal comparative process between the views of participants and the views of the Principal (shown diagrammatically below), before finally looking at the same data from other viewpoints, particularly incorporating data from outside the study.

5.7.3 Comparison and Triangulation

Key to the way I am using this case study is the comparison of information from different sources. Within the field which the case considers, there is firstly a comparison process between the views of the six interviewees, in order to establish the degree of commonality of view on any given aspect or topic area (Figure 20).
The outcome of this process is a set of accumulated views – convergent or divergent. Then within the case study field itself there is a comparison between the position expressed by the Principal and the view(s) of the six other interviewees (Figure 21).

Finally I sought external triangulation data to compare findings emerging from the case study with relevant data from outside it (Figure 22).
5.7.4 Grouping, processing and presenting the data

The sequence of interviews with each person form a story over time. In addition to the specific information which they convey at any one point (and which may indeed change at different junctures), it provides the unfolding and dynamic perspective on the individual's views and how they themselves are developing in their understanding and meaning over time. This is particularly important since it will add the longitudinal dimension to the study, contributing richness to the data, confirming and extending it (or otherwise) over time, and overcoming a fundamental flaw in the single interview approach which only gives a 'data snapshot' at one moment in time.

A specific issue I had to resolve was that of how to accumulate and present the case study interview data so that, eventually, it is set out clearly and in a readily assimilatable manner. One factor was how best to represent the dimensions of the interview data. I have 7 interviewees (which reduced to 6 when one person left), for each of whom I have 4 interviews. Using the data analysis approach indicated would result in a set of thematic topics (dimension 1) for each interviewee (dimension 2), with changes over time (dimension 3), and in each case, with the views of the Principal contrasted with the views of others in the organisation (dimension 4). I eventually decided that it would be best to build up and present individual introductory pictures and within these, include the interviewees personal views of spirituality. Then I planned to amalgamate data from all interviewees by theme and sub-theme, including views on spirituality in the workplace, and present this. Finally, I would compare the amalgamated thematic data with the position espoused by the Principal.

5.8 Overall Data Analysis process

In summary, the approach I followed in processing the interview data was as follows:

- for the Principal, develop a set of themes which allow separation of her internal or intra-psychic view for phenomenological presentation, and her views of her external manifestations which might affect or be perceived by others; group the data into themes
- for the other interviewees, group any data which might provide a profile of them and their background (primarily from interview #1); group all other data into themes
- for themes particular to each individual (for example their view of spirituality) present these with the individual profile
- for historic themes, group the results from the 6 interviewees to present a combined overall picture, for example, the former 'culture' of the College.
- for other themes, group the results from the 6 interviewees and, using the 'external' data for the Principal, compare and contrast these views
- produce a themed 'group picture' from each round of interviews, to capture significant and relevant elements of change over time.
For the Principal I worked with interviews #1 and #2 together to provide a combined initial position, since these were highly interlinked, close together in time and covered much common ground. The process was:

1. Check the verbatim transcript against the original tape for accuracy and make any necessary corrections; then add line numbers to each page to yield a master copy
   - this has the advantage of a further auditory review of the whole interview
   - there were always a significant number of corrections to the transcript
2. Consider each statement (in hard copy); underline all statements to be considered
3. Build an initial set of themes
4. Using a word processor (Microsoft Word) on a PC, with split screen, extract all chosen statements from the transcription file and move to an analysis file, dynamically grouping them into themes
   - this produced Data Analysis file #1
5. Review, and refine the grouping of themes ensuring correct placement of statements; where necessary, pull out any new themes and regroup all relevant statements
6. Reduce to eliminate repetitive and overlapping statements.
   - I chose not to be totally rigorous here in eliminating overlap if I felt that it gave additional textural depth
7. For each of the relevant themes, synthesise each into a thick textural description
   - this produced Data Analysis file #2
8. For data on themes relating to her ‘inner world view’ develop a phenomenological presentation of this data

**Figure 23 – Initial data analysis for Laura - Phase 1 Interview data**

For the first of the other interviewees, for interview #1, I developed a set of themes based on those extracted from Laura’s themes but extended. I then used these themes for subsequent interviewees for interview #1. Where new themes emerged (which happened twice), I added the new theme, retro-checked and modified previous files and proceeded with the expanded list. The ‘external’ themes for the Principal are listed in Figure 24 and for other interviewees in Figure 25.
View of her interpersonal style
Appointment to Present job
Status of the College + views of previous Principal
Views on management style generally
Personal approach to Management
Relevance of spirituality in the workplace and to the job
Others' reaction to her
Indicators of success of her leadership and of the College
Major hurdles for her in the College 12/98 - 5/99

Figure 24 – Analysis level 1 themes - the Principal

Role in the College
Past status of the College
Current status of the College
Level of involvement with the Principal
Perceived style of the Principal
View and effect of previous Principal(s)
Difference in style from previous Principals
Drawbacks of the style of the present Principal
Staff's view of the Principal
Suitability of the Principal to lead the College and the changes
Own view of Spirituality
Spirituality and the College/the Principal
Values and ethics
Future direction of the College

Figure 25 – Analysis level 1 themes - other Interviewees

On completion of this process for all the first round interview files, I had a set of textural descriptions for each interviewee for each selected thematic topic. I was conscious of the approach to analysis of Stake and others, where data which does not form part of the phenomenon being researched is ruthlessly eliminated (Stake, 1995:76, 121) and further, all but the most useful data is set aside (1995:84). This seems to be a recurring theme with qualitative research in general and case studies in particular: 'The critical task in qualitative research is not to accumulate all the data you can but to get rid of most of the data you accumulate' (Wolcott cit. in Stake 1995:84).

Initially, I found this very difficult to do in practice. In the early stages of analysis I had a constant concern that by not including data I might somehow be prejudiced in editing, or simply missing an important point or theme in the data. As I proceeded however, by referring back to the research question and developments in Chapter 4, and in conjunction with greater clarity and focus on the emergent themes from the
case study, I became more confident in decisions about what data to accept and what to reject.

The same process was followed for subsequent interviews (phase 2, 3, 4) introducing additional thematic topics as they arose but always including 'changes since last interview' and 'considerations for the future'.

The overall process is shown in Figure 26 overleaf.
Figure 26 – Linear Data Analysis process
Chapter 6: Presentation of Case Study Data

This section is laid out as follows:
- 6.1 The College and background relevant to the study
- 6.2 - 6.5 Laura, the Principal and Chief Executive
  - positioning section including my experience of the interview process
  - phenomenological presentation with interpolated comments
  - my comments and reflections on the phenomenological picture
  - her approach and style in dealing with others at work
  - her views on spirituality in the workplace
  - her views on spirituality in her job
  - additional relevant data
- 6.6 Introduction to and background on the other interviewees
- 6.8 Laura’s personal and management style – a comparison of views
- 6.9 Participants perception of Laura and spirituality
- 6.10 Changes over the duration of the case study
- 6.11 Concluding reflections of participants
- 6.12 The intervention of the researcher
- 6.13 Impact of the process on the researcher

The data is then analysed and reflected upon in Chapter 7.

The referencing system for quotes from interviews is: interview number/transcript page number/line number, thus 1.12.34 = interview #1, transcript page 12, line 34. Where the identity of interviewee is not evident from the section heading, an initial letter is added for identification. Thus L2.4.16 = Laura, interview number 2, page 12, line 16.

6.1 The College

The College is a Further Education institution providing 'a vast range of vocational and academic qualifications, well qualified and experienced staff alongside well equipped and modern learning facilities' (quote from the College Internet website) to students attending the College, to community education, to distance learners and business-to-business programmes. In 1997/98 there were over 1000 courses with over 200 new courses introduced and student numbers exceed 27,000. At the time this study commenced, Laura, the Principal and Chief Executive had been in post for 6 months. Prior to this, the post had been held on an interim basis for 12 months since the previous long-standing Principal went on sick leave.

In 1997/98 the College had an income of £15M but had been running at an operating loss against budget, which in 1998 was running at £1.5M. Legislative rules do not allow any college to run at a loss for more than 3 years and maintain status (currently
category 'A'), so a primary requirement of the Principal and Executive Team was to break even or preferably achieve a profit situation. After an initial review, the Principal felt there was no option but to undertake a major restructuring within the College to enable it to be efficient, effective and positioned to correct its budgetary deficiency. This was done by a process which enabled and encouraged wide consultation across the College and which ultimately resulted in extensive restructuring, removing a layer of management and implementing a voluntary redundancy programme. Plans were also made for increasing income streams, particularly for the academic year 1999/2000. A further Technician-level staff review was opened for consultation and resulted in a small number of further redundancies in 1999/2000.

6.1.1 On-going changes in the College

The backdrop to this case study is one of major governmental changes in the FE sector, and major organisational and cultural change within the College itself. The most significant aspects were:

- the need to redress a significant financial deficit by increasing curriculum delivery
- the need for greater efficiency in curriculum delivery
- resultant major re-organisation of the College structure with implicit job changes and redundancies
- changing expectations of the way that staff would be expected to perform their role, possibly including workload and work style changes
- on-going, incompletely defined, yet high-impact, national government legislative changes
- the way that Laura, the Principal and Chief Executive, functioned in her role and ran the College, as compared with previous Principals.

Organisational development and change as such is not a primary focus of this study but it is important in understanding the context of this study to convey the wide-ranging and radical nature of the changes and the fact that no area of the College remained unaffected by them.

6.1.2 Previous culture of the College

I felt that it was important to establish the recent past history of attitudes in the College as perceived by staff and encountered by Laura as she took up her post. All the other interviewees had first hand experienced of previous regimes. I did not interview any previous Principal and although all the views expressed were quite specific, very congruent and strongly expressed, I have excluded the many specific references to personal attributes on the grounds that these are not directly part of this study. However, the climate which appears to have prevailed is highly relevant because interviewees attributed it largely to the style of the penultimate Principal (the immediately previous Principal having held the post for a short period only, as a temporary measure). Laura’s own espoused style (discussed in detail shortly) is in sharp contrast. In pursuing her approach, therefore, she had both to establish and gain buy-in for a very different leadership ethos and to deal with reactions perhaps based on transference, described by Jacobs as ‘difficulties which ... represent a repetition ... of
former conflicts' and/or 'a relationship style which [has the characteristics of] past relationships' (1986:6).

Immediately prior to Laura’s appointment, the role of Principal had been held for 12 months on an interim basis by a long standing manager prior to his retirement. This was universally seen among the interviewees as a ‘holding operation’ which caused some difficulties for managers since major decisions were ‘put on hold’. As a result, exacerbated by pressure from their reporting staff, some managers chose to act independently in managing their departments. Comments about that period include, for example, ‘you couldn’t move things [on a wider scale] the way you wanted to ... and it’s not satisfactory to be doing your own thing..... I chose to do that but I didn’t find satisfaction in doing it and I was getting very frustrated really’. Another person referred to what some people called the ‘College glue’ whereby staff who had been around for a long time were difficult to move forward to function in new ways. One interviewee observed that this interim period might have been useful ‘for some people to sort out their stress levels’.

The general management ethos of the period prior to this is summarised from combined perceptions and views of six participants, excluding Laura. There was a very high degree of commonality of view, though much specific detail has been excluded as it contains explicit but potentially pejorative and unsubstantiable attributions of characteristics to a specific individual. Generally, the ethos of this period was experienced as autocratic, highly idiosyncratic and non-consultative – ‘there was no debate’. Critical input was felt to be discouraged, even to the extent that it was perceived potentially as having career-limiting implications, and organisational changes were communicated without significant consultation. The experience was of a blame culture in which people felt ‘threatened ... considerably [and it] stifled development and initiative’ with another person commenting that it ‘permeated through the organisation [which became] very unhealthy when people covered their backs, accusing other people’. Another interviewee spoke of a ‘culture of distrust and suspicion’ and one manager went so far as to say ‘the staff were terrified’. Many people feared for their jobs ‘often for no rational reason ... I don’t think any of us felt other than our days were numbered’ and stress levels were perceived to be generally high: ‘I was ... helping [people] manage their stress levels because they were working to targets and unrealistic expectations with fear of reprisal, really’. Another commented ‘people used to keep their heads down’ and another described it as ‘a pretty unpleasant place to be’ mitigated only by the fact that ‘we were doing superb work with the students and that ... was the satisfaction that kept me going’.

6.2 Laura, the Principal and Chief Executive

Laura came into Further Education in 1982. Prior to her appointment in this College in 1998, she headed a Business School in another College of Further Education. She had applied for other Principal positions but had not wanted them – they merely provided a basis of experience of interviews at this level in order to be prepared when a job she did want came up. She finally decided to leave her previous job largely as a result of being limited in the way that she could deploy and apply her specifically ‘spiritual approach’ to the role. In the case of her present position, she had
felt that this was the job for her and indeed that she would get it: 'When I came for the interview I walked through the door and energetically I knew this was my job... the second I walked through the door' (t.2.11). She was appointed, although 'the odds were against me ... but I got it' (t.2.16). At the commencement of this case study, she had been in post for 6 months.

In selecting this specific organisation for a case study, a primary consideration was that the leader, in this case Laura, should fulfil the requirement of my research question, namely:

"How do leaders in organisations, who recognise and value their own spiritual dimension,....."

From the outset, Laura was clear that spirituality is fundamental for her and as a consequence she is continually looking to understand how the organisational style would be if they were a spiritual organisation. She would wish to help build and live in an (organisational) community 'that's open, receptive, loving, caring, tough, challenges, doesn't accept incompetence' (2.9) and working with others 'who also can express meaning beyond just work' wants to 'experience joy, pleasure, job satisfaction, the whole works' (2.10). This aspect is explored in detail in the sections which follow.

6.2.1 Laura – other relevant data

Laura has been through Myers-Briggs typing (Appendix 1) more than once on development courses and though she is not actively familiar with the instrument, knows that her best fit type is ENFP. She has studied Torbert's work (viz Torbert, 1991; Fisher & Torbert 1995) in some detail, and from the Torbert sentence completion test is evaluated as a Strategist, moving to Magician.

6.2.2 Reflections on the process of interviewing Laura

Interviewing Laura was a fascinating process which invoked a strong positive response from me. From my first encounter with her she came across as a slightly 'larger than life' character, extroverted, voluble, engaging, infectiously enthusiastic, talking more than she listens; she is cheerful, positive, full of ideas, suggestions, hopes, wishes, plans and appears intelligent. Her perception of herself reflects some of this: 'I fill the room when I walk in' (3.8.10) and although she has 'agonised' about this, concerned that it might be a display of ego or selfishness, has come to believe that it is more about general personality style, 'not always ego, because I just don't know how not to make an impact' (3.8.19). My experience of her is in line with her view that she is a very gregarious person but she believes people sometimes find it difficult to cope with her openness: 'I talk about everything .. I'm open and transparent and part of me wishes I wasn't .. I don't want to be closed and cut off, but I wish I was more sedate and dignified' (3.7.16) but says of herself 'I'm gobby Annie'. I talk about everything' (3.7.16). At all times throughout the data gathering period she was very open, readily revealing of herself and her views both about her professional dealings (within the bounds of confidentiality) and about her personal beliefs, requiring little prompting to share these views, sometimes at length. Sharing her views is a specific intention: 'I do articulate where I am coming from and what [my] values are' (2.9.20).
Her interest in and enthusiasm about spirituality was particularly engaging and in my first interview with her, I found myself drawn into dialogue, wanting to contribute as well as to ask questions and listen to the answers. To some extent this was a result of specifically seeking to establish a genuinely good rapport and ‘working relationship’ with her (see section 5.5.2 - Interview planning and early experience) as someone highly influential in enabling my research project, but my reactions went far beyond this. I felt an affinity, some overlap of shared experience and thinking, an enthusiasm and a wish to engage in dialogue which I found highly stimulating. There was a strong sense of speaking with someone whose perspective I felt I understood, with whom I shared some comparable experiences, and whose ideas I related to, both on a personal basis and as a researcher. Also, as a consultant actively working in organisations myself, I found her approach, plans and initiatives within her organisation positive, exciting and of potentially great significance in effecting change. Reflecting after the first interview however, I felt that I needed to exercise greater restraint on future occasions and take the role of interviewer rather than active co-researcher. Although I achieved this effectively on the other occasions we met (my perception, but also confirmed by Laura after our final interview), I was constantly aware of the tension in my wish to dialogue rather than interview. After each meeting, I left feeling interested, enthused, encouraged, and positive. This seems to be a commonality of experience with some others at least, as she has had feedback, for example, from an administrator saying ‘Everyone who comes out of [your] door walks with a lightness in their step’ (1.8.9).

In terms of the impact on my research, I felt the need to check quite frequently that I was not compromising my attempted neutrality (épocché), particularly because, as the interviews progressed over time, I had a growing sense that the approach Laura was taking was having a profound positive effect in the College and that, in consequence, there was a danger that I might not be sufficiently rigorous in my questioning. I did this in three principal ways. One, by reflecting myself on my reactions and attempting to take a neutral stance in the tenor of the questions and the interviews. Two, by reviewing carefully the questions I was asking her and the other participants to ensure that they were searching, almost to the point of encouraging ‘nit picking’, so as to pick up any nuances of issues which I might be missing or minimising. Three, by reviewing progress externally with my now detached former research partner, to ensure that I was continuing to be appropriately critical in my evaluation and assessments.

6.3 Laura – a phenomenological perspective

The phenomenological presentation seeks to explore what Laura’s spiritual dimension means to her, how she perceives and makes sense of it and what ‘recognition and valuing’ means to her. My focus was on those aspects of herself which seemed likely to contribute to her views on spirituality in practice, to the way that she views her job and her chosen way(s) of going about doing that job.

Laura’s perspective is divided up into four sub-sections covering:

- background and perspective on religion
- understanding of spirituality
- spiritual 'peak experience' and its impact
- spirituality and future directions

My short reflections are interpolated at the end of each sub-section and overall reflections on this phenomenological perspective are positioned at the end of the sub-sections.

6.3.1 Background and perspective on religion

Laura has always felt that she wanted to be 'a good person' and live in a certain way; this was important to her. Even as a younger person, she attempted to articulate her values and ethics 'because to me that was part of life; you just did'(2.2.23). In general she seeks to 'live a good life in good company from a certain set of values and ethics and working consciously with others who also want that'(2.2.33).

She was brought up as a Methodist. From being a young person, her parents would say jokingly that she was 'always asking why - seeking the meaning'(2.2.24). She feels she has 'always engaged in ... religious enquiry' and even whilst rejecting religion in a rebellious teenage phase was 'always debating with religious people'(2.2.30) although at this stage she channelled her energies into social reform, politics and feminism. From then on, she was and is highly attracted to religions: 'I love religions, I just love 'em. I study them, explore them. There isn't a religion I haven't tried, or met people [from] ... it's a genuine passion'(1.2.34). She is quite open about this interest, feeling that she can't hide it. She married into a Christian religious family, though later spending 11 years as a Theravaden Buddhist. Following a peak spiritual experience, she returned to Christianity and converted to Roman Catholicism. Following divorce and remarriage - which affect her status and acceptability within the Roman Catholic Church - she now feels drawn to the Anglican Church, although still maintaining contact with a Jain Guru.

For her, 'I think and feel in religious terms so that the notion of God as a higher power [fits]' (2.2.19). Throughout her life she has also been involved with many different forms of religious practice, including for example: frequent retreats of differing styles; Anglican, Roman Catholic and Sufi worship; Buddhist practice and meditation; pilgrimages to the Holy Land and other sacred places. She is attracted by many aspects of religions, specifically mentioning music, candles, incense, icons, singing, rituals, and also churches, mosques, temples, holy places: 'I just love the spiritual spaces and places'(1.12.8).

Later in life she worked extensively with interfaith groups ('I'm at home in interfaith work' 1.12.20) but feels unable to be absolute and specific about what denomination and religion she is: 'I'm all of them ... I can't help it but I am'(1.12.4). She is unwilling and unable to accept that one particular way is the correct way - 'to me it's how you manifest'(1.12.44) - and very recently has been accepted to commence training as an interfaith Minister.

She is attracted to monastery and/or convent life and has taken spiritual direction from monks both at times of crisis and at other times as well: 'I love being with monastics because .. they express a very strong spirituality that's also in a religious context'(2.11.43). There are 'periods in my life when all I've wanted to do is to go and live in
a monastery or convent (2.2.8) and between her first and second marriage, she gave long and serious consideration to becoming a nun. She would like to be affiliated to a Christian religious community but had not yet been able to do so (though this situation changed towards the end of the case study period). Historically, this has been something of a problem since, despite her wish to be with a community, "I seem to spend my life going to communities that won't really take me" (1.4.13). She feels the need for a focal point and some boundaries in religion 'because I become too boundary-less if I'm not careful' (1.12.21) and to help in this, has a spiritual director - described by a Church of England Diocesan Adviser on Spirituality as 'someone who has a developing spiritual life of their own, who is called into a confidential, anonymous ministry of listening carefully with the directee for the movement of God in the directee's .. life' (Percival, 2000). At this stage in her life she feels that the specific path which a person takes and the process along it are not so important as they all lead to the same end.

I noticed that the background or basis of Laura's approach to religion and/or spirituality seemed to be based on the notion of 'living a good life' which meant pursuing an ethics and values based stance, and being in connection with others sharing her values. Clearly religion forms a prominent and most important part of her life but I was struck by the fact that it seemed to matter less what the specific form or theology or belief set is, as long as it met the needs of the time, perhaps possibly with some unclear, unconscious or subjective test of acceptability. Even this latter may only apply to those faiths with which she chose to engage closely and for the rest, it seemed that she enjoyed opportunistic those elements which appealed to her or caught her attention in some way. She seemed to move between different faiths without problem and although asserting that God is paramount to her, had spent 11 years in a religion that does not have a theistic belief. This may not be quite as paradoxical as it appears, since her own definition of God is not in a specific form associated with a particular religion. As she expressed it, much of her attraction seemed to be with the 'sense' of place, and the accidentals (candles, music, processions) rather than on explicit beliefs or dogma and she was open to a wide variety of experience whilst rejecting any requirements to be more exclusive, narrow or specific in her beliefs. For her, the most important thing is to be living out what one believes in, in a way which each person finds authentic for him/herself and she acknowledges quite strong antipathy to paths which are in any way dogmatic, evangelical or fundamentalist.

She is drawn to community life, though I was intrigued by the comment about being drawn to communities that 'would not take her'. It would require more investigation of this statement to understand just what the issues were and given the priority of other areas of discussion, I did not pursue this. In the initial interview she indicated that she 'stay[ed] in organisations because I like belonging to a community' however 'I've had to become a Chief Exec to get to the point where an organisation can be big enough for me' (1.4.14). There seemed to me some sense perhaps of needing to do things in her own way or with the scope or lack of restraint that being the Chief Executive allows, needing to have the community accept those ways and being unwilling to be limited or constrained over matters which she felt were significant. There is perhaps some related significance in her comment that 'I'm not very good at humility; I'm not very good at obedience either' (3.11.38). Although intrigued by this topic, I did not explore it further, faced with the considerable other ground which she covered. At the end of
the data gathering period (May 2000) she became a lay member (oblate) of the Order of St Benedict (Benedictine monks), fulfilling a long held wish to be more closely associated with a religious, monastic community.

6.3.2 Understanding of spirituality

Laura has always had a 'spiritual quest, a search for meaning and understanding' (2.2.27) and this was evident early on to her parents and to her. God was almost always a focus of this searching, though 'other people may call it universal spirit or energy'.

Key to her understanding of spirituality are the following themes:

- ..involves a sense of transcendence .. I have a very strong sense of something bigger and beyond myself, as well as spirit within (2.1.7)
- ..is about growing to wholeness and completeness; interconnectiveness with something bigger than, greater than (2.1.10)
- .. to have a sense of awe and wonder and goodness and wholeness and healing ..(2.1.11)
- .. it's about a different reality ... perfect ... moving towards that and bringing it in to every day (2.1.13)
- It's about having .. unconditional love; having the ego .. dissolved or playing a much lesser role in things and having a positive outlook .... it's all about acceptance (2.1.1.40)

For Laura herself, the notion of God as a higher power is now integral to her beliefs (which has not always been the case at some periods in the past), though she recognises that this is not necessarily so for others. She has 'a very strong relationship with the transcendent' (1.10) although she feels unable to describe that clearly other than that it is 'something bigger and over and above' (1.10) and as a result, 'always had a sense of wanting to live in a particular way, linked to the divine' (2.2). As far as the connections between spirituality and religion go, she believes that they are not necessarily linked, though for her personally there is a link. She has experienced religious people who are not spiritual and vice versa.

When her spirituality and the expression of it are restricted or contained by her circumstances, she 'walks away'. Her experience is that when she is open about her spiritual journey, others open up to her. She 'likes talking about it. I just love it, I love to share things like that' (3.8.18).

The fundamental importance of spirituality to Laura came across strongly. Uniquely out of all the people I interviewed as part of this research project, she was able to speak at some length her about her thoughts, ideas and beliefs about spirituality and the transcendent nature of it, even though these concepts are notoriously difficult to articulate. What is less clear is how her views might have seemed before her 'life-changing' experience described in the next section but certainly it would be impossible now to have even a relatively short conversation without it being clear how important this area is to her. The transcendent dimension is one that she is aware of, actively lives with and seeks to develop and understand – an awareness which is still quite uncommon in my experience.
As she described her thoughts and beliefs about spirituality, I found myself wanting to ask more and more questions and, again, to engage in dialogue with her about her answers and I found it intensely frustrating not to do this. With my own religious/spiritual background (Appendix 3) I felt deeply drawn to understand and discuss her spirituality and its impact with her and I had to work hard not to engage in a different form of dialogue. I had a real sense of the profundity of her belief and shared some of her ‘awe and wonder’ as she talked about the sense of ‘something bigger and beyond myself, as well as spirit within’.

6.3.3 Spiritual ‘peak experience’ and its impact

Laura had a powerful and life changing mystical experience in 1991 during a month long workshop/retreat – ‘a mix of therapy and meditation and bodywork’ – at a well known centre on the Greek island of Skyros. She was outdoors at the time when she had a ‘total experience of feeling at one with everything, everybody... there’s this wonderful reality that it’s how it really is, how it can be...it’s just like that moment when everything’s one... pure love, actually... unbounded... timeless' (2.3.35-2.4.31). It was ‘just the most beautiful thing I’ve ever experienced; ... more than a vision because it’s also reality because I’ve experienced it; ... not a vision because that is almost an aspirational thing into the future; ... it’s in the here and now as well as [something I] aspire to’ (2.1.36). It was an experience of ‘transcendence and immanence’ and although she had further experiences of the same sort during her time there, they were of lesser intensity.

After this experience people sensed a difference in her both immediately and for some considerable time afterwards. For example, her Father commented spontaneously (and, unusually, emotionally) on an intangible but observable difference which he somehow perceived in her, even before she spoke. However some long time friends, whilst acknowledging a difference, felt that this was just a further step along the way which she had always been pursuing: ‘I’ve got friends who have known me for 20 years, who after this mystical experience would say “Well, what’s different?”’ (2.2.29).

Following the experience, it became ‘the primary way I related to the world and to God’ (1.1.25) although it took up to 2 years for her to integrate the experience with much reflection, prayer meditation and frequent retreats. From this point on she was no longer searching ‘... because I’d found it’. She has been focused on how to bring the experience into everyday life ‘but also into my work life’ and is attempting always to work consciously with this perspective informing what she does: it is an experience of ‘drawing on and sending out energy’ (1.9.47). She now seeks to be ‘... truly and totally of service’. She feels more able to trust in a ‘higher order’: ‘... you [can] let things go; you don’t have to control in the same way’. However, she is always aspiring to do better: ‘I have experienced that perfection or that wonder and I always fall short of it’ (2.2.6). She made a ‘full return to Christianity’ although still being involved in other faiths and firmly believing that ‘the actual path and the process doesn’t matter as they all lead to the same end’ (2.4.19).

On return to work after this vacation, Laura wanted to ‘consciously work organisationally and educationally with ‘being’ in a spiritual sense’ (1.1.34) and sought permission to do her job in a different way. In a highly emotional conversation ('the tears started down my face because it’s really emotional at the time’ (2.6.24) explained to her Principal the general background and her wish to act differently as: ‘it’s about ethics
and values and other things' (2.6.27), offering to resign if the approach (which she did not clearly articulate) did not work or was deemed unsatisfactory. She chose not to mention spirituality specifically as she did not think 'he was open to that'. 'As it happened, the business school just thrived' (2.6.49). She felt she was different, 'far less pushy and task focused .. [able to] see things in a more holistic way' (2.7.1); very people focused - 'it's about a genuine concern and care, primarily for the students .. for everybody because that's who we serve' (2.9.19); working intuitively; finding synchronicity in events; taking quite big risks; articulating values and jointly exploring these with her (sometimes reluctant) staff. She was always able to work across a wide range of tasks but 'can do even more now'. She felt she was able to be less controlling than before; she 'trusted in a higher order' - 'you let things go; you don't have to control in the same way' (2.12.11) and felt herself part of something bigger 'it's about an energetic [sic] that .. comes into the organisation .. a sense of alignment of something bigger, more purposeful and meaningful than ... if you don't have that extra bit' (2.8.4). She is also aware of being 'more nurturing and caring instead of push-y and pull-y.' (3.12.11).

She feels that when meeting someone who has had such an experience 'you don't have to exchange words; you know it when you see it and when you feel it' (2.8.21) and that this same 'sense' is true when meeting people who have a well developed spiritual dimension 'particularly when it's linked with unconditional love, brings something bigger'. She finds that some people say 'I want to be like you; it doesn't seem to matter what they throw at you, you keep bouncing back. What is it? What have you got?' (3.11) - which she responds to by talking about God and her spirituality. 'Somebody said to me 'You just want to be an angel, floating about' and I said "No I don't actually. I want to be earthed and grounded as well".' (3.13.29)

Laura spoke of this life-changing experience in our first interview in a way which I sensed as being profound and fundamental for her. This sparked intense interest for me, however, I deliberately did not pursue it in any more detail until the second interview lest it became the predominant focus of our conversation. Although I approached my questions carefully and sensitively, being aware that this was a deeply personal and life-changing experience, she was readily willing to talk about it, although acknowledging that 'I find it hard to articulate it' (3.3.1). I was deeply moved both by the description she offered and her willingness to share it with me so readily. This type of experience, perhaps best described as mystical, is one not uncommonly reported by many, including spiritual seekers and mystics both over the ages and in many traditions (Schmidt-Wilk et al, 2000:584-585). Characteristics frequently have some commonalties, like the awareness of nature or natural things with incredible intensity, timelessness, and a sense of being connected in the unity of all things – an experience of transcendence and immanence (Maslow 1994). Although not having personally experienced anything quite so profound, I have had an experience which seemed to me to have some commonality and so, as she talked I felt that I had at least some measure of understanding of how it might have been for her. My instinct was to want to sit in silence both while she spoke about it and immediately afterwards, so profoundly moved was I. I asked only two short questions for clarification at this time, however she herself moved the conversation on to talk about the effect on her after she returned.
It was clear that this was a fundamental turning point in her life, destined to affect it significantly from then on. In particular, I was struck by the length of time it had taken her to integrate the experience and make sense of it (2 years) but also by the fact that it was not just an experience of the past but a sense of 'what is and what must be', providing motivation and guidance to her in all that she does: 'it was so fundamental to me that I have to work, I have to live this' (1.1.26) requiring constant seeking and sifting — even now after 9 years — to understand more clearly the meaning for her.

I was also interested in her answers to questions about how she was different subsequently. The particular elements seemed to be a clear awareness of a higher order, a transcendent dimension; a lessening of the ego, as expressed by being less controlling, less pushy; a sense of wanting to be of service; an even stronger connection with and concern for people; a more all-round (holistic) concern about her job (less task focused); increased energy; a strong, perhaps unstoppable, desire to work and function in a particular way, guided by her experience and its meaning for her.

6.3.4 Spirituality and future direction

Laura takes active steps to develop spiritually: having contact and discussion with others (including her spiritual director); going on retreats regularly; having daily prayer and reflection time; attending religious services and related events. She attends groups and events connected with spirituality or spirituality in the workplace generally, has written articles, and networks widely. She is also a great reader and accumulator of books related to religions and spirituality. However she felt that 'there are times when I go backwards' (2.6.13).

As for where this is leading her, she sees it as influential in all that she does ('I need to have meaning') and that her path 'seems to be linking business and organisational life with people being able to express all of themselves within an organisation' (2.2.37) however 'at heart I believe my vocation is as a spiritual mentor ... or spiritual director' (3.9.11) and she has undertaken training for this role. She sees herself attracting and/or engaging with people who want to work with their spirituality — a situation that has been true for some years: 'I hear all the time about people's mid-life crises or mid-life transitions ... or they're just acknowledging that they have a spirituality ... and want to work with it' (3.9.19) and sees this happening both within and outside her work. She is however, aware of the need for appropriateness and balance within work, especially when dealing with people who are not at a peer level so as not to 'abuse the power and balance'.

In addition, she has been trained as and practices as a spiritual healer although with some reluctance initially as she felt that it was both a daunting arena to enter and was unsure where it might take her. Whilst recognising clearly that she should not work directly as a healer with individuals in her organisation, she feels that she does work consciously with healing energy.

This theme was deeply intriguing. She clearly pursues a committed path of spiritual development, though not, it appears, in any particularly orderly or planned way. Her need for boundaries and direction is met primarily by having a spiritual director,
although she pursues a variety of other developmental routes, for example, retreats of widely differing kinds. I did not pursue how she chose the particular paths she followed but had real sense that it was on an opportunistic basis or following some interest, instinct or inner ‘knowing’. Being a person whose energy is primarily directed outwards, she seeks and encounters a wide variety of stimulus and input, perhaps finding in this the seeds for pursuing various paths of interest to her. Certainly, during our interviews, specific questions which I asked caused her to think, reflect afterwards, read, and even on one occasion to produce a short paper as a result (details later).

I argue elsewhere that the spiritual dimension is a fundamental human dimension. Even assuming this to be so, there seem to be relatively few people who are able not only to comprehend the issues but also offer understanding and guidance to others who are also seeking. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that someone who speaks readily of her own experience and beliefs in such a profound way, and who appears able to understand the experiences of others should be a magnet for some (or many) who are seeking their own development, and indeed this seems to be the case with Laura.

6.4 Reflections on the phenomenological picture

Laura was clearly very profoundly affected and changed by her ‘peak experience’ and its immediate aftermath. Although these experiences could be seen as an extension of her search and general focus of belief, they had an impact far greater any other experience before or after. One aspect of the subsequent change in her behaviour and approach which I thought particularly significant was the way that she had both integrated it into her life personally and was actively putting her principles, values and beliefs into practice in a new and different way – so much so that the importance of doing this meant that she was prepared to resign her job if this approach was deemed unacceptable. This seems to fit with other research into integrating spiritual transformation into work life: for example, Neal’s experience is that: ‘The individual has a strong sense of what work to do that will nourish her spirit and will allow her to be of service. From this point on, synchronous events seem to occur that make moving towards right livelihood appear almost effortless. Sometimes Right Livelihood comes about as a result of seeing one’s current work in a new way, or redesigning one’s job to fit with what the individual is passionate about in life’ (1999:3). This seems to fit exactly with Laura’s experience and the way she described the changes following her peak experience.

I was also interested in her perception of the diminishment of ego, where, following her peak experience, she speaks of ‘letting go of my ego’. However, it appeared to me that to meet the demands of the role of Principal and to initiate and implement major culture change requires huge self confidence and an approach which, from the outside, cannot be distinguished from having a strong ego. Laura goes even further than this since outside the College she is a high profile figure in the Further Education community generally and has published numerous articles during the period of this research. Perhaps the key is to understand her concept of doing what
she is doing as a service rather than for personal glory. However, she also acknowledges her own need to be seen as doing a good job.

Later, in the process of considering the models of transformational leadership practice, I was struck by just how much of her ‘new approach’ appeared to map onto ‘best practice’ themes proposed by consultants and academics in this field. A reflection considered further in Chapter 7 (Case Study Findings, Analysis and Reflections).

I sought verification of my understanding of the above, and all Laura’s contributions to this research, from Laura herself and received a supportive affirmation of my commitment to, and achievement of what she described as ‘an accurate, authentic and honest description and analysis’.

I also reflected on my own responses to interviews with Laura in general, and hearing about Laura’s peak experience and its impact in particular. By nature, I am not a person whose initial reaction is easily to get ‘caught up’ or enthused either about ideas or people at first meeting, often preferring to get to know a person over time and to reflect and discuss ideas in a positive but more measured way. Consequently, I was intrigued by just what it was that went on in these interactions with Laura which provoked such strong positive reactions in me. Undoubtedly, there was sufficient affinity of understanding, awareness and experience for me to feel drawn to, moved by and almost envious of the extent and profundity of the experiences she had had. I was aware that not only was this a precious time for her but also that it was indeed life changing and had an impact which went far beyond the time of the experience itself. Additionally, I had the sense of a spiritual level of response in me to a spiritual experience of hers; a response more significant than normal reactions of interest or enthusiasm. I was aware of this touching me deeply, not necessarily being drawn to the other person herself (Laura) but rather a sense of vicariously experiencing the awe and wonder of something transcendent and beyond regular human experience: standing with her and looking outwards at or for something inexplicable. I reflect later that this type of response may be one of the ways in which a spiritually motivated leader can and does affect those with whom she/he interacts and thus has an influence over and above ‘good leadership’.

6.5 Laura at work

6.5.1 Laura’s approach and style in dealing with others at work

She sees her characteristics as: ‘I am fair; I genuinely listen; I haven’t got any hidden agendas ...I’m truthful; ..I’m congruent’(2.9.19). She believes (and others consistently confirm) that she has a great capacity for working quickly and undertaking many things at once, which others find tiring ‘the speed at which I work and the level of energy - I wear people out. I have a capacity to work across a full range of things at once’ (2.11). Over time, she has found her intuition strong and reliable, for example, frequently resulting in her making accurate ‘guesstimates’ which are later verified by the more painstaking work of others.
She values all interactions with others intending that 'in every interaction people go away feeling valued, respected, challenged where necessary too .. and with their dignity and ideally something extra as well - with a new idea or a bit of inspiration'(3.8.2). In such interactions she also sees a spiritual dimension: 'I hope people come away saying that I inspire them because ... there's an added dimension to their spirit, or a part of them'(3.13.19) and has feedback from some people which would support this view, indicating that they see her as someone who is highly resilient. In these circumstances, she doesn’t hesitate to say that her inspiration is God which seems to have a powerful effect as people say 'You're not mad, either, are you. Because you’re quite competent and able’ (3.13.28)

6.5.2 Laura’s views on spirituality in the workplace

Her ‘dream is that people can bring all of themselves here into the organisation’(2.16.26). She speaks very openly and freely – particularly in one to one discussions – about her spiritual path and believes that others have responded openly to her ‘a lot of them said ... they felt that there was a part of them that [formerly] they couldn't bring into work’(2.7). She also speaks about her need ‘to have meaning [in my work]; I need to be of service’(2.9) but despite this, on a wider scale, she does not see it as necessarily important that (all or most) others know her view on spirituality; rather she thinks ‘it’s how you are that’s important’(3.7.7). She is also aware that telling ‘everyone’ might alienate people and may be based on ‘spiritual pride’. She herself particularly admires those who don’t necessarily talk about their spirituality but ‘just live it, exude it’ and as a result, have a profound effect on the people who come into contact with them.

She believes that ‘people run away from [the word] spirituality’ and has used different euphemisms at different times. However, for her spirituality implies more than just principles, values and ethics: it is ‘an added dimension on top’ although she is still considering how they link together. She does believe that if the spiritual dimension was firmly rooted, it would not be congruent to have ‘poor’ ethics, standards or principles. In practice, she is insistent that values and ethics are modelled ‘up and down’, from the Board downwards and throughout the College: ‘I, as the leader, live for my values but also with the staff, articulate a community set of values that we all live by’(2.9.26)

6.5.3 Impact of spirituality in her job

In developing the College vision statement, she ‘shied away from the word spiritual’ and spoke about learning, moral and social values and responsibilities (which was also the preferred phrasing for those others who were consulted), together with the phrase ‘developing maximum potential’ which for her includes spiritual potential as well as moral and social responsibilities. In her previous job they used the phrase ‘core values’ with mixed success. In this job she has made a conscious decision not to talk explicitly about spirituality in certain situations for example in College literature or when hiring new people and has instead used the phrase ‘inclusive learning’ which, together with the concepts of the learning organisation, she sees as having ‘a spiritual connotation’.
In other situations – particularly one to one – she is very open about spirituality and her beliefs, not least because she feels she want specifically to engage the spiritual dimension of others in her interactions – at least where they themselves are willing and wishing to do so. ‘I think the spiritual dimension enables people to take that one step further’ (2.8.40).

6.6 The Case Study interviewees

There are 7 interviewees in all:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Principal &amp; Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>A Director and Executive Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>A Head of Department (later becoming an Executive Team member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>Personnel Director and Executive Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>A Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>A Senior Manager (later becoming an Executive Team member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>A Deputy Maintenance Officer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the case of Laura, the introduction and background, including a phenomenological picture, has already been covered in the previous section. The other interviewees are introduced by giving:

- a summary of their role in the College
- observations and reflections on how I experienced them
- any religious background proffered in interviews
- their perception and view of spirituality

6.6.1 Ian

A member of the Executive Team, Ian has been at the College for about 2½ years and is responsible for all aspects of personnel including all personnel related policies and procedures. He has around 15 years prior experience in different organisations, all with a personnel remit and within the education sector. During his time at the College, he has experienced the past three Principals. He has had primary involvement with the voluntary redundancy programme; is developing an effective staff appraisal system to include personal and professional development; working closely with Laura, he is currently focused on developing the strategic objectives for the College and all levels of staff so that the personal objectives are in line with department and College objectives.

Personal approach, style and religious background

From the first, Ian seemed relaxed, friendly, positive, realistic, committed, honest and straightforward in advancing opinions. His responses were often quick, though sometimes he paused for thought but without any sense of holding back. He advanced no information on any particular religious background or stance and I did not specifically enquire about it.
Contact with the Principal
He has frequent daily involvement, 'sometimes hourly, daily. I think it's very rare that we have a day when we don't actually speak to each other'(1.2.13). The involvement covers a wide range of things, especially all aspects of personnel, providing mutual help particularly dealing with difficult situations, plus 'we ... brainstorm ... and support each other generally'(1.2.17).

Spirituality
For Ian, spirituality is 'really about values and it's about what you aspire to personally, yourself in terms of the way you want to treat people, the environment ... working to my own values and not compromising those values'(1.5.21). The way this is lived out is by working to his values and not compromising them. When asked about spiritual experiences, he paused for thought and then cited an example of selfless service by someone who was going to take redundancy and linked this to the fact that he and the Principal 'know what we are doing is right'(1.5.40) and are handling people fairly 'treating people properly, having the values, getting the environment right for them'(1.5.42). Ian feels spirituality is relevant to the workplace since for him it is based in personal integrity and living out values.

6.6.2 Adrian
Adrian is a Director with responsibility 'for all the learning and the resources allocated to teacher delivery'. Although there is no official position as deputy to the Principal, in practice he frequently performs this role, and is a member of the Executive Team. In his 15 years at the College, he has held various roles including Head of Department. He is married with children.

Personal approach, style and religious background
Adrian appeared quite serious, even slightly dour, on initial contact and that continued to be true each time I met him. During the course of each interview however, he gradually seemed to warm to dialogue and was occasionally humorous. Often his initial responses seemed slightly cautious or reserved though there were no questions he declined to answer, so this might have been just careful thoughtfulness. Sometimes a question seemed to catch his interest particularly and at these times he answered in great detail, so much so that occasionally I felt it necessary to interrupt lest I ran out of time for asking other questions.

He does not see himself as religious and did not have a church upbringing or background: 'I'm not a churchgoer or anything like that', however 'I occasionally go along because I find it does feed me in the spiritual sense; there are certain individuals that I admire who lead those churches'(1.11.8). He finds that these people 'often challenge him to make more of a step in the Christian faith', though he doesn't do this 'I don't know why I don't but I don't'(1.11.17). He does believe firmly in God and was 'baptised once when I was a student'. He also believes that 'there are certain things that are right and wrong and you will be judged in some way'(1.11.29).

Contact with the Principal
Adrian has a high level of regular contact "If she needs a sounding board then .. she uses me quite a lot; she also does with Ian" (1.1.39).
Spirituality

He 'very much believe[s] in a God and ... something outside of ourselves... in an outside frame of reference; and that there are right values and wrong values and there are right principles and wrong principles' (1.11.9). He would struggle to 'explain that or verbalise it'. On a personal basis he feels that 'I do know I have a certain energising spirit about me and I'd say that is because I do have a spiritual side to my nature' (1.12.48).

He initially said that he is not aware of anything in his life which he would describe as experiences of the spiritual, although 'it's difficult to differentiate between having very strong feelings when something's happened and whether it's... a spiritual experience. I have listened to people talk and I can see [them] as spiritual people and I've felt a tremendous spiritual power and surge from them, so you could describe that as a spiritual experience' (1.11.49). He describes people like this as 'they are transcendent, there is a transcending quality about them' and he can 'read something that gives me the same feeling; I can go into a church and feel it amongst a body of people' (1.12.13). However, he has also felt that at some times in his life, perhaps when faced with very hard decisions that there has been some influence which he can't explain or be specific about which 'I'd almost put down as a spiritual experience'.

In the workplace he believes spirituality has a place in as much as it is bound up with integrity, principles and values. This is something which he believes energises people and enables them to 'make people feel OK even when they are doing tough jobs' (1.12.48). He has read or 'dipped into' some 'classic management books' which he has related strongly to and which feel very relevant to 'our very hard job in this organisation', citing specifically Steven Covey's books and Scott Peck's 'The Road Less Travelled', although prior to working for Laura he would 'never have thought... we could apply that in practice across the whole organisation' (1.13.13).

6.6.3 Philip

Philip has been with the College for 13 years in a number of posts and has held his current post since 1996. In this role, he is responsible for the development of all activities, curriculum related and otherwise, associated with the College which take place outside it, which represents a major portion of the College's students and carries a large budget responsibility. He has worked for 7 Principals during this time. During the period of the case study, he became a member of the Executive Team.

