

RELEASE-TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION:
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS'
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

By

ERIC EDWARD STONES

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education

MAY 2006

© Copyright by ERIC EDWARD STONES, 2006
All Rights Reserved

© Copyright by ERIC EDWARD STONES, 2006
All Rights Reserved

To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of
ERIC EDWARD STONES find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to all who assisted me in preparing, conducting and completing this study leading to an advanced degree. I would like to thank my committee, particularly my chair, Dr. Gail Furman, for the excellent feedback, and the professional and exacting standards she requires. Dr. Furman instilled in me a desire to excel and expected me to put forth my best effort in producing this work. I am indebted to her for her kindness and persistence. Nothing I say in print will convey the appreciation I have for the help she gave.

I would like to thank Dr. Nancy Kyle, my initial advisor and teacher when I began taking classes at Washington State University Tri-Cities campus. She has continued to be involved as a member of my committee. She not only maintained contact with me but provided encouragement at every juncture in my studies. I thank Drs. Forrest Parkay and Terrell Young who served on my committee for their participation and support.

There are many individuals who provided timely aide and rendered assistance and encouragement as I worked to complete this study. I would like to thank Susan Shipman, librarian, for her expertise in retrieving research materials; Brett Hill, Attorney at Law, who helped obtain numerous legal documents and gave freely of his knowledge and legal expertise; Bruce and Karen Bowman and Max and Juanita Hufaker for providing accommodations when my studies required me to stay overnight in communities away from home; and Rodney Redford for assistance in printing. Certainly all my professors contributed to my understanding of the field of educational administration, and I feel a great sense of appreciation to each of them.

I thank my employer, the Church Educational System (CES) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for allowing me the opportunity to pursue a doctorate degree and providing me a CES doctoral fellowship. This fellowship greatly eased the financial burden associated with pursuing my dream of attaining this degree. I appreciate Richard Elms, who also received a CES doctoral fellowship, for being such a faithful friend and steady support as we have worked together in taking classes, studying, and traveling these past three years.

I acknowledge the 15 public high school administrators who gave freely of their time to answer my questions. I have often commented to my CES colleagues, the great admiration I have for those that serve in public education. I found each administrator interviewed to be professional, courteous, respectful, and forthright in their approach in answering my questions.

I thank my parents, Robert and Frances Stones, for instilling in me a love of education modeled by my mother's Master's Degree in Speech and Hearing Therapy, and my father's work in physiology following his Ph.D. in Biological Sciences. My mother used her talents in the home to raise nine children and my father supported the family by working as a professor and department head at the university level. I am eternally indebted to them for their example as husband and wife.

Finally, I thank my wife of 23 years, Cindy. She is an inspiration to me and her advice and opinion is the one I seek most. I thank my children, Jared, Caleb, Sarai, Seth, Micaiah, and Abigail for their patience and support as my studies often required me to be out of the home. This has been a wonderful experience and opportunity, and I thank all who in any way helped me to be successful in this endeavor.

RELEASE-TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION:
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS'
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Abstract

By Eric Edward Stones, Ed.D.
Washington State University
May 2006

Chair: Gail C. Furman

The purpose of this study was to explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in seminaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) in one western state. Consistent with the purpose, this study employed qualitative research design and methods. Qualitative interviewing was the primary means of data collection. Questions that guided the study include: What are public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding LDS release-time? What works well in this arrangement from their point of view? What does not work well in this arrangement?

Public high school administrators from 15 sites participated in this study conducted in two phases over a two year period. Analysis of data employed a "constant-comparative" process that resulted in the principle of separation of church and state as the emergent central theme. This principle makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time, the principle of separation of church and state allows for the legality of such

arrangements. Phase one determined that LDS release-time religious instruction works well in the public high school setting, while phase two explored why it works well. It was determined that the central theme of the principle of separation of church and state is manifested in three ways: (a) In community negotiation allowing release-time seminary, (b) in the fact that release-time religious instruction works at all and how it works, and (c) in ways the school attempts to keep the relationship quiet and out of public view or separate.