Personal approach, style and religious background

Philip is tall and with a somewhat 'patrician' appearance, smartly, even meticulously, dressed in a business suit. Quite precise in his answers, he elaborates little, is not easy to chat to and even less easy to interview: I felt least relaxed with him compared with all the others. His responses are measured, considered, careful and usually minimalist, and my experience was that he is unwilling to venture an opinion unless he can substantiate it in some objective fashion. He consistently answers closed questions with 'yes' or 'no' and does not elaborate further. As a result of my own sense of discomfort I asked at one point in interview #1 if I was irritating him or causing offence which he assured me I was not. He was often unwilling to venture into areas where he was asked to give subjective views of others, especially if he had not related to each person from the same status or job
position and more than once closed down a line of questioning with the phrase ‘I prefer to leave it at that’. On the basis of his answers, he appears relatively unaffected by the personal style of others and ascribes the pressures that he experiences to the considerable scope of the job, not the styles of individual managers. Despite my discomfort with interactions with Philip, I warmed to him over the period of the study and had the impression that his reserved and cautious nature masked reactions and responses which he was unwilling to acknowledge freely – at least to me.

After the first interview, he indicated that he was a scientist by background and being an assessor of PhD theses which are quantitative in nature, he distrusts and is unconvinced of the value of qualitative research. He gave no indication of his views on religion or of any relevant background in this area.

Contact with the Principal
He has had direct access to the past 3 Principals and that continues, currently with fairly frequent contact and dialogue.

Spirituality
Connotations of the word for Philip are ‘probably (pause) a religious base (pause) but not exclusively’(1.4.29). When asked if he had ever had any experiences which he might consider spiritual or as having a spiritual thread running through them he replied ‘not that I can call to mind’. He feels that spirituality is not something that has particular relevance to daily life in work or outside (for himself or others) other than that people bring their beliefs and experiences with them. In this context only, he recognises that ‘whatever it means for a person’ spirituality could be part of their makeup and therefore it ‘might have a significant bearing on the way in which that person behaves’(1.5.1) – the examples he gave (which he chose to be deliberately diverse) were someone who had, perhaps, a liver disease or ‘let us say’ a passion for vintage cars.

6.6.4 Ron
Ron is a deputy maintenance officer, describing himself as ‘a general dogsbody’ (1.1.11) in the College, supervising a team of tradesmen. He has been at the College for 20 years and holds a post on the Health and Safety Committee.

Personal approach, style and religious background
Ron is self-effacing, direct, blunt and frank, believing that he has been around so long that he does not need to worry about speaking his mind. At the first interview he seemed relatively uncomfortable with the interview process but answered all the questions very directly and relaxed somewhat as the interview progressed. His answers to questions seemed factual and realistic though his reasoning or line of argument sometimes seemed simplistic even when considering complex questions. I liked his disarming frankness and honest approach to life generally. He is highly committed to his job and takes a pride in his work ‘If you don’t do [a job] properly, you jolly well go back there and do it again. It’s got to be ... repaired as it was originally’ and he disapproves of certain of his colleagues who, in his opinion, have a much more slapdash approach.
He is not a churchgoer, though his daughters are - 'they enjoy those sort of things'.

Contact with the Principal

Ron has relative low contact with Laura. He sees her in the corridor to 'pass the time of day'. Most contact is with his own supervisor and although he thinks Laura is available, has not had any cause to make contact directly with her. He attends staff meetings and the Principal did come to one of their group meetings.

Spirituality

The word does 'not really' have any meaning for him. He recognises that different people are interested in different things but 'I just respect everybody's views and expect them to respect mine, so I would never condemn anything or condone anything' (1.5.17). In terms of a spiritual component to one's make-up, he was unsure but he thought that he had a 'society thing', related to the way he views others: 'I give blood and these sort of things to help people; I help with charities; I would certainly help anybody' (1.5.26). This is important to him and he gets irritated with people who are 'takers out of life' as he strongly believes in the need to be putting back, with direct action and via charities 'When I retire, I'll probably help a charity or something' (1.5.43). As far as relevance at work, he believes one should do jobs to a high standard 'as though it was our own home', not just doing the minimum.

6.6.5 Marie

Marie described herself as 'basically just a lecturer', teaching 'A' level and HND courses, and providing tutorial support. She has been with the College 15 years and said that she is interested almost exclusively in her job and the students, to whom she is deeply committed, but is not really that interested in the broader picture. She is somewhat disgruntled that, in effect, she is still at the same level as 15 years ago since the next level to which she might have aspired has been abolished.

Personal approach, style and religious background

Marie is cheery, direct, warm and straightforward – coming across as honest and 'telling it like it is' without trying to be particularly diplomatic. She is easy to converse with and was willing to give her views and opinions readily, elaborating where she felt inclined. Self effacing and inclined to minimise herself and her achievements, she has a keen, if slightly cynical sense of humour which made the interviews enjoyable. Highly committed to the students, she puts up with numerous shortcomings and inequitable situations within the College (some of which she detailed) in order to do the best by her students. A high priority for her is to treat people's feelings with care, not upset them and apologise appropriately if she is the cause of upset. She believes that others should take a similar stance. She provided some insights into what she heard and observed of the views of other lecturers.

Although Marie said that the word religion 'came up' for her in connection with spirituality, she gave no indication that she had any personal religious beliefs.

Contact with the Principal

At the interviews for a new Principal, Marie explained humorously that she was one of 'a select band of people [who] were invited to grill them [the interviewees]' (1.2.20). Since
Laura’s appointment, she has been to see her over a particular issue but contact otherwise is usually through staff meetings and occasionally bumping into her ‘in the corridor ... or in the loo’ but otherwise has no personal contact.

**Spirituality**

When considering spirituality ‘the first word that comes to mind is religion. And then talking about ‘souls’ is another word that comes to mind. And generally the great ethos .. of perceptions and feelings - it’s all a bit vague’(1.6.32). She doesn’t feel that she has got a ‘spiritual side’ to her, as far as she is aware – though ‘I might have and don’t know it’s there’ (1.6.45). When pushed, she suggested that ‘people have feelings that a biologist can’t analyse or define’ which causes them to act in certain ways towards others and where those actions were ‘nice’ and ‘kind’ then she thought you might argue that that had something to do with spirituality, however, ‘spirituality is not a word that enters my vocabulary very often at all’(1.7.11). She has never been aware of any experience in her life that she would describe as spiritual. Even a major personal family tragedy which caused great distress was not seen by her as linked to spirituality nor did it prompt her to be different in any spiritually related way.

As far as the relevance of spirituality in the workplace is concerned, this would depend on what definition was being used ‘if it’s treating people pleasantly and dealing with people’s emotions in a sensitive way, then yes’ (1.7.27).

**6.6.6 Catherine**

Catherine is a long-standing member of staff and had risen to be a Head of Department – a position which she had held for some few years when I first interviewed her. In this role she was a manager of a large staff team with a significant cross-College responsibility in addition. She had been set to take a voluntary redundancy package but had changed her mind when the current Principal created a new Director role with specific responsibilities (and which necessitated being a member of the Executive Team) which she successfully applied for. In this new role, she has moved from managing a large staff team (50) to a very small one. This was a big decision as she has significant interests outside the College and had to consider carefully whether she wanted the job and the commitment it required: ‘I’m not prepared to take on a job like that if I’m not prepared to do it properly’ (1.8.16). The style and level of commitment of the Principal was an important factor in her decision.

When I initially selected Catherine as an interviewee she had not decided whether to apply for her new role. However, it was particularly helpful to be able to follow her progress as she made the transition into a newly created senior role with new responsibilities, becoming a member of the Executive Team. She started her new job 3 weeks before the first interview and at that time was, concurrently, still in the process of finalising her previous role.

**Personal approach, style and religious background**

Catherine is very clear, straightforward, practical and pragmatic in her interactions, answering questions at some length in a direct, no nonsense style. She describes herself as someone who is very much a ‘people person’ but also ‘task focused but taking
people fully into account' (1.8.42) which she sees as essential to 'succeeding'. I found her easy to talk to and readily forthcoming in her responses.

She is not a Christian but was 'brought up in a Christian way and I actually have a Christian ethic so I'm more of a humanist in terms of my morality' (1.8.23). She does not believe in God and does not understand how others can see God as essential to cope with the difficulties of life; she judges whether she is 'winning or surviving by my own value system'.

Contact with the Principal

Prior to Laura taking up her post, Catherine's involvement with the last full-time Principal was limited 'occasionally I got consulted but then for months on end I wouldn't speak to the Principal' (1.3.30). Since Laura's appointment she has 'already had more meetings ... than I had previously'. With her acceptance of a new role, the contact level should rise considerably 'she becomes my direct line manager ... day to day we should be in contact' (1.3.47) and she was looking forward to a closer relationship.

I felt that Catherine's views would be particularly interesting over time as she moved from a job with limited exposure to the Principal to one with frequent exposure.

Spirituality

Asked about spirituality she said 'It's not a word I use a great deal because, I suppose, I'm not a Christian' (1.8.22). 'I'm more of a humanist in terms of my morality ... I suppose I think in terms of value systems ... 'do unto others as you would be done by' ... and concepts [like] justice, integrity, honesty, equal opportunity, fair mindedness' (1.8.24). She does see spirituality as a part of a person which she equates with values and their 'moral basis': 'we've all got values whether we recognise them or not' and this 'does not have an overgloss of religion'. 'That is my value system and that is what I see as spirituality in terms of any job that you do' (1.8.30). This shows in how one deals with other people and she is 'winning or surviving by my own value system' not by any external force or higher power. She thinks that people who work with you will know what your value system is and whether they can trust you. In this sense spirituality is relevant in the workplace, most particularly dealing with staff with integrity, which she seeks to do and requires of others working for her.

6.7 Observation

No attempt has been made at this stage to summarise or amalgamate the data from individual interviewees. The emergent themes are picked up again in Chapter 7 (Case Study - Findings, Analysis and Reflections).

6.8 Laura's personal and management style

6.8.1 Laura's view of the College

Laura's assessment of the College was that she saw the need for 'organisational healing' as a result of past regimes: 'it hasn't had a real management culture; it's had a bully culture where things have gone underground' (2.18.24). She believes that staff see
themselves as caring passionately about the students but generally believing that ‘you can’t trust managers, they don’t care. Managers bash you about in one way or another’ (2.16). She hesitates to generalise about all staff but some at least seem to want to be left alone to do their teaching ‘even if it’s 25 years out of date [and] it may be in the old way and how they’re used to it’ (2.16.13). She ‘inherited a culture that was [based on] ‘no challenging’ (1.3) but there was ‘a lot of cynicism and anger’ both in the College specifically but also in Further Education generally. Staff have said to her that ‘we don’t know how to respond to positive things. We’re so used to coming to meetings to slag management off and to throw .. brickbats. We don’t know how to be positive back, yet’ (2.11.17).

Laura felt that she had to undertake significant cultural change as, overall, the staff were entrenched and feeling vulnerable. However they were also reluctant to give feedback in consultation processes because, based on historical experience, they were suspicious about the process and felt that they would not be listened to or that speaking out would be detrimental to their career prospects.

6.8.2 Laura’s approach to the role of Principal

She is convinced that the Chief Executive sets the tone in an organisation and that the CEO’s intervention is essential, for example ‘if the CEO doesn’t say ‘thank you’ then it doesn’t matter who else does, it counts less’ (1.3). She sees the job as a huge challenge, seeking to develop the College whilst also growing respect and treatment of each other as a community where she sees everyone as a peer: ‘I have as much time and respect for Bob who picks up the leaves, and the technicians, as I do for the Executive Team or the Corporation’ (2.13).

She believes she has a clear vision and mission ‘with students at the heart of everything’ (2.14) and that she and the staff ‘co-create .. the community’. To do this she feels ‘rationally and intuitively’ that the staff have to know her as a person and deliberately sets out to influence by meeting with people and spending time with them — an approach counter to the previous culture and difficult to get established as an accepted norm. She wants and encourages people to be constructively critical and has a high tolerance in this regard, not hearing things as impertinent which other authority figures might consider impertinent (‘I hear it as people exploring’) — though she has had feedback suggesting that she should ‘cut them off ‘sooner’ (2.13).

In reflecting on her personal and management approach, Laura commented ‘as the leader I live for my values ... I do articulate where I’m coming from and what those values are. ... I am fair; I genuinely listen; I haven’t got any hidden agendas; I’m truthful; .. I’m congruent’ (2.9). She seeks to be open and encourages feedback whilst also clearly stating when things are unacceptable for which she gave specific examples. Her hope is that people observing her would ‘come away saying - even, in work context - “in that interaction or watching her do that or whatever, I see a fair, supportive, loving, professional, competent person who’s well, balanced, who looks at it from all sides and who in the context of that decision has made the best one possible and we can see how she got there”.’ (3.7.34).
Based on her expressed views, Laura’s espoused approach as a leader and manager seems to have the following components:

- She should articulate the mission clearly, set direction and pace, and inspire and motivate others
- She wishes to articulate her own values and visibly work to these in practice
- Her approach is ‘first among equals’, a peer community, co-creating the future
- Her starting point is to trust others, to value them and to ascribe positive motives to their actions unless they demonstrate otherwise
- Personal interaction is essential to build trust and to motivate staff; she places high value on such interactions which should be grounded in respect and value of the other
- Two-way openness and feedback are essential and can only be achieved on the basis of trust
- Decision making and control should be co-operative and appropriately delegated, although the Principal still needs to hold the vision and demand firm adherence to agreed principles
- Be caring and concerned but challenging and requiring high competence
- Acknowledge and encourage deployment and development of the ‘whole person’ even in a workplace context

The primary components then are that she wishes to lead by having a clear vision and values which she visibly promotes, adheres to and makes happen. She wants to establish actively fostered, trusting relationships such that staff are jointly involved in decisions, agreeing the goals and progress towards achieving them. The personal dimension is of primary importance both in quality of relationship and in enabling the possibility of development of the ‘whole person’.

One of the elements which does not come through clearly in this summary is Laura’s belief that she is ‘not alone’ in undertaking this task and shouldering this responsibility. Her belief in God and that she is doing the work she is ‘meant’ to do is a significant supporting factor. This compares with other leaders who see things in the same way. For example Judge interviewed various leaders who were able to be more effective when recognising that they were not ultimately responsible for everything but could find strength in God (1999:57, 75-76), one of his interviewees commenting: ‘I’ll tell you, it takes a lot of pressure off. I mean, I don’t feel responsible totally for the results here. I do feel responsible for doing the best I can, but I am not driving this thing; and I don’t want to drive it. I want to do the very best that I can and just see where it leads us’ (1999:75).

It was clear from the interviews that Laura is passionately committed to this route and approach which sets a high, even idealistic standard. What was then important was to understand what happens in practice: how she goes about implementing her approach and how this is experienced by others.
6.8.4 The perception of others

In reviewing the data from the other interviewees on their perception of Laura’s style and approach, it became clear that there was a marked degree of difference between those who were in more frequent contact with her and those not, so the following sections present the data grouped by this criterion.

6.8.4.1 Those in frequent contact

Ian’s view was: ‘I trust her’([I.4.16]), ‘her style is very open, very warm; [slow pauses] direct ... and encouraging. She is very achievement focused, very achievement driven .. but for good reason and ... she makes sure the people understand .. that they know why she is going in the direction that she is going. ... she is fun to work with as well’([II.2.34]). He sees her as generous and open with people having direct access to her. She involves the Executive Team in College processes and is personally involved with all stages. However, she does not interfere inappropriately ‘she enables us all to take collective responsibility for our actions’([II.4.20]). Ian feels that she has the trust of the majority of the staff, and Corporation members, who like her and trust her. She can address the staff with integrity and be believed. He sees her reflecting a lot on her experiences and when talking about things which involve her values, talks through outcomes and considers the whole person. Also ‘if she’s having difficulty with something, she will say and will explain why’([II.7.6]). He could see no downsides to this approach.

Philip has had contact with many Principals both in colleges where he has worked and elsewhere and despite acknowledging the competence of some of them, feels that ‘very few would inspire trust over a period of time’([P1.4.4]) whereas in Laura ‘I think I would have more faith, more trust .. than probably most of the Principals I’ve met [or worked for]’([P1.3.45]). Alongside this trust he does see Laura as ‘potentially quite ruthless .. but with the best of intentions and for the right motives’([P1.4.6]) and does not find this either discomforting nor compromising the sense of trust he has in her.

In terms of management style ‘Laura tends to be very much hands on and that has its advantages and disadvantages’ ([P2.5.28]). The advantages include fast access which can save protracted debate and make the organisation more responsive. The disadvantage is that ‘it does place the risk perhaps on one person’. She has an open door policy with no filters except her inevitably large personal workload. There is ‘a lot of direct communication with people at all levels’ and ‘the key important decisions are always explained’. He sees her as ‘a very able communicator’.

Adrian’s response was unhesitating: ‘It is quite clear – first of all, she is very open and consultative to the point that it can get uncomfortable and bumpy’([A1.2.6]). He elaborated saying ‘if you are genuinely open and you genuinely consult, it creates a lot of uncertainty and anxiety in people ... you can be dealing with those tensions as part of the consultation process. You can’t genuinely consult and not make people feel uncomfortable in some cases’ ([A1.2.11]). He felt this discomfort was inevitable because the outcome of the consultation had a potential impact on some people’s jobs and for others, their role within the College. The other ‘key thing that marks [Laura] out ..is she’s definitely a highly principled leader who wants to .. have strong values for the organisation that we all live by’ ([A1.2.33]). He was clear that these two points are ‘big differences compared to what has occurred in this College before’. Whilst Laura is adamant about strong values and empowering people he ‘wouldn’t want to give the impression that Laura’s soft’. He sees it necessary to be ‘tough about the issues and things that need to move on .. and with
individuals who do not perform' (AI.3.39) and believes Laura is taking this approach, indeed she has 'made a certain [management] layer in the organisation redundant' (AI.3.43). The important things which characterise the present process are that 'the process is done honestly with integrity .. with objective judgements; we don't have favouritism [and] we operate equal opportunities .. during the process' (AI.4.1).

He sees Laura as working quickly. She also 'will face difficult issues and problems head on rather than avoid them' (AI.8.17), in particular, confronting staff whom she feels are being obstructive. She is explicit about how she sees their behaviour and how that clashes with her direction for the College, and whilst emphasising that she 'values them as a person' asks whether they want to be 'on board' or not. 'I have seen her turn people round like that' (AI.6.4). Because this is a very different and more positive regime than previously, people 'want constant reassurance' that 'we really have moved into a new approach'.

Adrian sees the management team as working co-operatively and as being free to express their views openly, guided by strong principles and values. Laura however is also demanding, 'if you haven't done something right you soon know, but it's not a beating about the head culture'. - Over all, Laura is 'quite an energising personality' and a 'natural communicator [who] puts people at their ease'.

6.8.4.2 Those in less frequent contact

Catherine has seen a significant change since Laura took over. 'Laura's very much a democratic leader ... she believes genuinely in consultation .. and in more open management style' (CI.6.28). There has been more consultation than before and requests for feedback in various ways (for example, direct, e-mail, surveys). The opportunities have been there and 'as people were less suspicious, a lot of people have been doing that' (CI.3.43). Catherine sees Laura as a 'very powerful leader' and 'perfectly prepared to take [even tough] decisions but sees people as being there to tell her what they think ... the whole organisation is learning, moving forward in a kind of joint venture' (CI.6.30). Over major issues like restructuring she is being careful to consult, review and keep going round that cycle 'to give people the opportunity to own [the changes]' (CI.6.42). As well as being positive and a 'great relief it is also 'very unnerving in its own way' since after 'years of [a different management style] you are inevitably a little bit wary'. She believes that, at first, people had been watching suspiciously to see if her processes were genuine.

On a personal level she feels able to trust her, otherwise 'I would not have applied for this job'. She believes that Laura is 'concerned to deal with integrity' and that they would be able to resolve even significant disagreements appropriately. She is very approachable and Catherine has been able to gain ready access to her on the rare occasions she has needed to. Laura has 'tremendous energy' and she sees her as a harder worker than previous Principals. Overall, she is 'very comfortable with what she's been trying to do' (CI.3.46)

Ron is still forming his opinion about Laura. He sees her as 'not in the ivory tower all the time' and taking a real interest in the College and its buildings as 'a big part of her life if not all her life' (RI.7.4), more so than previous Principals - 'I feel it's her College and she will become proud of it' (RI.7.9). She is a good communicator of her vision and how things are going; honest; 'quiet but strong ... not really a person to muck about with' (RI.2.33) and she seems to have the trust of the senior managers and governors. Although building the trust of staff and 'being told the truth now', he thinks she is not
fully in touch with (low) staff morale and is perhaps too focused on what the College has to do without fully taking into account staff needs (although he did not specify in detail what he thought these were).

Marie has found Laura 'totally different' from previous Principals - open and honest, which for her 'by definition' also means trustworthy, willing to listen and responding 'freely and openly'. She finds her available when necessary, having said from the start that she is an 'open door Principal' and Marie has found this to be so personally as well as for a number of her colleagues. In casual corridor conversations, Laura 'will ask me how things are going and wait for the answer'(MI.3.12) which she sees as very positive and in contrast with previous experiences. Whilst Laura 'responds well to reasoned argument', Marie is confident that she would be straightforward in saying if she disagreed with something 'she won't just pander to you and then after you've gone say "That was the most appalling load of rubbish". She wouldn't do that' (MI.3.40). She has seen Laura present the situation of the College honestly, putting forward a clear recovery plan and consultation process. Later, Laura had to announce that she had not received accurate information first time round and things were even worse that she thought. 'The cynics in the audience thought "the same as [previous regimes]" but I genuinely think she was misinformed' (MI.4.49).

6.8.4.3 Laura's leadership style: reservations or drawbacks

Interviewees were asked to comment on whether they had any reservations about, or saw any drawbacks in, Laura’s leadership style.

Ian - none to do with Laura personally but as a College cultural issue, feels that no matter how you act towards staff at this College 'my perception is that [they] seem quite selfish and ... have little consideration for others'(11.4.31). As a result he thinks people have taken easy access to an extreme and are wanting more than is reasonable. He feels, and thinks Laura feels, exasperation when, on giving so much, more is demanded. He thinks she is sometimes too trusting of people, taking things at face value and giving people the benefit of the doubt 'she will always try to see the best .. in people'(11.7.17), although she is not 'soft'. As a personal development area, he feels she should slow down and consolidate, building on present achievements before jumping on to the next. Ian feels the need sometimes to ‘pull her back’ (from jumping ahead in immediate action) to make sure that the process details have been fully covered and considered.

Ron - knows that Laura has an open door policy but is not convinced it works that well in practice, although he has no personal experience. He would like her to communicate even more, particularly with support staff and feels that further effort needs to be put into addressing staff morale which he believes is very low.

Catherine - 'There are downsides to any management style, [no] matter which one you go for' (CI.7.11). 'We do seem to have gone into some protracted consultation periods, which I'm not sure are totally necessary, and they do delay operationally what you can do'. Whilst this does satisfy the ‘due needs of the HR process’ there is a human cost in delaying so long and in the future it might be 'a cause of concern for me if we did too much more of
On the other hand, on non-consultative issues she 'could perhaps make decisions too quickly' (C1.7.22).

She also has a concern that 'open door management' can go too far, with 'pushy' people presenting a biased view which is not representative of the 'silent majority'. She feels Laura is well capable of dealing with this issue but it is a potential cause for concern. After moving into her new role, she felt that 'if there was anything I would criticise her for, it would be that she takes on so many things' (C2.4.24).

Marie - sees no real negatives. Her experience is that other staff feel Laura doesn’t make decisions fast enough. 'We’ve gone from a Principal who says [here, M snaps her fingers] “I want it now” ... to a principal who consults' (MI.3.3) however, Marie sees it as typical that under the former regime, staff complained about not being consulted and now that they are, they complain about slow decision making. She thinks Laura could be more assertive in making decisions and not be quite so ready to listen to and perhaps be influenced by 'people who whinge and whinge'.

Philip - feels Laura needs to be more visible in the College whilst recognising that 'this is the complexity of the role' - having significant presence inside the College whilst also playing a significant role outside. He pointed out that there are areas which could be misinterpreted as to do with her style but are in fact due to external influences such as compliance with legislation over employment.

Adrian - believes Laura can be a 'feedback junkie', sometimes seeking too much and pushing the consultation process 'beyond that which groups of staff can handle' (A1.8.19). He gave a specific example of a consultation with a group of staff whose jobs were at risk and described how stressful they found the process. Laura’s response was that re-organisation was both inevitable and a continuous process which senior professional people need to accept, especially since, as Adrian confirmed, 'they know exactly what the situation is - there is no hidden agenda' (A1.9.38). Other than this there were no drawbacks to Laura’s style that he could think of.

6.8.5 Reflections on espoused vs experienced style and approach

The data show a very high degree of congruence between what Laura seeks to do and believes she does, and how that is experienced by others (sections 6.8.3 and 6.8.4). Each person had a slight variation in perception, often related to their particular needs at the time (for example, Catherine for more guidance at early stages in a new role, Ron for more contact in a less prominent staff area, Marie for greater visibility). Early on, there was a strong sense from interviewees that Laura was being ‘tested out’, or at least observed, to see if she really meant what she said about a new way of operating. It seemed that in the past there was little or no trust of management and that that this had to be established by Laura before people were willing to risk engaging with her at all openly.

Finally, those working more closely, and therefore having more frequent contact, were more rapidly and more profoundly aware of Laura’s views, style and approach. They answered related questions more fully than other interviewees and were very clear about their views of Laura. The inference is that it is not possible to work in close proximity to someone without seeing a more complete and detailed picture of
all aspects of how they function under a range of circumstances – a theme taken up further in section 7.3.

6.8.6 The influence and impact of the leader

Overall, the view that a leader, in this case the Principal, holds a highly influential position in the organisation and needs to be prominent and visible was strongly reflected in the views of my interviewees. One Executive Director commented 'I think it's important to allow people to know the identity of the individual who is running the place'. Another said 'it's quite interesting, the person at the top is so key – she warned me about this when I took on this job ... If you've got a show or a demonstration or an exhibition or a prize giving, it only counts if the Principal is there ... the person at the top is key'. This influence also affects the culture of the organisation, the way that it operates: 'it's interesting how the culture, the ethos, the values come from the person at the top'. These sentiments highlight the concern of Judge to discover more about who leaders are rather than what they do: he notes that there is 'virtually no publicly available data on the inner life of CEOs' (Judge 1999:3), a deficiency to which the phenomenological and other data from this study contribute.

The previous leadership regime was perceived by all interviewees as having characteristics which did not encourage openness and critical input, nor set consistent or positive values. These different attitudes had a far reaching effect: 'I've seen that permeate down through the organisation and the organisation get very unhealthy'. Under that regime, two managers dealt with what they experienced as a conflict of values by running their departments in a way which shielded their people from what they saw as undesirable in terms of that Principal's overall style and values. They thus allowed these managers to maintain their personal values and integrity and to try and encourage these with their own staff. As they spoke of it, I had an image of a 'siege mentality', which most interviewees, particularly the managers, acknowledged as very stressful as they were unable to operate openly in the way that they wished. This goes some way to confirm my proposition P3 in Figure 12.

Laura's espoused style is directed towards a very different way of operating – consultative, encouraging not fear-based, tough but willing to listen and, overall, empowering, wanting to 'co-create' the culture and future co-operatively with staff. The result of this style is enabling for managers and she seeks to set this tone down through the organisation. Laura specifically seeks not only to be clear what her principles and values are but also directly and openly to stand against behaviours which are in contradiction, some examples of which are given later. Further, the proximity of staff to, and frequency of contact with, the leader was found to be highly significant as discussed later, particularly in section 7.3.

6.8.7 Laura as a competent leader

Given the focus of this research, spirituality and leadership, I was interested in how the perceived competence of the leader might affect the overall picture, a factor rarely addressed in literature related to spirituality in the workplace.

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55 An exception is Judge (1999:149) who suggests that 'perceptions of competence are necessary to enable organizational members to trust their leaders'.
There are numerous possible approaches to defining and developing effective leadership which might be considered in order to make some assessment of Laura’s competence. For example in Chapter 2 I referred briefly to the approaches of Senge (1990), and Covey (1992). Here I compare briefly the views of two internationally known and well respected pairs of management consultants with data from the case study.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) list the four vital competencies which they found that successful leaders possess:

Management of attention – leader’s visions commanded the attention and commitment of those who work for and with them

Management of meaning – leaders were skilled communicators, able to distil information and cut through the complexity to frame issues in simple images and language

Management of trust – trust is essential to all organisations and leaders expressed this through a consistency of purpose and in their dealings with colleagues and others. Even those who disagreed with them admired leaders for their consistency of purpose.

Management of self – leaders were adept at identifying and fully utilising their strengths; and accepting and seeking to develop areas of weakness

Laura appears highly aware of each of these and is actively seeking to implement the first three in the College both personally and through her Executive Management Team. She is also active in pursuing the fourth personally, through seeking feedback and attending development courses and workshops on a regular basis.

For another perspective, I considered the approach of Kouzes and Posner (1996), selected not only because of their international reputation but also because I have first hand positive experience of using this methodology myself as a manager in a blue chip multinational. Kouzes and Posner propose five principal characteristics for effective leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K &amp; P Characteristic</th>
<th>Data on Laura</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging the process</td>
<td>’she’s not afraid to face difficult issues and will face [them] rather than avoid them’ (A1.8.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>’I’m now making clear statements’ (about some unacceptable attitudes) and demanding changes (L2.9.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring Shared Vision</td>
<td>’She is a very able communicator’ (P1.7.12), ’there is a lot of direct communication with people at all levels’ (P2.6.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She’s had open meetings where she gives a rundown of where she sees things ... what the changes are, and how they’re going to affect people’ (M1.3.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling others to Act</td>
<td>’the whole organisation is learning, moving forward in a kind of joint venture’ (C1.6.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling the Way</td>
<td>’a new Principal is providing effective leadership. Management problems are being resolved and communication is effective’ – External Inspection 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>’Her style is very open, very warm; direct ... and encouraging. ... she is fun to work with, as well’ (Fl.2.34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 27 – K & P leaders characteristics vs Laura

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Without applying their proprietary evaluative process it is not possible to give a
detailed assessment, but in Figure 27 I have taken each of these characteristics and
compared them with extracts from the data. This indicates positive correlations in
each of the five areas.

In addition to the above indicators, my own professional experience indicates that to
be competent and effective in implementing major change, a leader must pay
attention to three key, linked, elements: effective communication, a high level of
direct contact and a common approach by managers throughout the management
levels. My observations on each of these as applied to this situation are:

Effective communication: there was a high level of agreement that Laura was an
effective communicator at many levels (one-to-one, small groups, larger gatherings).
I observed this personally at two staff meetings I attended, in one to one meetings
with her, and noted that it was commented on positively by most interviewees. She
sought extensive feedback prior to making decisions about organisational change and
keeps staff up to date on progress. However, all-staff meetings are large, relatively
short and infrequent (once a term) so opportunities for direct influence in this way is
limited. Laura has a whole series of other initiatives to enable wider communication,
particularly with smaller groups of staff, backed up with e-mail, College news-sheet
and letters. Even so, there are indications that this is not enough to convey clearly
and strongly her vision, commitment and integrity in practice. Often, these aspects
were only clear either where there was a more direct contact with her or contact over
a significant period of time.

High level of direct contact: This happens as a matter of course between Laura, her
executive directors and some senior managers, but is difficult or impossible to
maintain throughout the College with all managers and staff. It was clear that contact
levels are higher than formerly and this was appreciated (one interviewee contrasted
it with a previous Principal who used to produce communications videos 'which
people hated'). However, with the size of the College and just one Principal, this is a
difficult objective to achieve. Teaching and support staff stated that they would wish
for a higher level of contact. (See also later comments in section 7.3 on proximity
and 8.5 concerning processes.) Laura herself places high priority on direct contact
and its style, saying that what she wished in interactions with her was that 'people go
away feeling valued, respected, challenged where necessary too, and with their dignity and
ideally something else as well - a new idea, a bit of inspiration'. Clearly, whatever the
level of contact, on its own this is not enough since the contact needs to be effective
(however defined) in order to be of value as a process.

Common Management Approach: given the limitations which are perhaps inevitable
in the two previous areas, a common approach from all managers becomes vital and
possibly critical. I did not interview any 'first line' managers but it was clear from
those who reported to them that - during the period of this study at least - they were
not wholly or consistently 'speaking with one voice', promoting the messages that
the Principal and the Executive Team were committed to, and doing so with
enthusiasm, determination and conviction. I did not have the sense that this was
because they were opposed to these views, but rather that Laura had been
concentrating more on her immediate team and had not yet got managers at other
levels fully 'fired up'. I also formed the impression that the reorganisation (including
flattening of the management structure) had increased workloads for everyone, perhaps especially for line managers, and that they had not yet adjusted to new responsibilities and ways of working.

My overall assessment, then, is that Laura is a very able, competent and successful leader. By a number of different recommendations, measures, application of organisational structures, operational practice and effectiveness, she and the College rate highly. This is reflected in external assessments both from Investors in People and the Further Education Funding Council. It is further reinforced by other external assessments and awards received in 2000/2001 after the time of my study, namely: the only Further and Higher Education institution to be selected in the Vision 100 listing (the top 100 most visionary public and private sector organisations in the UK); the Excel-SE award (a European award for business excellence based on 9 criteria including leadership, policy and strategy, people management and customer satisfaction) and a GoodCorporation kite mark based on adherence to ethical standards.

I suggest that this highlights a significant issue. Unquestionably, Laura's perceived competence, ability to engender trust, clarity of vision, enthusiasm and energy in implementing that vision make her a leader attractive to many, and mark her as one who inspires others. However, questions arise as to what the consequences would be were she less competent and/or if the College were not perceived to be making progress against tough objectives. I have no case data that give any indication of the answer to these questions. However, the inference from the above sources coupled with my own assessment, lead me to speculate that perceived lack of competence might (at least) have as consequences a reduced ability on Laura's part to inspire others and take her vision forward, a greater unwillingness of staff to co-operate with change, and greater resistance to accepting heavy workloads or additional duties.

6.9 Participant's perceptions of Laura and spirituality

Although my primary interest is in considering the impact of spiritual motivation, this presented a problem when deciding what to ask interviewees and when to ask it. I was very conscious that in asking questions about spirituality, I was essentially being interventionist, causing people to reflect on an area which (as became clear) few had previously considered in this context. I was acutely aware of not wanting to ask questions which would inject my own thinking or pre-dispose interviewees to consider actions or perceptions in ways that they might not have done had I not asked the question. However, I did feel that I needed to be specific in order to understand their positions. The way I finally decided to approach this problem was that in the initial interview (early 1999), but at a late stage in the interview to allow for any spontaneous comments, I sought views of how the interviewees perceived spirituality, views of the relevance of spirituality in the workplace (data from both is included with the individual profiles), and their perception of Laura with regard to spirituality. After that, I deliberately did not raise the issue of spirituality again until interview #4 (mid 2000) when I sought a further update in all three areas.
Laura's own position on spirituality is covered in detail in the phenomenological view (section 6.3). The position of the other interviewees follows.

Broadly, there seems to be a major discernible difference in the views of those who have a higher level of exposure to the Principal as opposed to those who have the 'normal' level of contact experienced by most staff. In summary, the former are clearly aware of her interest in and commitment to both spirituality and to a broadly positive view of religion. The latter are generally not aware of this interest or commitment, nor of Laura's own view of herself as a strongly spiritual person.

Ian knows that spirituality is important to Laura, as he commented wryly 'she never stops telling us about it ... the books she's read [and] the retreats she's been on' (II.6.46). He observes her reflecting a lot on her experiences.

In our initial interview Catherine said she felt that she was beginning to 'form some judgements' but related these to Laura's strong beliefs in 'openness ... collective responsibility ... professionalism ... dealing honestly ... integrity ... building trust ... creating ownership ... concern about values' (CI.1.0). By the second interview, as her level of contact with Laura increased, there was some change 'it's quite fascinating, her interest in spiritual matters and how they do inform her life (C2.4.49).

Ron has no perception of Laura's view on spirituality but sees her as interested in the fabric of the College and also on issues such as the drugs policy.

When asked if, in her dealings with the Principal she had any sense that Laura has views or beliefs around spirituality, Marie replied 'No' but added 'she feels that the students are the central thing, and that they need the support, and so she cares. Now if we are going to say that that's what we mean by spirituality, then yes' (MI.8.46).

Philip is aware that spirituality is very important to Laura, a part of her make-up and that she has 'a passionate interest in comparative religions and other cultures, diverse philosophies and that is part of her' (PI.6.7). He seemed uncomfortable with this line of questioning and said firmly 'I prefer to leave it at that'.

Adrian also is aware of how important spirituality is to Laura as she speaks openly and freely about it. He sees that she has a highly energising spirit about her and 'she's able to release that in other people'. He does see in her 'the sort of person who opens up the possibilities [of working with] those people .. who can work to those sort of principles and values and that's a more spiritual approach' (AI.13.17), however, he thinks that 'a lot of the College will be unaware that she is a spiritual person because she doesn't talk openly about that in a whole staff [meeting]' so 'it's only people who work closely with her or involved in certain groups working with her who will be aware of that' (AI.13.38). He is not aware of any negative reaction to this interest and focus of Laura's among the people who work for him or with whom he is in contact.

Overall, it was noticeable that those more distant or in less regular contact did not have any significant awareness of Laura's spiritual motivation or beliefs. As people moved into more regular contact, they became very aware of this, not least because Laura talks about it frequently. This theme — proximity to the leader — is of
considerable significance and is discussed at greater length elsewhere, particularly in section 7.3.

6.10 Case study: changes over time

The case study was designed deliberately as longitudinal in order to eliminate issues arising from the 'single snapshot' approach. In particular, I wanted to confirm over time the impact of any espoused or practised approach and was also interested to see how long changes took to become accepted. Consequently, following the initial interview, there were three further formal interviews. These represent phases as follows:

- Phase 1 - changes between round 1 and 2 (February '99 - July '99)
- Phase 2 - changes between round 2 and 3 (July '99 - Nov '99)
- Phase 3 - changes between round 3 and 4 (November '99 - May 2000)

In addition, I visited the College finally in March 2001 for an informal review with the Principal and some of the other interviewees.

For each phase, I asked questions which focused on 4 areas:

- Changes in the College and their impact
- Present and future demands
- Perception of morale, personal and overall
- Observations on and changes in the style of the Principal

Additionally, in interview 4, I gathered data related to:

- Highs and lows - where I asked each person when considering the past 15 months, what they felt most proud of about the College and what they felt unhappy about or even ashamed of.
- A revisit of views about the relevance of spirituality in the workplace (which I had not mentioned in the intervening interviews)
- Changes in them personally as a result of working for Laura
- The impact on them of taking part in this research

The extensive and detailed recorded data resulting from each of these phases was analysed by phase, grouped by question area and participant. For each question, I grouped individual responses together into a composite. The volume of data is considerable and I present here a summary rather than the whole. Initially, this summary excludes the questions about spirituality in the workplace, which are located at the end of the section.

6.10.1 Changes in leadership style over time - Laura's view

In the last formal interview I asked Laura about her perception of changes in her style since she took over the job. She felt that she had changed quite a lot. 'Basically I
have had to temper a lot of my personality traits' (L5.6.26). She listed these as: patience (having more of); not speaking out immediately in response; contain irritation and learning to be patient; despite internally being angry or outraged, engage in a conscious mental process of deciding ‘what is best for the College here’. In general being more aware of her reactions and not reacting on instinct as much as in the past. ‘I would think I am picking up more of the traits of an Ironist [Fisher & Torbert, 1995], which is, you use masks more, but for the greater good.” (L5.7.3) . She also feels she is ‘kinder, and much more aware of what others need to motivate them, and I go out of my way to do it’ (L5.7.31). Regarding internal change during this time, she feels she is ‘more cheerful; more balanced’ largely because she is enjoying the job so much despite its more exasperating moments. Her internal instincts are more honed and she can and does rely more on her intuition ‘because I am more confident in that internal process and it has a more conscious element to it, therefore I can trust it more [than in the past] ... I anguish less’ (L5.7.37). She feels that as Chief Executive ‘I am able to live by my values for the first time in organisational life’ (L5.7.27).

In terms of communication with staff she has introduced round table discussions with small numbers of staff and has also started to be available in the staff room on certain afternoons for informal contact.

6.10.2 Other changes over time

This section is a summary of my experience of change over time within the College. I have amalgamated the views of the participants into a combined whole, whilst retaining any features particular to one or more individuals.

6.10.2.1 Phase 1 – February 1999 - July 1999

A major preoccupation during this time was the wide-ranging and extensive consultation process about re-organisation of the College (protracted by re-visiting and seeking further input in some areas), the reorganisation itself and consequent redundancies. I found that the information from the Principal about the financial problems and the additional difficulties caused by inaccurate information received in the first pass of collecting it was well known at all levels in the College. The new management structure was bedding down and the Executive Team seemed to be working well together.

There was a feeling of increased pressure at the teaching level and an example was given of one School in the College where the Head of School and five team co-ordinators/course managers were replaced by just two Heads of School, with a consequence of raising the workload ‘lower down’. There were no perceived benefits so far at the teaching level.

Technician support staff were also going through a consultation prior to re-organising and opening up a broader career path, though with a reduced headcount which was a cause of continuing uncertainty and discomfort. This was prompted by a situation where their jobs have been untouched ‘for the past 20 years’ and ‘have developed by custom and practice’ with ‘no equity in salaries’ or what people actually do (12.1.30). A major innovation was to delegate this process to the Heads of Schools.
supported by personnel professionals, rather than the Executive handling it personally.

An external *Investors in People* assessment had taken place during this time with a 'huge cross section of staff' being interviewed and overall 'a glowing report in terms of staff motivation, their positive feelings about the College and the way it's moving forward' (A2.2.2j). Despite this positive report, morale was generally perceived to be low, though it seemed noticeably better at senior management levels. In general, senior managers felt that at least some of the low morale was endemic to the sector, contributed to by organisational change and redundancies which is unsettling and general cynicism, summed up by one manager as 'I think people have to moan naturally, just let off steam and share things; it's their way of dealing with it'.

Major challenges for the future were the internal (September 1999) and external (November 1999) inspections, raising overall morale, and generating a break even budget for the next academic year.

The Principal was seen generally as doing a reasonable to good job. There were some concerns at the 'grass roots' level where people wanted to see more of Laura round and about in the College. This was also commented on by a senior manager who explained that she had been pre-occupied with planning and implementing the major reorganisation. Again, the view was more positive amongst senior managers. Catherine, who had changed jobs and was working more closely with Laura had not seen any change as a result of her move although she had found that she was expected to 'run the moment you get into the job'. She had, however, become more aware both of how important values were to Laura and also how significant her spiritual beliefs were in shaping how she acts.

At this time, Laura was pleased that the core restructuring had happened and that those taking voluntary redundancy had been treated well and had now left. Work was proceeding on producing performance indicators for staff, including one on personal development and 'enrichment areas', so that individual goals lined up with College focus areas. She felt that there was evidence from her immediate managers that other staff had a high level of energy and enthusiasm (although this was not reflected by the two staff members I interviewed) and was pleased with the positive IIP report. She felt that in the 'going less well' category, there was 'nothing major' although later stating that the MIU (Management Information Unit) was a 'big problem' (L3.3.31).

6.10.2.2 Phase 2 - July 1999 - November 1999

Enrolments at the start of the academic year were looking 'reasonable' raising the possibility of a break-even or surplus budget and this position had been communicated to staff. There had been a mock inspection, which although valuable had inevitably required significant extra work, putting more pressure on an already pressured team. At the teaching/support staff level, organisational changes were not perceived as effective both because there was too much pressure on certain management positions and because 'the system's so pared down now that one little thing will break and the whole thing will collapse like a pack of cards'. Despite this, staff felt that senior managers were trying very hard to rectify the situation.
The consequence of this situation was that morale was still perceived to be low, further exacerbated by an unclear financial position, such that Laura was unable to pay the annual ‘cost of living’ increase. At staff levels there was a perception that some people were refusing to do more than their contractual minimum, leaving others to shoulder an even larger burden. Even at senior management levels the workload and pressures were felt to be very high. Two managers suggested that the situation was no worse than other colleges in the sector although all senior managers expressed concern about the situation. Again, there were specific issues mentioned at staff levels which were felt to be examples of bad management practice. Those on the Executive Team consistently commented how well and effectively the College was working. Although Laura’s personal morale was not low, she was physically and emotionally drained from the level of effort she was putting in.

A second manager, Philip, moved on to the Executive Team during this time. His increased level of contact with Laura had not changed his previous perceptions ‘just an extensional colour to the picture that was already there’ (P3.8.6). His previously expressed high level of trust in Laura continues. At the staff level, communication was seen to be working well ‘you may not like what you hear but at least you know’ (M3.5.30). Others had not seen any significant change in Laura or the way she was doing her job.

The major preoccupation was the upcoming external inspection due in February 2000 and the attendant work to prepare for it. The Executive Team had also recognised that communication to the whole staff group was insufficient and planned to engage more directly with staff via small group sessions run by every director.

Laura was pleased with the significant progress over the last nine months, where the ‘main thrust is the student experience’(L4.2.1) and which an external consultant had described to her as ‘way over and above what could have been expected’(L4.1.20). She was disappointed with a culture survey that she had initiated, where only 60 out of 400 staff had replied and the results were ‘far more negative than I’d anticipated’(L4.2.41). A major preoccupation for her and the management team was financial performance where the poor information from the MIU was complicating their analysis. Significant changes in and restructuring of the Executive Team as a result of the departure of the Personnel Director had gone well and the team was functioning ‘very, very well’. A new curriculum resource model was thought to be providing a valuable tool to middle managers and Heads of School.