This study is significant in that it contributes substantive knowledge of LDS release-time religious instruction from the perspective of the public high school administrator. Conclusions and implications resulting from this study may be useful to public and religious educators as they consider policies and practices regarding release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public schools. The results of this study may also provide helpful insights to families whose youth enroll in LDS seminary, and perhaps provide a model of release-time religious instruction useful to other religious denominations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | iii |
| ABSTRACT..... | v |
| LIST OF TABLES | xii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xiii |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Research Problem | 4 |
| Purpose of the Study and Research Questions..... | 4 |
| Research Methods..... | 5 |
| Context of the Study | 5 |
| Typical LDS Release-Time Students..... | 5 |
| LDS Religious Instruction Curriculum..... | 6 |
| LDS Seminary Facilities..... | 7 |
| The Extent of LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction in the United States..... | 8 |
| Research Ethics and Validity | 9 |
| Significance of the Study | 10 |
| Report of the Study | 11 |
| 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 13 |
| Introduction..... | 13 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Legal History of Release-Time Religious Instruction | 13 |
| Separation of church and state | 13 |
| Change in the constitutional interpretation of separation of church and state | 15 |
| Supreme Court rulings regarding public schools and release-time religious instruction | 16 |
| Debate concerning separation, public schools, and religion..... | 17 |
| Legislative and executive involvement regarding religion in public schools..... | 18 |
| Current administrative guidelines..... | 19 |
| The present political climate for release-time religious instruction..... | 20 |
| Approaches to Release-Time Religious Instruction..... | 21 |
| Current Practices of Release-Time Religious Instruction..... | 26 |
| Summary..... | 30 |
| 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN | 32 |
| Introduction..... | 32 |
| Research Methodology | 32 |
| Research Design and Methods..... | 33 |
| Site and Participant Selection | 33 |
| Two-Phase Study Design..... | 36 |
| Phase one | 36 |
| Phase two | 38 |
| Analysis of Data..... | 39 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Limitations | 40 |
| Research Ethics and Validity | 41 |
| Summary | 43 |
| 4. ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS..... | 44 |
| Introduction..... | 44 |
| Preface to the Analysis: Gaining Access | 44 |
| Analysis..... | 47 |
| Community Negotiation in Changing Times | 48 |
| Introduction to the theme | 48 |
| Community values | 52 |
| LDS families' educational preferences..... | 54 |
| Community politics..... | 55 |
| Local school board..... | 58 |
| Administrators represent community..... | 59 |
| Summary | 61 |
| LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction Works | 62 |
| Introduction..... | 62 |
| Because kids go..... | 64 |
| Because they are good kids..... | 64 |
| Because the seminary building is close | 67 |
| Because participating students and the LDS Church bear the cost..... | 68 |
| Because the LDS seminary does all the adjusting | 72 |
| Because it is legitimate | 74 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Because it is legal..... | 76 |
| Under what conditions might it not work? | 77 |
| Summary | 79 |
| Keep it Quiet..... | 79 |
| Introduction..... | 79 |
| How seminary is listed on the public high school master schedule..... | 81 |
| How communication takes place with the seminary..... | 84 |
| Summary | 89 |
| Summary | 90 |
| 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS..... | 91 |
| Introduction..... | 91 |
| Conclusions..... | 92 |
| Separation of Church and State Provides a Fulcrum Point..... | 92 |
| Release-Time LDS Seminary Works Well for Many Reasons..... | 94 |
| Public High School Administrators are not Responsible for, but Support Students' Choice to Attend Release-Time LDS Seminary | 97 |
| Implications of the Study | 98 |
| Public High School Administrators and Local School Board | 99 |
| LDS Church Education System Personnel and LDS Families | 102 |
| Other Religious Denominations..... | 103 |
| Summary of the Study | 106 |
| Implications for Further Study..... | 107 |
| REFERENCES | 109 |