6.10.2.3 Phase 3 – November 1999 - May 2000

For everyone, the external inspection had been the major preoccupation and into which had gone a great deal of effort and energy. Although the inspection report was generally very positive there was some disappointment for at least 2 members of the Executive Team, since the highly positive initial draft had been ‘toned down’ for the final published report. One manager said that the final document seemed ‘very bland, with a lot of the more personal touches which the inspectors brought to the first draft having gone’, which had been ‘a bit of a shock’ and disappointing to the point of being ‘a bit of an injustice, really’. Laura felt that most of the report was fair with one notable
exception which she had written to seek clarification about. Overall, it also indicated strong management but mixed quality of teaching, which Laura planned to use positively to seek change in some areas. It also validated the restructuring and reorganisation that had been going on. However, she had felt strong personal responsibility for the areas of deficiency, especially shortcomings in some pockets of teaching.

Communication with staff via smaller groups had begun and was reported as a valuable two-way exchange of views (H4).

The effective working of the Executive Team continued to be a source of satisfaction for those I interviewed who were on it (three plus Laura, by now) and a new member had been satisfactorily integrated despite some initial issues. One senior manager felt that ‘the blame culture from the top has gone’ and another felt that ‘everything is improving’ with staff development and good management being the greatest improvements. Notably, the interviewee representing the support staff still felt that planned projects were being slowed or stopped with inadequate explanation and/or not in good time and, further, that those with practical experience of ‘what will work and what won’t’ were still insufficiently consulted.

At inspection time there was a strong sense of staff ‘all pulling together’ but this had now lessened and one senior manager felt that ‘moving the agenda forward will continue to be hard work’, exacerbated by unclear legislative pressures from central government. Another senior manager felt that more effective middle management was the key to better motivation and morale. Whilst recognising that morale overall was not high, Laura commented that, although it was a ‘terrible generalisation, on the whole, a lot of staff like moaning and complaining because that’s the culture’(L5.4.27). She had had recent confirmation from other Principals that the same thing happens widely elsewhere. There had been a loss of £1M income because of underachievement of targets and in consequence, the cost of living award had not been paid which had also had a negative effect on morale.

Overall, my impression was that the pressure of the inspection and the resulting effort from all staff had been enormous and that there was something of a dip now that it was all over. Although workload pressures were evident at all levels, it still seemed that morale was higher in the executive management group that elsewhere. Laura commented that her ‘personal morale is higher than it’s ever been since I’ve come here’ (L5.3.4). She saw two reasons for this. The College has ‘been through the worst ..... and weathered the storm’(L5.3.3) and things can only improve; the other is that the executive and senior team now had a full grasp of the issues needing to be tackled. Coupled with positive and supportive comments about herself and the management team both from the inspectors personally and in the inspection report, she felt highly positive about the future.

Generally, all the interviewees felt that Laura’s style was consistent and had not varied greatly over time. One manager felt that Laura was ‘happier and more relaxed in herself’, working well with colleagues and being ‘balanced, without favouritism’. Laura was seen as bright (intelligent) and moving quickly, even impatiently, into things ‘which sometimes leaves people unhappy at not having had a complete discussion’. Another
manager described this as 'she works very fast; she's driving but does not always understand that others may not be able to work at the same rate'. He sees Laura as very ambitious and impatient for change but with the consequence of 'trying to do too many things too quickly'. Another manager felt that she 'had wide mood swings' which were just part of her style: although 'a little bit disconcerting sometimes' he saw it as a potential strength given the demands of the job. He said that to do her job, you had to 'stand out in front of all the guns' and so it requires someone, like Laura, who has 'a sense of performance ability - there are those people who like to be in the spotlight'. A staff member felt Laura had not changed over time but that staff attitudes to her had (positively). She was seen as approachable but more direct informal contact (walkabouts) would be a good thing. Another person felt she was 'very enthusiastic [and] talks from the heart'.

6.11 Concluding reflections of participants

6.11.1 Successes and failures

In this final phase of data collection, I asked about things which the interviewees were most proud of and most unhappy or ashamed about the College over the period since Laura took over. The summary of their responses is:

6.11.1.1 Areas most proud of

Catherine - 'quite a lot'; 'values are there whether people perceive it or not ... even when you're making difficult decisions'; 'genuine attempts to discuss, communicate, involve, share, be just, care about what happens' not just lip service. Also, it seems different from what happens in other colleges she has contact with. The Executive is a real team 'which I think few others are, at the moment'; genuinely attempting to involve middle managers through monthly meetings and other channels 'a process which is evolving rapidly' (C4).

Marie - couldn't think of anything specific but things are 'moving in the right direction' (M4).

Adrian - strong planning and development processes; restructured curriculum with the resulting structure very strong as confirmed by comments from the inspectors. The College has developed a curriculum resource model which is an example of best practice in the sector (A4).

Ron - 'We try to give the students everything' and have 'as good a College as anybody', particularly the new library facilities (R4).

Philip - felt unable to respond at all to the question without much more time for reflection and consideration.

Laura - believed 'that we've begun a culture shift' and within that, was pleased about the improved relationship between the management and the teachers. She gave a particular example related to a trades union negotiation and reported that the union representative proposed reporting to the membership that "for the first time since we can remember there's trust between NATFE (the union) and the management".
6.11.1.2 Areas unhappy about or ashamed of

Catherine – 'nothing [since I came into the Exec], even though there have been difficult decisions (especially on financial, matters) which were unavoidable' (C4).

Marie - nothing she is unhappy or ashamed of

Adrian - unhappy that they have not been able to pay the cost of living award for this year. Although he believes nothing more that could have been done, he feels a sense of 'letting the staff down' (A4).

Ron - although not a personal issue, he feels that discipline in the College has 'drifted away', and there is insufficiently firm action against those who cause trouble such as daubing graffiti and causing other damage to facilities.

Philip - felt unable to respond at all to the question without much more time for reflection and consideration.

Laura - when the inspection indicated pockets of inadequate teaching 'I realised I was really ashamed that we were... we had such unsatisfactory teaching. I felt like a mother who had discovered that her kid had done something really kind of shameful' (L5.5. m. Correcting this is now her top priority.

6.11.2 Revisit of the relevance of spirituality in the workplace

The answers to the questions covered both the general issue of whether spirituality in the workplace was felt to be relevant but also the interviewees perception of how that applied to Laura. I have left the data combined on these two aspects, to convey more clearly how intertwined the responses were.

Catherine - spirituality in the sense of values, definitely - 'a common sharing of some values is necessary'. She believes this is often an area of lip service in businesses but believes it needs to be specific and measured against, although 'people's perceptions will always be different' but 'even engaging [in dialogue] in why there is difference might help the organisation to identify a problem that needs to be tackled'. However, 'attempts by Laura to start a values debate have not been successful' and the 'vision' debate got more reaction. Catherine doesn't think 'there is a strong sense of spirituality in the College particularly but probably as much as there is in society. I don't think it's untypical or atypical' however 'being English we tend not to talk about those things so it's extremely difficult to know'. As for spirituality and religion, the College should show tolerance and see what the student body and staff body want, but being very wary of any evangelical or proselytising approach. (C4)

Marie - when asked about spirituality in the workplace said: 'yours or mine?' (laughs). 'If we are talking care and concern, then yes it does have a place'.

Adrian - 'you asking about this before made me think about it'. Yes he does think it is relevant and 'Laura has the view we should be living it and it will naturally come through
Ron - felt that it was relevant as *it's all about respect for people*, though he doesn't think younger people value spirituality as much as those who are a bit older. The quiet room which has been set up is a positive example of this in practice. However, *he doesn't like people ramming it down his throat*.

Philip answered the question by asking *what do you mean by spirituality?*. He felt that he would not now understand the question because *the definition has changed so much since my role has changed, since working with Laura, and since our early discussions*. However, given the increased awareness of such issues as a result of these influences he agreed that he now felt quite strongly that it was not something which was relevant in the workplace, *in fact, it could be a gross impediment*.

### 6.12 The intervention of the researcher

In theory, a case study approach is non-interventionist and empathetic; Stake suggests that: *we try not to disturb the ordinary activity of the case* and *[researchers] try to see what would have happened if they had not been there* (1995:44). I was seeking to collect and view data from a phenomenological perspective. I was not a co-researcher and beyond establishing and maintaining empathy with the interviewees, I attempted to ensure that I was not intervening in their processes or the processes of the College. Although I was asked about my research, I gave guarded answers, seeking always to convey an attitude of openness and searching, avoiding use of any terms which might seem judgmental or indicative of a particular personal viewpoint, so as not to inhibit responses from interviewees or encourage them to please (or disrupt) the interviewer. This made for limited and somewhat stilted responses from me which I noted that I found discomforting, and almost dishonest.

I had expected Laura as the sponsor of the case study to seek some degree of feedback on its process and this indeed happened. As long as individual confidentiality was carefully protected, this did not seem an unreasonable request. However it is an intervention which is more likely than not to cause the sponsor to reflect on what may be happening within the organisation, whether the general effects observed are in line with his/her intent and what further actions he/she may consider taking. Consequently, I delayed giving this feedback until after the end of the data collection process. All interviewees were invited to this feedback session, though in the event only the managers attended. My observations were directed more towards the organisational issues that I had observed rather than issues of spirituality in practice. In particular, I spoke about the 'filter' effect of messages from the Principal and Executive being diluted at lower management levels and therefore having less impact than was intended at the staff level. This had been recognised but perhaps not to the extent that I suggested was occurring. The feedback to me from this session was very positive, interest was high and my comments were felt to be valuable.
Also towards the end of the data collection process, I was interested to know how my presence and interactions had affected things, bearing in mind Braud and Anderson's comments that: 'It is important to realise the impact a research interview may have on a participant. It is not often that a person has the opportunity to tell his or her story to an attentive listener... This experience can have a profound effect on the participant' (1998:206).

I was amused by a reaction that was reported to me by the Principal, who had heard that there was a rumour amongst some members of staff (unconnected with the study) that I was her spiritual guru and that she took no important decisions without consulting me first! I reflected on what this might mean and particularly whether it indicated a wider view of Laura as a spiritually motivated person than I was hearing from my respondents. However, without knowing the exact source of this information, I did not feel it valuable to speculate.

In my final interview, I asked each interviewee if they had any reflections as a result of taking part in the interviews. Overall, I was interested to know that all felt that it had affected them, sometimes to a considerable degree. Laura said 'They've been great for me because it [spirituality] is a major issue for me'(LS.12.49) and she had seen it as an opportunity to stimulate her thinking. She had started a piece of writing based on my question about the difference between good leadership and good spiritual leadership, and was still interestedly struggling to answer it. She also reported that, although she never initiates it, other directors (whom I had interviewed) have raised issues based on questions I had asked them, which provoked valuable discussions. To some extent she felt that 'it's been like going to a spiritual director'(LS.13.7), providing an opportunity to talk and then reflect on issues afterwards - 'the quality of what you've asked and probed on and discussed .. it's been invaluable'(LS.13.10).

Catherine said 'I suppose what [these sessions] do is make me pause and think and sometimes I get echoes back again of things that we've said. I've found it quite enjoyable and interesting .. like having someone who listens' which means 'I can talk to you like I wouldn't talk to anybody else' but as a result of the talking out loud, the dialogue subsequently went on in her head. 'It has clarified my thinking' particularly about 'the role that values can play, individually, in a team and across the organisation'.

Marie had talked with certain others about how she reacted or what she thought about various questions she had been asked, which then triggered thoughts about 'other things'.

Adrian said 'it's made me reflect on ethics, values and the spiritual nature of myself, and that's quite challenging'. He feels that having 'faith in spirituality' (sic) will tend to make a person more consistent in their behaviour, based on ethics and values, especially in difficult situations.

For Ron, there had been no real impact on him 'I just speak my mind as I see things'.

Philip felt that the interviews have been 'very useful' in that over the time they had 'provided a punctuation' which he regarded as a 'learning experience', raising his awareness of various issues. However, just as he becomes aware of forming certain
opinions ‘something else happens to change the orientation of the picture, which knocks it backwards or changes it radically’. He also proffered that my interviewing and questioning style had improved as the time had gone by!

What seemed to be happening here was that by asking questions I had caused most people to think and reflect on topics and in ways that they would not otherwise have done. This same process was reported by Hay & Hunt (2000). In their focus groups:

‘the conversations themselves often took on recognisably spiritual dimensions as people wrestled to articulate their own sense of the transcendent. Often they had not had such an opportunity before and found that the experience forced them to look at their own lives in a different way, many discovering what they actually believed as a result’ (2000:10) and in one-off interviews they commented ‘the dynamism of their search ... very often extended into the research conversation itself. Even as the encounter developed it was apparent that a rethinking was going on’ (2000:25).

My feeling was that this might represent a highly significant finding from this research. If I, as a researcher attempting to be non-interventionist, asking carefully phrased questions and not engaging in dialogue over the responses, could cause such a significant level of reflection in the participants, then clearly there is a powerful process in action. Of course, other factors which are relevant here are that I am an outsider, having no influence on the roles or work lives of participants; the discussions were confidential and after the interviews, participants would not expect continuing contact; I have no agenda which impacts them, other than to pay close attention and to understand their view; and finally but significantly, I was not seeking to reveal, propose, impose or debate my personal views or position.

6.13 Impact on the researcher

The process of gathering the data and, later, producing this presentation of it had a distinct effect on me. I found it extremely difficult to be a disconnected and uninvolved or neutral observer but rather I was caught up in the drama that was the College and the wide reaching change which Laura was driving. This was so much the case that I found it difficult at times not to interact with the interviewees (perhaps particularly those in least close contact with the Principal) as they spoke of the issues they faced – most often, I noted, wishing to present to them the ‘bigger picture’ so that they might better understand what Laura was attempting to achieve. Further, I felt personal frustration at a number of aspects, for example the legacy of previous bad management practices which required so much effort to address. I also experienced an impulse to become involved in addressing some of the issues raised, for example: when it was explained to me how middle management sometimes did not listen to the views of the people ‘on the ground’ and the ensuing waste of time and resources; when I heard of the reactionary attitudes of some lecturing staff; when interviewees spoke of their personal commitment to their jobs but also the extreme pressures under which some felt they were working; when Laura spoke of her vision and how this was sometimes impeded by others with self-interest agendas instead of the greater good of the students and the College. From this I deduced that my own judgement was that what Laura was attempting to do felt ‘right’ to me – something that I myself could be committed to – and that my instinct was to further her cause:
in effect, I had developed a loyalty to her and to her vision for the future which (as discussed in more detail later) I also found to be the case for those working closely with her.

6.14 Data presentation – summary

This chapter has presented the accumulation of the data from Laura and the other interviewees plus a phenomenological presentation of Laura's position with regard to spirituality. The broad picture which emerges from these data is of a College which is in a difficult financial position, historically having been led in a style experienced as not only autocratic but fear-inducing and repressive, and organisationally and motivationally poorly equipped to correct the deficit and indeed to expand its operations. Laura's appointment introduced a dramatically different style and approach, viewed initially with suspicion and even hostility. Her approach is underpinned by her spiritual beliefs, profoundly re-enforced by a peak spiritual experience, and she feels that in some way she was 'meant to' be in this College as Principal and Chief Executive. She strongly believes that spirituality is relevant and important in organisations, without necessarily being specific or prescriptive about how it might be put into practice. She is a highly enthusiastic and committed leader, preferring a co-operative approach although demanding high standards and conformance to clearly articulated principles and values. For most of the other staff interviewed, spirituality was not a concept which they had particularly considered. As they reflected on Laura, they appeared to be experiencing a high degree of correlation between Laura's espoused and experienced approach, with this being more clearly perceived by those in closer contact with her. There was a perception that in her enthusiasm she was prone to tackling too many issues too quickly. Some also felt that she consulted too widely and/or for too long a time, particularly over considerations of reorganisation. Over time, initial suspicion about Laura and in particular whether she would continue to be consistent in her approach seemed to reduce. Also over time she appeared to engender increasing trust among staff.

In presenting and later in analysing these data I had to remind myself constantly that my focus here was on spirituality in the workplace and not on Organisational Development consultancy or the search for optimum efficiency and effectiveness. This was particularly difficult as many interviewees did not hold strong or self reflective views on what spirituality is about – a theme reviewed in some detail in the next chapter.

I now proceed to reflect upon and analyse various aspects of these data in order to look for meaning and sense-making.
Chapter 7: Case Study – findings, analysis and reflections

The previous chapter provides an analysis of the data from the case study from which a more detailed perspective on many of the original research questions emerges. One of the potential strengths of this study is its longitudinal nature and I have sought to address such questions as ‘What happened over time?’, ‘Were the positions taken by individuals maintained?’ and particularly ‘Was the Principal seen to be consistent in her approach and with what effect?’. In addition, I also became interested to explore what the dynamics were, over time, between the Principal and her staff as she worked to make the College successful and implement her vision for the future. I sought to answer the general question ‘What seems to be going on here?’ and then speculate about ‘What might this mean or tell us?’ both in this specific case but potentially as relevant more widely. In Figure 28 I have developed a block diagram of the processes which I inferred from the data, and in the following sections I examine these in more detail. Whilst defending the integrity of the phenomenological picture of Laura, I have also reflected on how these data could be viewed from other perspectives.
Figure 28 – Outline of inferred processes
7.1 Reflections on Laura

I commenced looking at the processes by considering Laura herself. On the left hand side of Figure 29 I have grouped the principal factors which appear to have led to her functioning in her present role – what I have called ‘underlying drivers’, including motivational factors and personal convictions. The right hand side of this same diagram indicates how these are displayed and experienced in practice as supported by the detailed data from Chapter 6. I have then explored how Laura’s style and approach may be considered from other frames of reference (section 7.2).

**Figure 29 – Laura: beliefs, drivers and approach**

7.1.1 Underlying drivers

The phenomenological presentation in section 6.3 reveals some underlying attitudes, drivers, convictions and motivations. In the context of spirituality in the workplace, particularly significant amongst these are:
A lifetime search - seeking, testing, analysing, participating, rejecting & accepting: considering spirituality and religion, seeking the most appropriate ‘way’ and aligning what she does in life with the outcomes of that search.

A spiritual underpinning - part of the search but also partly the basis for all that she has done in the past and continues to do in the present. A belief in God which means that she is clear that she acts ‘in service’ and has a ‘higher’ calling and ultimately responsibility to a higher authority. This underpinning is a means not only of seeking the ‘right’ path for her but also a means of testing values, principles, ways of living and ways of being with others as being in accordance (or not) with her transcendent beliefs.

A peak experience - which has fundamentally changed, or perhaps more accurately transmuted, that which was already there into something specific, focused, overwhelming in experience, ‘demanding’ of a response, affirming in conviction and determination, and with a strong transcendent foundation which provides a connection and strength above and beyond a human level of conviction and connection.

The combination of this spiritual underpinning and her peak experience permeate all that she does, informing, guiding and supporting her in her life.

Added to these are two other key factors which seem to be a vital part of Laura as she approached the job of Principal and Chief Executive of this College – the need to be in the lead role and a sense of mission. Based on previous experience, she found that although she was able to run the department for which she was responsible in her last post in a ‘new way’ following her peak experience, she nevertheless felt restricted in that she had insufficient scope, influence and backing to extend and effect her preferred approach more widely in that College. It appeared that she therefore felt some need or prompt to seek a senior or ‘lead’ position where she could do what she believed ought to be done, in the way she believed it should be done, and where she had position and authority to make it happen. There seems to be some contradiction here: she expressed a wish and need to be part of an organisation to provide her with community, and also said ‘on one level, I’ve no desire to be Chief Exec but I just keep getting promoted’ which appears to sit uneasily with other statements. For example she is explicit in her belief that ‘the Chief Exec sets the tone in an organisation’ and has clearly felt the need to be in that position in order to set the tone that she believes in; she also said ‘I’ve had to become a Chief Exec to get to the point where an organisation can be big enough for me’. These latter views seem to be coupled with the other key factor (next paragraph) which together seem to indicate a belief in a ‘mission’ to lead.

When she came for interview at the College, she had the sense that this was ‘her job’ even before she was interviewed: ‘the second I walked through the door ... energetically I knew this was my job ... I felt like I belonged here’ and she was offered it even though ‘the odds were against me [getting it]’. My impression was that when she did get it there was a confirmation of ‘mission’ and of ‘being chosen’ as part of some wider scheme of things in which she is a willing and co-operative player.

Having taken on the job, she presented a prominent, hugely energetic, committed presence – in her own words ‘I fill the room when I walk in’; ‘I just don’t know how not to
She is convinced that she is there by some factor or process going beyond the normal procedural selection process for the post and is undeterred and undaunted by the magnitude of the task. She sees this task as including:

- addressing profound emotional damage and dysfunctional behaviour ('[the organisation] needs emotional healing')
- deep seated divisions and reactionary attitudes
- significant financial deficit
- poor morale
- unwillingness of staff to accept responsibility
- a less than optimally effective management team (another Executive Director commented 'In the past, the turbulence came from a dysfunctional executive [team]')
- an immediate past history of simply maintaining the status quo
- a history of management widely seen as autocratic, eccentric and bullying.

7.1.2 External influences

Laura's role, as with that of every other Principal in higher education in the UK, is also subject to external influences. I gained the impression that those involved perceive it as a demoralised sector ('there's an awful lot of cynicism and anger ... in the FE sector'), where staff are inadequately paid and where government intervention (for example, new legislation in 2000 changing funding and organisational structures) causes a major degree of change, often demanded in impossible timescales and with funding provision perceived as inadequate. This is exacerbated because in the past 'the Public Sector attracted people who wanted stability' but such people are now faced with high personal demands, and constant change as 'the largest long term problem we face'. Furthermore, external inspection was perceived as a major hurdle and workload, exacerbated by the fact that enthusiasm and positive feedback from inspectors at the time was rendered anodyne or removed from the final official reports.

With this as an external environment, having Laura as a positive, dynamic and committed leader, demanding high standards but also supporting staff and driving the College to higher standards, might be expected to evoke a positive response and support from staff. This was certainly the case with the executive layer of management but was not greatly in evidence at other levels, where their focus seemed to be more on internal issues, sometimes without recognition that these had external causes.

7.2 Alternative interpretations of style

The choice of Laura as the Chief Executive for my research study was based primarily on her strong spiritual commitment and motivation. This aspect and the relevance of spirituality is expanded on in section 7.7. In dialogue with Laura, her spiritual commitment and its importance was evident throughout (Chapter 6) and given her success in the role and task she has undertaken, it would be easy and enticing to hold her up as an example of the consequences of spiritually motivated leadership, as

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56 As just one example amongst many, in May 2000, government documents which would give curriculum details to be implemented in September were not available; an executive director commented 'so you're half guessing at it' when planning.
indeed appears to be the case, but without considering alternative perceptions. However, Yin (1993:112) talks about developing ‘rival hypotheses and rival theories’ as a means of avoiding bias. Despite the phenomenological underpinning of my study, which would make it entirely valid to consider the data solely from the perspective of the individual, I felt that it was important to consider how Laura’s style might be understood from different perspectives. I have indicated previously my reasons for considering the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Appendix 1) and I chose to use this here as an alternative lens – a behavioural model which in itself does not incorporate any spiritual dimension. Laura’s best fit MBTI type is ENFP. In Appendix 1, I indicate that the MBTI includes no assessment of competence; it only addresses preferences.

ENFPs are unusual in leadership populations. As represented in the population of UK managers attending management training with a leading provider, they represent only 3.3% \((n=7580, \text{see Appendix 1})\) and from another UK sample 2.9% \((n=849)\). Equivalent (though somewhat dated) figures for managers in business and industry in the USA is 6.9% \((n=7463 \text{ but includes some administrators})\) and executives 7.5% \((n=67)\).

\[(\text{in Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997, from ‘Atlas of Type Tables’, 1986, Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Florida)}\]

The majority of leaders in most organisations prefer Thinking as a decision making process with most organisations having few leaders with a Feeling preference (see type tables in Appendix 1). Where they do have this \(F\) preference leaders bring important strengths:

- including others in gathering information and decision making
- appreciating the contribution of others
- recognising the need for and providing individual processing and support
- assessing proposed changes by using the organisation’s mission and values
- remembering past contributions

\[(\text{Barger & Kirby 1995:342, 348)}\]

From the simplest level of description for ‘ENFPs at their best’, we might expect to find someone for whom ‘life is a creative adventure full of exciting possibilities. They are keenly perceptive of people and the world around them and insightful about the present and the future. [They] experience a wide range of feelings and intense emotions .. need affirmation from others and readily give appreciation and support to others’ (Myers, 1993:15). Other characteristics of ENFPs are listed in Figure 30 followed by Figure 31 – ENFPs in organisations which looks at the impact of type in organisational setting (Rogers 1997:17).
Innovators, initiating projects and directing great energy into getting them under way
Stimulated by new people ideas and experiences
Likely to be curious, creative and imaginative, energetic, enthusiastic and spontaneous
Value harmony and good will; like to please others and will adapt to others needs and wishes when possible
Primarily use Feeling [decision making] internally, making decisions by applying personal values through identification and empathy with others
Likely to be warm, friendly and caring. Co-operative and supportive.

How others may see ENFP’s
usually lively, gregarious, sociable interested in almost everything and bring a zest to life that draws others to them.
value depth and authenticity in their close relationships and direct great energy to creating and supporting open and honest communication.
hate routine schedules and structure
normally verbally fluent ... however, when their deepest values need expression, they may suddenly be awkward
may seem to want to dominate simply by being so voluble (Rogers, 1997:17)
their articulation of judgements will often come out with great intensity.

If ENFP’s do not find a place where they can use their gifts and be appreciated for their contributions, they usually feel frustrated

Figure 30 – Characteristics of ENFP (Myers, 1993:15)

ENFPs

ENFP’s may need to beware that in their quest for the ideal, they do not exhaust themselves and others

Lead by:
Creating trust, openness; setting the example; Inspiring belief that the impossible is possible; believes in the value of what each individual can contribute; sees self as leader of leaders; shares tasks on informal collegiate basis rather than through command and control; may promise more than can be delivered
Decides by involving others; can tolerate a high degree of ambiguity as long as core values are not under attack
Sees change as a way to bring about dreams and ideals of the future; insists on the people implications being discussed
Thinks at the macro level about how ideas will affect people; may look for the Big Idea that will unlock human behaviour; may be attracted to ’gurus’

Figure 31 – ENFPs in organisations (Rogers 1997:17)

From researched data, the expectation is that ’N and P appear to be positively associated with creativity, managing change and transformational leadership’ (Walck, 1997:97). Intuitive leaders are also seen to have strengths valuable during periods of organisational change, including:
devoting great energy to exploring new ideas
envisioning future directions
taking action on their vision with confidence
recognition of global impacts and interactive effects
persuasively presenting a picture of the future

(Barger & Kirby 1997:346)

In addition, ‘NFs will often be good communicators ... bringing creative imagination and the gift of language to their work. This can knit together communities and work teams so that the harmony of relationships increases their effectiveness. NFs will often enter the educational, counselling, sales, and media fields’ (Richardson, 1996:145)

Reviewing the above, it is immediately apparent that there is a very high level of correlation between what the MBTI would suggest about attitudes and behaviours of an ENFP and those displayed by Laura. Figure 32 takes just some characteristics to illustrate this correlation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENFP CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>OBSERVATIONS OF LAURA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovators, initiating projects and directing great energy into getting them under way</td>
<td>Initiator of a major culture change; consistently reported as being hugely energetic with heavy workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulated by new people ideas and experiences</td>
<td>Response to the challenge of the job; prominent member of Principal's peer support group; wide-ranging contacts in many areas; seeks new experiences constantly, including spiritual ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to be curious, creative and imaginative, energetic, enthusiastic and spontaneous</td>
<td>Recognised as constantly energetic and enthusiastic; appears creative with changes and approaches to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value harmony and good will; like to please others and will adapt to others needs and wishes when possible</td>
<td>Consults widely on major decisions; seeks consensus where possible from Executive Team; finds disharmony distressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily use Feeling [decision making] internally, making decisions by applying personal values through identification and empathy with others</td>
<td>Style with others heavily biased towards personal persuasion; always values driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to be warm, friendly and caring. Co-operative and supportive</td>
<td>Personal observation confirms most of these characteristics; reported by others as supportive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 32 – MBTI vs observed characteristic of Laura

As a certified MBTI practitioner, I would conclude that Laura was entirely typical – perhaps archetypal – of an ENFP. All the characteristics in Figure 32 were either observed by me and/or are reported by other interviewees with a high degree of corroboration. The only exception being ‘hating routines, schedules and structures’ where I infer that though this is true of Laura’s natural inclination, she exhibits the ability to work with these effectively as a manager. She told me she had commented to her managers that ‘What’s missing in this organisation is analytical tools for analysis. And that’s not my forte [so] I’m monitoring and evaluating everybody around here like nothing on earth because if I don’t, nothing gets done! ... I say “Do you think I want to do this? Do you think I want to go round monitoring everybody?”’. I hate it! But until I know that we are [getting things done properly], or these things are followed through, I’ll do it’ (L1.8).

Again, the prediction of how ENFPs are likely to operate in organisations compares very closely with Laura’s espoused style and how she operates in practice.
Given Laura's own clarity about her motivation and its spiritual origin and guiding force in all she does, spirituality is clearly fundamental for her. What the above analysis indicates, however, is that the way this internal view then manifests itself can be perceived, understood or explained in different ways. From an external point of view the style and approach which she exhibits has strong commonalities with other Myers-Briggs ENFPs I have observed or with whom I have worked, including those I have identified in Appendix 5, section Ap 5.1, where I have presented some comparative data.

From the available data on Laura's observed style and approach I have been unable to identify anything which would demonstrate a unique causal link with her personal view that she is spiritually motivated – her observed behaviour can be well interpreted by other means, of which MBTI, offering an explanation based on psychological preference, is one. However, any such analysis can not address the question of inner-world view or underlying spiritual conviction. Laura's own view is uncompromisingly clear that the driving force behind her beliefs, which are reflected in what she does and in her attitudes, is profoundly spiritual and have changed to be even more so as a result of her peak experience.

I further conclude that although it is entirely valid to accept that what Laura does and how she does it is based on, or guided by, spiritual inspiration, the inverse cannot be said. That is, it is not the case that anyone who is spiritually inspired and motivated would act as she does and would potentially get the results which she has got. I shall develop this point further in later analysis.

### 7.3 The influence of proximity

One insight which became evident as the analysis progressed was the overriding influence and effect of proximity to the leader, in this case Laura as Principal. It was clear that Laura intends to, and does indeed, 'set the tone' throughout the organisation by her clearly defined vision and values – reflected generally in the mission statement of the College but also in her communications either to groups, including staff meetings of 350+ people, or on an individual basis – and her own actions as being consistent with her stated values. However, what was also clear from the interview data is that there were significant differences of perception from those in close and/or regular contact. They were more specifically aware of Laura’s strong and committed stance on principles and values. Also, they were inevitably and invariably aware of her spiritual interests, motivation, commitment and belief – not least because as one interviewee observed wryly 'she's always telling us about it' whereas those in less direct contact had no particular sense of this aspect.

Those close to her, particularly those on the Executive Team, are therefore faced directly and daily with Laura’s stance: indeed it would be impossible not to face it when working in such close proximity with someone so dynamic. ‘She’s a very fast worker, she’s very straight and direct, she’s not afraid to face difficult issues and problems head on’ and another view ‘Her style is very open, warm, direct and encouraging. She is very achievement focused and driven. She makes sure people understand why; that they know
why she is going in the direction she is going'. At greater distance, or with less frequent contact, awareness is less specific. In working on their allocated tasks, someone at a distance does not have to face up daily to what is demanded by, and the approach favoured or expected by, the Principal except in a diluted way as the message works its way down. Even then, since it is diluted by the time it arrives, it is still more readily possible to avoid some of the consequences. This is reflected in comments from those not in close proximity, such as 'I think the jury's still out at the moment'; '[there are] people like me who don't necessarily want to see the broader picture'; 'she says that it's an open door but [although I have found that to be the case] people are very reluctant just to pop along and say hello to the Principal because of the connotations: people say "How many bums have you licked today?"'. This has a direct bearing on the question of commitment to the Principal, discussed in section 7.4.1.

Apart from the obvious change of style and culture which it has been her intent to introduce since taking over this role, it was clear to me from this study that Laura's influence on her Executive Team is considerable. I first became aware of this when I realised that two of the executive managers used phrases in their interviews which were the same as Laura used about the same subject, from which I inferred a high degree of influence or at least concurrence of these individuals with her 'message'. Another example is that Laura has a strong interest in the Enneagram, described by a leading practitioner as: 'an ancient Sufi teaching that describes nine different personality types and their interrelationships' (Palmer, 1988:3). She referred to using this with the Executive Team (l.2.13) and two managers referenced it in interviews. Asked why she chose the Enneagram, Laura replied 'because I think it is the most sophisticated; because I love it ... and it inspires me'. It eventually transpired that all the members of the Executive Team had been 'typed' by Laura, who used the results openly within the team as a useful method of considering differences, developing the team and getting people working more effectively together. When I enquired of another executive how it had come about that they were all 'typed', he replied that 'the way Laura does things, you see, she sort of gets you interested in things and then it gets to a point where you ask to do it'.

This is a most interesting phenomenon. The Enneagram, though well known in some restricted circles, is hardly a common tool in management development. Its origins in Sufi mysticism might be a problem for some on religious or cultural grounds, and for others on its lack of scholarly foundation or research. Despite this, Laura's own enthusiasm for it as a self-awareness and development tool seems to have led to all the executive voluntarily agreeing to be 'typed' and to using the outcomes as a vehicle for communication about personal styles and for team development. What process is at work here? Her enthusiasm carrying others along? Intrigue as to what it is about and what it might say about me? Some sense that 'if the Principal thinks its valuable and talks about it a lot, we would do well to go along with it'? A concern that if everyone else has it done and I don't then I shall be 'the odd one out' (and what might that lead to)? Sheer lack of energy to resist Laura herself or a general movement (peer pressure) to having it done? Whatever the reason for each individual, this seems an example of a phenomenon which is associated with the influence and power that the senior post holder has—a subject addressed further in section 7.8.
For those working more remotely and having less direct contact with Laura, the processes are less clear and much more diffuse. The notion of trust, an essential prerequisite for full co-operation, is more difficult to establish although the data indicate that, over time, trust was slowly developing and spreading even to those not in frequent contact particularly as a result of Laura’s honesty in open meetings (see section 6.8.4). Laura herself commented that the process of establishing trust and co-operation was taking time, indeed she had been told by some staff that ‘We don’t know how to respond to positive things. We’re so used to coming to meetings to slag management off and ... to throw brickbats at them that we don’t know what to do. We don’t know how to be positive back’. It seemed that there was still a good deal of cynicism amongst some staff though, again, over time the data indicate that there seemed to be some change. Laura commented in the third interview that ‘there are still some cynics but even they are prepared to give me a chance’.

7.4 The challenge

That people are faced with Laura’s convictions and views is unquestionable: she says ‘I talk about everything’ and acknowledges that ‘I do articulate where I am coming from and what [my] values are’. This extends to her views on spirituality ‘I just love it. I love to share things like that’. In practice it appears that, in effect, Laura issues or at least presents a challenge to all who work with and for her. My assessment is that the nature of this challenge is, in essence, to provoke a decision: ‘commit or not’. The exact nature of the commitment is unclear, perhaps not even specifically spelled out, but could be to Laura herself as leader, to her vision and values, to the College and its aims/future under her leadership, to the transformation process she sees as necessary, or some combination of these. In any event, it forms part of the psychological contract of engagement (Rousseau, 1995) - the unwritten and largely unarticulated understanding of what is being agreed, over and above the formal terms and conditions of employment. This process is shown diagrammatically in Figure 33.

7.4.1 Responding to the challenge

Initially, it appears that those in executive management positions or working closely with Laura are faced with a decision. The challenge, explicit or otherwise represents an invitation described by one interviewee as whether or not to ‘throw my lot in’ with Laura, and the system and process she is leading. For some executives, this was simply the decision to keep on working at their existing job and be part of the new Principal’s executive management team. For others, however, for example Catherine and later Philip, it was a much more an explicit decision. Catherine was seriously contemplating leaving the College and pursuing a number of external interests so her case is particularly relevant, since she made the decision to stay. Part way thought the study, Philip accepted an enlarged role which carried with it a position on the Executive Team.
For those in closer proximity then, there is an initial challenge or decision as to whether to commit or not. In theory, it would be possible to decide to take a role or stay in a role but not really commit ‘heart and mind’. This possibility is shown in Figure 33, though I did not interview or hear about anyone falling into this category. My expectation would be that the result would be to put considerable pressure and stress on any such individual. Whatever the factors actually perceived by the individuals – and I did not explore these explicitly during the interviews – my belief is that at close quarters, one could not stay in the dilemma comfortably and that an individual would need either to commit, or to move further away, or even out of the organisation.

Although I have represented this as a binary decision, the indications are that it is more likely that people taking an initial view to commit may well hold reservations which they handle in their own way. In the early stages of Laura’s tenure, for example, some senior managers felt that, as a result of bad experiences in the past, a degree of caution was appropriate: ‘In the first few months she was watching us but we were watching her too and trying to gauge whether this [her openness and consultative style] was just a paper exercise or would actually continue’. Perhaps, too, this is the way that people retain their own integrity and also do not relinquish all personal power – they do make a commitment but each holds their own reservations and also the option to re-evaluate their position in the future. Thus, the process of challenge is not necessarily a one-off event: it has a general on-going nature where, by her presence, style and behaviour, Laura de facto issues or presents a challenge – the expectation of acting in certain ways or conforming to certain values, norms or standards. As just one example, Laura herself commented that, faced with her direct approach, ‘what happened was that people
who thrived on manipulation and secrecy and holding information found it intolerable'. One executive commented that 'she is very much talking about having principles and strong values but you are still tough with individuals who do not perform so by having values and principles doesn't mean you are “nice” or “slack”'.

There is also a more explicit form of challenge over specific matters, such as the situation where Laura became aware that some people were being ‘nasty’ to staff about to be made redundant. Her values were violated sufficiently that she explicitly took action to demand a stop to what was going on: 'I'm now making some very clear statements and I've said “I won't have it. I think it’s unacceptable. That is not the way to behave, and you're going to have a little homily from me because I want to live in a community that's open, receptive, loving, caring, tough, challenges, doesn't accept incompetence. So please stop it and intervene positively if you hear it [from others]”'.

The question is, is this challenge (particularly the initial challenge, but also the ongoing process) an invitation or is it actually (or perceived as) a requirement? That is, how possible is it to continue working in the College without 'signing up' to the way the Principal operates and wants others to operate. This is not a simple decision, as both 'yes' or 'no' responses carry some potentially negative consequences. For example one interviewee said 'She drives herself hard and she'll expect us to drive hard. It's one of the things that made me hesitate because I wondered whether I was prepared to drive quite as hard as she was'.

Again, distance allows for at least a 'wait and see' approach, and even for some to hold an opposite or antagonistic view without being directly and repeatedly challenged on a frequent basis. I noted that there seemed to be a suspicion amongst some staff of ‘management’ as a negative influence or somehow not fully aligned with the focus of those staff, namely supporting or delivering education to students, leading to an unhelpful ‘us and them’ division. From a position of distance it is possible to delay or to be cautious about commitment (with less attendant pressure), until, or unless, there is direct and immediate reason to have to decide. It is possible to 'hide' among the majority and even derive support there from others who may similarly be biding their time – and there is much less likelihood of a ‘moment of truth’ where a person is challenged directly to make a decision.

My clear assessment is that no such procrastination is possible at close quarters: with such a strong and forceful character as Laura: her immediate team either make the decision positively or face a daily pressure of great intensity if they were to decide to oppose directly her overall approach. One interviewee said ‘Laura is pretty direct about making clear what she wants. I think it's a case of being assertive without being bullying. If you are in charge, you've got to let people clearly know what you want and if someone is not following along a route ... they need to be told to get back on that route’. This is not the same as agreeing with her over every matter (or of Laura requiring such total agreement).

Note here – and I shall return to this theme – that responding positively to this challenge is not the same as subscribing to Laura’s particular notions of spirituality or

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57 On one occasion I was given a copy of an anonymous, subversive ‘flyer’ which was widely circulated, highly critical of a particular management decision.
in any way concurring with her spiritual beliefs, but rather accepting her approach to how the College and its processes are to be run and to function, including principles, values, ethics and behaviours.

My own reactions are an important contribution to the data. I have noted both elsewhere in this document (sections 6.2.2 and 6.13) and in my journal the level of enthusiasm and pull to be involved which I myself felt as a result of my contact with Laura. At the initial interview, I was drawn into a dialogue which I found exciting and interesting, both because of my interest and fascination with her ideas and particularly her peak experience, but also by the way in which she was approaching the transformation of the College. I felt strong empathy with many of her views about what seemed to be required, and in particular her approach related to the considerate treatment of individuals. I recognise that many of her concerns are also high on my own list of value-based priorities and that this made the ‘pull’ all the stronger. I also noted that over time this pull did not diminish — in fact the opposite was true — hence the high level of frustration in subsequent interviews both with Laura and some others, when I had a wish to be much more discursive and vicariously involved but had consciously to work not to allow this to intrude.

7.5 Processes in proximity

"It is therefore apparent that leadership is increasingly being recognised as being more than simply the qualities of an individual. It is much more about the processes created by the leader and the impact, largely emotional, on the followers." (Hooper & Potter, 2001)

One of the strengths of this study is the collection of data over time, coupled with the fact that the start point of the study was barely 6 months into Laura’s tenure, allowing a view of the developing dynamic as she worked to put her vision into practice. In attempting to make sense of the longitudinal data, I have again focused first on those in close proximity, both because I have a greater amount of immediate (and reported) data and because of the more intense nature of the challenge, as described above.

From the block diagram in Figure 28, the processes particularly applicable to those in closer proximity to the Principal are expanded in Figure 34.
Initial commitment. As discussed in section 7.4, there appears to be an initial commitment point. This can be either the decision to stay in an existing post (but perhaps with differing responsibilities) or to accept a proffered senior post. It is, in effect, a decision to ’throw my lot in’ with the Principal, with what she is attempting to do, and how she is seeking to do it.

Re-enforcement. Having made the decision positively, a number of sub-processes can be inferred from the data. I have already established that Laura is a high profile leader, demanding, dynamic and enthusiastic. Further, she states that ’I as the leader live for my values but also with the staff, articulate a community set of values that we all live by’. My impression is that those around her are carried along by, or perhaps actively work with, this enthusiasm and rely on it. Thus this part of the process is one of re-enforcement:

- increasing clarity of vision
- regular exposure to her vision and to her belief that putting the vision into practice is not only possible but will happen
- understanding in more detail the principles and values which she espouses, with regular re-enforcement from seeing these principles put into practice on a daily basis
- seeing her overcome difficult situations and coping well in the face of adversity
- observing her own high level of commitment, effected despite considerable personal cost in terms of working hours, rate of work and, at times, some evident degree of pressure.

This committing and re-enforcing process forms the foundation for some other sub-processes.

Consequence of commitment. One consequence of the cohesion and commitment process seems to be a willingness to work harder and harder. Also, for executive managers, to put themselves under high degrees of personal pressure – even stress – to accomplish what they see as necessary to deliver their part of the vision to which they are now committed. In some cases, executive managers accepted additional responsibility and all carried high workloads. Issues of confidentiality do not allow for presenting detailed information here but there were data which made it clear that at times people were willing to work under pressure to an extent which was adversely affecting time for personal life to a high degree, and was even a potential threat to health and well being. Despite this, the same people clearly expressed a high degree of personal loyalty to Laura.

I observed another consequence of commitment for those in proximity. When asked about morale, all interviewees expressed a view that it was not as good as they would wish (see the section below on ‘Blind spots and collusion’ for more detail). Their explanations frequently cited high workloads and therefore by implication covered themselves as well. Certainly it was clear that their workloads and pressures were very high indeed and most had taken on additional responsibilities over time, making the scope of their jobs even greater. Also, some experienced adverse environmental factors such as worse office accommodation and less secretarial/administration support than previously. However, none would explicitly confirm that their own morale was low and all responded and acted like people who were highly motivated.
Team formation and development. One sub-process concerns the formation process(es) of developing a cohesive and effective management team. The cohesion seems at least partly to come from the commonly accepted vision, values and principles, which are self-re-enforcing, mutually binding and form the basis for a common approach by all the executive managers. Three different interviewees expressed this concept, two quotes being: 'I am also in the position where I am able to champion those values now and actually do something positive within the College' and 'you can speak with tremendous strength because it's based on sound principles'. The issue of trust, high on the list of necessities for any successful team, is of great significance. For example Philip, even before his promotion, already recognised of Laura that 'I think I would have more faith in her, more trust, than most of the Principals I have met'. My own experience of Philip was that he appeared able and experienced in the job that he did but also that he was highly cautious and reserved about making judgements and assessments on personal characteristics, yet despite this, he was clear on this issue of trust. Others also experienced this trust 'If I felt that I couldn't trust her, I wouldn't have applied for this job'.

A further theme is that of the support Laura extends to her executive managers, whilst still making high demands of them. One said 'I don't feel in any way that I haven't got a Principal who is right there behind me; rock solid on that, absolutely rock solid'. Another referred to the fact that Laura would spot when 'the sixth task on the list hadn't been done' and would raise it as an issue, but be willing either to help personally or seek additional help if and when she recognised that the individual's workload was just too great; 'I find her incredibly supportive as a boss. If you are struggling, for instance, she will zero in and help you sort it out'.

However, all this is not in itself sufficient to create an effective team. Laura has made it a high priority to build and develop the team and to invest effort in assimilating new team members, although by no means allocating as much time to task-based support of individual directors as they might have wished, even when newly appointed: a process which one described as 'being thrown in at the deep end'.