APPENDIX.....115

 A. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL....116

 B. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL -
 PHASE TWO.....117

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Public high schools with adjacent LDS seminary used in study | 34 |
| 2. Administrator composite resulting from interviews conducted..... | 35 |
| 3. Response to inquiry regarding the relationship of the public high school and the LDS release-time seminary..... | 63 |
| 4. How LDS seminary is listed on the public high school master schedule | 82 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. LDS release-time seminary buildings representative of those in the study | 8 |
| 2. Questions asked by the researcher of the data in this study..... | 40 |
| 3. Core phenomenon, separation of church and state, consisting of three separate manifestations | 48 |
| 4. First manifestation: The process of community negotiation in changing times results in the public high school principal reflecting the local school board decision to the community | 51 |
| 5. Second manifestation: LDS seminaries exist and work well within the context of and under the principle of separation of church and state | 79 |
| 6. Third manifestation: “Keep it Quiet,” under overarching principle of separation of church and state | 80 |
| 7. Separation of church and state and its legal interpretations provides a fulcrum point for the existence, and maintenance, of LDS release-time seminary | 93 |
| 8. Matrix for implications resulting from the conclusions of the study..... | 98 |

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Cindy,
and to our children Jared, Caleb, Sarai,
Seth, Micaiah, and Abigail.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court of the United States of America, in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), upheld as constitutional an arrangement in which public school students were released during school hours to receive religious instruction off school property. This decision established the legality of “release-time” religious instruction under the constitutionally interpreted standard of separation of church and state. Currently, release-time for religious instruction is found in various and limited application in 28 states (*Time for God*, 2000; Turner, 2004). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) operates the oldest and largest release-time religious education program in the United States. The LDS Church uses release-time to provide religious instruction to its youth in “seminaries” located adjacent to public high schools, primarily in the western United States. Based on projected growth patterns of the LDS Church (Stark, 1984; 1996), it is possible that similar LDS release-time programs may eventually be found in other areas of the country. While there is currently little apparent legal conflict or public debate regarding these arrangements, there is very little research regarding the nature of these arrangements and how they are perceived by the parties involved, including public school educators. It is not known, for example, if there are hidden issues that could productively be addressed by both parties, the LDS seminaries and the public schools with which they cooperate. In an effort to understand the dynamics and impact of these release-time programs, this study focuses on public high school administrators’ attitudes and perceptions regarding release-time LDS seminary in one western state. The results of

this study may be useful to public and religious educators as they consider policies and practices regarding release-time religious instruction.

Background

The principle of separation of church and state is the fundamental legal basis for separating public school education and religious education in the United States. Most individuals in America are under the impression that the principle of separation of church and state is explicitly provided for in the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, or one of the Amendments to the Constitution, but this is not correct. While the First Amendment to the Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .,” the term “separation of church and state” is not explicitly mentioned. It was first cited in a legal case decided by the United States Supreme Court in *Reynolds v. United States* (1878). Nearly seventy years passed before this principle was again cited in another U.S. Supreme Court case, *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947). Since 1947 to the present, dozens of Court cases have cited the principle of separation of church and state relative to religion and public education (Ascik, 1986), and legal interpretation of the principle has been vigorously and contentiously debated (Oaks, 1989; Wirth, 1992; Kilpatrick, 1994; Levy, 1994; Kossow, 1996; LaMorte, 2002).

One issue in regard to separation of church and state is release-time religious instruction. While religious instruction on public school grounds has been clearly found unconstitutional, *McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948), releasing students for religious instruction off school grounds has been ruled constitutional, *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). In fact, the political climate for release-time

religious instruction has become more accommodating over the years as reflected in the language of more recent Supreme Court decisions and legislative acts that appear to have partially lowered the wall of separation between churches and public schools (Equal Access Act, 1984; *Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v. Mergens*, 1990; LaMorte, 2002).