Concerns and re-assessment. For those in close and regular contact, early doubts (discussed earlier) about the elements of and consistency of Laura's style rapidly faded. Where further issues, doubts or problems arise there appears to be a process of dialogue, either with colleagues or with Laura, to resolve them. Executive managers recognised that this dialogue was possible, even encouraged, and could be engaged in without dire consequences 'I don't expect to agree with her all the time, and I expect to be able to disagree. My view would be however, that once we've had the debate and thrashed it out, I would abide by the decision of the executive or I resign - which I don't expect it to come to'. I did not hear of any specific examples of major reservations occurring, however as indicated in Figure 28 and Figure 34, as new issues and demands arise there must be a process which people go through to decide if they will continue to commit to Laura and the College. My assumption would be that if a significantly fundamental issue arose, then the process of dealing with this would effectively take a person back to the 'initial challenge' position of Figure 28. I noted that whilst Laura herself and her Executive Team believed that free, frank and open discussion was always possible ('the wonderful thing about Laura is we can have that
conversation with her [about difficulties or areas of disagreement] and she will listen and reflect), there were certain issues which people chose not to raise with her. Most often these appeared to be related to personal pressure but it is possible that there were others which I did not uncover. Sometimes reasons were advanced for this, for example, 'I haven't put it as fundamentally [as I have to you], mainly because I don't want to burden her', but not in every case. This comment was made in a way which indicated a care about, even a wish to protect, Laura. There may have been some sense that as Laura is prepared to push and commit herself, sometimes to inordinate lengths, then people felt they needed to respond in a similar vein, although again I have no direct evidence. Additionally, I surmise that there may also be concerns amongst senior managers in particular about whether they would be judged or in some way considered not sufficiently able to do the job (whether based in reality or on projections), although no-one expressed such a concern explicitly.

A consideration here is the issue of the power (discussed later in section 7.8) which Laura has or is perceived to have and how each individual reacts to this. It could be a coercive element (even where Laura herself does not explicitly seek to be coercive) in an individual's assessment: standing against Laura's views or approach is likely to require considerable energy, whilst accepting her views allows 'tapping into' or aligning with Laura's energy. It could also be the case that if Laura was perceived to be exercising power in a way which was experienced as negative or oppressive, then this could become a reason for individuals to decide against continuing in a position close to the source of this power.

Blind spots and collusion. There was some evidence that the tight knit, well motivated Executive Team had developed blind spots. This was most noticeable over the issue of morale. Although most executive interviewees recognised that morale was anywhere from 'not so good' to 'poor', it appeared that most discounted this concern, using a variety of rationales to explain why it might be the case. Many of these 'reasons' were also reflected by Laura herself. So for example she commented in different interviews: 'I am having a dialogue with them [the staff in general], which goes down like a lead balloon, that they are no worse off than any other college, in fact they are better off' and 'it's a terrible generalisation but on the whole, a lot of staff like moaning and complaining because that's the culture. We love moaning in FE'.

The impression I formed was that they underestimated or were unwilling to recognise just how bad morale felt at the operational level. There could be various reasons for this: perhaps - and this seemed most likely - they were convinced that what they were doing was 'right' and would sort out the problems in the College which, as a consequence, would result in morale rising over time; perhaps they felt overwhelmed by the negative feelings of staff; perhaps they felt frustrated by the continuing poor morale in the face of what they perceived as an improving situation; perhaps they minimised the frustration of external legislative factors which seemed to have a frequent and often negative impact; perhaps they were genuinely unaware of just how high an impact specific problems were having on staff at an operational level.

Another factor at work in the tightly knit Executive Team was the phenomenon of collusion - what can be described as 'group-think' (Janis, 1972). I noticed that
sometimes, in telling me about aspects of what was going on in the College or what was being planned, the words used by two or more of my executive interviewees were almost the same as those used by Laura herself when talking about the same issue. I interpreted this as a high degree of unanimity following discussions over particular issues. However, alternative explanations could be that there is a level of involuntary collusion amongst the executive as they define their views and responses, or that the strength of Laura’s personality and her ability to persuade and unite others behind her own convictions are successful to the point where some adopt not only her views but then use her own words to represent those views. One interviewee recognised that Laura is ‘the sort of person people need to feed off’ but the implication was that others needed that, with no indication of the extent that he (and other executive managers) might themselves be ‘feeding off’ or perhaps more appropriately, drawing strength and inspiration from Laura.

**Holding the vision.** Ackerman is clear that ‘Having a compelling vision of what is possible and a clear sense of the organization’s purpose helps to keep balance and order’ (1997:57). Laura’s Executive Team, managers and staff clearly look to her as ‘holder of the vision’. One executive said ‘Laura sets the standard. She is a leader. She sets a leadership style and approach which, when other things start to come together, is one of the keys to enable the organisation to move forward together’. Although executives felt that they were empowered, one spoke of a period of time when the Principal was absent and the Executive Team successfully continued to run the College, which he thought could have gone on for some months if necessary, but then ‘your time will start running out because we cannot set the ethos and the culture’. However much empowerment is effected, Laura carries this responsibility for maintaining the vision and my sense was further, that to maintain motivation, direction and commitment, she has continuously to restate her determination to achieve the vision and indeed her optimism about succeeding.

**Views over time.** It was particularly helpful to be able to follow the progress of two people who moved from senior management positions to taking up places on the Executive Team during the study. As they came into closer proximity, they were able to experience Laura at closer quarters and with greater frequency than before. Both commented that they had not found anything radically new or different about her but had become more aware of her specific beliefs and the functioning of her values-based style. This is well illustrated by comments made by Catherine, first in an early interview, talking about what she might see in Laura ‘in my past experience I however high minded you are there come times when very clear value systems come directly into conflict. You sometimes have to make choices you are uncomfortable with’. And then in later interviews: ‘I’m not sure Laura is somebody who can [compromise her values]’ and I knew before that she was very concerned about values but I suppose it’s much clearer to me now just how significant that is to her’; also ‘It’s quite fascinating, her interest in spiritual matters and how they do inform her life’. This consistency has a strong re-enforcement and motivational effect: the early ‘wait and see’ approach gives way to a guarded but increasing optimism and eventually to an enthusiasm built on what is now a shared conviction that the transformation can succeed.
7.6 Checkpoint of analysis so far

I have drawn on the case study data, firstly to reflect on Laura as a leader, exploring how she approaches her role as Principal and Chief Executive, where I have concluded that she is a highly competent leader and is judged both by colleagues and external audit bodies to be achieving success against her vision under difficult circumstances and from a problematic starting point. Her espoused style, based on a highly principled approach, correlates closely with how her behaviour is experienced. However, whilst she is clear that what she does is spiritually motivated, other explanations for her style and approach can be advanced which also correlate well with what can be observed. The question of the relevance of spirituality is discussed further in the next section.

The data have been used to infer and describe a set of processes which seem to take place and which have particular effect upon those in closer proximity to Laura, and to propose possible explanations for what was observed. In particular, I have highlighted the effect of proximity to the leader as a highly significant factor in these processes. Working closely with such a strong character presents a constant challenge to align with her vision and values and, on so doing, engenders a high degree of loyalty and commitment. Although debate and reasoned dissent are possible and encouraged, the subsequent processes generally re-enforce commitment, with commensurate high work rates and positive motivation. There was a high degree of commonality of thinking amongst the Executive Team and evidence of some blind spots.

The outcome is a picture of the College as I experienced it, and from the viewpoint that I took, demonstrating great strengths and progress in effecting profound change but also potentially providing pointers to some weaknesses or areas for improvement. These were particularly in the area of support for, and development of, middle and junior managers in successfully and authoritatively conveying and supporting the aims and values of the Principal and the Executive Management Team. If this were a study focused on organisational development, the data might also be used to consider the impact of changing variables; questions like ‘What might happen if ...’ . However, it is not and I have not undertaken any such analysis. The fundamental questions for this study relate to the relevance and impact of spirituality in organisations, to which I now return.

7.7 Spirituality – perception, relevance and impact

With the research questions in mind (Figure 1), this section reflects on how spirituality was seen by interviewees, its perceived relevance in this workplace setting and then in section 7.8 considers the possible links between power and spirituality.
7.7.1 Manifestation of spirituality and Type

Laura is clear about her underlying spiritual motivation and I have already presented the rich data related to how her spirituality is manifest. Having used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Appendix 1) to consider alternative views of her style and behaviour (section 7.2), I was interested to know whether there might be a similar perspective for spirituality.

I would expect that certain MBTI preferences would have a general impact on the way spirituality is manifest. For example those who have a strong preference for Introversion may outwardly be very inexpressive or uncommunicative of their spirituality at all since, as Hirsh & Kummerow point out, they 'are inclined to keep their thoughts and ideas to themselves' and 'do not have the need to communicate as much with the external world' (1989:13). It is thus unlikely for an observer to be aware of such a person's deeper held beliefs. As someone with a strong spiritual belief and a preference for Introversion, this is certainly true for myself. The opposite may be true for Extraverts, although other factors may inhibit their expression of this aspect (see sections 7.7.4 and 8.4.3).

The MBTI itself does not consider spirituality, but many others working with the MBTI and spirituality have developed correlations between particular Myers Briggs types – or in some cases, sub-groups based on certain scales of preference (including the so called temperaments (Keirsey & Bates, 1984)) – and the way that spirituality might be manifest, or the types or aspects of spirituality most likely to appeal to a particular group. As a reminder, Laura's best fit type is ENFP.

An article for the Bulletin of Psychological Type looking at the likely impact of ENFP on spiritual aspects comments 'Many ENTPs and ENFPs report going to revival meetings, ashrams, Buddhist retreat centres, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Quaker, and Unitarian worship services, sometimes on a lifelong search. After all, how can you know if you've found what is right for you if you haven't experienced everything? (Kise, 2000:12). Richardson suggests that 'Not only can NFs suspend conflicting ideals without reconciling them, in the interests of harmony they can also muddy distinctions altogether, as often occurs when the attempt is made to reconcile very different religious traditions' and 'NFs have a tendency to claim to combine all traditions' (Richardson, 1996:158, 178).

This is clearly reflected in Laura's approach to spirituality, her commitment to interfaith work, involvement in differing spiritual practice, her inability and unwillingness to be absolute or specific about what denomination and religion she is ('I'm all of them ... I can't help it but I am' (1.1.12.a)), her history of changing religious affiliations, her resistance to accepting that any one way is the correct way and her mistrust of fundamentalist or dogmatic positions.

Again, looking at the NF temperament (Keirsey & Bates, 1984) in the context of spiritual development, Richardson considers that 'open symbols, flexibility, warmth of human presence, and an eclectic reservoir of resources are hallmarks of settings for NF spirituality' (1996:143), and 'with their warm and friendly manner and natural sympathy, NFs ... will always be drawing people towards their own best selves' (1996:145). He warns, however that 'NFs will rightly be seen at times as fickle – especially NFPs – for a path of action intensely pursued will suddenly be rejected because a new possibility has come into view and they will be off after it with equal enthusiasm' (1996:146). Again, this assessment
has strong parallels with Laura’s reports of how she is affected by her beliefs and puts them into practice.

The above seems to indicate that the expectations of how a person’s spirituality is manifest as predicted by psychological preferences works with a high degree of correlation for Laura. However, there are other factors which may influence the picture – not least consideration of the degree of spiritual development – which mean that this correlation may not hold up for a wider population.

As referred to earlier, a series of interviews with another leader, Bill Lucas (Appendix 5 section Ap 5.1), provided triangulation data for comparison with Laura. Bill is of interest particularly as he and Laura both value their spiritual dimension and have the same Myers-Briggs type. My impression, however, was that Bill’s understanding of spirituality and what it means to him is very different from Laura’s. As with the case study interviewees described below (section 7.7.2 and Figure 36, Interviewee’s interpretation of spirituality), Bill relates spirituality to his personal values and beliefs set, in his case based on a belief in God and manifest primarily around adherence to certain key values and ethics particularly focused on how he relates to others, and to a strong environmental ethic. In spiritual degree terms (Figure 7) he might be categorised as 3 or 4, and therefore may not yet have undertaken a deep personal spiritual search. Thus, (on the basis that my assumptions on degree are accurate) a person like Bill at degree 3/4 can be expected to manifest spirituality very differently from Laura somewhere in degree 6, even though both share the same general psychological preferences. In particular, unlike Laura, Bill did not relate any single life changing peak experience and this seems to be an overriding factor in changing Laura’s lifelong spiritual awareness and search into a more specific and intense influence in all that she does (see section 6.3). Whether this is the reason or not, Bill’s notion of what is spiritual is more diffuse and despite a commonality of Myers-Briggs types with Laura, his spiritual journey does not appear to exhibit the same searching and sampling of experiences and religions as Laura’s.

A further explanation for the differences between them may be indicated by the manifestation scale from Barnett et al (2000:568). They indicate that the path an individual pursues can evolve very differently (2000:566-569) and offer a preliminary categorisation of types (see Figure 35), used as a basis for discussion in a management development training.

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<tr>
<td>← SOLITARY/PRIVATE (V.S) GROUP/PUBLIC →</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MYSTICAL ← PERSONAL ← RITUAL → GROUP-PARTICIPATIVE → ECSTATIC

(BARNETT 2000:568)

Figure 35 – Individual orientation of spirituality
This categorisation suggests that a common starting point is ‘ritual’ which can then develop in one of two directions. This is not claimed as definitive but is valuable because it illustrates how very diverse spiritual experience and practice can be understood, and gives a further indication of the influence of personal preference: ‘spiritual development too is dependent in large part on one’s personality attributes, and it is generally accepted that personality influences the seeker’s choice of spiritual path’ (Barnett, 2000:572).

Bill appears to operate in the Ritual-Personal part of the spectrum whilst Laura ranges more widely, moving (at least) between Group/Participative, Ritual, Personal and Mystical.

I was attracted to the concept that one indicator of spiritual development might be manifest in a ‘letting go of the ego’ which Laura reported after her spiritual experience. This factor is also proposed by Jacobsen as a characteristic of transformational leadership (1994:32-33) and by Cook-Greuter (2000) as a development towards ‘ego transcendence’. Wilber suggests that of those who have explored the various levels of consciousness ‘their opinions are impressively universal and unanimous; transcending the ego is not a mental aberration or a psychotic hallucination but rather an infinitely richer, more natural, and more satisfying state or level of consciousness’ (1997:11). However, following Laura’s actions closely over a reasonable period, I was unable to identify data which would suggest or confirm that this was, in fact, the case for her. In fact, from my professional work I have formed the impression that as a leader, doggedly pursuing one’s deeply held beliefs and getting them implemented in practice against considerable inertia and resistance requires a very strong ego indeed. Also, Pfeffer, who does not consider the issue of spirituality in any way, suggests that submerging one’s ego can be an important source of power especially when seeking to build support from others (1994:182-183). Thus it is not clear that this forms a useful factor for indicating spiritual development in leaders (or others?), unless perhaps one sought to investigate in much greater detail the motivation for submerging the ego and how this might be observed in practice.

These aspects and the broader phenomenon of spiritual manifestation are considered more widely in section 8.4.3 and the consequences for the application of spirituality in the workplace more generally are considered in section 8.5.

7.7.2 Interviewees understanding of spirituality

In my interview questions specifically about spirituality, I sought to differentiate between spirituality and religion, however the two were frequently associated by interviewees. I did not enquire directly about their background or views on religion and how they related this to the workplace (if at all) and so there are only data on this distinction where individual interviewees volunteered a view. What I did find extremely revealing and believe to be highly significant was the very high correlation of concepts which interviewees offered as pertaining to or related to spirituality (‘what spirituality is about’) and their own views on what is important to them more generally as guiding principles in life.
In considering interviewees’ responses to questions about their understanding of spirituality, I formed the view that in almost all cases they were answering questions about spirituality more as an intellectual response rather than responding to something related to significant personal experience or that they had previously considered. I attempted to relate their positions to the Degrees of Spiritual Awareness which I defined previously in Figure 7 and my tentative assessment is shown in the final column, indicating that most would seem to correspond to degree 1 or degree 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVIEWEE</th>
<th>WHAT IS IMPORTANT?</th>
<th>WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY ABOUT?</th>
<th>DEGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>Dealing with people with integrity and values, 'doing what is right', handling people fairly</td>
<td>Values, the way you treat people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>Principled management, dealing with people in an appropriate way</td>
<td>God; right values and principles, personal integrity</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Not clear from the interviews. Possibly the need for empirical substantiation</td>
<td>Unsure, perhaps to do with religion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>Doing your job to the highest standard; sets great store by care for other people</td>
<td>Unclear but probably a 'society thing'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Doing jobs to a high standard; consistently demonstrating high ethics and values;</td>
<td>Humanist value systems; trust; acting with integrity</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Care for other people, especially the less advantaged; considering other's feelings</td>
<td>Unclear - possibly religion; perhaps to do with treating people sensitively</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 36 – Interviewees Interpretation of spirituality

Since interviewees’ definitions or associations in all cases are primarily to do with values, principles and relationships with others – but little or nothing further – I was led to reflect that this might be considered as a further indicator of early-stage spiritual development. Relating this to my earlier discussion of dimensions of human development, this seems to indicate that for this group of people – and by implication and extension, perhaps many others – the spiritual dimension is not specifically recognised or experienced, is not usually reflected upon and has not been consciously developed.

Laura, by contrast, was and is highly self reflective on what spirituality means to her, how she seeks to develop and work with spirituality generally, and the importance of spirituality in the workplace. As well as contributing to the debate on this latter aspect on management courses and in peer groups which she attends, she has also begun to write papers and articles on the subject. Asked how she had changed her approach since starting the job she replied ‘what I think is a fundamental shift has been for me is grounding myself more, and seeing, experiencing spirituality in small things. Because I had a tendency and I still have a preference for wonder, ecstatic mystical experiences, highs, you know, rituals; and what I am experiencing is much more a calmness and a wholeness and a beauty in small things’ (Q.69.50). She then went on to illustrate this by recounting meeting a busy and conscientious member of staff and deliberately spending some time talking to him and encouraging him on a number of occasions, seeing a clear positive change in this individual as a result. She said ‘those are the
Although spirituality and the spiritual search have always been a part of her life, the integration of her 'peak experience' means for her a constant conscious awareness and practice. On another occasion she reported that 'Staff say that they can bring a part of themselves into work that they couldn't before' although the data from my particular interviewees did not verify this and indeed I would confidently predict that some staff would consider this inappropriate. Laura would see her spirituality as 'informing her style and approach' in almost every way, whether or not this is evident to others in the organisation. She said 'I think that's the shift in my spirituality, I don't have to go off somewhere else to do it.'

### 7.7.3 Link between spiritual self-awareness and perception

I have indicated that the degree of spiritual development of most interviewees appeared to be at an early stage. From this, I infer a further emergent theme: the likelihood of a link between personal spiritual awareness or development, and the ability (or otherwise) to perceive and understand the spiritual development and impact of that development in others. Expressed simplistically, if you have limited awareness of spirituality yourself then you are unlikely to be able to perceive or to make sense of the spiritual situation or motivation of others whose awareness is more explicit. A good example of this was the response of the Principal in Laura's previous college when, following her peak experience, she tried to explain how this might affect her job 'he just said “I haven’t a clue what you’re talking about; I don’t even understand what you’re saying but something has happened to you ... [and because he knew me well he said]... I’ll back you to the hilt”'.

If this inference is correct, together with the indications that only a minority of staff are likely to have high personal awareness of spirituality, then a majority of staff in the College are unlikely to be aware of Laura as a spiritual person or as being spiritually motivated. One director commented 'I think a lot of the College will be unaware that she is a spiritual person because she doesn’t talk openly about that in a whole staff [meeting]'. Laura herself does not consider this significant 'it's how you are that's important. I think everybody knowing it might actually be spiritual pride, or alienate people' (L3.7.7). Even if for some reason she did speak of it, or where staff have had more direct contact and she has discussed this with them specifically, it would be my expectation that many would have limited understanding of what this means to her in practice and how it affects and directs how she functions – an expectation born out in the data, albeit with a limited sample. This is perhaps a specific example illustrating that it is not possible to comprehend well the position of those in stages more 'advanced' than one's own.

### 7.7.4 Reactions to explicit discussion of spirituality

At a personal, experiential level I noted with interest my own strong positive reaction to hearing Laura describe her spiritual peak experience and her engagement with spirituality in general – a reaction which I experienced as far beyond simple intellectual or emotional level interest. This is an area of great personal interest, involvement and development so it might be predictable that I would be highly attracted to interacting in some way with Laura around this issue, and so it proved to be. A similar reaction appears to be so for some others: Laura commented that one of
the reasons she underwent training as a spiritual director was that 'people would come into my office [in the previous job] and lay their life transitions out on my table' and she wanted to become more proficient at handling these interactions. These people seemed to be seeking or searching and found it satisfying to find someone who understood their position and was able to talk with them about it: a situation in which she reports that she frequently finds herself.

However, reactions to exposure to Laura’s explicitly stated beliefs about and interest in spirituality are not uniform. Amongst my interviewees, there was one person for whom this was a particularly positive influence. He not only displayed very strong loyalty and support for Laura and all that she was doing within the College but it was also apparent that, over time, contact with her had caused him to re-evaluate and consider his own position around spirituality and the part it played in his life. Another interviewee expressed fascination at coming to comprehend the extent that spirituality affected Laura in all that she does, though it did not appear that this person had changed their own views particularly as a result. A third person appeared to have a strong reaction against the constant exposure to spiritual discussion and views, expressing an opinion that this was not a matter for debate in a work context and that the person had had a surfeit of dialogue on the subject and would wish no more, if this were an option. My strong sense is that this represents in microcosm the breadth of reaction that might be expected if spirituality were on an explicit agenda more widely in the organisation. Further, in the same way as discussed previously with ‘commitment’ decisions (section 7.4), for those at greater distance – and particularly those opposed to any explicit spiritual expression – there is a high potential to form a body of opposition and a source of division.

7.8 Power, influence and spirituality

‘One cannot do justice to the concept of leadership ... without considering the concept of power as well’ (Judge, 1999:180)

When considering what processes take place and seeking to understand those processes, a significant consideration is that of the impact or effect of actual or perceived power of the leader. Morgan, in exploring issues of power in organisations says that 'Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when and how' (1986:158). Many lists of sources of power exist and Morgan offers a list of fourteen (1986:159, Exhibit 6.3) of which the first four are

- formal authority
- control of scarce resources
- use of organisational structure, rules and regulations
- control of decision processes

Of these four sources, it is clear that Laura inevitably deploys all to a considerable extent in her role as Principal and Chief Executive and therefore de facto both carries and deploys a high level of what is often generically termed positional power.
Notably missing from this particular list is what is sometimes known as personal power — that power which comes simply from force of personality. When exhibited to a considerable extent by leaders it is often referred to as charismatic leadership. Pfeffer suggest that what charismatic leaders do is to ‘create an emotional (rather than purely instrumental) bond with others; they take on heroic proportions and appeal to the ideological values of followers’ (1994:79). Pfeffer references a longitudinal study of a school Superintendent (Principal) in the US who was described by her staff as ‘a mover, a shaker, a visionary’ (1994:79). As a result, she ‘developed an extremely loyal following, unlike superintendents who had preceded her’ (1994:79) using an approach which was to ‘begin with a mission and a vision that outline where one wants to go; generate enthusiasm and support for the vision at the grass roots level; create a structure for change ... that will serve to channel the interest and energy into innovative programs’ (1994:80). There appear to be considerable parallels here with my own case. However I quote the example to illustrate that power which is based in personality, particularly where that personality has great charisma and presence, is considerable and when used positively can create a high degree of loyalty in followers.

Considering these two sources of power (positional and personal) it is evident that where they are combined, as is the case with Laura, they form a formidable power base, even where the intent is to use such power benignly, ethically, and in the ‘best interests’ of the organisation and its people. I have no doubt that it is a very significant factor in how people respond to the ‘challenge to commitment’ discussed in section 7.4 as well as other behaviours and processes within the organisation. There may also be a further, and perhaps more subtle, consequence. Where people align themselves with Laura’s aims, ideals and approaches, always accepting scope for differences of views at a detailed level, and the more that this alignment appears to produce the ‘right’ results (that is, successful or positive outcomes for the College and perhaps themselves) then perhaps the more that such a person may be open to influence in other areas. Following this line of reasoning, where Laura proposes a route which makes explicit some aspect of spirituality, her position of power must inevitably carry considerable influence, especially with a committed, dedicated and loyal team of executive managers.

However, this influence — at least as deployed in the benevolent and co-operative way that it is by Laura — has limits. The most clear example of this is Laura’s attempt to introduce a spirituality policy into the College based on a proposed UK national model, a debate which in the UK is not unique (for example, Jenkins, 1988). Some senior managers and other members of staff, selected because of potential or expressed interest, had previously been involved in a regional workshop considering a spiritual policy: ‘there was a lot of discussion about the need to create a more healthy environment through a spiritual approach as well as about how spirituality can be evidenced .. and promulgated through college life’(A11.14). A proposal to introduce such a policy explicitly into the College was opposed and eventually voted down by a majority of the Executive Team, based on concerns about the potential for confusion between spirituality and religion. Independently, I also have specific information of a similar situation and outcome in another UK college in the Midlands where a ‘Draft Spiritual Policy Statement’ supported strongly by some was rejected after debate by the College management. ‘One or two vocal members’ in particular influenced the management team who ‘threw out the whole idea on the basis that they did not want
"religion" in the College' (quotes from a senior manager in that College). In both these cases then, the Principals accepted the position of the Executive Management Team as a whole.

The reactions to Laura’s overt enthusiasm for, commitment to, and belief in a spiritual approach to all that she does, particularly from those in closer contact, has been discussed in section 7.7.4. Although in spiritual matters she is personally strongly opposed to any form of rigid dogmatism or proselytising on the basis of a single preferred or ‘best’ way, there must be some speculation about how her powerful position and personality play out in practice. Are people who are influenced by her position, success or personality likely to be more susceptible to influence from her spiritual beliefs? Is the process of ‘group think’ for which there is some evidence (section 7.5) likely to extend to spiritual perceptions? Is it purely the strength of her personal convictions which keeps spirituality in the workplace on the agenda for the College (and what will happen when she leaves)? These are just some of the speculative questions for which I have no data. My own view is this. Leaders have the potential to exert considerable influence within their organisations (see section 8.6.1 - The pivotal role of the leader) and leaders like Laura who are both strongly spiritually motivated and successful as leaders inevitably have a strong influence organisationally but also on those in more immediate contact with them (see 8.6.2 - Proximity to the leader). At a personal level, Laura is likely to be experienced positively by many, and indeed to have what may even be a life-changing effect on some individuals. Some others, however, will not wish to engage in this deeply personal way and will be opposed, either to Laura’s particular view of spirituality or to spirituality in general as a suitable area for consideration in the workplace.

I would expect a leader such as Laura, who has spirituality specifically and prominently on her agenda, to be seeking to implement organisational approaches in keeping with her beliefs – including a values, ethics, principles based approach which values people highly – as well as economic or other measures of success. Over time, I would expect to see the more general principled behavioural approaches permeate the organisation as a whole – in this case effecting a change in its ethos or culture. However, it is also my view that though such a change may come to be considered widely as preferable and desirable, it is likely to be maintained only as long as the leadership role is held by someone with compatible views. Such is the power and influence of the leader, perhaps coupled with issues of job security and other considerations, that management and other staff would be unlikely to be able (and unwilling to fight) to maintain their preferred operational style in the face of determined opposition. I would expect that personal change at a spiritual level would be much more durable but without spiritual conviction on the part of a new leader, there is a high potential for that intangible influence not to continue organisationally: principled leadership per se is not the exclusive preserve of spiritually motivated leaders (see section 8.6.4 - Effective leadership vs effective spiritual leadership).
7.9 Summary of Case Study findings

This chapter has examined in some detail the findings of the case study. Those findings most directly related to the focus of this research and the research questions may be summarised as follows:

1. Laura, the leader in this organisation, is a charismatic leader whose personality is such that it would be difficult to ignore or to be unaffected by her. She is heading up a high impact and far reaching change programme and appears proficient, competent and effective in her role. Her starting point was inauspicious, with a legacy of unhelpful management practices in the past, though this could be seen as helpful to her by comparison, as long as her approach is viewed as successful. Against considerable inertia, and in difficult external circumstances, there are clear indications of progress and success.

2. Her espoused style and approach, in her role as Principal and Chief Executive, correlate closely with what is experienced by others in their relationships with Laura. The data indicate that she is consistent over time and strongly asserts a values based approach.

3. Proximity to, and regular contact with, Laura are highly correlated with her degree of impact and influence. This proximity has a direct effect in terms of speed and effectiveness when establishing trust, gaining commitment, engendering loyalty and motivating individuals.

4. She has developed a committed, cohesive and effective Executive Management Team who are very loyal to her. They are well motivated, accept significant responsibilities and take on high workloads, sometimes at considerable personal cost. They appear inclined to develop and hold common positions on some topics (as might be expected) which are significantly influenced by Laura. There are indications that this team may have some blind spots. The study did not seek to understand the impact of this and there is limited data from which to draw inferences.

5. Laura is perceived as working at a fast rate, being eager to take on all necessary projects and tasks and achieve objectives in as short a time as possible. She drives herself and others hard in the process: some would say to an unreasonable degree.

6. Laura is highly spiritually aware and is motivated and guided in all that she does in the light of this awareness. This spiritual awareness and motivation can most comprehensively be understood from a phenomenological point of view. A peak personal experience has enlightened, re-enforced and underscored her awareness, and of her sense that she is 'in service' to God and to others. She is differentiated from some other leaders who also value spirituality by the consequences of this peak experience.

7. She has a strong sense of mission about her job: a belief that she is 'meant' to be in this role in this specific organisation. She is strongly convinced of the value

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58 This is entirely appropriate and would be expected in a senior team. The issue is whether individual positions have been adequately considered and expressed before a common position is agreed, and what Laura's role and influence is in this process. The data suggest that disagreement is allowed or even encouraged. There are no data on the process.
of integrating spirituality into the workplace and would wish it to be a place where ‘people can bring all of themselves here into the organisation’. She attempts to be aware of spirituality in small things and act appropriately on this awareness: ‘that’s what transforms an organisation, ... the small little encounters that touch the soul or heart or whichever bit of them that needed to be touched.’.

8. Given the above, this leader, how she operates within her organisation and the results being achieved can be considered an outstanding example of spiritually motivated leadership in action in the workplace. However, ....

9. .... her decisions, actions and behaviours can all be interpreted through other frames or lenses. A causal relationship between spiritual motivation and observed behaviour can not be empirically demonstrated. Substantive alternative explanations can be proposed, for example Myers Briggs type.

10. Most staff are unaware of Laura’s spiritual beliefs, with the exception of those in close proximity to her, who are very aware as she is very overt in discussing her particular beliefs and how they influence her. Most staff are unaware of Laura’s spiritual beliefs, with the exception of those in close proximity to her, who are very aware as she is very overt in discussing her particular beliefs and how they influence her. 

11. Spirituality is a concept which is not usually considered by the majority of the research participants (and possibly a majority of all staff), either in the abstract or in relation to their own self-awareness or experience: most do not speak of it from personal experiential reflection. When faced with discussing it there is, in almost all cases, a high degree of discomfort. When asked, most people propose definitions related to their own strongly held principles and values; they also associate it with religion.

12. A set of behavioural processes can be inferred from the interactions between Laura and her staff which raise issues for this case but also more widely. Power and influence can be assumed to be an important factor in these processes. Laura’s personal convictions are relevant to these processes and impact significantly on others. This is most apparent when considering staff in close proximity to her.

In the next chapter, these finding are considered in the context of my original research questions.

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59 I am proposing that there is an additional factor here: where there is significant disparity between a lesser degree of awareness of spirituality in one person and a greater degree in another, it is not likely that the former will recognise it or appreciate what this means to the latter.
Chapter 8 : Outcomes and Conclusions

Having considered the outcomes from the case study in some detail, this chapter now returns to the original research questions. It reflects on how those outcomes relate to the bigger picture of spirituality in the workplace, what the implications are for the field in general, what I have learned in the process and where the focus of further research might be directed. In doing this, I also refer again to the work of other researchers, particularly Jacobsen (1994), Judge (1999) and Zwart (2000) previously referenced in Chapter 2.

As an introduction, I reflect in section 8.1 on the methodology I have used and some implications of using a phenomenological approach.

In the later sections of this chapter, I introduce comparative data from other leaders, a process previously discussed in principle in section 5.7.3. Each was chosen either because they also believe spirituality to be of significance in their lives (including their work life) or because they share the same Myers Briggs type (see Appendix 1) as Laura, the leader in my case study. There was no attempt to define a purposive sample and indeed all but one were already known to me. The intent was to introduce data indicating the way that other leaders approached their role and consider commonalties with, and differences from, Laura. These other leaders are:

Bill Lucas, Chief Executive of the Campaign for Learning, a UK organisation with charitable status, dedicated to lifelong learning. MBTI best fit type ENFP.

Brett Jordan, Managing Director and founding partner of a small graphics design company. MBTI type not known.

'Richard Mapleden' (a pseudonym), Medical Director of a large National Health Service Trust. MBTI best fit type ENFP.

Rob Bernstein, founder and Chief Executive of Shared Vision, a consultancy specialising in facilitating innovative and creative transformational change within large organisations. MBTI best fit type ENFP.

David House, Human Resource Consultant and former HR Director of a UK plc. MBTI best fit type ENFP.

The base data on each of these individuals is provided in Appendix 5. In the case of Bill Lucas the data come from a series of interviews over a period of 15 months; with Brett Jordan, from a single, long, semi-structured interview; in the other cases, from extended personal observation of, and interaction with, these individuals in a business setting.

8.1 Reflections on methodology

It was only as I approached the data analysis phase that I realised how complex and challenging was the methodological approach that I had developed and used. The
strength of the phenomenological perspective is, for me, in the non-judgmental,
observational, in-depth perspective which enables development of an understanding
of the perception, motivation and 'inner world' view of the subject. This in itself,
when applied to a person such as Laura, provides rich data and could have formed a
study on its own, perhaps with the addition of, and reflection on, similar perspectives
from other comparable subjects. Not only did this feel like a very satisfactory
approach to understanding Laura and her intentions but I came to conclude that it is
the most valuable (perhaps even the only comprehensive) way to approach and
understand issues of spiritual conviction and motivation, since inferences from
observed behaviours are always subject to alternative explanations.

The drawbacks, largely identified in advance but made real in execution, are in
particular around the impossibility of being the totally neutral and blank canvas
investigator-researcher which the methodological process strictly demands. This
appears to be a common concern which some would say is impossible to uphold and
should be worked with constructively. Gilbert comments: 'by separating the personal
side of fieldwork from the substantive story, they add to the myth that personal feelings do
not influence the research to any great extent and do not taint the final product' whereas in
fact qualitative researchers need to recognise that 'they are part of the research process
and what they observe, hear, and experience is filtered through various lenses including the
emotional' (2001:18). Adopting an approach of heuristic enquiry would have placed
these issues in the foreground and removed entirely the requirement to be neutral or a
blank canvas, however, the requirement for personal immersion in the process (Braud
& Anderson, 1998:265) raises the concerns which I had following the pilot study
(section 3.4) and which I wished to avoid.

The development of my understanding of Laura in particular must, because of its
depth and extent, be mediated to some degree by my own background, history,
experience, world vision and reaction to her. I have sought to indicate the points at
which I have been particularly aware of this. I encountered the problem of
ambivalence of relationship with most interviewees at various times throughout the
interview process. This occurred in three broad areas. First, when I had a feeling of
particularly good rapport with an individual where, in a more socially neutral setting,
I would naturally engage in a dialogue of discovery with that person. Second, where
an individual raised issues on which I had a view that I thought might be helpful, or a
question to ask them – as in a coaching session – which might help them become
aware of other perspectives. Third, when they raised issues in which I was
particularly interested (either as part of the research or otherwise) where I was
tempted to engage in a debate or discussion, rather than simply to seek their view.
The most obvious example was the very first interview with Laura which, as reported
elsewhere, began to stray into all three of the above areas. However there were
occasions with a number of other interviewees where there was potential for this to
happen but by then I was more disciplined in restraining myself. This caused me
some degree of discomfort, even inner tension, during the process and left me
somewhat dissatisfied that I had not entered into a true dialogue with the participants.
This experience is clearly not unique as Gilbert notes: 'Qualitative researchers ..
receive mixed messages. As they are told to work to establish rapport, they are also told to
avoid over-identification and unnecessary emotion. .... Thus many .. function like quasi-
positivists, allowing themselves to have particular feelings such as closeness with
participants but then denying their emotions when they construct their accounts' (Gilbert
A different methodological approach, for example co-operative research, would ameliorate the impact of this particular issue but overall, I am still happy with my choice. I have specifically tried not to ‘deny my emotions’ when constructing this account, and to reflect what was happening for me at various points.

The case study approach had felt from the start to be a highly appropriate way to investigate the situation generally, and between Laura and the other participants in particular. It allowed me to adopt as close as a non-interventionist a role as possible whilst still enabling direct personal contact and assessment. The semi-structured nature of the interviews elicited comparable data from the participants and the longitudinal view provided data over time to allow the process of change to be considered. How much of my comfort was because my background and experience made it an approach in which I felt confident I am not sure. However following my discomfort after the pilot study, it also removed the potential pitfalls which concerned me about more directly collaborative techniques (see section 3.4).

I did became acutely aware of two problems. The first was that of selecting questions and focussing the investigation on the research question(s), allowing contextual data but not being side-tracked by it. There were a number of points in the longitudinal process where I found myself interested in, and allowing participants undue time to explain, the organisational changes which were happening in the College. At one point during the second round of interviews, I realised that I was being seduced by interest in these organisational changes and became more disciplined in restricting the interview time devoted to answering these questions. The second problem was that of ‘leading the witness’ or influencing the outcome of a line of questioning by use of certain words and even by use of questions about specific topics. This was no better illustrated than by the conundrum of how to ask questions about spirituality without pre-disposing the respondent to answer in a certain way. All other routes to seeking this information seemed beset with further problems around the meaning of words, the definition of concepts and the lack of common concepts which would apply to, or be understood by, every respondent in the same way.

The process of comparison of the case study data might seem to be more in keeping with analytical positivist paradigms than to a phenomenological presentation. However, my interest was in the perception of the respondent, seeking at least some degree of understanding of their internal framework of reference, and comparing this with the position of others. This was neither a behavioural analysis nor was there any attempt to explain these positions in relation to other models. I still maintain that my theoretical stance is based in phenomenology whilst employing a case study approach.

Combining the results of these two methodological approaches (a phenomenological study and a case study) was also challenging and problematic since one is heavily presentational and reflective, and the other more directly comparative and inherently analytical. However, in working with the outcomes of the data analysis phase, I am satisfied that the combination has provided a valuable and effective way of examining the research questions.
8.2 Return to the research questions

Returning now to the research question (Figure 1) and the ancillary questions raised at the beginning of the research (section 1.3), I have offered outcomes, critique, reflections and conclusions on the thematic areas. Data are incorporated from all the sources reviewed in this document but particularly the case study, my own additional research data, and recent literature. I also trace developments in my understanding, with propositions and assertions based on my findings.

The original research questions are indicated thus: *What are the ...*

8.3 Spirituality as a human dimension

*What are the implications if spirituality is an integral dimension of human beings?*

In the early stages of my research this seemed like a foundation question, and the embedded question 'Is it?' is addressed in Chapter 2. I have recognised that it is an assertion for which many seek conclusive proof but, despite some recent research indicating a degree of support for there being psychological factors which are uniquely spiritual (Piedmont, 1999; MacDonald, 2000), such proof seems unlikely. Consequently it is unsurprising that some do not necessarily accept this component. Gibbons notes that 'many people identify spirituality as part of their nature ... [these beliefs] remain as assumptions about the nature of humanity' (2000:IV-27). For myself, I eventually recognised that my own wish to be able to contribute to the process of proffering proof was driven by a tendency to view positivist approaches as somehow more valid which, as I clarified my phenomenological approach, ceased to become an issue.

Right from this first question, the issue of definitions arose and subsequently appeared regularly. At a general level, there is confusion of meaning since spirituality is often equated with other attributes, for example, 'many of us have grown up with niceness conflated with spirituality' (Beebe, 2000:55). As evidenced in my case study and in discussion with other leaders, there is also a common tendency to equate spirituality with 'positive' or 'good' morals, principles, ethics and values. This is perhaps not surprising, however I am proposing that these aspects or indicators are necessary but not sufficient as definitions of what spirituality is about. The question 'What do we mean by spirituality' has been considered at length earlier in this work (section 2.4) and will be discussed further in this section.

Jones suggests that 'The quest for meaning and connection to the sacred is a fundamental part of human development and an essential resource for mental and physical wholeness' (1995:20). This sentiment is common amongst inspirational writers in the body-mind-
spirit field and, assuming sacred is equivalent to spiritual, I am not aware of any such writers who argue against it. Amongst practitioners and scholarly writers supporting the relevance of spirituality in the workplace, most are equally convinced. For example, Fairholm asserts: 'Spirituality is the essence of who we are. It is about our inner self, separate from the body ... our real self' (1998:111). Similarly many researchers are also led to consider this a likely inference. For example: 'Clearly it is a term that attracts the interest of many people from diverse backgrounds. All of this suggests that it connotes a fundamental aspect of human experience' (Jacobsen 1994:25), and Judge (1999:132) illustrates how these dimensions (body, mind, spirit) may be considered as linked or networked rather than as a hierarchy. It must be acknowledged that example after example of those who believe this to be the case, or even the assertions of those who successfully pursue interventions based on this premise, from change using NLP to holistic medical practice, do not constitute proof. However, I am absolutely clear, and have become further convinced as a result of this research, that to let lack of definitive proof cause us to dismiss or sideline this assertion is to miss both understanding fully who we are as individuals and (vital in the context of this research) to miss the transformative potential for those who are deeply convinced of and actively working with this dimension — to which theme I shall return shortly.

In a recent innovative work, Zohar and Marshall not only recognise this dimension but go a good deal further by asserting that it can be explained by considering the way that the brain itself works: 'there is a third kind of thinking of which the brain is capable' (2000:86) over and above serial thinking (fixed programme neural tracts) and associative thinking (neural network processes). They call this third intelligence 'connected inherently to meaning' Spiritual Intelligence — SQ. They see this as 'the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-given context' (2000:3-4). This work offers a putative physiological theory together with a description of what it means to act with Spiritual Intelligence. However, unlike the response to Goleman's (1996) proposition of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) the response to SQ — both the physiological and the metaphysical/behavioural aspects — has been much more cautious. As with EQ, it encompasses some notions which others would ascribe to aspects of behavioural or cultural development, for example some of the approaches recommended to improve SQ such as 'a high degree of self awareness', 'standing against the crowd' and 'reluctance to cause harm' (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 285-291). This work is thought provoking for those interested in spirituality and spiritual development but must be considered contentious.

The decision as to whether to engage with one's spirituality or not remains highly personal. My sense, my own experience and much reported experience from others (Neal, 1999; Jones 1995; Peck 1991 and many others) indicate that, at some juncture in their lives, most people encounter circumstances which provide or provoke an opportunity to explore this aspect of themselves. Beebe suggests that 'Spirit emerges out of the shadowy background of consciousness, but it is the integrity of consciousness that assures our ability to see if the spirit is capable of moving us in the direction of greater awareness or condemning us to repetitive impulse' (2000:16). Part of this research is to consider whether there are leadership and organisational factors which might make

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62 See the description of Neuro Linguistic Programming in Chapter 3 'Key Concepts for this Research' subsection 3.2 'Human Development'
such a step more or less likely and I shall argue shortly that there are. Nevertheless, the adage that 'you can lead a horse to water but cannot make it drink' remains true here: although presented with any and all opportunities to engage with their spiritual dimension, if an individual declines to do so then s/he cannot be forced or coerced. Engagement with the spiritual dimension is an intensely personal process: rather like, say, psychotherapy, only individuals themselves can engage with it and no-one else can do it for them or on their behalf.

8.4 Concepts and understanding of spirituality

8.4.1 How do people understand spirituality?

The confusion, contradiction or plain lack of clarity which results from attempting to define spirituality has been a issue throughout my research. Time after time I found that it extends to all who seek such a definition whether in the context of research, management and other education, healthcare or elsewhere, and is widely acknowledged as a problem in most, if not all, papers and books on the subject. To add to previous examples in section 2.4, Schmidt-Wilk comments 'a review of the existing literature on spirituality in management indicates that definitions of spirituality lack clarity or agreement' (2000:582) and Rosenblatt goes further 'I hesitate to define spirituality, because I know the experience and understanding of it are different from person to person and even different within a person from time to time. Also, I think some of what I experience as spirituality cannot be captured in words' (2001:113).

As a personal example, in working with a group at the University of Surrey, UK, to consider the relevance and application of spirituality in practice to the environment, process and content of tertiary education, the subject of definition kept a group of academics, clerics and doctoral students busy for three meetings of 2 hours duration, without any agreed resolution or common definition. At the fourth meeting it was decided to 'move on' to talk about theory and practice, acknowledging the 'waste of time' that would ensue if we continued to seek consensus on a definition. This flags up the potential dangers of pursuing discussion and action without a specifically agreed definition, but also illustrates reasons for the pragmatic approach of 'let's get on and seek ways of engaging rather than debating definition' – both considerations being highly relevant when considering application of spirituality in organisations (see section 8.5). In research approaches, too, researchers either struggle with definition (for example, Jacobsen, 1994; Judge, 1999), adopt likely definitions (Zwart, 2000), or avoid definition entirely like Hay & Hunt (2000) who in a paper on 'Understanding the Spirituality of People who don't go to Church' 'did not define the terms 'spiritual' or 'spirituality' at any point in the research process. This follows from [their] theoretical stance that spirituality is present in some form in everybody's life and is not always directly connected to religious beliefs and practices' (2000:10).

This range of understandings and uses has repeatedly called to mind what Humpty Dumpty said to Alice in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less".