Much of the current literature available regarding release-time religious instruction focuses on the legal aspect of the arrangement, citing the two Supreme Court cases that specifically address the subject of release-time religious instruction, *McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948) and *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). In *McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948) the Court struck down plans to teach a variety of religion classes in public school buildings funded by tax dollars. In *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952) the Court held that public school students could be released from compulsory education during regular school hours to attend religious instruction off school property, solidifying the phrase “release-time” religious instruction. Baer and Carper (1999) chronicle the history of the start of release-time religious instruction in America, suggesting that it began in 1914 in Gary, Indiana. However, there is very little literature that explores the current practice of release-time religious instruction adjacent to public schools (Trotter, 1995; *Time for God*, 2000). Further, no mention is made in the literature that the LDS Church initiated the first release-time religious instruction program in America in 1912 in Salt Lake City, Utah (Berrett, 1988) and that it operates the largest single denominational program of release-time religious instruction adjacent to public schools in America, administered by its Church Educational System (CES). Nearly 120,000 public high school students currently participate in LDS

release-time religious instruction nationally (CES Annual Information, 2005). Little research addresses how LDS release-time seminary is perceived by public high school administrators or how this program works in relation to the adjacent public school. Research from this study seeks to address the gap in available literature regarding the practice of LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools.

Research Problem

The principle of separation of church and state prevents religious instruction in public schools, but allows for release-time religious instruction off school grounds. The LDS Church operates the oldest and largest single denomination release-time religious instruction program in the United States with nearly 120,000 public high school students enrolled as of the 2003-2004 school year (CES Annual Information Update, 2005). The sparse literature related to release-time religious instruction usually focuses on its legal aspects. Little is known about how this arrangement is perceived by public high school administrators, or how release-time religious instruction works in facilities adjacent to the public high school. This problem is addressed by the purpose of the study and questions that guide the study.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study will explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. Questions that guide this study include: What are public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions in regard to the LDS release-time program? What works well in this arrangement from their point of view? What does not work well in this arrangement? Since the purpose of

this study is to explore and portray the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, qualitative research methods will be used.

Research Methods

Consistent with the purpose of the study and the research questions, this study will employ qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methodology is effective in exploring and portraying the attitudes and perceptions of individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The specific application of qualitative research used in this study will be further described in Chapter Three, Research Methodology and Design.

Context of the Study

In order to provide a contextual setting for this study it is necessary to include background information regarding the LDS release-time religious instruction program provided in “seminaries” adjacent to public high schools. The following sections will describe typical LDS release-time students, LDS religious instruction curriculum, LDS seminary facilities, and the extent of LDS release-time religious instruction in the United States.

Typical LDS Release-Time Students

Typical LDS release-time students are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They come from families that value religious instruction as part of a core curriculum. These students make the individual choice to attend LDS release-time seminary in the public high school setting. LDS release-time seminary students are typically very active in school and involved in several extra-curricular activities. For these students the day often begins earlier or extends longer than the average high school

student in order to accommodate the choice to attend release-time religious instruction. LDS release-time seminary students often have to attend “zero hour” classes before the official school day begins, or take home study college correspondence courses, in order to meet credit requirements for high school graduation. However, since they choose to attend religious release-time, they accommodate that choice the best they can.

Not all LDS high school students enroll in LDS release-time religious instruction. Statistics provided by CES indicate that slightly more than 70 percent of the LDS potential students sign up for LDS release-time religious instruction, and of the 70 percent of potential LDS students about 70 percent complete all four years of high school seminary with full credit (Turner, 2006). Seventy-three percent of potential LDS freshmen students enroll in LDS release-time. There is roughly a six percent LDS student dropout rate from LDS release-time per year resulting in 54 percent of potential LDS students enrolled their high school senior year. Drop out from LDS release-time religious instruction is somewhat higher between the eleventh and twelfth grades than between other grades (CES, seminary enrollment/dropout study, 1990-1994).