The same confusion has also applied to me. At the outset, I thought that I had a sound understanding of what spirituality was about but it rapidly became clear that
my concepts were not clearly articulated, were closely linked to religion and were limited in scope. The most useful clarifications for me have come from two sources. The first is the four dimensional model of the components of spirituality which I developed following the pilot study (Figure 4). This has been repeatedly valuable in allowing me to reconcile widely varying views of what spirituality is about, for making clarifications throughout the research, enabling me to put comments about spirituality into a context of the understanding or frame of reference of the contributor, and to offer a framework for understanding and proposing why any less than all four aspects seem to me to be incomplete. In offering this understanding, in articles and papers (Joseph, 1999; Joseph, 2001) and in internet discussions, the reaction has been one of interest, including supportive critical comments over the Internet from other researchers interested in this topic area. Others, and notably more than one clergyman, would wish for a stronger emphasis on the primacy of the connection with the Divine, and even the transcendent aspect of all four dimensions. The second clarification was the orientation scale from Barnett et al (2000:568) reproduced in Figure 35, which provided a putative categorisation of the widely differing ways in which spirituality may be engaged with and manifest in practice. However, it should be recognised that neither of these clarifications offers a specific definition of spirituality.

For many of the people I interviewed as part of this research, within and outside the case study, the concept of spirituality was not something they had generally considered or related to personally. Even for those few who had considered it, it was most often unclearly defined or widely interpreted. Most people were willing to engage intellectually to proffer some sort of definition, but few had considered it previously to any great extent and fewer still seemed to speak from a position of personal exploration and experience. The most common threads were that it has to do with:

- religion
- values and ethics
- (positive) behaviour towards others

My own definition (section 2.4.4) has stood up well to my developing understanding of spirituality through the course of this research. However I have not been able to establish any of the separate threads with any greater degree of clarity or certainty. The most I can say is that I have not encountered anything which has caused me to revise fundamentally my definition. The understanding of those I have encountered for whom spirituality is significant have not argued with my definition, except the final phrase 'which may seek fulfilment in the Divine' which is not accepted by all.

8.4.2 Differences between the UK and the USA

When looking at people's understanding of spirituality in general, most other researchers, principally in North America, have findings different from my experience in the UK. For example, Mitroff & Denton (1999ii) found that in their sample of high level managers and executives 'most of the people we interviewed had a rather definite notion of what it is and what it is not' and a similar pattern of clarity or at least awareness was found in CEOs and executives by Judge (1999) and by others (for example, Fairholm, 1996; Jacobsen, 1994). Similar results seem to be evident in
other worker samples (for example Bruce, 200063). This is in direct contradiction with my own experience. It may possibly be linked to the fact that America is reported to be the most religiously oriented country of all the developed nations (Van Buren64 cit in Judge 1999:84) and 95% of Americans believe in God (Emmons & Crumpler65 cit in Gibbons, 2000). Despite having taken pains earlier to differentiate between spirituality and religion, those who are religiously inclined consistently make a link between the two. By comparison, a UK poll (Heald, 2000) found that 60% believe in God, although only 26% have faith in a personal God. 39% of British people regard themselves as 'definitely not religious', and those acknowledging belonging to a particular religion have declined from 58% in 1990 to 48% now. However, only a very small minority (8%) declare themselves 'convinced atheists' so it is perhaps not surprising that only 12% admitted to being 'not a spiritual person' 66 and points to a search for meaning in spiritual matters which goes beyond established religions.

One notable exception to this US trend is Zwart (2000) who was surprised to find that in her sample of managers in a particular geographic area, she was unable to correlate spirituality with characteristics of transformational leaders. Her results were in contradiction with, for example, Jacobsen whom she cites, and who found that 'spirituality plays a vital role in the personal and professional activity of [his] participants' (1994).

Whatever the reason for the disparity between the US and the UK, my own findings are not in concert with the majority of American research and writings. Most of the interviewees in my case study did not particularly recognise spirituality as part of their make-up in any major way or at all, nor had they explored this dimension of themselves to any extent. For others in the pilot study, other research interviews, and less formal contacts in the world of management, there was for most a limited concept of spirituality or none at all – indicators of a degree 1, 2 or at most 3 awareness in the categorisation of Figure 7 (section 2.5). Perhaps not surprisingly, there seemed to be a somewhat greater awareness evident in a group of counsellors in training (referred to in Footnote 27) although this is based on discussion and expression of their views rather than understanding in depth how this was lived out. In the group which met specifically to further their spirituality (Appendix 5) there was again some awareness, at least of the wish to search and explore this dimension. However, even there, only a few had previously considered the concept to a significant degree: most were seeking further understanding and to find ways to develop their spirituality in practice. Most, therefore, would seem to be at degree 2, perhaps moving to 3. Here again there were the same widely diverse concepts as elsewhere of what spirituality might be about and how it related to the individuals themselves.

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63 Bruce (2000) In a random sample of 391 members of the American Society for Public Administration found that to the statement 'I consider myself a spiritual person' 73% said yes; 'I associate spirituality with my work' 45% said yes; 'Working in the public sector is part of my spiritual path' 48% said yes.

64 Van Buren H, 1996 March, Community, relationality, and the love of neighbour, Presentation at the International Association for Business & Society, Santa Fe, NM


As far as my case study data are concerned, this difference between the US and the UK may be because:

(a) my sample is so small that I am getting a skewed view unrepresentative of the whole staff in the College
(b) the sample is representative and this is a general norm
(c) there is a major difference between UK and US
(d) the US research is not typical of wider US populations.

My strong sense, supported by a number of other less structured discussions with senior managers in the UK, is that it is very likely that this is a general UK norm, and that the UK may be unlike the US in this regard. Although I am not able to substantiate this specifically, I do have further support for this view from a colleague researching in depth with 9 UK senior executives in large organisations, responsible for major transformational change and downsizing. In the context of discussing in detail and at length their work, change processes and life consequences for themselves, he has found none who indicated any specific relevance, or even awareness, of spirituality. One consequence of this is that it would be misguided to assume that initiatives to introduce spirituality into workplace settings (whatever that might mean in practice) would meet with universal, or even general, acclaim and support.

8.4.3 Individual manifestation of spirituality

In section 7.7.1, I addressed how my data might be interpreted as related to individual styles of engagement with spirituality: the relevance of factors such as psychological preferences, the degree of an individual’s engagement with their spiritual dimension, and differing preferences for manifestation. In summary, I have concluded that:

1. The extent to which a person manifests their spiritual dimension – or is able to fully comprehend the position of others in this dimension – will depend on, and vary with, the degree of an individual’s spiritual awareness (see section 2.5) and the extent to which this is pursued or developed, modulated by the individuals’ unique life experiences.

2. Individuals will manifest spirituality in widely differing ways. It may be possible to indicate how we might expect to see this happen for people grouped by common characteristics. For example, relating this to MBTI preferences, some general patterns may be observable for certain type-groups (Richardson 1996, and others). This is significantly modified by point 1 above: that is, these general characteristics may only be expressed similarly by people with a comparable degree of awareness or development.

3. Further significant differences are likely depending on the style of manifestation preferred by an individual, as indicated by Barnett’s manifestation scale (Figure 35) but also according to the extent to which a person chooses to externalise their inner beliefs.

67 There may be a correlation between preferred style of manifestation and psychological type but investigating this is beyond the scope of this research
What this suggests is that whereas two people might both have an awareness of spirituality and even consider it as an important factor in their lives, we need to enquire more deeply in order to understand the way and the extent to which it affects them, how they engage with it, and therefore how it is likely to be evident and lived out. I have come to the view that phenomenological investigation provides the most effective way to understand individual perception of spirituality with clarity. Laura, for example, has a significant preference for Extraversion in MBTI terms, and on closer contact with her it would be hard not to hear about her more strongly held beliefs which she discusses freely. However, only through the process of the phenomenological review was I able to develop an understanding of just how profound these views are, what formed them and how fundamentally committed she is to pursuing them. My confidence in my understanding of her position developed further by re-enquiring of her over time and from different perspectives. I also sought data from others, over a period of time, as to how they perceived her. This process enhanced my degree of conviction that I had understood with some accuracy Laura’s view and intent, and verified that she acted in a way that was congruent with what she espoused.

The significance of the above to this research is in indicating the wide disparity of views about, interest in, and practice of spirituality that must be expected in any population group. Given the deeply personal and sensitive nature of this dimension, the greatest care is needed when considering approaches allowing or facilitating spiritually-based practice with the disparate groups that comprise all organisations – indeed some will argue that this is entirely inappropriate in an organisational setting. Conversely, not to seek to engage spirituality at all means missing the transformative potential of this profound dimension of our nature.

8.5 Spirituality in Organisations

What is the relevance of spirituality in an organisational context?

8.5.1 Use of the word ‘spirituality’ in organisations

Both in the case study and in other discussions with leaders and managers, I found a marked reluctance to use the word ‘spirituality’ in public discussion or documentation. Even given Laura’s deep commitment to spirituality in the workplace, she and the Executive Management Team have avoided using the word specifically in the College mission statement, prospectus and communications to wider audiences. This reluctance has also been noted by other researchers (for example Zwart, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999i; Judge, 1999). There was a feeling that it is a ‘loaded’ word, carrying connotations which are frequently not positive, sometimes based in previous religious experience. Bill Lucas (Appendix 5) for example, felt that the word spirituality was not commonly used and indeed he had experienced ‘by and large a fairly negative response’ when he deliberately tried it out on various people. These negative responses have made him hesitant to use it directly. Perhaps for similar reasons most people, even those for whom spirituality is important, seem to prefer to use alternative words to try and convey the sense. For some, Barnett suggest this may be because ‘the more transcendent a [person’s] spiritual
experience, the more untranslatable and incommunicable it becomes [to others]' (2000:573). The alternatives often encompass such concepts as core values, ethics, relationships, moral stance, holistic development. I have already commented elsewhere that these euphemisms represent a limited or incomplete view of spirituality; in particular, they completely miss any of the sense of the phrase in my definition, of spirituality being 'the source of our ultimate sense of purpose' and fail to reflect its transcendent nature.

Conversely, Laura reports that being explicit about her spirituality has caused some to respond with intense interest. I also recall my own strongly positive reaction to the opportunity to discuss this topic with someone who shared an interest in it, particularly as related to organisations. However, since Laura is not my leader or manager, then my relationship with her is very significantly different than for those in her organisation.

Whatever the reason, raising spirituality as a topic for discussion in organisations can be expected to meet a range of responses from the positive and enthusiastic to misunderstanding, resistance and, quite possibly, opposition. As related specifically to leaders, this point is taken further in section 8.6.1.

8.5.2 Impact of spirituality in the workplace

How, then, can the notion of spirituality be related to the workplace? There is a grandiosity of view about the yearning for, and effects of, spirituality in the workplace expressed in much of the literature 'many authors have told us about the magic that can happen in organisations when the outward concept of leadership meets with the inward concept of spirituality in the arena of the workplace' [14 sources are then cited, all of which are American in origin] (Bento, 2000:651). In my investigations, and extensive professional experience, this perception is not widely mirrored in the views of the many people with whom I have had contact across a considerable number of organisations in the UK, spanning many profit and not-for profit sectors. Nor indeed was it in the US based multinational for which I worked for 19 years, despite that organisation's demand for ethical business practices and positive, though paternalistic, concern for individuals. This same concern about undue optimism is reflected only by a limited number of others (for example Zwart, 2000) and strongly expressed by an even smaller minority such as Gibbons: 'there is an assumption in .. writings that spirituality always makes people feel better about themselves, about their lives and so on. This is simply not true' (2000:V39). Again it is notable that the related literature on this topic is overwhelmingly North American in origin – none of the seminal works specifically about spirituality in the workplace are from the UK or based in UK experience. It is likely that there are cultural reasons why UK attitudes differ somewhat from America. Perhaps, also, these particular ideas and concepts, like many others before, will take time to 'migrate' to this country and to find acceptance here. There must also be some concern that the optimism expressed, particularly by those who are committed to, and seeing, some positive results from working with spirituality in the workplace, may be less ubiquitous than is implied.

Research and more scholarly writings often reflect spirituality in the workplace in the context of development of individual potential. For example Neck & Milliman
propose that: 'The goal of spirituality in work is seen as being able to reach one's full potential and to have positive attitudes and relationships with the world. In this sense, spirituality is seen as being similar to Maslow's concept of the highest stage of human development, self-actualisation' (1994:10). In contrast, among the people I interviewed the predominant, virtually unanimous, view is to link spirituality in the workplace with values, ethics, style of approach to others, and acting with integrity. Indeed, after Laura’s definitive spiritual experience, she chose to use exactly these terms with her (then) Principal when indicating the likely impact on carrying out her job, since she felt he would not understand her if she couched the discussion in more specifically spiritual terms. Once again these ways of defining spirituality do have a direct relevance to the workplace but represent a limited or incomplete view.

Laura alluded to the wider perspective that spirituality can offer in her reply to my question about the difference that spirituality makes in organisations: 'it's about an energetic that I think comes into the organisation, and just a sense of alignment of something bigger, and more purposeful and meaningful than ... if you don't have that extra bit' (L2.8.3). The undefinable and transcendent nature of this belief makes it impossible to quantify or evaluate. It is more a belief, stemming from the profound 'faith' of an individual that this is the case: it is not demonstrable as being so, or not being so. Further, it may not represent the views of all who are convinced of the importance of their spiritual conviction. Others (of whom Bill Lucas is one – Appendix 5) may have personal convictions but feel that the only appropriate link to the workplace is to inform their principles, values and practice.

There is a sense in which considering the impact of spirituality in the workplace as I have just done can objectify it. However, as proposed at a very early stage in this research (section 1.3) if spirituality is an inherent dimension, then it is inevitably part of each person, in the workplace or anywhere else. Considering spirituality in this more integrative and immanent way raises questions as to whether, how and to what extent individuals might choose to engage this dimension in a work context, and how these choices are influenced by their particular understanding. I have indicated that participants in the case study report a wide range of understandings, and an equally wide range of responses to considering spirituality as relevant to the workplace. This leads me to conclude that it is neither desirable nor wise to be prescriptive in suggesting or proposing how spirituality might be specifically raised, presented, engaged with, or 'implemented' in organisational settings.

In the next section, I explore the consequences when leaders are motivated by their spiritual beliefs and how people respond when leaders make explicit their own position, illuminated in particular by data from my own case.

8.6 Spirituality and leadership

Where leaders in organisations recognise, value and are guided by their own spiritual dimension how does this affect and inform their style and approach in their role?

What is the impact and what are the consequences within their organisations?
8.6.1 The pivotal role of the leader and the consequences of spiritual belief

A primary focus of this research has been to consider the consequences of leaders’ beliefs on their behaviours (although not investigating differing types of leadership style per se) and how this affects their organisations. From the outset, I was seeking to observe and understand how a leader who was ‘spiritually motivated’ went about her role, how this was perceived by others in the organisation and what the consequences were.

At a management development workshop which I facilitated during 1999 (which had nothing to do with spirituality) involving senior managers of a major UK high street bank, one manager said "It is clear to me that the style of the senior manager is absolutely crucial. He has to set the tone and the standards. Preferably he has to be seen to be ‘doing it’ but at very least, visibly supporting and re-enforcing those of us who are ‘doing it’." The management literature, too, suggests that the tone of the organisation is strongly influenced by that set by the leader, and the significance of the leader’s role in forming and shaping what happens is widely recognised by those working in the field. As just one example from many, Conger writes: ‘After studying leadership for a decade, I have come to believe that leaders are often the strongest force in shaping the orientation of their organisations’ (1994:6). Data from managers outside the case study (see Appendix 5) also indicates that all held this view. Bill Lucas saw it as ‘absolutely essential’ that the tone has to be set from the top. ‘Richard Mapleden’ also confirmed this as his view, referring me to a book on his bookshelf ‘Leaders on Leadership’ (Crainer, 1996) where this theme was echoed throughout by 12 high profile leaders.

Although I am contending that the leader’s impact is also subject to issues of perceived competence (section 8.6.3) and personal style (section 8.4.3), the consequences for matters of spirituality follow, as Conger also asserts: ‘If any single catalyst in an organisation is likely to bring about a spiritual presence into the workplace it is the leader’ (1994:6). I am, however, suggesting that the impact which follows as an outcome of the pivotal role of the leader also extends to the impact of their spiritual beliefs. This has both a general and a particular consequence:

The general consequence is that if the leader is unsympathetic to the concept of spirituality within the organisation, then expression of this aspect of our nature is not likely to be acknowledged, encouraged or perhaps even respected. Conversely, when the leader is open to those possibilities then it can have a very significant effect, minimally in ‘giving permission’ for those in the organisation to ‘be’ in certain ways or, potentially, to go further, encouraging them to develop aspects of themselves which may not be possible under other regimes.

The particular consequence has relevance to the organisation generally and to those who work in proximity to the leader specifically. I have demonstrated from my data that spirituality for Laura is not an ‘add on’ to her other leadership activities – it is integral to all that she does. Since this includes both the way that she deals with and relates to others and also to her personal and organisational position on ethics, principles and values, then in a very real and direct way, her spirituality impacts on and affects the whole organisation and everyone in it. At the beginning of Chapter 7, I inferred from the data a set of behavioural process which take place around Laura and which affect particularly those who work in close proximity to her (Figure 34). In considering those processes, I also indicated that acceptance of Laura as Principal and alignment with her objectives and approach does not mean or require acceptance
of her particular views on spirituality. However, in these processes of interaction the same situation pertains as for the organisation at large — her behaviours and position on ethics, principles and values are informed by her spirituality: she influences others and this influence is enhanced by closeness. In closer contact, there is an additional impact which comes from her explicit acknowledgement of the source of these attitudes and beliefs — the naming of her spirituality. The data indicate that being specific about her beliefs seems always to provoke a reaction and a subsequent reflection: in a majority of cases this appeared to be a broadly positive reaction, but not in every case.

This latter effect of the impact of the leader naming her/his spirituality explicitly is complex to unravel. I have shown earlier that using the word spirituality can provoke a range of reactions, sometimes very negative but sometimes quite the opposite (section 8.5.1). It seems to be the case that acknowledging spirituality is distinguished from naming other convictions: if a person says ‘I am a vegetarian’, or ‘I am a liberal humanist’, reaction is often limited, muted or even non-existent. If a person says ‘What I do is fundamentally based on my spiritual beliefs’, then this consistently seems to provoke a stronger response. However, if the person making this declaration is a leader, then the declaration and any response to it is also bound up with issues of position and power (section 7.8). The response is likely to be affected by consequent considerations, for example, how will it affect my job if I agree or disagree? do I want to expend the energy that engaging on this topic might take? do I want to engage with my manager in considering something so personal to me and what might this reveal to her about me?

In summary, I conclude that because of the influence that a leader has in an organisation, her/his spiritual beliefs will have a widespread effect in as much as they influence matters such as style, principles, ethics and values. The broad consequence is that the workplace is more likely to be generally facilitative for those who choose to ‘bring their spirituality’ into the workplace and/or seek a more holistic personal development. Raising spirituality as an explicit conviction can be expected to provoke a significant response, which can sometimes be negative. When this is done by a leader, such responses will be highly influenced by issues of power and position.

8.6.2 Proximity to the leader and organisation size

What has become clear from this study is that proximity to the leader is of great significance when considering influence on others. I have already shown in the case study that Laura influences those close to her to a considerable extent: they, more than others, understand most clearly her motivations and see her values put into practice; they, more than others, are likely to align with her views, methods and approaches and are significantly influenced by them. In her organisation more widely, this clarity of view becomes more diffuse as distance increases, although even then there were indications that most people experienced her as honest, consistent and adhering to her clearly articulated values.

In the case of smaller organisations like Bill Lucas’ and Rob Bernstein’s (Appendix 5) everyone has frequent access and exposure to the leader and so all staff fall into
the category of being in close proximity and being influenced directly by the leader. The consequence appears to be a high degree of understanding of their leader's vision, style of operating and standards expected. One exception to this pattern seems to be Brett Jordan (Appendix 5) where despite leading a small organisation, he felt that he had not been successful in getting staff to buy into his vision. Perhaps this is an indicator that proximity alone is not a guarantee of influence and other factors are also important (see sections 8.4.3, 8.6.3 and 8.6.4). In the case of 'Richard Mapleden' functioning in a large and diverse organisation (the UK National Health Service), only his immediate staff and limited others understood his vision and his passion for principled leadership, although more widely, he was highly regarded in general terms as being 'a good leader' and 'a person you can trust'.

A consequential question which this raises is what size of organisation can be directly influenced by one person and, in a larger organisation, what can be done to gain the same effect? In the case study, I found indications that lower levels of management had not yet become effective in delivering 'the message' from Laura to their staff with personal conviction. This diluting effect has long been recognised as an inhibitor to change (Flude, 1991:136-137) and can therefore be expected to apply whether change is based on spiritually motivated principles or not. In looking at their varying models of organisations, Mitroff & Denton noted that each 'grapples seriously with size and the relationship of size to the ultimate purpose of business. Can an organisation be ethical or spiritual if it grows beyond a certain size?' (1999ii:11). The bracketing of ethical with spiritual here is unhelpful as the two concepts are separate, and the assumption that both can be considered as being in some way synonymous is not borne out in my experience. However the authors go on to suggest that 'It appears then that 150 to 300 is the maximum size of the human unit in which people can still interact on a one-to-one basis and with personal knowledge of one another' (1999ii:92). The findings of my own study lend weight to this general argument, although they also indicate that even in a larger organisation the leader can still influence more widely. However, it may take time for this influence to have significant impact on people who have less direct contact. This must continue to be highly relevant issue for leaders and organisations who wish to effect radical change and be particularly problematic for those in larger organisations.

8.6.3 Competence in leadership

The question of fundamental competence as a leader seems rarely to be addressed in the spirituality in the workplace literature, where there is often an implied or explicit assertion that spiritually motivated leadership is inherently 'better' or likely to be 'more effective' (see section 8.5.2). I have reflected earlier (section 6.8.7) on Laura's competence as a leader, demonstrating that she appears to be highly competent by a number of measures. All the leaders referenced in Appendix 5 would be considered competent by similar indicators and by the success of all but one of their organisations, though not all are spiritually aware or motivated primarily by their spiritual convictions. I have found no basis for inferring or assuming that spiritual motivation in itself can be shown to be correlated with competence: it seem just as likely that there will be spiritually motivated leaders who are incompetent and vice versa.
Covey suggests that competence has three aspects: technical competence (knowledge and skills), conceptual competence (ability to see the big picture) and interdependent competence (the ability to communicate well and interact effectively with others). He further asserts that 'both character and competence are necessary to inspire trust', thus suggesting that unless both are present, trust - a basic and essential requirement for successful leadership - cannot be established (1994: 241). In section 6.8.4.1, Philip spoke of a high level of trust in Laura, more so than with other 'competent' Principals. I infer that he is talking here primarily about Covey's concept of technical competence of other leaders, possibly even conceptual competence but not interdependent competence. Once again, as a characteristic of leaders, competence on its own comes into the category of 'necessary but not sufficient'; as Judge asserts: 'leader competence is not enough. organisational members must also believe in the moral character or personal integrity of their leaders if they are to trust them' (1999: 149).

8.6.4 Effective leadership vs effective spiritual leadership

One of my propositions and biases listed in Figure 12 was that spiritually motivated leadership might be recognisable, and have an impact, over and above good but non-spiritually motivated leadership. This remained a key question during the research and one to which I returned repeatedly in the later stages. I sought to establish whether I could discern any basis for being able to answer, including asking 'spiritually aware' business people and inviting input from the internet academic research interest group. The replies from the latter are included as Appendix 4 in this document. Once again they reflect a wide range of views though they support my assertion that the question can only really be understood from the internal view of the leader and the congruence with which their convictions are manifest in practice.

I considered what it would take to establish a 'level playing field' - how might it be possible to compare a good leader who did not recognise the spiritual as important, with one who did. Further, in leaders who do value the spiritual, it would seem necessary (following on from the conclusions in section 8.4.3) to factor in the degree of awareness, belief and motivation behind their spiritual conviction (as surely few leaders will have had the 'road to Damascus' experience which Laura had), and possibly behavioural or psychological preferences (such as comparable MBTI types). I have been unable to formulate clearly how these requirements might be met, except perhaps by obtaining data from a large sample and extracting comparable examples which appear to fall into each of the categories.

In seeking to be more categorical on the issue of what constitutes spiritual leadership, Fairholm (1998) defines a hierarchical progression of levels of management, namely:

Leadership as Management
Leadership as Excellent Management
Values leadership
Spiritual Leadership

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68 Covey suggests that character includes integrity, maturity and an abundance mentality, where the latter connotes a belief that life is ever expanding with a consequential availability of abundant resources.
where the latter encompasses the explicit concern of the leader for the total person ‘the whole soul, the inner self’ (1998:xxii) rather than simply an effective controller of resources. He goes further, asserting that: ‘Evidence is amassing that suggest that there is a significant connection between a leader’s (or worker’s) ability to have a transformational effect on the organisation and his or her disposition towards spirituality’ (1998:xxiii), citing his own research as an example. He believes that: ‘Spirituality is the source of our most powerful and personal values’ and as a consequence when others see that ‘our communications are laced with commonly held core spiritual values, our statements will strike a responsive chord ... and foster mutual growth’ (1998:xxiii). My study would support these latter assertions although earlier cautions around definitions also apply here: Fairholm’s list of what he considers ‘spiritual values’ include trust, faith, honesty, justice, freedom and caring – surely not a list that is in any way exclusive to those espousing a spiritual approach. Nevertheless, this is a rare attempt to be more specific about the nature of spiritual leadership.

At an advanced stage in this research, Gail Zwart published a doctoral thesis in the US on the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership69 (Zwart, 2000). As indicated in Chapter 2, her primary conclusion from this quantitative study was that there was no significant detectable quantitative relationship linking the dimensions of transformational leadership and factors indicating spirituality, despite her expectations which were partly formed by the widely published - views to the contrary.

There are further significant consequences of the foregoing. First, I have shown that many, perhaps all, of Laura’s behaviours could be seen as being attributable to her psychological preferences and preferred style of leadership, and are in common with other ‘good’ leaders whose preferences are the same or similar. Second, although she directly associates much of her approach with her spiritual beliefs, I have indicated that most observers would not attribute them to that cause, perhaps depending on their own phase of spiritual awareness and development (section 8.4.1). However, I believe that it is significant that many people did perceive Laura as acting in a way which they respected and even admired, particularly her energy and her absolute commitment to high principles. In my propositions in Fig 14, P4 proposed that ‘When acting out of personal motivation that is spiritually inspired, this is likely to be evident in some way and to be highly motivational for others, touching them at some deeper level than might otherwise be the case’. Whilst my findings indicate a high degree of impact, they do not support the view that observers might infer a link to spiritual beliefs. Again, whilst Laura appears to inspire trust to a high degree – particularly, but not exclusively, amongst those in closer contact – I am unable to infer that this is ‘at a deeper level than might otherwise be the case’. Additionally, as discussed earlier (sections 8.6.3, 7.8, 8.6.2) I have concluded that this is a more complex equation. For example, a spiritually motivated leader seems likely to require other characteristics of good leadership – such as vision, energy, competence, good communication skills, inspiring trust, for example – before others would find them motivational or inspiring, and issues of position and power play a significant role in this dynamic.

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69 This study looked at 159 leaders in public, private and not for profit organisations in a specific geographic area of California.
I have not identified any sound basis for expecting that leadership embodying spiritual principles is more likely than other approaches to lead to material success. I am inclined to support the argument that the more spiritual a person, the less worldly and therefore the less driven or motivated to 'succeed' in worldly terms. This is a view also proposed by Vaill in an Internet e-mail (quoted in section 2.7) but is by no means universally self-evident. In particular it runs contrary to the 'Protestant work ethic' (Weber, 1971) which held that: 'as long as a person's moral conduct was spotless and the use to which he put his wealth was not objectionable, [he] could follow his pecuniary interests .. and feel that he was fulfilling a duty in doing so .. with the consciousness of standing in the fullness of God's grace and being visibly blessed' (Weber cit in Yinger, 1961:521).

My consequential contention is that working in an organisation where the leader aspires for it to be ‘spiritually enlightened and enabling’ (even ignoring the question of definition) is unlikely to be an uplifting or fulfilling experience if that organisation is inadequately led and managed, and even more so if it is in economic decline or failing in its objectives as a result.

What does seem to be significant in considering this question is the sense of 'mission' which Laura reported (section 7.1.1), of being in this role as a result of some greater purpose to which she is aligned. This aspect of mission appears to be a unique aspect of (some?) spiritually motivated leaders and finds support from other researchers (Perry Pascarella’s e-mail Appendix 4 #1, Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii, for example). The result may be that such leaders have an agenda that goes beyond the immediate task, or role to which they are appointed, and has an effect on what they seek to do and how they seek to do it. The nature of this effect cannot be generally inferred and would require a detailed understanding of individual leaders' views to be able to reflect on it. In the next section I also indicate that this alignment with a greater purpose or higher power is also likely to provide an addition source of strength and motivation.

As a rider to the considerations of this section, I was particularly struck by André Delbecq’s caution in his e-mail in Appendix 4, #2, where he says:

‘we can report behavior; and can report the self proclaimed world view should an individual allow us to enter into this private space. Still we must be cautious and humble in doing so, not “setting up” the individual to be expected to perform at a level of perfection not possible for we sinners. All we can say is “in these instances these particular challenges were responded to in a way which seems consistent” We can provide praise for courage and compassion, but must remember we are dealing with a fallible human, not a “little god”’.

8.7 Effecting radical organisational change

The process of effecting radical organisational change has a long history of dubious success and an equally long list of approaches (such as Business Process Re-
engineering and Total Quality Management) designed to improve success rates. Effecting radical change and, particularly, radical change based on or incorporating spiritual principles, faces even greater challenges, so that as Beer & Walton assert: 'Finding managers who are willing to risk creating a countercultural work environment and who are capable of advocating and implementing a radical vision is essential' (1994:565).

Gibbons points out that two frequently cited examples of companies run along more ethical and spiritual lines, Ben & Jerry’s and The Body Shop, were founded on spiritual/ethical principles which thus form part of their history, mission, and culture; however, 'there may be significant practical barriers to applying their success stories in an attempt to reconfigure a company along spiritual lines' (2000:IV-33). Not only may there be barriers, there is also no evidence that a basis of spiritual/ethical principles is in itself sufficient to ensure success – indeed both these organisations have experienced major management changes and changes of ownership in difficult economic circumstances.

My case study seems to demonstrate that such a change is possible but the implications are that:

i) this is a difficult and demanding process
ii) it requires absolute determination and clarity of purpose on the part of those promoting the change
iii) the change leader will need, in addition to a high degree of competence and skill, huge amounts of energy and commitment to hold to the vision
iv) it still takes considerable time for new or different cultures (particularly ethics, values and practice) to permeate through the organisation and to be widely accepted and practised

I have attempted to determine what organisational change experts would consider an average time for significant change to become established in an organisation (perhaps with variations depending on size) but without definitive answers. Periods of 3 to 5 years seem to be ‘best guesses’. It would require a study over two or three times the time period of my case study to assess whether a new culture was or was not firmly established in an organisation and what differences were evident.

The issues discussed previously about proximity to the leader and organisational size seem very relevant here as factors affecting the rate of change and acceptance of a new culture. Mitroff & Denton argue that: ‘as society has had to learn over and over again, the resistance to change is deep and pervasive’ (1999ii:120). They extend this consideration further by suggesting that a truly spiritually based organisation is likely to be operating on a time-scale very much longer that the ‘normal’ annual and even quarterly focus of traditional organisations and may extend ‘over the entire course of a person’s – and organisation’s – life’ (1999ii:175). The indications from my study are that spiritual conviction, and in particular conviction which recognises a higher power as a source of inspiration and strength, may be significant in sustaining the required ‘energy and commitment’ in point (iii) above and indeed in justifying the large sacrifice of time, effort and energy that is inevitably demanded. Further, with the protracted timescales indicated by point (iv), the same spiritual conviction may
provide motivation to persist both in the face of opposition or inertia and over the long term.

8.8 **Summary of research findings**

In this chapter I have reviewed the phenomenologically based methodology I developed and used, reflected on strengths and weaknesses, and concluded that it has proved a highly satisfactory method of investigating the research questions.

Returning to the original research questions, I have revisited the issue of spirituality as a human dimension. I am proposing that despite lack of empirical proof, spirituality is not only fundamental but in some way is both interconnected with and over-arches the other dimensions (physical, mental and emotional).

Incorporating the outcomes from the case study (Chapter 7), other research, and personal experience, I have explored a broader view of spirituality, and spirituality in the workplace. The wide range of understandings of spirituality and the ways that spirituality is manifest are discussed. The primary implication of this diversity is that great care is required in order to ascertain clearly what individuals mean by spirituality. The claims in the literature (almost exclusively from the USA) of a widespread awareness of spirituality among individuals in organisations do not seem to be substantiated in UK settings, although more extensive studies would be required to verify this.

Considering leaders in organisations, I conclude that competent leaders exert significant influence within their organisations and particularly on those who work in close proximity to them. Where leaders are spiritually motivated, this does have an impact, but is generally unlikely to be attributed to spiritual causes by others. Making spirituality explicit as a belief and source of motivation is likely to provoke significant reaction: this may not always positive, though for some it will not only be positive but can have a profound personal impact, prompting introspection which may lead to further personal or spiritual development. The most significant difference for spiritually motivated leaders themselves is likely to be in their sense of personal mission and purpose within a wider, transcendent, context – potentially sustaining or enhancing inspiration, motivation, persistence, and justification for commitment of energy and effort.

In the final chapter, I move on to explore some of the consequences of these finding and consider how this research could be developed further.
Chapter 9: Final Reflections and Areas for Further Research

In this chapter I use the findings from this research and some of the issues which have emerged to reflect on wider considerations, particularly those pertinent to practical application of spirituality in the workplace. A critical appraisal of the research is presented, together with insights into the impact of the process on the researcher, followed by suggestions for extending it. A section presenting final reflections concludes this thesis.

9.1 Issues of definition

The inability to define spirituality clearly (sections 2.4 & 8.4.1) and the ambivalence for some about its existence as a human dimension (sections 2.5 & 8.3) raise a major issue for research and for operational practice in the area of spirituality in the workplace. In research and scholarly approaches, the idea of engaging with a concept that cannot adequately be defined is often considered with suspicion. Even beyond that group of people, my consistent experience during this research has been that in simply discussing the topic with others who are interested, they are frequently dismissive when the ambiguity of definition becomes apparent. This is even more apparent with those who are already cynical about, or less inclined to recognise, spirituality or its relevance to the workplace.

The significant question then for this and other research, for literature and for the practical application of spirituality in the workplace is: since a clear or commonly accepted definition seems unachievable, when we use the term spirituality what are we talking about? Given the disparity and breadth of understandings, there must be a serious concern about aligning behind generalised notions or proposing actions based on individual assumptions. Overlaid on this is the effect of cultural settings, in this instance disparities in understanding of and engagement with spirituality, particularly between the UK and the USA (section 8.4.2), which appear to be significant.

I have found a breadth of individual understanding, degree of engagement and personal spiritual development, and wide individual variations of manifestation (section 8.4). This not only affects the validity of general questions such as “Do you believe spirituality is important in the workplace?” but even more crucially must be a concern when considering generalised assertions like “Introducing spirituality in the workplace makes for a more satisfied workforce” or when taking practical initiatives in organisational setting. Since there is considerable scope for some initiatives not to appeal to a wide cross section of people, they may be more likely than unlikely to cause upset, opposition or offence to many. The exceptions probably lie in the areas of values and ethics, and positive behaviour towards others, where common agreement may be more readily possible. However, these on their own can not be considered as exclusively spiritually-based practices.
9.2 The primacy of the spiritual dimension

I have argued that spirituality is a primary human component, with which we have a choice to engage. Other studies indicate that it may have a significant effect on well-being (section 2.8 and elsewhere). Although not specifically grounded in my findings, I am drawn back with an increasing sense of conviction to the belief that the spiritual dimension is unlike the other three (intellectual, emotional and physical) – not just a co-equal component but in some way playing a more fundamental role, interacting with the other mind-body components in a subtle and complex way which defies simple explication. I found myself returning to this conundrum repeatedly during this research project, as others have done. For example, Jacobsen records that: 'Some researchers suggest that spirituality may be the "avenue" through which different aspects of the self and life are brought together and interact' (1994:25) and Eberst considers that 'the spiritual dimension may be the avenue in which the physical, mental, emotional, social, and vocational dimensions interact with one another' (cit in Bensley, 1991). That such interactions can or do occur should not be surprising: it is not a new concept and is a long-standing assertion and belief in many cultures and groups of people (going back thousands of years), which is re-emerging strongly at the present time. Labun, for example, asserts that: 'Spirituality is an aspect of the total person that influences as well as acts in conjunction with other aspects of the person ... It is related to and integrated with the functioning and expression of all aspects of the person' (1988; also see Chopra 1990, 1991, and many others). The body-mind-spirit link is the subject of much current interest and debate, exploration and learning as related to well-being, to personal development and to the fundamental interconnectedness of all creation (Chopra, 1990; Zohar 1991; and many others). These works propose and support the concept that the spiritual dimension is part of us, intertwining and affecting other dimensions but also in some ways going beyond – that is, it is both transcendent and immanent (Wilber, 1995).

In the phenomenological study of Laura, and in the case study related to her, the data indicate that she perceives and is profoundly affected by her spiritual dimension, and its links to the other dimensions, in ways which support the notion of primacy of this dimension. Covey asserts that: 'If we see our spiritual needs as separate from all other needs, we may not realize that what we believe about ourselves and our purpose has a powerful impact on how we live, how we love, and what we learn. To compartmentalize or even ignore the spiritual dimension of life powerfully affects each of the other dimensions' (1994:47). Wilber goes further: 'although the Spirit is, in a certain sense, the highest dimension or level of the spectrum of existence, it is also the ground or condition of the entire spectrum' (1997:xvi). All of which adds weight to the view I am proposing that in some way the spiritual dimension is not only inter-connected with the other dimensions but overlays them, and is therefore the primary or highest dimension of our being.

9.3 Concerns about practice

Whilst recognising the considerable positive potential for acknowledging spirituality in the workplace, and being a firm believer in and proponent of authentic approaches, it is also my view that there are concerns about mis-application in practice which
need to be considered carefully. These are already drawing attention and critical comment: for example a theoretical case study presented in the Harvard Business Review\textsuperscript{71} suggests a range of conflicts which could arise in different circumstances, along with comments from a group of experts. No overall conclusion is drawn nor recommendations made.

In summary, during this research I have identified the following areas for caution or concern:

- There is a profound problem of definition related to spirituality: meaning and understanding need to be thoroughly checked rather than making assumptions.
- The role of the leader is likely to be highly influential. The leader's position and the power they exercise because of their position make it imperative that they also exercise prudence and good judgement in supporting or implementing what they consider to be spiritual approaches in their organisations.
- The leader's personal commitment to spirituality or spiritual development are pre-requisites for authenticity in implementing initiatives related to spirituality in the workplace. A corollary is that to be authentic, a leader committed to spirituality may feel that they should, and must, pursue such initiatives.
- Each person's approach to, or manifestation of, spirituality can be expected to be very different (including the leader's). Thus what appeals to one person may not appeal to another, perhaps to the extent of being resisted, disliked or being found offensive. Leaders need to recognise that the reaction to their particular approach may range from highly attractive to deeply off-putting.
- Leaders (and those in other positions) with deeply held convictions and 'good intent' may be seen as attractive to others\textsuperscript{72}. Where this is so, they may be able to have a profound effect in others' lives, not least helping them to consider fundamental philosophical questions which occur to many. It is a serious concern as to how much such matters should form a part of organisational processes.

I have become aware of an over-arching concern related to 'introducing spirituality' where it is considered to be the latest addition to good leadership practice from which potential benefits may spring. There are two aspects of this concern: the first relates to the exercise of power (raised initially in section 7.8) in an area which is very personal (and potentially an area of great vulnerability) and the second to the application of spirituality in organisations as a leadership tool without concomitant personal commitment.

The potential concern about the exercise of power is underscored by extending the outcomes of research into 'emotional labour' which, Mann states, occurs when \textit{expressed emotions satisfy display rules but clash with inner feelings} (1997). Some organisations demand 'required emotions' to be presented in certain roles, for

\textsuperscript{71} Harvard Business Review, July-August 1999, Vol 77 No 4
\textsuperscript{72} Those with deeply held convictions and bad intent may also be seen as attractive, though I have not considered this inverse 'dark side' in this thesis.
example unfailing courtesy and friendliness in customer facing roles at McDonald’s or Disneyland. Given the nature of these businesses, such a requirement may not seem unreasonable but can result in high levels of stress in some staff from expressing inauthentic or incongruent emotions. All leaders could be expected to require conformance to certain approaches (for example honesty, loyalty to the organisation). However, it is entirely possible to see how this could be, or is already being, extended to the area of spirituality in the workplace by organisations or individual leaders requiring certain values, meanings or even beliefs to be adopted as a condition of work (Gibbons, 2000: VI-66,67). A example of this in practice may be the ‘religious based’ model of spirituality in organisations (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii).

Taken further and more broadly, there is the potential for what may generally be termed ‘spiritual abuse’ – ‘Spiritual abuse is a misuse of power in a spiritual context’ and ‘Spiritual abuse involves a confusion of kinds of power because it is … a misuse … of social power (status automatically conferred by virtue of one’s gender, race or class) and/or political power (status and authority because of one’s position at the top of a hierarchy) in a spiritual context. This social or political power then parades as spiritual power and carries spiritual weight and authority’ (Wehr, 2000:49). What Wehr describes here as political power equates to what I have identified earlier as positional power. I have shown in the analysis of my case study just how much power and influence is, consciously or otherwise, exerted by the leader and how this can extend beyond the boundaries of the organisational role. I need to emphasise that I found no indication whatsoever of anything that could be termed spiritual abuse during this study (indeed Laura was particularly aware of this issue and gave it specific consideration in deciding what she felt was appropriate, and not, to be doing or saying in the College environment). However, it is easy to see how an enthusiastic and committed leader could cross what is an ill-defined line with the best of intentions, either deliberately or otherwise. Again, some might consider that the religious based organisations; described by Mitroff & Denton (1999ii) specifically cross this line as a matter of policy, although here it is likely that the wider intent of the organisation would be clearly expressed. I have chosen to exclude any discussion of deliberately subversive abuses of power extending into the spiritual domain as being beyond the scope of this study.

The second aspect relates to embracing a spiritual approach without any corresponding personal spiritual awareness or commitment. This is well summed up in Conger ‘I have looked at some training programmes for leaders, and I am discouraged by how often they focus on the development of skills to manipulate the external world rather than the skills to go within and make the spiritual journey’ (1994:27). Even where leaders have a religious commitment, it does not follow that this is either transformative or that it necessarily results in greater integrity (Judge, 1999:84-85). This presents the possibility of an approach which is simply another tool or aspect of ‘good management practice’ and perhaps a way of enhancing employee performance, potentially exploitatively. Worryingly, some appear specifically to advocate such approaches: ‘organisations must seek to develop any option possible that can result in a competitive advantage. Developing a spiritual vision can bind an employee to the company and enhance job performance’ (Neck & Milliman, 1994:14). No approach which has these motives as its basis could fall within any definition of spirituality that I would consider valid. My expectation would be that leaders using such approaches without demonstrating personal spiritual conviction and commitment would, sooner rather than later, be recognised as cynically manipulative and as a consequence, any
transformational 'initiative' so based is unlikely to be embraced or sustained by staff within their organisations. Gibbons addresses this same concern from a slightly different perspective: 'If it [spirituality] is attempted as a “quick fix” for personal or organizational morale issues, disappointment will likely ensue. If spiritual rhetoric is coupled with non-spiritual action, then the sanctity of the word spiritual (associated with humanity's highest aspirations and potential) will become debased' (2000:VII-76).

Even with the best intentions there is a problem when seeking 'a process for the transcendent experience that is respectful of spiritual differences' (Haroutiounian et al, 2000:676). In my case study organisation, the establishment of a 'quiet room' for prayer or meditation was widely welcomed but great care had to be taken to ensure that the decorations were not offensive, for example not displaying religious symbols, not depicting animals or humans (which would be unacceptable to some religions), and providing suitable washing facilities for groups who require to wash before they pray. As another example, in an organisation for which I worked, permission was granted to use a room for Christian prayer during lunch periods but was later withdrawn after complaints by staff of other religions as well as others simply opposed to any religious activity on work premises.

Seen more positively, the spirit or spiritual is an important consideration for leaders (Dehler & Walsh, 2000; Fairholm 2000; Judge, 1999; Conger 1994) and may result in leaders taking greater concern about or seeing in a different light such matters as people issues, consideration of authenticity in mission, values and ethics, holistic development, and facilitating opportunities for spiritual development in the workplace. It is possible to find management development courses on spirituality which fully address individual awareness and personal experiential development as well as organisational consequences (for example, Delbecq, 2000) – although probably only in the USA at the present time. Finally, as previously argued, the spiritual journey is intensely personal. Consequently, no leader, however inspired, can push, pull or coerce others into a spiritual way of being although undoubtedly leaders can establish an environment where awareness and development are fostered and encouraged and where their own example can be inspiring.

9.4 Implications for spirituality in the workplace

The findings of this study accord with the widely accepted view that competent, strong leaders exert significant power and influence within their organisations. They further indicate that a leader making spiritual considerations a high priority can have significant positive impact both on individuals and the organisation as a whole. However, they do not demonstrate that such an impact can only be made by a leader who is spiritually motivated. Where there is a constant consideration of the priority of issues beyond hitting financial or similar operational targets – such as respect for individuals, more holistic development, determined support of strong value systems, for example – this can result in an environment which promotes development of all kinds, including the option for spiritual development. However, since many of these concepts are ill defined it seems essential to have effective 'check and balance' systems where good judgement is applied. Less autocratic styles of management
would seem more likely than other styles to encourage this (Mitroff & Denton, 1999ii; Scott, 1994).

Does this mean then, that given the many reservations which I have expressed, spiritually motivated leadership has no relevance or should be curtailed in practice? Do the concerns which I have raised mean that spirituality should be seen as a personal issue and not one relevant to leaders and organisations? It is my strong contention that the answer to both of these questions is ‘no’. The conclusions from this study indicate that:

1. A leader operating from spiritual principles is likely to be highly committed to their organisation and in particular to the well-being of the people within it73.

2. They are likely to seek to inspire a clear vision, and to operate with strongly held principles and values. Others are likely to be influenced and inspired by this principled and values-led way of operating, which is far from the norm in many organisations.

3. Such leaders are likely to have a high regard for holistic development of people, not just those aspects beneficial to the organisation or its financial stakeholders. In particular they are likely to wish to establish an environment that fosters the opportunity for spiritual development.

4. Their aspirations, and understanding of success, are less likely to be limited to commercial and economic considerations.

5. Particularly where their spiritual convictions are based in a belief in God or a higher power, this transcendent frame of reference is likely to provide additional resources including inspiration, conviction, motivation, and sustaining energy and commitment.

6. Perhaps most importantly, this study indicates that leaders who are strongly spiritually motivated will have an impact on those who come into personal contact with them over a period of time, particularly if they make their spiritual beliefs known. For some of these, at least, they will be a catalyst for beginning or deepening a personal spiritual journey.

I am aware that, in particular, points 1 and 2 (and maybe 4) above might also be characteristics of good leaders generally but this does not negate their being important consequences for the spiritually motivated leader.

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73 I have, throughout, assumed that spirituality is positive in intent (whilst accepting that the way it is applied could have drawbacks, limitations or undesired effects). It may be argued that it is more neutral than I have suggested and modified by the intent of the individual, though this is not a view I hold. Further, I have not explored whether there may be, or is, a negative form of spirituality which seeks an evil purpose.
9.5 Reflections on this research and potential extensions

9.5.1 Critical appraisal of this research

The challenge that I have faced in seeking to comprehend what precisely it is that is being studied as the subject of my research, just how it might be engaged with effectively, and the progression of new understandings, has been documented periodically in this thesis. I have concluded that my early judgement that a qualitative approach as a preferred way to examine spirituality and its impact on leadership was well founded. Seeking to define, quantify or operationalise spirituality is to run the risk of seeking to describe and measure that which is undefinable. The dilemma is between attempting to be precise as Gibbons suggests: 'we must strive to be even more precise in our definitions, assumptions, theories, and research methods' (2000:VII-76), and the futility of doing so because of the ineffable nature of spirituality.

Attempting to seek a phenomenological understanding – even acknowledging the inherent concerns that it raises or its limitations (section 8.1) – does at least require the researcher to seek to gain an insight into the nature of the understandings and perceptions of the individual at some depth without being driven or motivated by the need to analyse, make judgements or form conclusions.

The setting and context in which this research is located bounds it geographically and culturally in a UK/USA arena, where I have offered original insights into differences between these two countries related to the extent and perceptions of spirituality. This must still be understood as a limitation and I acknowledge that there are more radical comparisons which can be made. For example, if the context were widened, the already problematic area of understanding spirituality – 'what are we talking about' – becomes even more complex. In an internet article about spiritual exploration, Ken Wilber points out that:

'We intend to explore a sensitive question, but one which needs to be addressed - the superficiality that pervades so much of the current spiritual exploration and discourse in the West, particularly in the United States. All too often, in the translation of the mystical traditions from the East (and elsewhere) into the American idiom, their profound depth is flattened out, their radical demand is diluted, and their potential for revolutionary transformation is squelched.'

Not only do external matters like geography, and associated cultural and value systems, contribute to determining a defined field of view, but issues of subjective understanding also require acknowledgement and examination. Despite having highlighted the inadequacy of considering spirituality as somehow being epitomised as ultimate self-realisation, I nevertheless consider it both implicitly and explicitly as an essentially individual phenomenon. This represents a position which I recognise as based in my personal experience and understanding, albeit shared with a majority of my research participants. It is not, however, the only way to view spirituality.

74 The dilemma has been long debated and is well documented by sociologists (Yinger, 1957), theologians (John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich and the Honest to God debate in the early 1960s), and present day polymaths such as Wilber (The Marriage of Sense and Soul, 1998, Dublin: Newleaf)
75 A Spirituality that transforms, Ken Wilber, www.santosha.com/moksha/
In seeking to differentiate spirituality from religiosity, I have recognised the propensity of many, including myself, to link or even conflate the two (an experience common with other researchers in the field: see Chapter 2 and elsewhere). Given that this is the case, then attempting such a separation may be questionable: it may be that in order to gain a more complete comprehension of how a person understands spirituality, an insight into their understanding of religiosity is required. Further, a person’s specific religious belief and/or experience may impact their views on and approach to ‘applied spirituality’ in the workplace. Also, radical differences may be expected in other settings such as areas where Islam is dominant, where praying five times a day is a required practice and where social behaviour is more heavily influenced by religious principles and practice than in the West.

This research into spirituality and leadership has provoked further questions. I have adopted certain views of leadership which are based in, or at least heavily influenced by, 20th Century Western capitalism, tempered only slightly by considering some of the wider potential of leadership. The understandings which I have presented and proposed are related to this environment. Other equally valid views of leadership and spirituality would be likely to emerge from studying, say, Mahatma Gandhi, the Pope, or Nelson Mandela, which might be expected to show very different visions aspirations, goals, style, approaches and measures of success, related to their philosophical, cultural, social, religious and political frames of reference.

In researching matters related to spirituality, I have become wary of methodologies involving empiricism, especially when based on specific definitions and constructs which seek to evaluate and compare levels or measurements of spirituality. However, comparative reflection has been helpful to me in seeking to understand individual positions on spirituality, and my own delineation of degrees of spiritual awareness (section 2.5.2) has been valuable despite its limitations. I see this as part of the ‘need to find a way to acknowledge both the independent meaning-making of the authentic autonomous human being and the universal patterns to which we all belong’ (Reason, 1988:97). By the same token, in seeking suitable ways of knowing and methods of enquiry, Braud and Anderson suggest that transpersonal methodologies: ‘expand the usual dimensions for studying human experience by directly employing alternative modes of awareness and intuition in the conduct of research’ (1994:ix), and thus seem to offer a more useful way of engaging with the ineffable nature of spirituality, although lacking the potential satisfaction of being able to posit definitive proofs.

I have reviewed the issues pertaining to the methodology that I have employed in section 8.1. The strength of my approach lies in its detailed comprehension of the case, the players in it and the duration of the observation. One potential weakness recognised in advance (section 4.7) is the issue of the ‘single case’. Although it may continue to present a basis for reservation, I am asserting that it neither dilutes the value of the study nor necessarily limits the value of findings. It is widely recognised that hypotheses can be generated from single cases which are relevant beyond the case (section 4.7; Silverman, 2000; Gummesson, 2000; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Any concern is further ameliorated by the addition of other research data and relevant scholarly literature. To extend such an investigation to multiple cases would be of great value although it would, of course, represent a massive amount of additional
research. Further, it would be necessary to identify carefully selected cases which have the possibility of providing perspectives on my data in areas not possible with a single case, for example, a consideration of leaders with different psychological preferences as determined by the MBTI, leaders who define spirituality in different ways and leaders who are deemed to be effective but who hold no strong views on spirituality.

9.5.2 The impact of the research process on the researcher

Some researchers have found the process of undertaking qualitative research to have a profound impact on them, which they experience as a significant spiritual experience in itself. This seems to be particularly likely, or to have greater impact, when the nature of the research itself deals with profound and potentially traumatic issues such as serious illness, bereavement or other traumatic life events (Rosenblatt, 2001). Whatever the focus of the research, the process of interviewing – where there is care in listening based on taking a real interest (active listening) – is an example of practical connection with others (see the Dimensions of Spirituality in Figure 4). Hay and Hunt observe that: ‘This 'sounding board’ approach seems to give powerful permission for people to speak about existential issues that are normally obscured in everyday life’ (2000:41) and such interactions have the power to touch not only the interviewee but also the researcher: ‘...of course this [process of rethinking] was a two way process. We ourselves were constantly changing our understanding as we listened to what people were saying to us. There is no other way for open minded research to proceed’ (Hay & Hunt 2000:25).

This is indeed a process which I have experienced as inherently spiritual. It affected me when, as a result of the pilot study, I re-considered both what spirituality might be about and how it might be manifest. Also later, in interviews, I was aware of feeling drawn to engage in a more equal, two-way and reactive dialogue than was appropriate for such an interview. Further, I felt on occasions a strong empathic reaction with many of the interviewees which I wished to, and in the main managed to, restrain but which I then had to deal with outside the interview situation. The question arises as to whether this would become less of an issue if I were to undertake similar research in the future. Although I would be more alert to it from the start, I suspect the basic issue would remain – how to engage in an empathetic in-depth ‘dialogue’ authentically but without revealing my own position.

I was interested to discover, in a source which became available after completion of my data collection phase, that others had also experienced how explicit connections can be made with interviewees: ‘interviewing with integrity, curiosity, observant attention, a sensitive ear, and a determination to know the interviewee well always has the potential to create a deep and meaningful interaction’ (Rosenblatt 2001:125). This perhaps goes some way to explain the impact that my ‘non-interventionist’ interventions had on those whom I interviewed (section 6.12). On reflection, it highlighted to me the considerable impact of prompting profound introspection in others and therefore the

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78 Examples of this included the revelation of a poignant family tragedy and its impact at work on the part of one interviewee, Laura’s description of her peak experience, and another interviewee’s description of the results of stress from overwork.
even greater potential impact from explicitly expressing and living out internally held spiritual conviction.

Reflecting on Braud & Anderson’s caution ‘readers are cautioned that one of the unique properties of applying transpersonal approaches to research is the potential transformation of the researcher. ... [they] learn about the topic and about themselves, and, therefore, tend to engage research with a spirit of adventure, anticipation and some trepidation’ (1988:x) heightened my awareness of the impact on me. From the outset, I had seen the research as a vehicle for continuing my own spiritual development and this indeed proved to be the case. I realised early on that my own perception of spirituality was limited but was unprepared for the wide range of understandings of others, which caused me to rethink my own definition and understanding, resulting in a broader concept of what I saw as spiritual. Whilst acknowledging these other viewpoints, I found that my own belief in God as the primary source of spiritual inspiration remained, although in some cases this differentiated me from some others who had a strong spiritual understanding based in a different belief. In reflecting on the wide range of what participants considered spiritual, I seemed to recognise what appears to be a contemporary tendency to see almost anything as potentially spiritual: this is a point of view that I did not, and do not, hold.

Given my profound personal belief in the importance of the spiritual dimension and, as I believe, its effect in interacting with the other aspects of our nature, my strong endorsement of the value of spiritually motivated leadership will not be surprising. As I entered the final stages of analysing and making sense of the data I experienced a strong reaction of resistance to certain of the emergent outcomes. Reflecting on this over a period of time, I realised just how much it had been my hope and wish to be able to demonstrate a clear positive consequence of spiritually motivated leadership as opposed to ‘simply’ good leadership, and a level of disappointment at not being able to do so. In discussing this with my supervisors, I became acutely aware that at some level, I had been hoping to be able to demonstrate an empirical result which might be offered as ‘proof’ of the effect of spiritual motivation – which is more than anything, indicative of a subconscious belief that such ‘proof’ is somehow more valid than understanding in a phenomenological sense. This reflection gave me an even more profound understanding of what it means to accept and value the phenomenological interpretation of data.

I noted during this research process that as my own understanding extended, I became more and more resistant to dogmatic positions on spirituality and its role in the workplace and leadership, and more critical of wide ranging assertions unsupported by data or not borne out by specific experience (mine or others). I have referred earlier to my recognition of what may be a difference in culture or commonly prevailing national mindset between the UK and USA around the awareness of, and interest in, spirituality generally and in the workplace particularly, which inevitably influences my position and re-enforces my sense of the significant dangers of moving into ‘applied spirituality’ without great care. In section 1.5 one reason I gave for undertaking the research was to consider whether I might use the knowledge gained in a consultancy capacity with organisations or individuals. My current view is that effective consultancy is often seen as requiring a clarity on the part of the consultant about what might or might not be successful in their area of
specialisation. I believe that propounding a specific view or preferred approach for spirituality does not accord with the careful discernment for suitability which I consider is needed in spiritual matters and therefore at this time I am not attracted to working in this way. There may however be a role more in keeping with the overall paradigms of this research, where the process is more to do with asking questions, and possibly considering outcomes in a process of collaborative enquiry.

Inherent in this position are two dilemmas with which I am still struggling. One, the literature on spirituality and leadership which I have found most inspiring and motivational does not often proffer supporting data. Thus, responding positively to it requires intuitive acceptance or perhaps an act of faith (comparable with Ackerman's 'leap of faith' during transformational change - see section 2.6). Two, the well founded concerns and cautions could easily result in paralysis, believing that doing nothing is the most prudent way. I have a strong conviction that this is not correct and I would suggest that authenticity requires each person, each leader, to take well considered steps to act on their convictions.

My final thoughts on this research process and journey are given at the end of section 9.6.

9.5.3 Areas for further research

As established at the outset, there is a strictly limited amount of academic research into the focus areas of this thesis and, accordingly, there are many areas which would benefit from further work. There are some wider issues which apply generally to this field. For example, I and others (eg Skelley 1996:67) have argued that spirituality is an integral human dimension. Are there elements of spirituality then, that apply widely or universally; what are they; can they be applied in an organisational setting to allow, enable or even encourage staff to express their spirituality so as not to present problems to others of different beliefs or cultures? Apart from such broad issues, I have identified here some specific areas which would be significant extensions of this work.

1. Either further case studies of this sort or a study of multiple cases looking at leaders and managers who believe themselves to be spiritually motivated would help to understand whether there are common factors at work. These could be examined to understand whether there are inherently spiritual factors which transcend specific cultural settings and backgrounds, psychological or behavioural preferences, or personality types. A comparison of leadership-related processes with leaders who do not consider themselves spiritually motivated could seek to identify unique aspects of leadership practice.

2. Following on from 1, undertake a wider study of how such spiritual factors or aspects are experienced by others, what are their responses, and what effect does this have on them. In particular, how does the expression of personal spiritual commitment relate to the exercise of power as a leader and what are the perceived positive and negative consequences in organisations. This would allow a greater understanding of the impact when leaders make their beliefs known more explicitly.
3. Fairholm (1998) is one of few people to have attempted clarity in expressing how spiritual leadership might be identified as a specific dimension of management (see section 8.6.3). Additional research is needed to determine whether these characteristics are able to be differentiated and if so, how managers who aspire to do so could develop in this way.

4. Spirituality is by no means universally recognised as a desirable or essential facet of modern (transformational?) leadership approaches. Why is this? Is there a specific reluctance to consider this factor or are there other reasons why it is not addressed more widely and specifically in leadership and management development?

5. Are there significant differences between general populations and management populations in the USA and those in the UK as regards what they understand as spirituality, what meaning it has, and how significant it is for individuals? Based on the outcomes of this question, what impact does this have when considering spirituality in organisations in the UK and other northern European cultures, and more widely?

6. I have carefully differentiated between spirituality and religion in this study, however it has also been clear that this same distinction is not common for many respondents. A study which seeks to understand and differentiate between these two aspects would help to understand how spirituality might be approached in a way which either avoids the past history of religious experience contaminating present experience and aspirations towards spirituality or allows history and current religious experience to co-exist with spiritual engagement.

7. From this study it has become clear that the phase or extent of a person’s spiritual development is a very significant factor in their ability to recognise spirituality in others. More work needs to be done on differentiation between these phases of spiritual development and the consequences both for leaders and staff generally when considering spirituality in organisations.

9.6 Final reflections

In commencing this project, I set out to understand the impact that leaders who are strongly spiritually motivated have on their organisations and the individuals within them. I was aware that the concept at the heart of the research question — spirituality — was complex but felt that I had sufficient understanding to engage with it. I also recognised a bias which led me to anticipate that I would be able to demonstrate clear differences in such leaders and the impact that they had: I was further encouraged in this by the literature and the reported experience of others.

The experience of the pilot study generated two major outcomes. Firstly, I was disabused of the notion that I had a reasonable concept of the breadth of understandings of spirituality, and wider aspects began to emerge and become clearer. Secondly, I clarified my preferences for methodological approach, firmly rejecting approaches involving co-operative enquiry but still seeking to take a non-positivist and non-empirical stance. The resulting phenomenological philosophy
allowed for this, while the unusual and innovative inclusion of a case study within the overall approach provided a challenging but effective way of investigation. The combination of the longitudinal nature of the study, the comparison of espoused and experienced approaches of the leader within her organisation, and the geographic location in the UK, are, I believe, unique and contribute particular value to this research.

My thesis is that leaders who are perceived as fundamentally competent add a further dimension to their leadership when they are spiritually motivated. This has positive consequences for them personally and impacts on their organisations and individuals within them. I have demonstrated that this dimension is not likely to be directly evident to most people nor likely to be attributed to spiritual sources by those who do perceive it. To infer and understand such a link may require that individuals have a degree of spiritual understanding broadly comparable with that of the leader. Despite this, the effects can be perceived, perhaps in much the same way that wind cannot be observed but its effect can. My case and other data show that where spiritual conviction is specifically articulated it can be expected to cause a significant reaction, which in some cases may be negative. Reactions may be modified, in the case of response to a leader, as a result of issues to do with power and position. For some individuals, exposure to a leader articulating and living out strongly held spiritual values can stimulate profound self-reflection which may lead to their further development in this area.

My expectations at the start, of being able to demonstrate clear differences in spiritually motivated leaders, proved ill-founded and I was unable to advance more instrumental methods of doing this. The phenomenological approach to understanding the leader’s spiritual convictions and motivation revealed underlying themes which are significant and can make a difference to how they function as leaders. Most particularly, leaders motivated by strong spiritual conviction seem likely to have a sense of mission or purpose which is extra-personal or transcendent, potentially providing inspiration, motivation and a source of support.

I found that people’s concepts of spirituality were widely varying – requiring careful elucidation to be clear about what they meant by the term. Most often people related it to the focus of their primary personal principles and values, and frequently associated it with religion. A majority did not engage with it in a personal way. On the basis of much of the published literature, there appears to be a significant difference in this regard between UK and US populations which would present a valuable area for further study.

In the case study I have revealed some of the social/interpersonal processes through which spiritual leadership may operate. The leader in my case aspired to creating an environment within her organisation which is conducive to more holistic development: this may be similarly true for others. Such leaders may also seek to facilitate or introduce spiritually-based practices, not least to be in congruence with their own deepest held beliefs. There are significant reservations and concerns about the aims, content and process of such initiatives as I have explored. These reservations are an even greater concern when such steps are considered by leaders who are not themselves on a journey of spiritual development. On the other hand,
these well founded concerns and cautions could easily result in paralysis, believing that doing nothing is the most prudent way: I have a strong conviction that this not correct. Overall, I have become convinced that spiritually motivated leaders can significantly influence organisations and individuals, perhaps being the ‘grit in the oyster’, providing opportunities for recognising and developing what I believe is our most fundamental dimension. Care needs to taken not to idealise or expect perfection from such leaders since they are also fallibly human.

At the end of this research project I have come to understand the meaning of research as a personal process and, for me, the value of adopting a research paradigm which is in concert with my psychological preferences. I have become more and more aware of what I do not know and just how much more work there is to be done to make sense of this vast field. Overall, during this five year journey I have experienced an expansion in knowledge, a development in analytical and critical thinking and a profound appreciation of the value of phenomenological experience. Of greater value, I have encountered people who are sincere in their belief and their unbelief and who have allowed me to share in their journey for a time, to our mutual reward and, as I believe, spiritual growth. However, I have ended this phase in my life without having achieved the clarity of spiritual insight for which I had perhaps hoped: I find myself more knowledgeable, a little more cautious as a result, perhaps more wise, and still firmly on a spiritual journey seeking to understand my role and path in co-operation with God's purpose.
Appendix 1: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

Please note wherever MBTI and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator are referred to within this document that: MBTI and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator are registered UK and US trade marks of Consulting Psychologists Press Inc. Oxford Psychologists Press Ltd is the exclusive licensee of the trade marks in the UK and Eire.

This appendix summarises the reason for considering the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, its function and use. Unless otherwise indicated, it is taken from the following sources: Myers & Myers, 1980; Myers, 1993; Myers & McCaulley, 1993. I have described only the most basic theory and practice: more advanced theory and further information at greater depth can be obtained from these same references and many others.

Reasons for inclusion and use

In working with individuals and groups, I have used the MBTI for over 7 years as a valuable and effective tool to help understanding of preferences and behaviours of ones-self and others. A major advantage of MBTI is that it is non judgmental: no type is better than or preferential to any other. As such, it provides an excellent vehicle for feedback and for self understanding which, when properly deployed, is non-pejorative.

Given this experience, I anticipated that the MBTI might be valuable as another 'lens' through which to consider the observed behaviours and characteristics of individuals (and possibly organisations as a whole) involved with the research. At the outset I had no detailed plan for how it might be used but anticipated that it might be of value when analysing data, to see whether a particular leader's approach appears to be significantly affected by type preferences and indeed whether the subjective impact of his/her initiatives differs according to type preferences of those involved. However, it was not my intention to make this a major assessment tool in the research or to 'type' all research participant.

The MBTI is a widely used and referenced psychometric instrument and from the early stages of literature review, I found it referred to in management development literature (for example, in the MIT Course 'Managing for the Future' Ancona et al, 1996, Module 4; Walck in Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997), as well as in other related books on leaders (for example, Zweig & Abrams, 1991; Judge, 1999).

It should be noted that the instrument itself does not address spirituality. However, I was aware of, and interested in, the way that various writers and practitioners have used some of the elements of Myers-Briggs Type to look at spiritual development, and felt that this aspect was likely to be of interest during the research.
The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report questionnaire based originally on Jung's theory of psychological types, extended to offer an accessible and useable model to consider behavioural preferences for normal, healthy people, in everyday life. MBTI results provide a basis for better understanding of oneself and others, including motivations, strengths and potential areas for growth, particularly where there are differences of type (and therefore preference) between individuals. It does not measure or assess competence.

After more than 50 years of research and development, the MBTI is the most widely used instrument for understanding normal personality differences (more than 3 million Indicators are administered annually in the USA alone). Details of Construction, Properties, Reliability and Validity can be obtained in Myers & McCaulley (1993) and, amongst others, APT (the Association for Psychological Type) publish regularly on new research and cross comparisons with other psychological instruments.

The underlying theory is that much seemingly chance variation in human behaviour can be explained as the logical result of a few basic, observable differences in mental functioning. These differences concern the way people prefer to use their minds, specifically the way they perceive and the way they make judgements. Perceiving here is understood to include the process of becoming aware of things, people, occurrences and ideas. Judging includes the process of coming to conclusions about what has been perceived. Jointly making up a large proportion of a person’s total mental activity, these preferences govern much of their outer behaviour, since perception determines what people see in a situation and their judgement determines what they do about it. Consequently the applications of MBTI cover a broad range of human activity with just some examples being in:

- Education
- Counselling
- Career Guidance
- Situations Requiring Co-operation and Teamwork
- Communications generally

The MBTI reports preference on four bi-polar scales and thus a person’s Myers-Briggs four letter ‘type’ is created by recognition of their individual preferences. Preference is deemed to be innate, though developing a clear preference on all four scales most often only develops by mid to late teens. Type development - the process of gaining greater command over all the functions of perception and judgement - is seen as a lifelong process. Type assessment can also be undertaken by experienced observation, though there are dangers of making assumptions without confirmation with the person observed. The indicator has a numeric value associated with each scale. This provides a guide as to how strong the preference is for an individual: it gives no indication whatsoever about their competence in using it. The stronger the preference, the more frequently it is likely to be used.

What the scales reflect and the bipolar names are as follows:
- Focus of attention
  *Extraversion*(sic) or *Introversion*

- Taking in information
  *Sensing* or *Intuition*

- Preference in decision making
  *Thinking* or *Feeling*

- Process of orientation to the external world
  *Judging* or *Perceiving*

For further details of the meaning of the scales, refer to any of the sources listed at the beginning of this Appendix.

So, for example, a person's type might be *ESTJ* — Extrovert, Sensing, Thinking decision maker, Judging orientation. Each of the 16 possible types has a dynamic balance between the preferences and can be expected to have characteristics which are generally common for those of the same preference. Individuals will always differ in detail since this is not a full psychological or personality description. The sources quoted provide further detail.

It should be noted that some of the preference names are used differently in common parlance, so

*Extravert* does not mean talkative or 'party animal'
*Introvert* does not mean shy, inhibited or social recluse
*Thinking* does not mean intellectual or intelligent
*Feeling* does not mean emotional
*Judging* does not mean judgmental
*Perceiving* does not mean perceptive

MBTI is a well validated instrument, itself the subject of academic research, from which the work of Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) is used in this research.

The following two pages contain 'type tables' which are referenced at different points elsewhere in the text. They show the type distribution in managers attending two different leadership development organisations, one in the US and one in the UK.
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® Type Table No 1

US: Participants in CCI leadership Development Program. \( n = 26,477 \)

CCI is the Center for Creative Leadership, USA)

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In Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997:119
# Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® Type Table No 2

**UK**: Participants of ASK Europe Programmes to December 1999. \( n = 7580 \)

(ASK Europe is a premier provider of management education and development programmes)

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Intellectual property of ASK Europe plc
Appendix 2: Case study documents

Ap 2.1 Case Study proposal document

[Note that the research question as stated in this appendix is not the final version]

Proposal to Undertake a Research Case Study
at Southfields Further Education College

Michael Joseph, 10 November 1998

This document summarises my proposed approach to undertaking a research case study at an FE College and is the basis for requesting approval from the Chief Executive/Principal and the College to proceed with this research project.

Background

I am a mature student undertaking an external MPhil/PhD course at the University of Surrey, Guildford. The majority of my career has been spent with large organisations, most latterly with IBM(UK) Ltd where I held a management position for many years. For the past 5 years I have worked independently in a variety of ways with individuals and groups - often from organisational backgrounds - helping people to work more effectively together. This ranges from personal counselling, mentoring and coaching to working with groups or management teams, improving personal awareness and developing interpersonal effectiveness.

Study Area

I am researching the impact of spirituality in organisations. The thinking behind this is that we are composed of the physical (body), the mental (intellect), the emotional and the spiritual. Thus, whether consciously or otherwise, we bring the spiritual component of ourselves into the workplace. (In this context, it is important to recognise the separation between spirituality and religion - they are very different.)

Historically, organisations have recognised the mental/intellectual dimension; for some years have acknowledged the importance of physical health (health and safety, impact of working conditions, health programmes, employee health insurance); and more recently, some have begun to consider the impact of the emotional component (Employee Welfare officers, Employee Assistance Programmes, in-house counselling). The spiritual dimension is only just becoming recognised and is still rarely considered explicitly.

Depending upon the organisational attitude, this latter component (spirituality) may be specifically excluded from consideration, tolerated, or actively engaged. My underlying belief is that where it is appropriately involved, there is likely to be a much greater degree of engagement and commitment in the approach of the individual to work and a greater possibility and potential for 'self actualisation' or personal development and growth.

The specific research question that I am considering is:

"How do leaders in organisations, who recognise and value their own spiritual dimension, seek to engage the spiritual dimension of others within their organisational context? What is the impact and what are the consequences of so doing?"
Approach

My intention is to undertake a detailed case study with a suitable organisation - specifically, with this FE College. A prime criterion is that the leader should hold views generally in concert with those outlined in ‘Study Area’ above and I believe this to be the case. I propose to do this research over an initial period of 9 - 12 months, possibly with more limited follow up during a further period of up to 6 months. I would follow a general procedure and process as outlined below.

Although all data acquired will be held confidential at the level of each contributing individual, the engrossed findings should provide the College with valuable summary information for reflecting the views of those working within it, input to planning future strategies, and the opportunity for regular checkpointing during the study period. Additionally, I would expect the interview process to prompt in a positive way the awareness and thinking of those interviewed.

Process

There would be five main strands or threads through the initial 9-12 month period of the research:

1. Interviews with the Principal/Chief Executive

These would take place as follows
- 1 hour interview to set up the case study and agree the parameters
- 1.5 hour interview to obtain initial personal data
- 1 x 2 hour interviews at intervals of approximately 3 months : 1.5 hours for data gathering, 0.5 hours for summary feedback from the research
- 1 interview at the conclusion of the research to feedback data from the case study overall

2. Interviews with staff

Current staff - personal, semi-structured interviews with teaching staff/heads of department. My proposal is to interview approximately 6 staff members, selected from different departments, a range of seniorities and time in post and with varying levels of contact with the Chief Executive. 3 or 4 interviews with each staff member of approximately 45-60 mins duration, over the course of the study.

Previous staff - a programme of voluntary redundancy is under way. I propose to use a questionnaire to be sent to all staff taking such redundancy, seeking feedback anonymously.

3. Interviews with other ‘stakeholders’

This option will not be incorporated initially but it may become desirable and appropriate to interview some of the following: non-teaching staff, students, board of governors, external authoritative commentators.

4. Participant observation

Where appropriate and acceptable, I would request to attend appropriate events which might take place during the period, such as: staff meetings, task force or project group meetings, internal workshops, public meetings relevant to the College, meetings at which the Chief Executive or others discuss and present the College.

5. Other data

I would intend to analyse publicly available data (prospectus, annual reports, communications to staff from the Principal, design changes, Internet website) and such other data as can be made available, with appropriate caveats on confidentiality (internal memos and briefings for staff, staff guidelines, minutes of meetings, working party reports, reports
on changes within the College, general terms conditions of employment, board meeting minutes).

Dependent upon progress made and data analysis, it may be appropriate to hold limited 'follow-up' interviews 3-6 months after the main research period to reflect on developments during that period.

Confidentiality and Statement of Positive Intent

Unless the College gives permission otherwise, its identity will not be revealed directly in the output of this research. However, it must be recognised that an informed observer reading a resulting thesis may be able to identify the subject college.

All identifying data pertaining to individuals interviewed under (2) and (3) above, or observations in (4) will be held in the strictest confidence by myself, the researcher and will not be made available to the Principal or others in a way which could be associated with a specific individual.

As with any research project, the researcher must analyse data in the most objective manner possible and will present and draw conclusions from that data. It is not possible to know what the outcomes might be prior to commencing the study, but in my approach to conducting the study and writing up the results I shall at all times seek to be respectful of both individual and corporate reputation. If requested, I would be pleased to brief the Chief Executive/Principal on the main points of my findings, prior to publication of a thesis or other work.
My name is Michael Joseph. I am a mature student at the University of Surrey and this is a request for your help in my doctoral research case study. This project has the full approval of the College Principal/Chief Executive.

I am looking at the underlying personal motivations/beliefs of senior managers and the impact of the style within their organisation. Specifically, my research question is:

"How do leaders in organisations, who recognise and value their own spiritual dimension, seek to engage the spiritual dimension of others within their organisational context? What is the impact and what are the consequences of so doing?"

Specifically in relation to this College, I am trying to build up a picture of differences of style between previous and present Principals and how this is/was experienced by staff. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire and post it back to me. It is entirely confidential - you do not need to provide your name and I will take care not to identify you by your responses.

Thank you in anticipation.

1. Approximately how many years have you worked at the College?

2. What would you say were your main reasons for deciding to leave?

3. Over time, what has been the level of contact between you and the Principal/Chief Executive of the College?

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4. From a staff/management perspective, how would you characterise the style and approach of:

4.1 Last principal?

4.ii Interim Principal?

4.iii Present Principal?

5. What would you infer are the guiding or driving principles behind the approach of:

5.1 Last Principal?

5ii. Interim Principal?

5.iii Present Principal?
6. In there anything specific (actions, behaviours, exchange of information, meetings etc) on which you based your answer to question 5?

7. When you hear the word spirituality (NOT religion!), what words or phrases come to mind?

8. Do you consider that spirituality can be a relevant consideration within an organisation, and if so, in what ways?

9. Have you seen any indications (positive or negative) of spirituality in practice at this College?
Ap 2.3 Interview Questions

These questions were asked of all interviewees except Laura, the Principal, however, the exact phrasing was not necessarily identical in all cases. At each interview, as answers were given or issues were raised by interviewees, these were pursued by further dialogue. In interviews after the first, any on-going issues which were raised by individuals in the previous interview were also referenced.

The progression of interviews with Laura was somewhat different because of the phenomenological exploration. However, most of these questions (suitable modified where they referred the ‘the Principal’) were also addressed to her.

Ap 2.3.1 Questions used in round 1 interviews (1st Quarter 1999)

Tell me about your role and responsibilities and how long you have been in post/in the College.

What is the level and nature of your involvement with the Principal?

How would you compare and contrast the style of the present Principal with previous Principals? [if required, prompt in terms of: general style; style as Chief Executive or manager; style as leader; personal style with people]

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this style? What do you find really good; really difficult about the Principal’s style?

Turning to spirituality, when you hear that word, what does it bring to mind for you (words or phrases, for example)?

Do you see (any aspect of) spirituality being relevant in the workplace or working life?

If so, what and how might you expect to experience it?

Does it have any benefits? Any drawbacks?

For you personally, how do these beliefs affect what you do or how you do it?

Do you think the Principal believes that Spirituality is important? in the workplace?

If so, how do you experience this?

What have you seen happen in the College which might be a consequence of this? What difference do you think it makes?

Are there drawbacks as a result of her views and approach?

If time:

In summary, what are the major issues facing the College at the moment and over the next couple of years?

In what ways do you think the Principal’s beliefs and style either equip her to lead these changes or present problems for her?
Ap 2.3.2 Questions used in round 2 interviews (3rd Quarter 1999)

Any comments or reflections from our last meeting?

Where is the process of consultation on reorganisation up to and what has happened since we last met?

What is your perception of staff morale? Your morale?

How would you say you are different in the way that you operate/function with Laura as Principal, compared with previously?

What do you see as the major challenges over the next 4-6 months
- for the College
- for you personally

+ interviewee-specific questions such as effects of transition into new roles.

Ap 2.3.3 Questions used in round 3 interviews (November 1999)

Any comments or reflections from our last meeting?

What significant changes have taken place since our last meeting – in the College; for you personally?

What is your view of staff morale? Your morale?

(Executive managers only) How is the Executive Team functioning? Can you give examples?

Since we last met have you seen any changes in the Principal’s style? Can you give me some examples? What is she doing well/less well? What does she need to do for the future?

+ interviewee specific questions such as effects of transition into new roles

Ap 2.3.4 Questions used in round 4 interviews (May 2000)

How are things going in the College for you/your job, particularly since we last met?

What is your perception of morale, yours and others?

Since the present Principal took over, what has happened in the College that you are most proud of? Most unhappy with or ashamed of?

Have you seen any changes in the Principal’s style – over time and/or since we last spoke? Examples?

What do you find most helpful/least helpful in the Principal’s style and approach?

Have you changed in any way as a result of working for Laura?
What would you say were the major things you would like to see the College doing, or see changed, in the future?

Returning to the question of spirituality which we discussed in our first interview, do you see any relevance for spirituality in the workplace? If so, in what way?

What reflections have you had as a result of taking part in these interviews?

Is there anything you would have wished to say or comment on that we have not covered?
Appendix 3: Personal Spiritual Formation and Background

This summary is offered to put in context the background from which I approach this research. I feel vulnerable at putting it into the public domain, yet is essential to understand my starting point and to help me be more specific about clarifying potential bias.

I was what is known as a ‘cradle Catholic’ – a phrase used by Roman Catholics to describe those who were baptised as babies and by implication (though not always so in practice) brought up as children to ‘practice their faith’. My Mother was staunchly Catholic, raised in England but in an Irish Catholic tradition which accorded total acceptance to all teachings of the church, though usually as interpreted through the clergy and certainly not by direct reading of the bible.

In general, serious dissent from official teaching was, of course, ‘a sin’ and in public or extreme cases, punishable by excommunication from the church. Conformity was expected and required; apologetics was the preferred way of ‘defending the faith’ and the authority of the Church was taught and emphasised from the earliest age. Perhaps needless to say, no other branch of Christianity was on the ‘right’ path – that is, leading to eternal salvation. Worship in other churches was specifically forbidden (at least during my childhood); all other non-Christian religions were specifically condemned.

If this sounds rigid, conformist and insular then indeed, in many ways, it was – though it rarely felt so, since I accepted it (in childhood at least) as ‘the way things were’. Attending Catholic schools also meant that I was surrounded by others of broadly similar belief and background, and so was not isolated, odd or different.

For myself, the potential for seeing no other view of the world was offset by the fact that my Father was, as explained by my Mother, agnostic – but in practice, clearly atheist. His promise at the time of marriage to allow his offspring to be brought up in the practice of the Roman Catholic faith was to him, however unpalatable, a firmly binding commitment and he never to my knowledge impeded my Mother in carrying it out. In later years, I recognised this as a model of integrity inspired by something else other than religion. In childhood, I simply grew up with awareness that there were good people around who did not believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church (or even attend church) and yet whom I could not accept were destined for hell in the life hereafter. This provided a plurality of view and a healthy balance from an early age.

Particularly during teenage years, many young people go through a time of significant questioning, doubt, and often rejection, of whatever faith they may have. Although constantly debating issues and questioning some of the underlying dogma and structure of the Catholic Church, I never went through a period of real rejection and continued throughout to practice my religion assiduously. I married a Roman Catholic and we continued to be strongly committed to and involved with the Church.
For many years my involvement could be characterised as fairly conformist. Although I saw myself as something of a rebel from within the system, my questioning never took me too far beyond the bounds of the core orthodox teaching of the Church. I was, however, strongly convinced of the importance of the spiritual side of my life – although at that time it was inseparably intertwined with my religious beliefs: I felt that the Roman Catholic church was both a supportive environment for me and provided the best framework for expressing my spirituality – with this expression largely directed towards following the regular practice of my religion.

Preparing myself for working with adults who had had limited exposure to the church caused me to think more deeply about my beliefs and my spiritual dimension than I had since I was at school. As a result, in my early 30's, I found a growing and insatiable ‘inner hunger’ for things spiritual which I could find no way of satisfying. I tried to meet this hunger intellectually by reading and study, but to no avail. In the interests of brevity, I will condense the next 5 years or so, though they were by far the most profound leap in what I consider to be my true spiritual development.

In summary, initially I discovered ‘free prayer’ – praying in one’s own words and with no set form – within a prayer group: a strange but very liberating experience. From this beginning in the late 1970’s, I rapidly became involved with the Charismatic Renewal movement which was sweeping through many mainline and other churches in the US and UK particularly. Characterised by profound commitment; dedicated but informally expressed prayer time, both privately and in groups; worship; study; engagement of the intellect, certainly, but initially a primarily experiential engagement, encouraging integration of emotions with intellectual belief, and ‘real’ experience (as opposed to historical understanding and intellectual assent) in many areas, not least in the exercise of some of the biblical charismatic gifts including prophecy and healing; and a major focus on the Bible as a source of personal inspiration and teaching. It met my hunger in full and took me into a satisfying, expressive, experiential, intellectually supportable, multi-coloured and fully dimensioned world of faith and spirituality which I felt I had been searching for all my life and which had true life-changing effects on me and on others.

Despite this personal spiritual renewal, in which my wife was also involved, we began to encounter problems in our marriage. Finally, over 8 years or so, I separated and eventually divorced. Although sustained during this difficult and stressful time by prayer and faithful friends, I began to experience marginalisation within the Catholic church based on its rejection of divorce. Furthermore, after the passage of more time when the consideration of re-marriage became at least a possibility, I felt very distinctly separate and ‘beyond the pale’ as re-marriage is not allowed by the Catholic Church – a position re-affirmed recently by the present Pope.

There followed a series of major life changes. The first was that half way through a part time course of counselling training, I decided to leave my well paid and still relatively secure job as a manager within a major multinational organisation in order to be able to focus on those things that I felt were more truly of value and interest to me. In particular, doing work more closely related to individuals’ personal
development and supporting people in transition. Initially working for a small consultancy, I then went freelance in order to have greater control over the amount and type of work that I did.

My own spiritual journey felt as buffeted as did the rest of my life by these changes. I began to experience other ways of understanding spirituality; meeting people with different ideas; reading more widely and beginning to understand spirituality as a much wider issue than religion. A ‘chance’ meeting with an Anglo-Catholic priest resulted in a change of church to one where I was welcomed and I began to worship as an Anglican. However, I was aware that I did not feel fully ‘engaged’ spiritually: I began to drift and the importance of the spiritual journey was eclipsed by the worldly roller-coaster I was riding.

On a workshop entitled ‘Re-shaping your Life’, held in the foothills of the Alpujarra mountains in Spain, I met a remarkable woman who 10 months later was to become my wife and partner. We were married — to our mutual deep satisfaction and delight — in the Anglican church. The speed of these decisions, especially given their momentous nature, is unprecedented in my life before that time.

Although currently involved with my local church, my spiritual journey still feels somewhat superficial and less than challenging: the wheels transporting me along the way seem to have sunk firmly into the sands of the desert. I am well familiar both with desert analogies and desert experiences, so I am not totally destitute spiritually. However, neither am I in a place where the journey feels active or inspired and the resulting feeling of spiritual shallowness within myself is discordant and discomforting. I have somewhere lost the depth of drive and inspiration, though I have a deep wish to be ‘on the move’ again, to discover new depths and experience a feeling of movement with at least some sense of general direction. Although the motivation for undertaking this research was more to do with interest in the subject area I think my hope was that, as part of this process, I would explore with others and discover new insights into spirituality, new ways of continuing the journey, new depths of experience, further sifting and clarifying my own fundamental beliefs, and perhaps finding others along the way who share similar views. I shall reflect back on this at the end of my thesis.

My own spiritual path has Christianity marking the way: I looked forward to and welcomed the understanding of and insights into others’ ways, sharing the journey with them and exploring what happens when this intrinsic part of our being is acknowledged, made explicit, openly expressed and shared.

Michael Joseph 1998
Appendix 4: Internet Correspondence

My message, posted to the research forum for Spirituality in the Workplace was

Dear fellow researchers

After a long absence of contributions, I attach an update (just over 1 page) on my research, a case study looking in detail over 18 months at the impact of spiritually motivated leader in an organisation.

At the bottom of this update are two key questions which I am struggling with a great deal! In the context of academic rigour rather than inspirational perspectives I would warmly welcome your thoughts, suggestions and input of whatever kind.

best wishes
Michael Joseph

T0PICA http://www.topica.com/tl17

The relevant part of the attachment was:

The biggest issue that I am struggling with at this advanced stage is in what way might we say that this represents a move to a more spiritual organisation. The standards, values, attitude and behaviours are good, even exemplary. But if I was studying a good (and perhaps successful, by whatever standards) organisation, inspired by a totally humanistic and 'non-spiritually motivated' leader, would I not find the same result?

The key question is: "What is the difference between good leadership and good spiritual leadership" - and preferably couched in terms which will pass academic scrutiny - this is not an 'inspirational' question.

The second question is: What would I observe as the difference between an organisation that 'simply' espoused good principles, practice, ethics, belief in and respect for people, etc and one which did all these things but was motivated by 'spiritual principles'?

I would appreciate any and all thoughtful contributions – again, especially ones that pass the test of academic scrutiny.

As the song says "I'm a believer ...." but can I really demonstrate what spirituality in practice might look like, and why that's different from 'just' good practice?

There follows a set of 8 replies:
Dear Michael,

In response to your research summary of Dec. 20

Your first key question - the difference between good leadership and spiritual leadership: I believe we may be changing the definition of leadership (once again). Up to now, good leadership was measured primarily by secular standards – profitability, efficiency, etc. As we move on, we are looking more to the impact on the individuals in the organization as we view them as whole persons. And through that, we may unlock organizational effectiveness for a quantum leap.

The second question: "Espousing" good principles does not necessarily cause one to act consistently according to good principles. One has to be truly motivated by spiritual principles. And how does this happen? One has to be truly spiritual. Something has to happen to transform the individual from operating in a self-centered mode to an other-centered mode.

In my own book– Christ-Centered Leadership (Prima Publishing, 1999) I studied the fruits of the faith of more than 40 Christian business leaders in large and small companies. I also tried to explain their internal motivation. Perhaps this book (available through Amazon.com) would give you some insights or ideas for your research. In brief, my study found four major attributes of these Christ-centered leaders who truly walk their faith:

1. They BLEND their faith and work. Their lives are not compartmentalized. They see themselves as Stewards of Creation

2. They respond to a high calling. They see themselves as windows for God to work through. Their corporation positions give them a platform for ministry to others

3. They lead with love - not a warm fuzzy feeling, but a response to God's love that causes them to love even those they don't particularly like.

4. Their relationships are covenants. They are timeless, unlike mere contracts or acquaintances. This enables them to work with dedication to serving ALL their stakeholders.

I wish you the best in your research. Meeting the test of academic scrutiny is, I know, difficult since it limits itself to measurable, tangible evidence - none of which individually or collectively serve to capture the immeasurable, spiritual.

Please contact me if I can be of further help

Perry Pascarella
Ohio

From: Andre Delbecq
To: mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk
Date: 20 December 2000 18:15
Subject: Re: Spirituality and leaders
Michael,

A small reflection which might be helpful. It reflects my view, and is offered humble as one perspective which may be helpful. It is certainly not a final word on the complex issue you raise.

It would seem to me the "world view" of the leader ought to inform, motivate, and impact on the leader's behavior. Whether self reported or reported by others, aspects of behavior should be able to verify if there is congruence between the self reported world view of the leader and how the leader responds to organizational challenges.

As a Christian, I believe Mother Theresa was motivated to serve the poor, and care for the least of our brothers and sisters with compassion "because" of her Christian faith.

What a secular scientist would see is the compassionate actions. He/she is unlikely to be able to enter into or understand the nuance of her spirituality. Further, such compassion might also be engaged in by a Hindu, a Buddhist, or a secular social worker. (Indeed, Mother had such varied individuals who joined her in her work.) So the scientist might ask, what is uniquely Christian about Mother Theresa? If you study her motivation and world view, one can "infer"/"suggest" her actions flow from her Christian perspective. The researcher can document her world view, and study the congruence between the world view and behavior. But a researcher cannot enter into the mystery of God acting within a person, or the mystery of individual conscience as the individual travels the long spiritual path. Indeed, we are enjoined not to judge others, since we are never in a position to know the inner spiritual struggle. The lives of the Saints are filled with earlier behavioral imperfection winnowed by grace over many years.