LDS Religious Instruction Curriculum

For those students who choose to attend LDS release-time seminary, courses are provided in Bible Old Testament, Bible New Testament, The Book of Mormon, and The Doctrine and Covenants/LDS Church History. One of these courses is offered each year during the student’s four years of high school. CES teachers are expected to use as their sources the above mentioned scriptural texts and teacher manuals produced by the LDS Church for each course. Courses are supported by accompanying media. Students are expected to study the scriptures each year and are provided a student manual that relates

to the specific course of study. CES teachers participate in regular in-service training and evaluation. Instructional methods include lecture, discussion, role play, memorization, writing, group work, and all other traditionally accepted teaching methods. Length of class periods vary according to seminary and match those of the adjacent public high school.

LDS Seminary Facilities

LDS seminary facilities are generally constructed or purchased within easy walking distance of a public high school. Of the 20 sites identified in the western state that is the site for this study, 65 percent had adjacent buildings specifically constructed for the purpose of LDS seminary. Twenty-five percent of the buildings were houses renovated into seminary classrooms, and the remaining 10 percent of sites identified met in a nearby LDS church. The photographs in Figure 1 are representative of buildings specifically constructed for use as LDS seminaries. The buildings shown in Figure 1 are not from sites used in this study.

Each seminary building, whether specifically constructed for the purpose of LDS seminary or a renovated house, is similar on the inside. There is usually a secretarial office/workroom, an instructor's office or two, perhaps a principal's office, restrooms, and one or more classrooms. The floors are carpeted and the desks supplied with plastic castors to muffle the sound of movement. Each desk has a hymnal under it. The classrooms are warm and inviting and the walls tastefully covered with wall carpet. There are pictures of the Savior Jesus Christ, the prophet of the LDS Church, his counselors, and the governing Quorum of Twelve Apostles on the walls. There is a piano in the room and a locking audio visual cabinet filled with electronics and topped with a

large television. Windows and fluorescent lighting add to the brightness and warmth of the rooms.

Figure 1. LDS release-time seminary buildings representative of those in the study.



The Extent of LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction in the United States

The LDS Church enrolls approximately 210,000 students in daily religious instruction in the United States, some 120,000 in release-time (CES Annual Information,

2005). LDS daily religious instruction is provided in one of three ways: home study, early-morning, and release-time. Of the three programs, the one with the highest percentage enrollment of potential students and highest completion rate is release-time. Currently the LDS Church operates hundreds of release-time seminaries in nine western states, including, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming (Turner, 2004).

Research Ethics and Validity

An extensive treatment of research ethics and validity has been provided at the end of Chapter Three, Methodology and Design. However, in order to accurately frame my role in this study I feel that it is very important to address the background and strengths I bring to this study as a historian, certificated public school teacher with an emphasis in secondary education, and experience as a LDS religious educator for the past 21 years. This study brings developed skills and strengths into a special synergy as I have engaged in this research. I have drawn on my skills as a historian, on my understanding and empathy for public education, and my knowledge of LDS religious release-time instruction. For me this study has been a wonderful experience and one that I have found to be personally very rewarding.

As a historian I am very used to reading in depth and “between the lines” in an attempt to detect any possible biases on the part of the author of any work or study. I would expect nothing less from those who read the analysis and results of this study. However, in this regard, it may be helpful to recall the counsel of Tesch (2004) who said that good qualitative research comes to the essence of the matter and hence addresses the problem of representativeness and also legitimacy, in that, no matter what your

perspective or bias, the reader recognizes the portrayal as being from the situation or culture described. She likened good qualitative research to various concepts of art describing a specific scene, each having the distinct flavor of the artist, but recognizable to all who view it. Therefore, this work is presented to stand on its own merits while I attempt to accurately portray the views of the participants. In conducting the analysis of the interviews that were required in this study I have tried to be true to the attitudes and perceptions expressed by the participants and accurately represent their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

Participants in this study were informed that their identity will remain confidential, and that there is not any anticipated risk of embarrassment or harm as a result of their participation. Those interviewed were assured that they will not be identified, nor their comments connected to them in this study. Based on my approach I anticipate no harm to any of the participants, the public schools they represent, or the adjoining LDS release-time seminaries. Further assurances of confidentiality are found in Chapter Three, Research Methodology and Design. I am certain that increased awareness of the phenomenon in this study will result in deeper appreciation for differences that result in better understanding that may ultimately enhance such relationships.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it contributes substantive knowledge regarding an under-studied phenomenon, daily LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools. This topic has been ignored and neglected despite the fact that release-time LDS seminaries have existed for the past 94 years. It is anticipated

that conclusions and implications resulting from this study may be useful to public and religious educators as they consider policies and practices regarding release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public schools. Finally, the results of the study provide a model of release-time religious instruction that may be useful to other religious denominations.