The "mystery" of Christ acting in us remains that - a mystery not denied by a Christian, and testified to if asked, but not necessarily flaunted. As St Francis said: "As a last resort use words. "The Good Samaritan parable shows that goodness is not the sole perogative of any religion. The Spirit moves as the Spirit wills in many lives, Christian and non Christian, religious and secular.. However, a Christian world view that is not manifest in the fruits of behavior should be suspect.

So, we are not allowed to judge, but we can report behavior, and can report the self proclaimed world view should an individual allow us to enter into this private space. Still we must be cautious and humble in doing so, not "setting up" the individual to be expected to perform at a level of perfection not possible for we sinners. All we can say is "In these instances these parcular challenges were responded to in a way which seems consistent" We can provide praise for courage and compassion, but must remember we are dealing with a fallible human, not a "little god". Indeed, the great Saints were always the most aware of their sinfulness. So reports that include struggle, weakness, and imperfection along with good fruits will have greatest credibility.

The mystery of how God acts in any soul must remain that, and will always be shrouded in the cloud of unknowing.

I hope these thoughts may be useful to you.

Blessings on your work.

Andre L Delbecq
Thomas J. and Kathleen L McCarthy
University Professor
Leavey School of Business
Santa Clara University
California
Dear Michael,

I really like your 4 part definition of spiritual practice a great deal.

With regard to your two questions:

1) The key question is: "What is the difference between good leadership and good spiritual leadership" - and preferably couched in terms which will pass academic scrutiny - this is not an 'inspirational' question.

2) The second question is: What would I observe as the difference between an organization that 'simply' espoused good principles, practice, ethics, belief in and respect for people, etc and one which did all these things but was motivated by 'spiritual principles'?

First the definition of spirituality I have used is framed as a question rather than an answer: "the search for meaning in the ordinary business of life"; it is a formative rather than summative standard (i.e. intended to help move the search and behavior along rather than to determine the value of an outcome). Thus I think that continuation of a search, a view that no answer arrived at is, or presumably ever will be, final and definitive. Among other things this implies a continuing search for innovations; a continuing reflection upon one's own and the organization's action seeking to further seek for meaning in these; acceptance tolerance and even encouragement for searching by other members and other organizations; a perspective that perfection can never be attained but that we can and should continually strive to find better answers and deeper meaning.

It is also my view that your "belief in and respect for people" are behaviors that necessarily accompany spirituality, a perspective that widens to encompass at least all humanity and perhaps all sentient beings or all existence. Thus the spiritual person and the spiritual organization has concern about the welfare of all rather than just their own individual advantage or that of the organization. This seems to suggest some kinds of activities and to mitigate against other kinds of activities.

Thus I would suggest that there are difference in perspective but that the good "behaviors" that you mention are implied by a spiritual perspective. Of course various religions have often taken a much narrower view - that their preferred behaviors are the only right behaviors (inconsistent with the "search" definition) and that others should be forced to comply (possibly inconsistent with the concern for others and wider circle aspects above).

I hope this may be of some help. I would also like to mention that I am the chair of the MSR (Management Spirituality and Religion) group of the IAM and would like to encourage you to submit a paper. (more follows)

Lee Robbins
California
From: Jonathan Reams  
To: mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk  
Date: 21 December 2000 05:09  
Subject: Re: Spirituality and leaders

Hi Michael

You wrote:
"The biggest issue that I am struggling with at this advanced stage is in what way might we say that this represents a move to a more spiritual organisation. The standards, values, attitude and behaviours are good, even exemplary. But if I was studying a good (and perhaps successful, by whatever standards), inspired but totally humanistic and a non-spiritually motivated leader, would I not find the same result?"

My bet is yes. My reason for saying this is that I have been approaching this issue from the perspective of looking at consciousness, psychological development/maturity and such as a way into looking at spirituality in leadership in an academically acceptable and somewhat more measurable way.

I'm just beginning my dissertation in a Leadership Studies program at a Jesuit university in Washington state. My tentative title for my mostly theoretical study is "Leadership and the consciousness of holding space. A dialogical intuitive heuristic inquiry into the effects of quality of beingness on leadership." I have found plenty of literature to support using the framework of consciousness studies as a way to bring some academic rigor in, and at the same time in reality be dealing with spirituality, at least as I see it.

"The key question is: "What is the difference between good leadership and good spiritual leadership" - and preferably couched in terms which will pass academic scrutiny - this is not an "inspirational" question."

For me there is no difference. All life is spiritual. It is simply the misdirection of our attention to giving more validity and reality than is appropriate to the mental models we create that keeps us from seeing this. Thus for me "good leadership" will by its very nature be leadership that is in line with universal spiritual principles, no matter what labels people might give them. I have found that entering into dialogue with others helps me to find the language that they use to express this innate essence of themselves.  
(Of course there are those whom one has to dig deep, past any conscious articulation to bring this out with :-))

"The second question is: What would I observe as the difference between an organisation that 'simply' espoused good principles, practice, ethics, belief in and respect for people, etc and one which did all these things but was motivated by 'spiritual principles'?"

Again, for me the difference is more in the level of consciousness than the espoused articulation of "spiritual" values. I have seen many cases of "spiritual" people not acting in very spiritual ways. I notice you address this as well.

"I would appreciate any and all thoughtful contributions - again, especially ones that pass the test of academic scrutiny. As the song says "I'm a believer..." but can I really demonstrate what spirituality in practice might look like, and why that's different from 'just' good practice?"
This is the big question. And even if one can, it is no guarantee that reason and "proof" will prevail and people will be convinced of the need to move in this direction. If only it were so easy.

I have found a wonderful book recently put out by the Marathi university of Management press. "Invincible Leadership" looks at consciousness or psychological development as central to effective leadership. They also have some studies that they have done to support their claims. I can get you the contact info if you want. I also have a small chunk of preliminary writing on my topic that I would be glad to share with you and get feedback on.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Reams

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From: Dermot Tredget  
To: Michael Joseph <mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk>  
Date: 21 December 2000 15:18  
Subject: Re: Spirituality and leaders research

Dear Michael,

Thanks for your research update. I wonder if we should differentiate between ordinary leadership and spiritual leadership and look how the spiritual dimension manifests itself in all kinds of leadership even if not acknowledged. Are good 'principles' such as ethical behaviour, respect for others, partly or totally motivated by the 'spiritual' dimension in all of us, even though it may not manifest itself?

Dermot

Fr Dermot Tredget OSB  
Berkshire England

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From: Boelhower, Gary  
To: mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk  
Date: 28 December 2000 15:35  
Subject: spirituality questions

Michael,

Very interesting questions. My guess is that the only significant difference between an organisation that is being run from a "spiritual" perspective as opposed to one that is simply being run from a "secular values" perspective is a sense of "wholeness" or integration on the part of the persons running the organisation or in the organisation. In other words, if I am a spiritual person and I am espousing values that are consistent with my transcendent connection, my connection to others as brothers and sisters, and my responsible and appreciative connection to the world (to use your categories), then, I feel like a whole person. I feel that I can exercise who I am in my totality in the workplace. I don't have to leave part of myself at the door to the factory or the office or the school. My heart's passion, my soul's purpose and my work is connected. Now, exactly how you get at this sense of wholeness or personal integration is another question.. exactly what questions might identify that aspect in your surveys or interviews or assessments.
Please keep me informed of your work; it is very important. I am happy to hear of it.
May your heart be open to bright shining stars in the new year.

Peace,
Gary Boelhower
(Professor of Spirituality and Leadership at Marian College, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, USA)

From: Bowman, Tim (T.J.)
To: Michael Joseph <mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk>
Date: 03 January 2001 07:42
Subject: RE: Spirituality and leaders research

Michael,

Difficult questions - I'm glad I'm not answering them but here's some thoughts for the pot. I subscribe to your definition of spirituality but also add Principe's "the way in which a person understands and lives within his or her historical context that aspect of his or her religion, philosophy or ethic that is viewed as the loftiest, the noblest, the most calculated to lead to the fullness of the ideal or perfection being sought". As such, s. leaders draw from and live by their deeply inner 'reserves' and ULTIMATE values for guidance. I guess part 2 of your definition. Also, Macquarrie sees spirituality as the process of becoming a person in the fullest sense. Does the s. leader enable/promote this actualisation.

I guess what I'm trying to say above, it depends on the definition of s. and just how its different from ethics etc. I think distinguishing a s. leader has to be intrinsically and rigorously/firmly grounded in your definition of s. e.g.: an authentic and sincere humanist may be particularly spiritual.

Hope some of this may help!

Tim Bowman
UK

Dean Pielstick
To: Michael Joseph <mkj@mjos.globalnet.co.uk>
Date: 17 January 2001 17:08
Subject: Re: Spirituality and leaders

Michael,...
I am interested in the same questions you raise. The anecdotal evidence seems to support a positive relationship between leading and spirituality. However, I would like to do a more comprehensive assessment to be sure.

I wanted to finish reading Paul (Gibbons) dissertation before replying, which I have now done. I think that he is right that we need to look at types and components of spirituality rather than the broader concept. So we might ask, what is the effect when the leader exhibits "religious" spirituality, "secular" spirituality, or "mythical" spirituality, for example. We may even need to discern differences based on specific beliefs, values and/or practices. Another consideration is the effect of contextual variables (particularly difficult since there are so many... but not impossible). And we need to be clear about what outcomes (dependent variables) we are assessing in terms of these other (independent) variables, many of which Paul identified as "assumptions" that have been treated as "facts" in the literature. Ultimately, the biggest challenge, however, may be the ethical issues that he raises, particularly those that I would
characterize as questions of "manipulation." Can or will these (spiritual) practices, if shown to be effective [a big IF given the fundamental conflict between extrinsic (profit) and intrinsic (salvation, enlightenment, etc.) goals], be used to manipulate employees for the benefit of the company? And if so, is that okay? I don't see manipulation as intrinsically bad per se. It depends on means and ends, i.e., is it for the benefit of the employee, the common good, or the person doing the manipulation (self-interest)? More questions than answers at this point, but those present both qualitative and quantitative research opportunities.

Going back to your first question (from the attachment), the difference between good leading and good spiritual leading needs to be defined in terms of what you mean by spiritual. It needs to be defined in a way that you can observe or "measure" it. Then you can select a set of outcomes (e.g., what are the criteria you would use to determine the "positive" environment that you note?) to see whether there is a difference and, potentially, whether there is a causal relationship.

Paul's definition, as he points out, is very broad. One way to clarify it is to narrow "spirituality" into types as he has done with religious, secular, and mystic. I have been toying with a similar taxonomy derived from Wilber that has 5 or 6 categories (mythical, logical, systemical, mystical(?), transpersonal, transcendental). Within each category, one can then identify a set of beliefs, values, and practices commonly associated with each (which may require some independent validation). Using a qualitative methodology, one would then look for the "pattern of evidence" that these bv&p are related to each of those outcomes. Using a quantitative methodology, one could do a similar process by establishing a scale for each variable and using factor analysis. That's just off the top of my head, so I really need to spend some time thinking this through more carefully. But perhaps it will help. Let me know what you think.... Dean

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Appendix 5: Other research related involvement

Ap 5.1 – Data from other leaders

In addition to the main case study I obtained data on other leaders who might provide comparative data to illuminate data from the main case study. These data are primarily referenced in Chapter 8.

Leader 1: Bill Lucas

Commencing in June 1997, I undertook a series of 5 recorded interviews with Bill Lucas the Chief Executive of the Campaign for Learning (a UK organisation with charitable status dedicated to lifelong learning) looking at his personal views on spirituality, how they inform the way he approaches running his organisation, and how he is applying these beliefs in practice within an emergent and growing organisation. In this case, I have no direct comparison of Bill's views with those of others within his organisation, however I do have input from a consultant colleague who has worked extensively within Bill's organisation. The data from these interviews were analysed with similar themes to the main case study and are presented in detail in Appendix 6, section Ap 6.1. A summary is presented here.

Bill's Myers-Briggs preference is ENFP, the same as Laura. Bill has constant high energy and enthusiasm for all that he is involved with and is verbally expansive when interviewed. He is highly successful in his CEO role and is liked and respected by staff and business associates. He is seen as hard working but flexible, imaginative and resourceful and engenders a high degree of loyalty and commitment from his staff. He is clear about the essential role of the leader in 'setting the tone' in an organisation.

He sees spirituality as very important but believes it means widely differing things to different people. His own definition tends to be in terms of those things which he believes in – in particular, high ethical standards, values, principled behaviour and, in particular, valuing people. He feels there are 'moments of spirituality in most days'. However, he is cautious about the use of the term 'spirituality' in the workplace and has had adverse reactions when he has 'deliberately tried using it'. On a personal basis he is oblique in referencing it, partly concerned about demonstrating his own lack of clarity around spirituality but also fearing the potential for 'egotism of the 'look at me I'm spiritual' variety'.

Leader 2: Brett Jordan

In 1998 I undertook an extended interview with Brett Jordan. He is a Managing Director and Partner of a small graphics design company, currently with 12 employees, which has been operating for 13 years. This organisation might have been a possibility for my case study but its relatively small size and stage of growth meant that they felt unable to accommodate the potential demand of time. However,
Brett was happy to be interviewed as input to the research process. His Myers-Briggs preference is not known.

The data from this interview is presented in detail in Appendix 6, section Ap 6.2. A summary follows:

Brett is an intense but engaging person who talks freely and extensively. He sees himself as an 'optimistic realist' and is interested more in the creative processes at work rather than business management. He describes himself as being 'hyperactive - a hard worker'. As a committed Christian from the age of 17 (also describing himself as a 'constant questioner'), he makes his Christian belief explicit and is 'always willing to speak about it to whoever might wish' but is careful not to use his senior position to proselytise.

His 'spiritual beliefs' are translated into operating principles within the business, primarily ethical practices and concern for people. His co-Director is not religious and they agreed at the outset that certain ways of working and unethical practices would not be engaged in. His experience, however, is that staff often fail to respond to and reciprocate this approach as they seek 'the greatest amount of pleasure for the least amount of pain' and he does not feel they have been successful in getting people to 'buy into the vision'.

Leader 3: 'Richard Mapleden'

'Richard' is a Medical Director in a large UK National Health Trust with whom I have worked over an extended period as a mentor and executive coach. I chose to reflect on him since, like Laura, his Myers-Briggs best fit type is ENFP.

In terms of externally observable style and behaviours, he is warm, personable, has a keen sense of humour, is modest about his considerable achievements and can be self deprecating. He carries a heavy workload and long working hours positively and enthusiastically. He is seen as competent and successful both as a clinician and as a manager, widely acknowledged by members of his immediate team as a 'a great person to work for'. He does not seem to relish a high degree of control as a manager and is most happy when people accept delegated responsibility and pursue it without the need for his intervention. His immediate staff are committed and intensely loyal and put in long working hours when required. Over a significant period, he has never acknowledged any religious affiliation and has not particularly considered spirituality as a part of his life.

Aspects of Richard's approach which are particularly of interest here are:
- he displays behaviours consistent with someone of ENFP preferences
- he is widely respected and commands great loyalty particularly amongst those working in close proximity but also more widely in very large organisation
- he is highly focused on people and their well being and also functions from a strongly held set of values which guide his conduct (note that this is a general feature of those with Myers-Briggs 'F' preference – see Appendix 1)
- he is not religious nor does he speak of any explicit spiritual conviction

**Leader 4: Rob Bernstein**

Rob is the founding director of *Shared Vision*, a consultancy specialising in facilitating innovative and creative transformational change within large organisations with whom I have worked as an associate for five years. Again, I considered Rob because of his preferences for *ENFP*.

Rob is dynamic, highly entrepreneurial and is constantly optimistic even in the face of adversity. He is highly people focussed and also seeks to run his business to high ethical standards. It is noticeable that people working within and as associates for his business are willing to put in time and effort significantly above any contractual obligation. He was brought up religiously as a Jew but no longer practices and declares himself ambivalent about any religious belief, however, he has a strong view about the importance of spirituality, without necessarily being explicit about how that might be manifest.

**Leader 5: David House**

David is a former Director of Human Resources in a public company in the UK in the computing and service sector. He is now an independent Human Resource Consultant. I have known David for many years and worked closely with him. His preferences are also *ENFP*.

David is intensely interested in and involved with people and his work life is directed by this interest. He is a warm and engaging individual, perceptive with people, very energetic and very outward focused. He is a high achiever and places considerable store by being successful. Those who work for him speak highly of his warm and generous nature which engenders loyalty and willingness to ‘go the extra mile’ when asked. He is not religious – indeed he may have some antipathy to formalised religion – and does not speak openly of any particular spiritual awareness or development.

**Relevance to this research**

How are these additional data on leaders relevant to this research? It must first be recognised that with the exception of the interviews with Bill Lucas, they do not represent a rigorous process either of collection or analysis. The indications that they do give must be considered with care – for example, it might be postulated from them that ‘all ENFPs are competent and successful’ but this is not a generalisation likely to stand the test of a wider and more representative sample. However, there do seem to be some characteristics which are common to the *ENFP* leaders here in particular. For example, they are characterised as being highly energetic, having a primary, perhaps overriding, concern for people, and (perhaps as a consequence) inspiring a high degree of loyalty in others especially those working in close proximity – all characteristics that are shared with Laura. These apply irrespective of
the individuals’ particular commitment to spirituality or otherwise. Thus there is no
evidence from these data that the spiritual motivation of the leader, or lack of it, was
significant in people’s response to them. Indeed, despite his personal strong spiritual
and religious convictions, Brett Jordan (whose MBTI preferences are not known) did
not feel he was successful in ‘taking people with him’ and getting buy-in to his
vision. Further consideration of these data are contained in Chapter 8.

Ap 5.2 - Spiritual development group

In 1998, after the pilot study (see Chapter 3) was complete, I participated in a set of
6 facilitated sessions with a group of people seeking spiritual direction and
development in their life. There was a charge for attending, to pay a modest fee to
the facilitator. She and her partner, considerably experienced in running groups of
this sort, heavily influenced and directed the style and approach of the group. In
essence, the approach had a number of characteristics which might be considered as
‘New Age’ in style: meetings were held in the large top room of an old converted
water-mill; lighting was dim and the participants - a maximum of 10 - sat on chairs
in a circle, with candles on the floor in the middle, together with flowers, a rock
crystal and other ‘symbolic’ objects.

The facilitator spoke in hushed tones. The stated purpose was to help people wishing
to explore their ‘soul’s journey’ to discover, experience and develop their spiritual
self. The exact format of each session varied and in missing the first session, I did
not hear the extended introductory discussion. We generally opened with some form
of prayer-style invocation but appealing to an indistinct and inexact ‘spirit of the
universe’, ‘universal light’ and ‘spirit of ourselves’ to enlighten us, but which - I
noted - carefully avoided the use of the word God at any stage. During the sessions,
‘love, mutual concern and care, support in our search’ were key themes along with
past personal experience and current reflections. There was often some form of
guided meditation, some silence, an opportunity for people to share their
experiences, thoughts or feelings on some aspect - all directed by the facilitator. At
the end, we often stood, sometimes holding hands, while she or more often her
partner, ended with a closing invocation.

At the second session (my first), we were invited to share about our personal ‘soul’s
journey’ if we wished - and many did. In my journal I noted that ‘It felt like those who
spoke were somewhat ‘needy’ and also that they had not had a great deal of spiritual
grounding’. Overall, I noted that after the session that ‘It left me with a slight feeling of
discomfort but no real problems with either the language or the approach, from a personal
or Christian point of view’.

At the 4th session there was some degree of evaluation - people were invited to
comment on how the group was working. The first 3 or 4 people were positive, some
gushingly so, about how the group had helped them look at spirituality and
themselves in a new light, how much they had enjoyed the sessions and the company
of others and similar comments. When my turn came, as noted in my journal, I said
that ‘I had enjoyed the opportunity to look at things in a new way, however I was having
major problems about the fact that it did not seem OK to make reference to God; that this was a major area for my spiritual journey and though I in no way expected others to follow this path necessarily, I was very concerned that in a group seeking spiritual development, it felt to me hugely risky to speak of my personal belief in God, since this had in no way been part of any of the discussion or input from any quarter'. This felt very risky to say but seemed to be positively received and immediately some others also made reference to their belief in God or otherwise. The facilitator seemed somewhat flustered, and affirmed that 'of course it was absolutely valid to speak of God' and that she was 'just facilitating and people needed to say and do what they thought best'. I commented - not in any way aggressively, since I did not feel that way - that the style felt more as though we were children coming to ‘Mother and Father’ for instruction and that there was limited opportunity to input other suggestions as to format. For example, there was no direct venturing to connect with nature. The somewhat defensive response included talk of the importance of 'sacred space’ (i.e where we were) which was ‘likely to be difficult to achieve outside’. The 5th and last session felt positive, enjoyable and with a good level of connection between those who attended. Some wished to continue and this was to be discussed at a separate meeting. Along with some others, I had no such inclination and did not stay in contact with the group nor with any individual members.

Attending this group helped considerably in a number of ways: experiencing a group purely as a participant; seeing other approaches; gaining a view on what types of spiritual development did and did not suit both me and others in the group; and seeking to take a view on the suitability of other approaches for possible use in an organisational context. In general, I felt that it was an activity which, in this particular form, would have limited general appeal and in a wider organisational setting would, in my view, be a risky undertaking although it was clear that some participants had never had any equivalent experience and found it valuable.

Ap 5.3 – Center for Spirit at Work

Throughout the period of this research project, I have gradually developed a network of contacts with others involved in this area and particularly with those undertaking related research. One highly valuable link has been via the Internet where Dr Judi Neal, the Director of the Center for Spirit at Work, University of New Haven, Connecticut, USA, is a focal point and centre of competence for an international group of academic researchers in this area, as well as a co-ordinator of information for many others with a more general interest. I have had valuable and thoughtful feedback from this group on some of the more intractable questions which this research raises. Her website - http://www.spiritatwork.com - gives access both to a bulletin board for general contributions, extensive bibliographies and an index to current research.
MODEM (Managerial and Organisational Disciplines for the Enhancement of Ministry) is a UK organisation which links together business consultants and those involved in ministry, particularly in the Anglican Church. It has sought to offer best management practice to those involved in Ministry and to seek to understand the relevance of spirituality in the workplace interpreted from a broadly Christian perspective. Two books have been published reflecting considerations and ideas for each of these perspectives.

I have periodically attended MODEM conferences and meetings to discuss their research project and to contribute ideas form my own. Specifically of relevance here, is MODEM’s research project to investigate the spiritual energy at work in managers and to reflect on its significance for the practice of management. The approach was to test 3 hypotheses by running a series of Action Learning Sets under the aegis of Cranfield University School of Management, UK, and recording the experiences of the managers attending. In phase 1, there were two sets, comprising a total of 14 managers who were selected both from Cranfield Alumni and from personal contact by the researchers. They were not selected on the basis of any religious or spiritual alignment. The focus was on events where the managers felt that they had been part of or had accomplished something which went beyond what they might have expected (described as a peak experience or activity) and to consider the energy involved. A second phase is planned.

Although described as Action Learning Sets, the process appears to have been closer to that of a Focus Group. So far, the information publicly available on the data gathered is a short paper in the form of groupings of verbatim phrases from the participants, with brief interpretative comments from the author. In addition, one possible interpretation is available as an unpublished paper (Pettifer, 1999) and gives a thoughtful and fascinating insight from the point of view of a Christian theologian.

The data suggest that it is a common, perhaps universal, experience that energy can be released to an unexpected degree in certain circumstances, often enabling people to achieve way above their expectations and not clearly attributable to physiological factors such as adrenaline bursts. The source of this was usually unclear and was sometimes experienced from within (‘the power within ourselves’; ‘having to draw on your inner self’) but for others from without (‘having a sense that there is some knowledge out there that I can tap’; ‘feel that you are in the hands of the most worthwhile and irresistible forces that there are’).

My major concern with the reflections on the data, both written and verbal, is that for some of the researchers at least, a link is drawn between these manifestations of energy and the work of the Holy Spirit. This seems unsustainable as a general hypothesis, though applied to certain data it could be a valid faith-based interpretation from a Christian perspective. Despite this, I found the study useful in describing the energy or forces that people experience which stimulate peak activity and achievement in workplace settings. It raises the questions for my own research as to whether:
- this energy is linked closely (or exclusively) with our spiritual dimension
- it can be released more readily, more effectively or more consistently by a leader aware of this potential
- to be effective, it requires the leader to be aware of and in touch with their own spirituality, or simply to be able to create an environment that allows this energy to flow

**Ap 5.6 – Other areas**

Various other contacts and involvement have contributed to widening my understanding. Specifically relevant are:

- following and contributing to the developing debate about the relevance of spirituality in personal counselling (Rowan 1993:2-3; Joseph & Scrivani, 1997; Thorne, 199877; Worsley 2000; West 2000)
- attending a workshop run by the UK branch of the Servant Leadership organisation which emphasises the essential role of the spiritual in business (Greenleaf, 1997)
- following extensive dialogue on the Internet on spirituality in business and other spiritually oriented areas78; specifically developing e-mail contact with other academic researchers looking at research questions in this area to share research ideas, approaches and bibliographies. This has lead to Internet dialogue, and meetings with UK researchers looking at similar topics
- involvement with the Domino Consultancy in the UK, who have developed an instrument to analyse organisations from perspectives of ‘applied spirituality’, prior to proposing organisational development consultancy based on the output
- participating in a ‘Spirit in Work’ contact and mutual interest group in the UK, comprising clerics, academics and practitioners as a common-interest group
- participating in a group looking at incorporating spirituality more explicitly into university life
- presenting and talking to groups on subjects related to my research

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77 Thorne, Professor BJ, *Values and Spirituality at Work*, keynote speech to the annual conference of the Association for Counselling at Work, May 1998

78 http://www.spiritweb.org/Spirit/networks.html as an index to many others

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Appendix 6: Interview Data for Bill Lucas & Brett Jordan

Ap 6.1 Bill Lucas

Overall introduction
There are some similarities between Bill and Laura and their roles. Like Laura, Bill took over as CEO of new organisation, formally from November 1997. There is a considerable difference in organisation size, however. At the time Bill took over the job, the Campaign for Learning had only four staff and grew to around 20 by the end of the interview period (February 2001).

A further relevant similarity is that Bill has the same Myers-Briggs type as Laura – ENFP. Consistently, Bill came across as enthusiastic, very dynamic, both quick thinking and voluble in his answers, interested in the subject area and willing to contribute his views. His commitment and passionate interest in his organisation and its goals was clear.

Understanding of spirituality
On a personal basis spirituality is and always has been important to Bill, although there have been many times when for 'months and months ... it has gone underground' (B1.2.9) and at these times would have been invisible to anyone looking at him. He also commented that he might not always have used that word: 'in teenage and twenties I definitely wouldn't have' (B1.2.12). Instead, he would have talked about 'doing the right thing' or 'being fair'. Although for him having some links to religion, he often finds that religious spirituality doesn't always accord greatly with his own internal sense, however difficult to articulate, of what spirituality is about. This lack of clarity is compounded when considering spirituality in connection with work, where 'there is another set of adjectives and nouns around it which I use', all of which contributes to his 'lack of definition in this area' (B4).

He feels that there are moments of spirituality in most days, which he recognises as somehow special: perhaps 'a moment when I recognised the worth of someone, and/or knew we were taking a view of something, or acting in a way that made me feel there was something there beyond ... the bottom line ... beyond the compulsory nature of what we were doing' (B1.2.33). For him, there is also a connection with God which 'if I were to be honest ... was singularly absent, really, for most of my twenties and thirties and has come back in the last two or three years, really' (B1.2.49). However, throughout he has usually tried to behave in principled ways and feels he has also had great moments of spirituality, often associated with music, special places, special people, special times (particularly births and key stages of children's development), outdoors 'in nature', and in special relationships. He describes these as 'transcendent moments' which 'take you out of yourself' and give you a glimpse of 'something more' (B1.3.4).
The word ‘spirituality’

Bill felt that ‘the word spirituality is not the common language of the pub or common room or restaurant talk, at all’ (B1.2.18) and other words are likely to be used, all trying to ‘articulate something ... about the way you do things’. He also saw it as a big subject, meaning many different things to different people. He sees it as a specific component of everybody’s make-up ‘whatever we mean by it’ (B4).

Over the time of the interviews, he had deliberately tried out the word spirituality on various people he had met via work and ‘by and large, it has a fairly negative response’ (B3.1.31) which had made him ‘more aware of the barriers that are attached to all things spiritual, including the word ‘spiritual’’ (B3.1.38). He recalled the problems that the New Millennium Experience organisation had had in finding a backer for the Spirit section of the London Millennium Dome and drew a parallel with alternative medicine where, at times in the past ‘it would have been seen as not appropriate for an educated person to be involved in unless they were a bit cranky’, a view which eventually had changed. Similarly spirituality feels to him like that at the moment which means ‘it’s more difficult to use the word and it’s quite difficult to find synonyms [for it] in the business voluntary sector at the moment’ and yet he finds that people want ‘more than just doing a job’ (B3.2). He does not believe that this situation is confined to the voluntary sector.

Although a driver or motivator for him, in talking about it generally he ‘tends to be more elusive rather than direct’ partly perhaps from his own lack of clarity, partly for fear of running the risk of egotism of the ‘look at me, I’m spiritual’ variety, and partly because it might ‘position’ him in a way that might be difficult for some people to accept. He would rather people experienced him and the way he is, without running the risk of labelling. He recognised that on matters of ethics he is strongly and clearly outspoken but is much more hesitant about doing so on issues related to spirituality – ‘It’s an area that I remain equivocal about’ (B4). He feels that whilst ethics can be depersonalised this is not true of spirituality ‘it’s got to involve you as an individual’ and is much more fluid and relativist, with greater of lack of clarity and the capacity to ‘put [some people] right off’ (B4).

Spirituality in the workplace

Bill considered that it was no longer such a surprise to see the word spirituality linked with business as it would have been a few years ago. He said ‘in the context of your interest in spirituality in organisations, the kind of words which come into my mind are ethics, principles, consistency, valuing, valuing people you deal with internally and outside, transparency, moral courage sometimes’ (B1.1.29). By transparency he meant openness and honesty about all that the organisation does. Overall he saw spirituality in operation in the workplace as ‘a collection of values and principles, I suppose, that might inform a way of working’ (B1.1.37). He felt that it could be everywhere in an organisation starting with the mission statement, how you operate, the way leadership and management functions and the principles and behaviours throughout. These things are ‘linked to ... ultimately a spiritual view of life’ (B1.5.30).

In the second interview he elaborated on spirituality in the workplace being to do with operating to a set of values, pragmatically but not compromising. In terms of
overall style, what differentiates it as having a spiritual dimension for him, is going beyond the 'basic minimum for a principled person'. This approach was also reflected in care over recruiting, both in the recruitment process itself but also in looking for people willing to adopt the organisation's ethos and values. In the fourth interview he commented that within his organisation 'there is a sense in which everyone has had a stake in working out which way we are going' and it 'felt like a team in which there are expected behaviours' and 'by and large, those behaviours are being exhibited, almost without exception' with on-going reviews of these values and processes at intervals.

The focus of the Campaign for Learning is lifelong learning and Bill commented that this 'core business' was 'in a sense a spiritual one. If you believe that learning has the power to transform people ... then that kind of magical transformative power is something that is potentially spiritual' (B2.4.33). External feedback about what the Campaign is doing and how it is doing it is very positive, with comments that they are 'different' from other organisations in the way they operate.

Despite leading his organisation in a values-based way, which he would regard as nearly synonymous with spirituality, he said that 'In this office the word spiritual is completely alien to even the voluntary sector that I work in ..... we use the phrase Learning Organisation ... but we don't use the word spiritual' (B2.3.5). In consequence, although the word has significant meaning for him, he doesn't feel ready to use it openly in the office, although he would like to see that come about.

Although wishing to see the organisation develop along lines which he himself would consider to be spiritual, he was not clear how he would know if this was happening. He struggled to articulate how he would know, saying 'it's such a difficult question. You just get a sense of it because of what people say and do ... mainly the core people, but also trustees .. those that are very involved'.

Asked if he had any intent to engage the spiritual dimension of others he felt that it depended what the definition of spirituality is. However both in the past and present he had always sought to establish a quality of relationship with people, commitment to ways of working and values that are noticeably different from 'what you get in ordinary organisations'; both in times of adversity but also day to day, to demonstrate his belief structure which has as a primary part his high regard for people – all without being explicit about what his belief system is. He felt that one significant indicator of achieving this is the capacity to make mistakes and be forgiven, which is 'not easy to put into a performance of culture'. He would see all this as part of the concept of Spiritual Intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000), although not necessarily agreeing with some of the current definitions of that term.

The role and impact of the leader

Bill said that 'it's absolutely essential' that the tone has to be and needs to be set from the top and 'it's also part of the leadership role [is] setting a culture of everybody taking responsibility for their own actions', so that functioning in the way that the organisation decides upon is the responsibility of all. His values include demonstrating positive concern for others and he was pleased to see that being reflected by others in the organisation. He felt that the result of leading in a highly principled and people focused manner was that staff responded with a level of
engagement and commitment which went far beyond the contractual 'there are extraordinarily high levels of commitment in the team' (B4). Overall, he felt that 'leadership .. can be a very powerful tool for creating the moral environment' (B2.10.11) in an organisation.

Bill volunteered that he had had feedback which made him aware that others saw him as an 'inclusive' leader, involving others from the organisation wherever appropriate, and the organisation having a culture which he expressed in 'words like inclusive, trusting, open, transparent' (B2.2.19) which he was pleased about. He also felt that he was continually called upon to make decisions which had a clear moral element – how much to pay someone, his responsibility as an employer but not just within the letter of the law, 'the degree to which you go the extra mile', discussing options which might ultimately 'not be in the your favour as an organisation', dealing with reputable individuals and organisations.

At 'key moments' such as appraisal, and performance review, he has taken opportunities to influence a 'less systemic, more open, more transparent appraisal process than the one that was being proposed by the employees' (B4) because he believes that this gives greater value for all parties. One of the continual problems for Bill is finding 'quieter, less formal times' to talk to staff about their progress. In addition, he seeks to have direct daily informal, non work-related contact with all staff, motivated by his wish to convey the fact that he values and is interested in them as people, first and foremost.

'With such high levels of commitment' among the team, there is an issue about overwork and resultant pressure, especially around major events, which 'is increasingly being talked about and is dealt with, with reasonably good humour'. Bill has concerns about this and is aware that he has to review and consider whether he is expecting too much of the people, and to balance that with the financial and other considerations of taking on more staff - 'there is a danger that I might be abusing my position of employer' (B4). He himself works long hours, however he does so very flexibly and others see and are encouraged to emulate this.

Whilst being 'very confident in most of the traditional sort of management resource areas' Bill felt generally quite reticent to reveal in work the more personal areas of conviction, like spirituality, which offer 'a window into your soul' and therefore, for him, required a high degree of trust before feeling he could raise them (B2.9).

Other issues
The first interview with Bill was done in his home whilst the second was at his London offices. When I asked him about spirituality in the second interview, he commented on how different it was to be talking about this issue 'at his desk' rather than in his home environment which latter he felt was 'more obviously spiritual, as in a spiritually personal environment' (B2.1.30).

When undertaking initiatives such as assessment for the Investors in People award, the Campaign consistently seeks to go beyond the statutory requirements and see how they could extend these processes for the benefit of the organisation and the people within it (B4).
Bill Lucas - Summary reflections

Bill's notion of spirituality comes across as diverse and diffuse. Whilst to some extent linked with religion and a belief in God, it seems to owe more to his values set and espoused way of dealing with others, together with those situations in life which touch some deeper part of him – nature, special places, music, for example. Further, having 'tried out' the word spirituality and found a less than positive response, he avoids direct use of it, which I interpreted as a distancing of himself from the word whilst still engaging with the principles as he interprets them.

When relating spirituality to the workplace, his emphasis was firmly on ethics, values, principled behaviour and in particular, valuing people. He saw these as 'linked to ... ultimately a spiritual view of life' but I had no sense that, for him, there was an over-arching motivation or guidance which gave him direction. He was clearly proud to be instrumental in establishing an organisation which is recognised by others as having a quality of relationship with people, commitment to ways of working and values that are 'noticeably different from what you get in ordinary organisations'.

Bill's perception of spirituality compares with other case study participants in as much as he defines it in terms of those things which he believes in, or which are of particular importance to him. Although I did not enquire directly, I did not get the impression that Bill had a strong focus on or commitment to personal spiritual practice or spiritual development as such. His awareness level of matters spiritual is considerably higher than most other participants, however, and in relating this to my dimensions of spirituality (Figure 4), there is some degree of linkage, at least, in all four dimensions. All of which would seem to place him in Degree 3 of spiritual awareness (see Figure 7).

Trying to understand how Bill fits as a spiritually motivated leader is not so clear. He certainly recognises the spiritual as important, but it is unclear in what ways he specifically seeks to make this explicit and/or put this into practice in his organisation. However, Bill clearly sought to lead his organisation in a highly principled and values-led way. Feedback from a consultant working within his organisation indicates that Bill is highly valued by his staff, seen as a committed and dedicated leader, hard working but flexible, very energetic, imaginative and resourceful, engendering loyalty and commitment in staff. Both from an external perception and from the success of his operation, Bill can be considered a 'successful' leader. He is absolutely clear that part of the leader's role is setting the tone in an organisation and that this has to come from the top. Additionally, he believes in encouraging others to take personal responsibility.

Ap 6.2 Brett Jordan

Background

Brett was brought up by agnostic parents but became a Christian in a Baptist church about the age of 17. He was and still is a 'continual questioner'. He describes himself as 'hyperactive' and a hard worker, formerly expecting others to work as his pace but
not any more. He sees himself as an 'optimistic realist'. He is much more interested in the creative design side of the business than what he describes as the 'business side of things' and would ultimately love to get into some form of teaching 'I love to teach; I love to think' but the pressures of business prevent him exploring that route at present 'I have to work and at the moment, the best way of earning at least enough money to survive and do the things I like doing is to be the director of a company' (BJ.1.28). Generally, he finds the work rate of himself and his co-director noticeably higher than others in the organisation.

Understanding of spirituality

Brett said 'the modern way of assuming that there is some foundation to everyone's spirituality, to me as a Christian, that would be common grace. The problem with these things is it just comes down to semantics. What's spirituality? To one person that's feeling good; to another it's a good rock concert' (BJ.1.12). Although his spirituality 'is probably quite personal' (BJ.1.24), in general spirituality and religion are inseparable for him, and he believes that 'Christian beliefs in general are the answer, and that others are not as good' (BJ.1.42). His understanding of spirituality includes: 'on the intellectual side, there's the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and he guides me in truth when I read the scriptures and helps me understand things' (BJ.1.23). Having said this, he is ardently opposed to the 'charismatic disease' of people believing they have messages from God, then when things don't work out, explaining this by a further message.

His understanding is firmly theistic and of 'God in the world but not of the world', part of everything and in particular, everything that's good. (BJ.1.39, 41). This might be experienced in different ways, including those 'times when God seems very close: at a sunrise; or something that your child's telling you; or even the touch of a friend.' (BJ.1.37). Although he believes that 'most bad things that happen are just causal, and usually caused by selfishness ... not by any sort of personified evil' (BJ.1.49), he nevertheless believes in the demonic.

He experiences both work-rate and economic pressures to a considerable degree, and has had significant personal crises, but even 'in the middle of it, I have hope where other people don't' (BJ.6.9).

His view is that money is important for most people and whilst 'a million pounds won't necessarily buy you happiness, it allows you to be miserable in extreme comfort'. Most people will 'explore their spiritual side' only when they have found that money doesn't bring happiness, or reached 'a point where you just can't go any lower', or when 'you've done everything you wanted to do, it's all happened and you're still sitting there thinking; still empty' (BJ.11.1-8). Consequently he believes 'for most people, spirituality is a hobby ... It's the thing you do either when there's nothing else to lose or when you've got the time' (BJ.11.14). He thinks this a great shame as engaging with their spirituality would potentially free people up from the need to see jobs and money as providing their security and therefore allow them to take more risks.

Spirituality in the workplace

Brett is publicly quite explicit that he is a Christian. He is careful not to use his position as a Director to proselytise, though he is always willing to speak about Christianity to whoever might want to.
He is of the view that 'most people seem to like spirituality when it helps them and hate it when it might stop them doing something' (BJ. 2.1). His experience with managing people has generally been that 'what most people's programming works on is the greatest amount of pleasure for the least amount of pain.' (BJ. 2.8). Although he describes himself as 'not cynical' he and his partner have always sought to treat people fairly, pay above the going rate and work long hours themselves. Despite this he has experienced people taking advantage wherever possible, including taking advantage of flexible working hours to the extent that they had to re-introduce controls. Also, he seeks to train staff well but because the technical skills they acquire are scarce, as soon as they can move for a larger salary then they do. Despite trying to create a good working environment, and treating people well, he finds little sense of loyalty in return: 'I don't think we've been successful at the moment in getting people to understand the vision thing, that you can make money and have a good time' (BJ. 5.38). However, in general, he has had positive responses from clients.

For him his spiritual beliefs translate into operating principles 'On a basic level, it means that I try to be honest. We don't over-invoice, we don't lie, we don't do all of those things'. He also said 'There is a difference between the way I work and the way lots of other people work. It means I try to be kind, listen, if somebody has a problem' (here he gave a specific example). Furthermore he had agreed at the outset with his non-Christian co-Director that there were certain ways of working or unethical practices which he would not engage in. Further, he made it clear that he was not fully 'master of his own destiny' that is, he might feel in the future that God was calling him to follow a particular route, to which he would have to respond (BJ. 4.7-26).

Overall, he tries to work to some overall operating principles — a friendly, family-style work environment, the leaders working hard and setting an example, a responsibility culture not a punishment culture, running open accounts so that everyone can see the financial situation. Despite this he finds that people do not necessarily respond in like manner and gave an example of an overheard conversation where some staff clearly believed that there was a second set of company books to hide additional payments to the Directors.

His ethical approach and general operating style as a Director (which includes where necessary 'cleaning the toilets and coming in [at the weekend] to put the shelves up') is shared with his co-Director, even though this person is not motivated by Christian or spiritual principles.

**Brett Jordan - Summary Reflections**

Spirituality for Brett seems inseparable from God, religion and specific beliefs (such as guidance by the Holy Spirit). He makes his beliefs known, whilst not imposing them on others, and is also guided strongly by them in his personal and work ethics. There was no indication that others in the organisation had specifically taken up his offer to share his views. He did not comment on why this might be so but from a personal point of view, whilst I enjoyed talking with him, I was aware that his expression of his beliefs was very firm, clear and specific, not inviting of debate and dialogue. He went further than other leaders I have spoken to who have a strong spiritual motivation and belief in saying that he would have to follow what God
wanted of him, which might include following a completely different path, if that seemed to be the way he was guided.

Despite his assertions to the contrary, he appeared to be pessimistic about human nature in general, particularly the propensity for staff to want maximum return for minimum effort and the unwillingness of staff to respond in kind to being trusted. Some of this attitude was the direct result of unfortunate experiences perhaps exacerbated by the prolonged difficult economic situation which had affected his business for some years. My sense was that Brett likes to have a high degree of control over what goes on in the business.

Within his small organisation, his 'applied spirituality' led him to run the business ethically for clients and staff, and to consider carefully equitable service conditions for staff. However, there was no indication that his partner (whom he reported as having no Christian or spiritual convictions) would have wanted to do otherwise.
Appendix 7: Original Research Questions

These were the original research questions formulated prior to the Pilot Study. They were later modified as presented in section 1.3.

How do people understand spirituality?

How might it be defined? How is it viewed by people across a broad spectrum, including those with a clearly defined faith system, Deo-centric (Christian, Jew, Muslim) or otherwise (Wicca, Druid) or those with none (Atheist, Humanist)?

What are the elements of spirituality? Is there a central set of ideas or concepts which transcend and/or are not in conflict with individual belief systems?

What might be a working definition and how does this accord with the views of those individuals being researched?

Is there evidence for spirituality as an integral component of human beings?

It is a basic concept and belief of ours that human beings have a spiritual component as part of our makeup. To what extent might it be possible to demonstrate or even support this view?

Are there elements of spirituality that might apply universally?

Can spirituality be developed?

We would further hold that as an integral component of each person (along with the physical, mental and emotional parts), in order to achieve balance in our overall development, this aspect of ourselves also needs to be developed. What measure of balance is desirable and why; what might be the effects of significant imbalance and how might this be observed or experienced?

Is it possible to develop spirituality and what might this mean? Does it depend on belief systems? Can it be done together with others, in a group setting? Perhaps like counselling, the individual impact depends on the individual response but can group settings be effective? How might it be possible to monitor or evaluate development?

What might the impact of attempting to develop spirituality be on the individual and on the group? What would be the wider impact upon those who chose to opt in and those who chose to opt out? Are there negative as well as positive consequences?

What is the relevance of Spirituality in an Organisational context?

If spirituality is an integral component of each of us, then we inevitably bring this into every setting, including organisational settings. Why is it that in a work or organisational environment, it seems difficult for many to refer to or acknowledge spirituality, let alone address it directly? How does it affect what we do and how we feel?
The above represent what we saw as some key considerations for research, as well as being areas of considerable personal interest. They are self evidently not fully comprehensive and each can readily be broken down further to yield many more questions.
Appendix 8: Detailed Process of the Pilot Study

This appendix details the process of the pilot study from selection of the group through to the content and outcomes of the meetings. The results and outcomes of this study are presented in Chapter 3.

Composition and selection of the pilot study group

Having decided that a group size of 8 (including ourselves) would be small enough for intimacy but large enough to allow for less than 100% attendance, we sought to select a group of people from among acquaintances, friends and professional colleagues. Selection was primarily on the criteria of potential interest in the subject area, a subjective assessment of personal development, geographic accessibility and, to a lesser extent, the potential for working harmoniously and contributing readily within such a group situation. Although our ultimate aim was to research within an organisational setting, we decided to proceed with the selection against these criteria on the basis that most of those under consideration either worked within organisational settings or had a background of the same, allowing them to comment and reflect from a basis of personal experience.

Of the criteria we were considering, the most difficult to define and assess was personal development (see footnote 35). In considering possible candidates for our pilot study, we made a very subjective assessment of 'sufficient' personal development: high in areas for consideration was emotional development and in particular, at least adequate interpersonal skills. Thus we were looking for people who had learned to 'be' with others, co-operatively; good listeners as well as willing to speak; sensitive to the feelings and needs of others; sufficiently robust to take part in debate without inappropriate personal reactions. We also looked for indications of interest in the subject and the ability to bring critical thinking to bear.

In the area of spiritual development we established no criteria. We felt that if someone agreed to take part, it would probably be an indication of more than just intellectual interest and would say something about their potential spiritual development or their interest in exploring it.

Despite having no definitively agreed definition of terms, we eliminated some people from consideration based on these criteria. We further eliminated some people who seemed to be very strongly and exclusively committed to a particular set of religious beliefs since we felt that they were less likely to be open minded in their participation. From an initial list of around a dozen we produced a short-list of eight and these we approached on the basis of asking them to attend 8 meetings, spaced over 3 months with each meeting lasting approximately 1 1/4 hours. There was no specific attempt to balance gender representation, though we hoped for reasonable representation of both. Of the eight, six agreed to proceed, along with ourselves.

This final group represents a variant of a purposive sample where ‘the researcher hand-picks subjects on the basis of traits to give what is felt or believed to be a representative sample’ (Black, 1993). Clearly here the sample is not ‘representative’ but
selected with an expectation of interest and contribution, more like quota and dimension sampling where 'the researcher non-randomly selects subjects from identified strata' and then takes into account more than one variable (Black, 1993: 49-50). Being 'hand selected', we were aware that we would have to consider carefully any outcomes since they may or may not be applicable to other self-selecting groups later in the research. We felt, however, that the results would be very valuable in informing and developing our own thinking around the research topic and that we would gain invaluable experience of co-operative enquiry in action.

In the event, the group comprised 4 men and 4 women. Three of the men were self employed: one was a physiotherapist and acupuncturist, the other two worked as consultants in organisational and personal/professional development. The fourth male was a Director within a university, who specialises in an area of adult learning. Two of the women were self employed, working in personal & professional development in organisations, and one of these was a Personnel Director until shortly before this study. The other two were, respectively, a Manager in health care organising care for the elderly, and a Personnel Director in a partnership business. The age profile extended from early forties to early fifties - a spread which may have some significance, considering the comments in Chapter 2 about human and personal development.

The range of religious experience extended from strong religious upbringing and belief, maintained into adulthood and to the present day, through a similar start but with rejection of organised religion at different stages in life, to a relatively non-religious upbringing.

One member of the group ceased attending after suffering a major heart attack between the first and second session.

**Group structure, process and session 1 content**

'You can't just set up a co-operative enquiry group, because co-operative processes have to be negotiated and re-learned by every group in every new instance. You may be able to establish a group in the spirit of collaboration ... but there is nothing mechanical or automatic about whether this intent can be realised.'

(Reason 1998:19)

Although asserting at the outset that this was not going to be a Focus Group, there was some degree to which we did wish to elicit and explore the views of those taking part, whilst also being participants ourselves. As experienced facilitators we were also aware that some process of group forming (Tuckman, 1965) would be essential to help the group gel, become focused and overcome defensiveness (Heron, 1989, Chapter 2). This would necessarily be initiated by us, although we would be explicit about not in any way promoting ourselves as experts in spirituality or spiritual development. We recognised that there may be issues of power, control, and other group functioning issues to contend with, especially in a group with a large number of professionally qualified facilitators, coaches and consultants. We were also aware that how the group progressed after the first meeting needed to be a matter of negotiation and agreement by us all, equally.
The overall process we were planning follows that of research cycling (Reason, 1988) where the group (or indeed individuals) go round a cycle of research reflection and action. In order to capture reflection following the meetings, we created a short review sheet (3 questions) which we asked attendees to complete and return to us. The intention was for us to use them as guidance when designing a wider study but also to help attendees individually (and us) track their journey during the life of the Study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did this session affect you? Immediately and over time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any thoughts or reflections on your own spiritual development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you find yourself reluctant to discuss in the group?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 37 - Pilot study session reflection questions**

For the first meeting on 19th May 1997, we developed an agenda (Figure 38) where we planned to negotiate and agree ground-rules before proceeding and look at future activities before ending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>07.45 Welcome - intro by us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>starting premise - 4 dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helpful to develop together; organisation is a relevant context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hope Pilot has own energy; we find a way together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>08.00 Name; what disposed you to agree to take part in this pilot; what might you hope to get for yourself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.15 trios - what the word spirituality conjures up for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.25 Debrief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.45 Open forum - 15mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why might spirituality be relevant in the workplace context?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>09.00 Pairs, 8 mins each way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you do currently, or have done, to develop your spiritual side?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 9.15 Debrief - hear from each person |

| 9.30 Think about what we might do together that could move us forward in collectively developing our spirituality (open with this next time) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree future dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce feedback form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 38 - Pilot study group - Agenda for meeting 1**

In the event, we started slightly late with 6 of the 8 participants present (the other 2 had advised us that they could not attend). The agenda proved hopelessly unrealistic
and we got only as far as looking at the word spirituality. The positive energy and enthusiasm for the group was tangible although there was also some caution about what it might mean that people would have to, or be asked to, do. The concept of a peer group was welcomed, though I still had a sense of people looking to us for leadership ("Well, it is your research, after all"), whilst hoping that this would change after the first session or two. There was a ‘roundup’ at the end of the session where each person was invited to summarise their position and feelings - I did not record the responses - an omission which, though I now regret, highlighted for me how difficult it is to be a fully participating member whilst at the same time (visibly) taking notes during a session.

The thoughts on what words spirituality conjured up were discussed and recorded in two groups and are reproduced in Figure 39 and Figure 40

**Figure 39 – Pilot group A: spirituality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-judgement</td>
<td>precious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quiet - peace</td>
<td>wholeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>totally unselfish giving of yourself</td>
<td>connected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy</td>
<td>compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs</td>
<td>harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moving</td>
<td>mystical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being</td>
<td>Divine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goodness</td>
<td>misunderstood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scary</td>
<td>sacred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>intangible yet concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult awkward</td>
<td>vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common purpose</td>
<td>controversial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutual (not between)</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deep within</td>
<td>a downside - New Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral - to be connected to as you choose to</td>
<td>unselfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscience, values, inner guidance</td>
<td>high order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

form - prayer, singing, poetry, congregation, reflecting, meditating, play/ dance
Figure 40 – Pilot group B: spirituality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>energy; + - or neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is it a need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose - mystical being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>link to Divine, source, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>links to outside myself but also part of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viz Victor Frankel : ability to choose our responses - ¿ comes from the spiritual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pan fraternal: connectedness; all life including non-human?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manifestation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healing - not healing that implies you were sick- well-being instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wholeness - Jung's individuation is more inclusiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality :goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down sides*: could be abused ; negative energies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from within: what happens when you meet someone spiritual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reaction? - is it to do with belief systems?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was some discussion of these words but no conclusion nor composite definition sought or arrived at. My own reaction was one of surprise at the range of responses and some sense of disturbance at how difficult I felt it would be to get even a reasonably comprehensive definition of spirituality. Equally, thinking about activities which would be helpful for the group as a whole to use to develop spirituality would clearly be problematic given the wide range of understanding or concept of the word.

Subsequent sessions

The intention was for the group to meet subsequently on a further seven occasions. As described in Chapter 3, following the experience of this Pilot I took a decision not to pursue this particular style of research and have therefore decided to document only a brief summary of the sessions, a summary of overall outcomes and an analysis of my concluding responses to the Pilot. However, as will become clear, the pilot study was a critically important step in the overall research, highlighting some of the issues which would prevail throughout (for example, the question of defining spirituality and what is spiritual), refining my views on spirituality and giving me clarity about possible methodologies.

Only two people turned up for the second meeting (Session 2) apart from us: they were the two who had not been able to make the first meeting. This felt very dispiriting especially as most did not ring to say they could not come. We had a useful session, however, going over the first meeting and the output with them and seeking
their reactions and input. One of the two subsequently provided four pages of hugely thoughtful reflections on what we had discussed and his reactions to it. It subsequently transpired that one participant had had a heart attack and although expected to make a good recovery, would not be available for any further sessions.

In session 3, six people attended and in two groups of 3 we discussed what one might do to develop spirituality. In practice, one of the groups got stuck, with at least one participant wanting to know why we might want to do something to develop spirituality jointly and what we would get out of it. There was generally some resistance to exploring what we might do, let alone committing to do it. My partner was clearly keen to ‘get on and do something’ - an approach entirely consistent with her psychological type preferences (see Appendix 1 - MBTI) but not one that most others were keen or ready to adopt. Ideas that emerged around spiritual development were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual development has something to do with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trust/trustworthiness - which makes connection easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>permission to be vulnerable and awareness that in vulnerability,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We seem to have an emotional Bank Account (viz Covey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENERGY is associated with spiritual level contact, especially ‘breaking through’ with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My behaviour matters - extending myself to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting rid of the baggage that stops me extending myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- getting rid of the fears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- deciding to do ‘it’ differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- just do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems to be an interconnected emotional/spiritual boundary. A sense of them being in some way connected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to get people to leave their own agenda behind when making spiritual connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 41 – Ideas related to spiritual development**

Thoughts that emerged while looking at suggestions for ‘doing something’ which might be spiritually developmental were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>share the feeling</th>
<th>beauty - vista</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>leave behind own agenda</td>
<td>connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>song</td>
<td>common experience - that's dear and precious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silence</td>
<td>moment of inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just caring</td>
<td>not emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loving</td>
<td>be sufficiently vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint sense of purpose</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close dependable relationships</td>
<td>co-listening for values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unpick - who we are; what are links; reveal selves to each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>why would we do this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do we all have to be involved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has to be real - at least for a majority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary between emotional and spiritual - confusing different kinds of experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Theraping’ - clearing the personal debris - do you have to go through one to get to the other (that is, through emotional to get to the spiritual)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 42 – Thoughts about spiritual development**
There was much learning for us in this third pilot group session. We had wished for the group to be self-determining from this session on. In retrospect this was probably naïve and the group, although fully participative, was not in practice sharing responsibility for leadership or direction. Although raising this for discussion in the group, we did not stay with it long enough to reach any resolution or change the status quo significantly - leaving us feeling the need to shape and offer direction to the group. The resistance to action rather than discussion, even from a group of selected participants, raised many questions especially for more diverse groups in the future. However it is entirely in keeping with general resistance to change and ‘doing things differently’ experienced in organisational change processes by us and others.

There were five people at session 4. Both researchers were feeling that group members were less committed to attending than we thought, or possibly not sufficiently thoughtful in not advising us that they were unable to attend. We felt this way particularly as we had discussed interconnection within the group and had got a positive response. We did not raise this directly in the group at this point. Most people had good reasons for not coming – they just didn’t all say so beforehand, though in one case a person consistently missed sessions she had confirmed as OK and developed a pattern of not calling before or after.

At this session, a participant not present at the previous meeting voiced reluctance to ‘do something’, though he ‘felt he ought to, really’. The person previously reluctant to try things out - a quiet but strong personality - became ‘re-concerned’. After quite some further discussion, both became less reluctant and agreed to look at options, though still with reservations. We brainstormed ‘things we could do’: an easy and enjoyable process with high energy from all.

| storytelling                          | some kind of ritual                  |
| physical activity eg circle dance     | eating together                      |
| creating something together          | drinking wine                        |
| sharing expertise/interests by offering a session to the group | group massage |
| exciting stories, people news, reflecting on world events | going away together |
| listening to music together          | sharing list of experiences          |
| running workshops for ourselves       | camping                              |
| experiencing drama together          | listing places - exploring           |
| campfire on the beach                | building something                   |
| Alan Heeks type of weekend           | meditate                             |
| gardening - earth - nurturing        | yoga together                        |
| life/death experiences/views         | relaxation tape                      |
| make music/sing together             | deep relaxation                      |
| visualizing                          | reflexology                          |
| sacred space                         | walk                                 |
| touching each other                  |                                     |
| sharing vulnerabilities              |                                     |

Figure 43 – Possible activities for spiritual development

We agreed that at the next session we might listen to some music brought by participants and then comment on it as a way of being more closely connected.
However, some activity giving a ‘connection with nature’ was agreed as being preferable if it wasn’t raining - perhaps a walk.

In Chapter 3, I refer to a workshop run for trainee counsellors in the workplace at the University of Bristol. During this workshop, people spent some time talking about their own spiritual experience - something which was not done during the pilot study. Participants then summarised the ‘quality’ of their experiences, rather than the content. It is interesting to compare these (Figure 44) with the suggestions made for spiritual experience and growth by the pilot group (Figure 43). Not surprisingly, there is a slightly theoretical cast to the latter while the former - especially as they were being related by the participants - were profound, moving, very real and life affecting, sometimes life changing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical experience</th>
<th>Warmth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- visual images</td>
<td>- awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different experiences</td>
<td>- scary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unexpected (washed in light)</td>
<td>- felt commissioned (to do something)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(free inside)</td>
<td>Overpowered/overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lost awareness of time)</td>
<td>- something outside of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- outside to inside</td>
<td>- detached from the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- frightening</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- life changing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- peaceful, warmth</td>
<td>&quot;Lesson&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- thin veil: life = death connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 44 – Nature of spiritual experiences

Prior to session 5, my partner proposed a process for the group to ensure good reconnection, since all seven participants had committed to attend. We would sit in a circle and raise the question "What else would you like to know about the person on your left?" - getting each participant to ask their neighbour one question to obtain more information. Five minutes after the start time, no-one had arrived which caused great anxiety and disappointment to us both, plus some annoyance in my case. In the event, four of the five others turned up within 20 minutes (total six people). No-one had brought music and most people thought we had agreed to walk or at least do something connected to nature, so we decided to sit outside since the evening was warm and still.

We started as planned, although we did not go round the group in sequence, as some people wanted more thinking time. The questions each person asked were all profound and thoughtful. Not only that but it seemed that just the right question was asked to make the person to whom it was addressed think carefully and touch a personal chord with them. Each responded carefully, thoughtfully and deeply, for as long as they wished. The list of questions asked was:
Three things that excite and fire you.
Two things you are proud of about yourself.
What is something about yourself that others here don’t know?
Are you in the work position you planned for yourself when you were young?
What makes you angry?
What new experience/being/doing would you like to have before you die?

There was a sense of timelessness, strong interpersonal connection and delight in being ‘out in nature’ - especially as the dusk grew and the stars became visible - that was felt by all. The talking continued with spontaneous questions being asked and answered, but also with some periods of peaceful silence. My partner finished with a ‘closing round’ – a normal device in professional facilitation processes (which again raises serious questions about the peer nature of her/our role in the group) where each person mentioned what had touched them most during the evening. Everyone felt that this was the ‘best session so far’, had ‘got a lot’ from it and felt very connected to each other person in the group.

Session 6 was poorly attended (just 4 people) – a deep disappointment after the common feeling of ‘success’ and pleasure of Session 5. One person had brought music (as suggested previously) and was keen to play it and talk about it. My partner was feeling despondent about the ‘progress’ of the group and in particular about my own increasing detachment from any organising aspect of it. I was reserved and somewhat detached, feeling increasingly uncomfortable about the role I felt I may be cast in, or have assumed – which I did discuss in the group. In fact, this was to some extent the most self-directed session of the group, as we had no real agenda and discussed the previous session as well as other related topics.

Few people had planned to make Session 7 and in the event, no-one came. We effectively terminated the pilot study at this stage.

The process of completing forms after each session did not work particularly well and apart from those completed by my partner and I, few were returned and some people never returned any. We were disappointed by this but felt that we did not want to ‘police’ the process which would have further emphasised our role as being one of leadership.

The outcomes and consequences of this study for this research are presented in Chapter 3.
Appendix 9 : The Phenomenological Data Analysis Process

This appendix illustrates by an example the detail of the process of phenomenological reduction. The overall process and sources of reference are described in Chapter 4, section 4.6. In summary the steps are:

1. Refrain from judgement or preconceptions (*epoché* or *bracketing*)
2. Analyse the data, giving equal weight to each significant phrase
3. Cluster and reduce to extract the textural meanings (*horizonalising*)
4. Use *imaginative variation* to considering as many meanings as possible, employing a variety of techniques but using most particularly the intuition of the researcher
5. Produce the final structural synthesis of the phenomenon.

The detail of how the interview data for Laura (the Principal and Chief Executive in the case study) were processed is given in sections 5.7 & 5.8. The final outcomes of the phenomenological analysis are presented in Chapter 6, section 6.3.

In presenting the final phenomenological analysis in section 6.3, the text is grouped under four main headings or themes: background and perspective on religion; understanding of spirituality; spiritual ‘peak experience’ and its impact; spirituality and future direction. An overall reflection on the phenomenological picture is then presented in section 6.4. For the purpose of illustration here, I have taken the first of these themes – background and perspective on religion – as an example to demonstrate the process.

**Data from Original Interview Transcripts**

Data from the original interview transcripts relevant to this theme were highlighted using hard-copy print out. The relevant statements from the original interview transcripts are reproduced below.

*Numbering is: interview number - transcript page, then each line is numbered within the page, so 1-2 is interview no. 1, transcript page 2. The notation ‘...’ does not indicate missing speech but a change of direction, tack or topic whilst in the flow of conversation.*

1-2

7 So I channelled all my efforts there into interfaith work and the College being
8 used as an interfaith centre and sharing that group and having a meditation or a
9 quiet room and different ways

34 I'm very overt, I love religions, I just love 'em; I study them, explore them.
35 There isn't a religion I have tried or met people and I'm very open about it
36 because I can't hide it because it's a genuine passion so they've got used to
37 that now. I mean, I don't push it, I just talk about it.
14 I stay in organisations because I like belonging to a community.

6 [I just] join in with the Hare Krishna's and go down the road, I don't particularly like the Hare Krishna's but .. it's the singing, it's the music

25 That is interesting. My religious affiliation, I was actually brought up a Christian, a Methodist and then went to Buddhism started to explore .. and for 11 years was a Therevaden Buddhist and through meditation and .. I love this ritual, “give me more”. But after this very strong experience, I actually converted to Catholicism. I just felt very totally drawn

38 But because I've married, remarried and divorced I'm barred from the sacraments and all that

9 and I know it and that's what I've been telling my priest, but it still really hurts; it's ‘cos you're saying “I'm unworthy” really. So what seems to happen to me .. so, really, I've gone, I've taken the sacrament but I felt a bit rootless .. but what’s happened since I've come to [town-name], it's funny I was just talking it through with my director, the Anglican church is just drawing me in.

18 I've not gone looking for it. I've had invitations, met people; and churches .. Holy Trinity in [town-name] is gorgeous. As soon as I walked in I felt at home; I loved the people. because I've always been anti parish life and very much monastic life .. and I'm discussing it with my Spiritual Director because he's actually an Anglican priest. I'm one of those people that need my regular dose of the sacraments, I really do.

1 And that's what I like about it, you see. It is actually because in a sense because I find it hard .. because I used to chair an interfaith group and they'd go round and .. clearly we're Christian or Ba'hai and it comes to me and I say ‘But I'm all of them (laughs). I don't know what I'm supposed to say, I can't help it but I am. Because I've been a practising Buddhist for 11 years, I mean, I've gone on Sufi retreats; I love Bali ‘cos they're just going to the temples all the time and I just go off with them (laughs); I've been in the mosque, and I just love the spiritual spaces and places and I just feel an immediate affinity, and the
9 mosques are the hardest for me (too quiet to hear). I love the Greek Orthodox church with the candles and icons; I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and went to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was just, like, ‘leave me here for ever!’ ‘cos they didn’t even know it was a Greek orthodox shrine of the gorgeous kind, and I love ‘em. I joined a group of free church, who think the Pope is the anti-Christ; I mean I didn’t know; I just rang up and asked to join their pilgrimage.

And they were saying “idolatrer, idolatrer, (sic) he’s a heathen” and I’m going “Go away!”. I just loved it, I just .. ‘Oh this is heaven for me’, the sort of Greek Orthodox gold, gaudy, in Jerusalem. So I just love ‘em all, you see.

Now some people hate that about me, I have to say, some people hate that about me. They say “you’re not this you’re not that”. I thought ‘no’ .. I do .. I feel at home, that’s why I’m doing interfaith work because I’m at home in interfaith work. But I do need a focal point because I’m too boundary-less if I’m not careful and the Catholic Church gave me that.

It’s the Catholic Church and not the Anglican church which attracts me because I know much more about the Anglican church, and I do, but it’s just what you’re saying: I still think the mystical body of Christ and the manifestation. It’s what drew me to it but .. and I would have stayed with it very happily .. but I mean I sat in St Peter’s when I was in Rome and watched this procession of the Pope and Cardinals, and they were all about 90 – it was like something off Spitting Image. This is wicked! And they all progressed down .. doddering old men ..

Interviewer: Right

and it wasn’t remotely a mystical moment for me. I just sat there and thought ‘No wonder the church is dire in how it functions’

13 You know, we are good friends; it was a mutual .. because I was married very young. We grew apart; we are still good friends; I’m not annulling it, because it would be wrong.

I know, and I love my priest; and I was very respectful to him and took the sacrament until the day when I got married, and I said “I won’t come after that because it will put you in a position that’s intolerable for you.

You’re wrong, in my view and I don’t like what you’re telling me but I respect you”, because he was a very good priest to me. And then at [a monastery] the monks were really helpful. And I spent a weekend with Ester de Waal, I like her .. cos I love .. I haven’t become one yet but I want to become a Benedictine oblate as well.

Well I love them and I’m looking for a community, because there’s a beautiful
Benedictine community of Benedictine Monks in [Town-name] but they don’t take female oblates. I went down there but the monks weren’t there; there was another chap there and we had a chat but they don’t take female oblates, and he says ‘Oh you could talk to them’ but I said ‘No, I don’t want to go to a community that isn’t ..’, I seem to spend my life going to communities that won’t really take me. I said ‘No, I’m not doing that any more’

17 I’ve always, always had a sense of what I call God; other people may call it universal spirit or energy. I’m quite a religious person as well so I think and feel in religious terms. So the notion of a God as a higher power, it fits; it didn’t at one time .. it fits quite comfortably with me. I’ve always had a sense of God and wanted to be a good person, does that sound pious or awful and that was actually quite important to me and attempted to articulate my values, my ethics, because to me that was part of life, you just did. And my parents joke and say ‘she’s like that since she was born, always asking why, what was the meaning’. So its always been a part of me and in a sense, since I’ve had my peak experience I’ve been more focused on how I bring that into my everyday life but also into my work life. So I’ve always had a spiritual pact or spiritual quest if you like, a search for meaning and understanding and ... but particularly, that’s always been there for example I’ve got friends who have known me for 20 years who after this mystical experience would say ‘well what’s different’ which is quite interesting feedback but you see you’ve always tried to work like that what’s different now, it was an experience of a different reality or another facet of reality and it was really powerful and the way that informed me, it’s about working to that which is actually about articulating how we live and how we behave in the context of that. Which is about, if you like, living a good life in good company from a certain set of values and ethics and working consciously with others who will also want to do that

but the underlying impetus was the same when I look back, and I was always having debates, again with religious people then I

married into a religious family so it was quite interesting to talk to them. So I was always engaged in some shape or form around religious enquiry, whatever perspective I was coming from at that time.

thinking about it, it’s almost as real now and it was then and nothing can take that away, nothing. And then I want into this small chapel and that’s really when I made a full return to Christianity because I got this real strong knowing that it doesn’t matter what religious path, or what religious route, they are all the same; it take us to the same, all the prophets and the religious traditions, all the spiritual paths, all the tools and techniques, whether it be meditation or icons or rosaries or whatever, are all about getting to that experience of wholeness and oneness and pure love and beauty and .. and it was both inside and outside for me, there was no sense of, there was definitely..
2-5
24 .. and then actually I turned to Catholicism and converted to
25 Catholicism as well. So going to the sacrament and receiving the sacrament
26 became crucial but also spending time just alone, needed to be alone a lot.

2-11
43 I love being with monastics because I think in many ways they express a very
44 strong spirituality that's also in a religious context .. I’ve gone home .. I think
45 they encompass that, its about acceptance, there’s also a drive there as well.

3-12
36 So on a .. and to me it doesn’t
37 matter, does it? To me there isn’t any difference, if you like. So on a ..and to
38 me it’s the same with the religious traditions ... I couldn’t cope with the Christian
39 view that said ‘Well if you’re a good Christian you’re saved.’ and I’d say ‘Well,
40 what if you’re a good Buddhist’ ’cause I know these Buddhist monks who are
41 like .. to me they’re saints. I know .. I know he’s a saint, this Sikh guy in
42 America, to me he’s a saint. And I think .. to me it’s fundamentally the same
43 thing. Does it matter if they’re a Buddhist or a Christian and Christians think
44 ‘No it’s better if you’re a Christian’. And I just can’t buy that ’cause to me it’s
45 how you manifest. So, I think at the end of the day .. an’ I’m sure Jesus’s answer
46 would have been ‘It doesn’t matter what religion you are or it doesn’t matter
47 how you define yourself as long as you are ‘a good person’ and you lived your
48 life in a way that’s manifesting love’. And loving your neighbour and the
49 ‘love God’ bit as well. So I think for someone on the receiving end it doesn’t
50 matter that much particularly in the work experience.
Production of data analysis file #1

Phenomenologically, each statement in the raw data is deemed to have equal value and is summarised and grouped without making any suppositions, explanations or evaluation. This latter part of the process is known as epoché or bracketing.

This process is illustrated below for the sub-theme which eventually becomes section 6.3.1 Background and perspective on Religion. This data is held as a computer file as Data Analysis File #1. The reference numbers from the original (raw) data are retained.

Numbering system is: ‘interview number’/’page number’/’line number on page’.

Religion(s):

1.2.34 ‘I just love them’ - to study, explore, try out - ‘there isn’t a religion I haven’t tried, or met people’; she is very passionate and open about this interest - ‘I can’t hide it’;
1.2.7 channelled efforts into interfaith work with the previous College as a centre
1.10.6 attracted, for example to the Hare Krishna’s because of the singing and the music
1.10.25 brought up as a Methodist; then rejected religion; went to Buddhism - 11 years a Theravadin Buddhist; converted to Roman Catholicism; 2/5 ‘receiving the sacrament became crucial but also spending time just alone’
1.12.21 Roman Catholicism gave her needed boundaries;
1.12.30 feels RC Church is ‘the original manifestation’;
1.12.42 found the experience of St Peter’s, Rome not ‘remotely a mystical moment’ when the aged cardinals processed in
2.4.18 (following mystical experience) made a full return to Christianity, believing that the actual path and the process doesn’t matter as they all lead to the same end;
1.10.38 now barred from the sacraments because of personal situation(second marriage);
2.2.50 married into a religious family
1.13.19 would not go through the process to annul her first marriage as she feels it would be wrong; ‘I took the sacrament until the day I got [re]married’;
1.13.38 didn’t after that because she felt it was disrespectful to her priest, whom she valued
1.11.13 is currently drawn to the Anglican Church; feels this has happened rather than she has sought it; is discussing with her Spiritual Director;
1.11.22 ‘I need my regular dose of the sacraments’

2.2.18 ‘I’m quite a religious person .. so I think and feel in religious terms so that the notion of God as a higher power [fits]’
2.3.2 ‘always engaged in ... religious enquiry’
2.2.20 always had a sense of God and wanted to be a good person
2.2.22 It was actually quite important to me and attempted to articulate my values, my ethics, because to me that was part of life, you just did.
2.2.23 parents joke(d) and say 24 ‘she’s like that since she was born, always asking why, what was the meaning’. So its always been a part of me
2.2.27 So I've always had a spiritual pact or spiritual quest if you like, a search for meaning and understanding.

2.2.25 since I've had my peak experience I've been more focused on how I bring that into my everyday life but also into my work life.

1.12.2 chaired an interfaith group; unable to be specific about what religion or denomination she is ‘but I’m all of them ... I can’t help it but I am’
1.12.20 ‘I’m at home in interfaith work’
3.12.38 is not happy with religious traditions which claim to be the ‘one way’

1.12.9 felt ‘in heaven’ in Greek orthodox churches
2.3.45 ‘I love icons ... and incense and candles .. have quite a profound effect on me’
1.10.7 attracted, for example to the Hare Krishna’s because of the singing and the music
1.10.31 ‘I love [this] ritual’
1.12.6 been on Sufi retreats; ‘I love it in Bali ... just going to the temples all the time’; been in mosques; ‘I just love the spiritual spaces and places’; been on pilgrimages to the Holy Land;
1.13.44 ‘I want to become a Benedictine oblate’;
1.14.4 [being a Benedictine oblate (lay associate)] will satisfy her need for community; went on a weekend on Benedictine spirituality with Esther de Waal
2.2.8 ‘periods in my life when all I’ve wanted to do is go and live in a monastery or convent’
1.11.6, 1.13.42 took spiritual direction from a community of monks - helped in a time of crisis;
2.11.43 ‘I love being with monastics because .. they express a very strong spirituality that’s also in a religious context ..’
1.12.21 ‘I need a focal point because I become too boundary-less if I’m not careful’
1.14.4 ‘I’m looking for a community (eg Benedictines); doesn't want to go to a community which might not take her: “I seem to spend my life going to communities that won't really take me’
1.4.14 stays in organisations because she likes belonging to a community
3.12 To me, there isn’t any difference. .. and to me it’s the same with the religious traditions .. I couldn’t cope with the Christian view that said ‘Well, if you’re a good Christian you’re saved’ and I’d say ‘Well, what if you’re a good Buddhist’ 'cause I know these Buddhist monks who are .. to me they’re saints. I know he’s a saint, this Sikh guy in America, to me he’s a saint. And I think .. to me it's fundamentally the same thing. Does it matter if they’re a Buddhist or a Christian and Christians think ‘No it’s better if you’re a Christian’. And I just can't buy that ‘cause to me it's how you manifest. .. an’ I'm sure Jesus's answer would have been ‘It doesn't matter what religion you are or it doesn't matter how you define yourself as long as you are a good person’ and you lived your life in a way that’s manifesting love’ . And, loving your neighbour and the ‘love God’ bit as well.

Horizontalising the data — file #2

Here the data is thematised and partly clustered to become file #2. It is subject to more reduction and elimination than in file #1, though some duplication is left where
it contributes different aspects of the theme to different clusters. Interview/page number references are still maintained to enable backward reference to the original data. In the original files, 'Approach to religion(s)' was theme 3 (from an arbitrary allocation of theme numbers). Within this theme, a number of sub themes, 3.1, 3.2 etc are developed and data clustered as part of this step.

3. Approach to Religion(s):

3.1 Religion generally
2.2.18 'I'm quite a religious person.. so I think and feel in religious terms so that the notion of God as a higher power [fits']
2.3.2 ‘always engaged in ... religious enquiry’ 2.2.27 So I’ve always had a spiritual pact or spiritual quest if you like, a search for meaning and understanding
2.2.20 always had a sense of God and wanted to be a good person
2.2.22 It was actually quite important to me and attempted to articulate my values, my ethics, because to me that was part of life, you just did.
Had always been like this - 2.2.23 parents joke(d) and say 24 ‘she’s like that since she was born, always asking why, what was the meaning’. So its always been a part of me

1.2 ‘I just love them’ - to study, explore, try out - ‘there isn’t a religion I haven’t tried, or met people’; is very passionate and open about this interest - ‘I can’t hide it’;
1.10 attracted, for example to the Hare Krishna’s because of the singing and the music
1.12 felt ‘in heaven’ in Greek Orthodox churches
2.3 ‘I love icons ... and incense and candles .. have quite a profound effect on me’
1.10 ‘I love [this] ritual’
2.2 ‘I'm quite a religious person .. so I think and feel in religious terms so that the notion of God as a higher power [fits]’
1.10 brought up as a Methodist; then rejected religion; went to Buddhism - 11 years a Thervadhen Buddhist; converted to Roman Catholicism; 2/5 ‘receiving the sacrament became crucial but also spending time just alone’
1.12 Roman Catholicism gave her needed boundaries; feels RC Church is ‘the original manifestation’; found the experience of St Peter’s, Rome not ‘remotely a mystical moment’ when the aged cardinals processed in
2.4 (following mystical experience) made a full return to Christianity, believing that the actual path and the process doesn’t matter as they all lead to the same end; been very involved with interfaith work since it

3.2 Religion and personal situation
1.10 now barred from the sacraments because of personal situation(second marriage);
2.2 married into a religious family
1.13 would not go through the process to annul her first marriage as she feels it would be wrong;
1.13 'I took the sacrament until the day I got [re]married'; didn’t after that because she felt it was disrespectful to her priest, whom she valued
1.11 is currently drawn to the Anglican Church; feels this has happened rather than she has sought it; is discussing with her Spiritual Director; ‘I need my regular dose of the sacraments’
3.3 Religion in practice

2.3 ‘always engaged in ... religious enquiry’
1.12 chaired an interfaith group; unable to be specific about what religion or denomination she is ‘but I’m all of them ... I can’t help it but I am’
1.2 channelled efforts into interfaith work with the previous College as a centre
1.12 ‘I’m at home in interfaith work’
1.12 been on Sufi retreats; ‘I love it in Bali ... just going to the temples all the time’; been in mosques; ‘I just love the spiritual spaces and places’; been on pilgrimages to the Holy Land;
1.13 ‘I want to become a Benedictine oblate’; 1.14 [being a Benedictine oblate (lay associate)] will satisfy her need for community; went on a weekend on Benedictine spirituality with Esther de Waal; 1.14 ‘I’m looking for a community (eg Benedictines);
2.2 ‘periods in my life when all I’ve wanted to do is go and live in a monastery or convent
1.11, 1.13 took spiritual direction from a community of monks - helped in a time of crisis;
2.11 ‘I love being with monastics because .. they express a very strong spirituality that’s also in a religious context ..’
1.12 ‘I need a focal point because I become too boundary-less if I’m not careful’
1.14 doesn’t want to go to a community (eg Benedictines) which might not take her:
1.11 ‘I seem to spend my life going to communities that won’t really take me’
1.4 stays in organisations because likes belonging to a community
3.12 To me, there isn’t any difference. .. and to me it’s the same with the religious traditions .. I couldn’t cope with the Christian view that said ‘Well, if you’re a good Christian you’re saved’ and I’d say ‘Well, what if you’re a good Buddhist’ ’cause I know these Buddhist monks who are .. to me they’re saints. I know he’s a saint, this Sikh guy in America, to me he’s a saint. And I think .. to me it’s fundamentally the same thing. Does it matter if they’re a Buddhist or a Christian and Christians think ‘No it’s better if you’re a Christian’. And I just can’t buy that ‘cause to me it’s how you manifest. .. an’ I’m sure Jesus’s answer would have been ‘It doesn’t matter what religion you are or it doesn’t matter how you define yourself as long as you are ‘a good person’ and you lived your life in a way that’s manifesting love’. And, loving your neighbour and the ‘love God’ bit as well.

Thematised text – file #3

Here Data Analysis File #2 is used as input, and the output is an extraction, reduction and summary of themes which forms file #3. This text is close to the final form (though not necessarily in the same sequence) which is presented in the thesis in Chapter 6, section 6.3. However, at this stage it still does not contain any analysis or ‘imaginative variation’.
Always sought to be a 'good person'; values and ethics were important and to be articulated. Was always an inquirer, seeking meaning, 'engaged in religious enquiry'. This was evident to her parents.

She was brought up as a Methodist, rejected religion for a period during adolescence, spent 11 years as a Buddhist; following her mystical experience, returned to Christianity and converted to Roman Catholicism; following divorce and remarriage is now drawn to the Anglican Church.

She is passionate about, and greatly attracted to, religions and has studied and/or joined in with many of them over a period of time. Many aspects of religions attract her such as the music, candles, icons, singing, rituals, churches, mosques, temples, holy places. Throughout, she has also been involved with different forms of religious practice, for example Sufi retreats, pilgrimages to the Holy Land. There have been clashes with religious doctrine, such as being barred from communion by the rules of the Catholic Church because she re-married. She is also opposed to recognising any one religion as the only way, or only true religion: she is more concerned about 'how you manifest' what you believe.

For her, "I think and feel in religious terms so that the notion of God as a higher power fits]." Feels the need for a focal point and some boundaries in religion. She has a spiritual director.

Later in life has worked extensively with interfaith groups. Is attracted to monastery and/or convent life: 'I love being with monastics because .. they express a very strong spirituality that's also in a religious context ..'. She would like to be affiliated to a Christian religious community but has not been able to do so yet. This is something of a problem as, despite her wish to be with a community, 'I seem to spend my life going to communities that won't really take me'. Has taken time with and advice from monks in the past.

Final stage – Imaginative Variation

The final stage of the phenomenological analysis takes the thematised data (file #3) and applies a process of imaginative variation. The aim here is to consider different ways of encountering the data by 'seek[ing] possible meanings through the utilization of imagination' (Moustakas, 1994:97) and any other possible techniques, but relying most particularly on the intuition of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). Through and from this process, a textural-structural analysis is produced which recognises that 'there is not a single inroad to the truth, but that countless possibilities emerge that are intimately connected with the essences and meanings of an experience' (Moustakas 1994:99). In this example, Laura's 'background and perspective on religion' is developed and presented in final text form in section 6.3 with some further summary reflections in section 6.4.

The steps I undertook in applying imaginative variation were:
1. Read and reflect on the data, particularly from data analysis file #2 and #3 and write a draft of the final text as a textural description, incorporating appropriate extracts from the original interviews as illustrations.

2. Using this text as a base, I sought to imagine in as many ways as possible what this data might be saying and how it might be considered. I was aware of the need to consider my own background and biases here, and to the extent that it is possible, questioned my own assumptions during this part of the process.

3. Using the final form draft, I sought input from my former co-researcher. She had had no part in formulating, planning or undertaking the interviews or case study and so had no direct experience of Laura, but she did have a professional understanding of organisations and management, and a strong interest in spirituality and religions from a perspective significantly different from my own.

4. I similarly sought input from a colleague researcher who is highly experienced in organisational development (OD) and management development. Again, he had no involvement with my study or with Laura. His approach would best be described as scholarly, and agnostic in religious terms.

Steps 3 & 4 provided not only two significantly different perspectives on the data but also challenged any tendency on my part to bias in interpretation of the data based solely on my own perspective. I discussed my text and my own thoughts with each reviewer, and took longhand notes from each of the discussions. The resulting analysis and final text was produced directly from this process.
Appendix 10 – A brief consideration of measurements related to spirituality

Despite the difficulty of defining spirituality (or perhaps because of it), some scholars and researchers have investigated closely related concepts or measures, notably spiritual development, spiritual health or spiritual well-being – and an associated measure, religiosity. Frequently in the literature, the first three of these are used without clarity about what is intended or with insufficient separation: they tend to have different though overlapping meanings, further complicated by lack of specific or generally agreed definition.

Spiritual well-being (SWB) has been and is increasingly the focus of academic work and writing. It appears to be as difficult to define as spirituality itself. As far back as 1971 the ‘White House Conference on Aging’ (sic) considered:

'components of Spiritual Well-being [as being] described in terms of the human need to deal with socio-cultural deprivations, anxieties and fears, death and dying, personal integration, self images, personal dignity, social alienation and philosophy of life. SWB was interpreted as a life long pursuit, continued spiritual growth hence being possible throughout the entire life span. Analogous but not identical with “Spiritual Health”, it overlaps with religiosity.' (Moberg, 1984:351 - my underlining).

Others also recognise this latter interaction: ‘SWB itself may in fact be an expression of spiritual health and, therefore, spiritual health and spiritual well-being may not necessarily be the same thing’ (Ellison cit in Bensley, 1991:288). The confusion of terms and overlap is widespread. In a literature review on SWB as related to health care Kahn & Steeves conclude that in the spiritual dimension, issues of patient well being are grounded in the person’s own answering of existential questions of meaning and purpose (1993:1). The US National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (NICA) in 1975 concluded that SWB is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness (cit in Moberg, 1984:352).

As a leading researcher in this area, Moberg, along with many other sources cited in this work, considers that the growing pragmatic and scholarly interest in spiritual well-being makes the development of instruments for its analysis increasingly important (Moberg, 1984:351). This is confirmed by other researchers (for example, Kahn & Steeves, 1993). Moberg reviews and cites the work of more than a dozen other researchers – including others recognised for their work in this area such as Ellison & Paloutzian – who have looked or are looking at aspects of SWB and associated issues (frequently including religious considerations) in different contexts, together with tools for measurement or assessment. One of Moberg’s conclusions is that SWB is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with possibly hundreds of components, many of which are unrecognised at present: he acknowledges that the ten indexes reviewed (derived from survey questionnaires) explore only a few components of the ‘complex multidimensional phenomenon of SWB’ (1984:352). They include much that is directly relevant to the Christian faith, including – for some indices – dogma specific beliefs. Among the reasons behind considering dogma-specific beliefs is that amongst the findings of Moberg and others, the rating of the importance of faith was one of the
strongest predictors of the feeling that life is worthwhile (1984:353). He considers Christianity to be particularly relevant in his research since much of his sample was from a specifically Christian background and he lives in a society in which Christianity is the dominant religion.

Also amongst Moberg’s findings is that religiosity is linked with SWB (1984:357): in terms of SWB, Christians specifically rank higher than persons who profess to be atheists, agnostics, or sceptics, which he verifies with highly significant differences on the indexes (1984:358). However, Moberg himself warns researchers in this area that

‘what one group views as indicative of a high level of SWB, another may interpret as symptomatic of a spiritual illness. For example, major aspects of holding a Christian faith commitment are viewed as signs of weakness, personality disintegration, or even mental illness by certain secular-humanist behaviourists and atheistic Marxists’ (1984:359).

Further, Kahn & Steeves (1993:3), whilst recognising the contributions of early researchers, emphasise the limitations of their instruments: of Moberg - that the instrument is useful only with patients who hold mainstream Christian beliefs; of Ellison & Paloutzian79 - that the instrument [SWBS] is dependent on the Western notion of a personal deity, and although it could be interpreted to fit Eastern conceptions, there are no reports in the literature of this being successfully done. They quote Kirschling and Pittman80 to support their views: ‘in a methodological study designed to test the reliability and construct validity of SWBS ... they found no evidence in the study that the instrument was valid ie that it actually measured spiritual well being as it purported to do’ (1984:4) and conclude that there is an obvious need for instruments that measure SWB and other aspects of spirituality more broadly than the ones cited (1984:10). Other researchers such as Trott have reached the same conclusion: ‘construction of a SWB scale with stronger psychometric properties is urgently needed Although the SWBS [Ellis & Paloutzian instrument] is recommended to assess low levels of spiritual well-being, it has too many limitations’ (Trott, 1996:132).

Spiritual Health is, again, an aspect of spirituality which is the focus of increasing consideration and research, not infrequently by those involved in healthcare but also elsewhere, for example in counselling (West, 1997, 1998-i, 1998-ii), and psychology (Dominion, 1998). In a literature review for the Journal of Health Education, Bensley asserts that it is generally agreed that total health consists of a variety of components, notably the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions (1991:287), an assertion he supports from a wide range of research literature. He looks at how this literature defines Spiritual Health, concluding that currently a common definition does not exist. He further notes that interpretations of this concept vary widely and whereas some professionals define spiritual health in relation to the sense of fulfilment in life, some concentrate on values and beliefs and yet others see it as a controlling higher power, a “godlike” force, with a human/spiritual interaction (1991:289). Whilst commonality of definition and interpretation is lacking, agreement that this is an important area affecting well being appears widely accepted.

In considering measurement of SWB or spiritual health, such instruments as there are frequently have strong links with religion and religiosity. The drawback of using any measure which gives consideration to the ways and beliefs of any one group, particularly since individual belief and practice vary so widely, is that the measure is likely to have at least some consideration of how well, or effectively, the individual has followed a preferred or prescribed path. Even with non religious and non dogma based assessments, there are still questions over what will be considered as spiritual and therefore included or measured by the instrument. This complexity and disparity is confirmed by other researchers such as Macdonald who concludes that 'there are a myriad of spirituality instruments but no available means of organising them into a conceptually coherent framework, since they are all seemingly grounded on disparate theoretical models' (2000:188).

Current research continues actively in the areas of SWB, spiritual health and operationalised measures of spirituality. Specific examples include the following: Beazley (1997) and Twigg, Louisiana Tech University, working on the development of a spirituality assessment scale with questionnaire items assessed on a Likert scale covering Transcendence (belief in or awareness of a higher power), Connectivity (sense of personal mission; spiritual component of everyday activities), Personal Attitudes and Traits. Piedmont (1999) suggests that there may be personality dimensions uniquely related to spirituality and in related research covering two quantitative studies (n=534 and n=938) in the USA. MacDonald (2000) presents a factor model of the expressions of spirituality and claims to have isolated five 'robust dimensions of spirituality' which he calls Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality (COS), Experiential/Phenomenological Dimensions (EPD), Existential Well-Being (EWB), Paranormal Beliefs (PAR), and Religiousness (REL).

Reflecting on measures of religiosity and spiritual well-being, Gibbons (2000) notes that there are fewer measures of spirituality, citing Elkins81 who looked at a measure of humanistic-phenomenological spirituality, and Emmons82 who looked at a goal-centred measure called spiritual strivings; he also refers to further research which is underway in this area (2000: III-24). Gibbons summarises the problems with such attempted measures, concluding that it is possible that consensus around measures will never exist given lack of agreement on definitions, and that there are still important weaknesses in definitions of spirituality, particularly spirituality at work (2000: III-25).

Even ignoring their considerable shortcomings (issues of definition; the strong links of extant research with religion and/or religiosity; researcher's own acknowledgement of the incomplete measure of each concept and the potential need to modify the instruments depending on the research population), methodologically,

82 Emmons R et al, 1998, Assessing spirituality through personal goals, Social Indicators Research, 45:391-422
such systems of detailed measurement do not fit within my research framework. I have not, therefore, incorporated any of the instruments mentioned, or other instruments such as those seeking to measure religiosity, into this project.
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