Report of the Study

The report of this study consists of five chapters in standard dissertation format. Chapter One has introduced the study, provided necessary background, identified the research problem, purpose of the study and research questions, highlighted the research methodology, provided a context for the study, addressed ethics and validity issues, and highlighted the significance of the study. Chapter Two contains a review of the legal history of release-time religious instruction, approaches to release-time religious instruction in literature, and current practices of release-time religious instruction. Chapter Three will describe the research methodology, design and methods used in the study, address limitations of the study, and address issues regarding research ethics and validity. Chapter Four is the heart of the study and will examine administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding the relationship between the LDS release-time religious instruction program and the public high school. The analysis of data will unfold as three manifestations of the central theme resulting from the data are explored. Chapter Five will list the conclusions resulting from this study, address implications of the study, and suggest implications for further study. References and appendix are included. Four tables and eight figures have also been provided in the study to aid understanding

throughout the study. Reference to tables and figures has been included after the table of contents.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature provides a context for the study of public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding LDS release-time religious instruction. The review includes (a) the legal history of release-time religious instruction, (b) the approaches to release-time religious instruction in literature, and (c) the practice of release-time religious instruction. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that findings from this research will meaningfully contribute to the literature on the topic of LDS release-time religious instruction and public high schools.

Legal History of Release-time Religious Instruction

To understand the legal history of release-time religious instruction, it is helpful to first review the development of the concept of separation of church and state in American law. This section will highlight (a) separation of church and state, (b) change in the constitutional interpretation of separation of church and state, (c) Supreme Court rulings regarding public schools and release-time religious instruction, (d) debate concerning separation, public schools, and religion, (e) legislative and executive involvement regarding religion in public schools (f) current administrative guidelines, and (g) the present political climate for release-time religious instruction.

Separation of church and state. A common misconception is that the Constitution of the United States of America calls for a separation of church and state (Barton, 1993). There are only two references to religion in the Constitution and the 26 Amendments to

the Constitution. First, Article Six of the Constitution reads, “. . .no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to an office or public trust under the United States” (LaMorte, 2002, p. 431). Second, the First Clause of the First Amendment, known as the Establishment Clause, says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . .” (LaMorte, 2002, p. 431).

The idea of separation of church and state began as a result of the political climate of the mid-1800’s. To understand the politics of that time consider a phrase from the *Republican Party Platform of 1856* which reads, “. . .to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism – Polygamy, and Slavery” (*Republican Party Platform*, 1856, para. 4). After the Civil War put an end to formalized slavery in America, the United States government focused on the practice of plural marriage among the “Mormons” (LDS Church) in the Territory of Utah. A legislative and legal battle, with numerous lawsuits and challenges, extended for more than two decades. The U.S. government passed laws disenfranchising those who professed belief in plural marriage. This disenfranchisement included taking away the right to vote, serve on a jury, and in some cases, property rights. *Reynolds v. United States* (1878) was a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision addressing the practice of plural marriage among Mormons. In this decision the Court cited a letter written by Jefferson in 1802:

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of the government reach actions only, and not opinions, - - I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make

no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” *thus building a wall of separation between church and State* [italics added]. (*Reynolds v. United States*, 1878)

In making the decision, the Court noted that it is within the power of civil government to determine the bounds of marriage as the law of social life under its dominion. They also established the authority of the State to denounce a particular belief found contrary to law and offensive to society. The immediate effect of this Supreme Court ruling and first legal citation in American law of separation of church and state was to uphold the political disenfranchisement of members of the LDS Church and negate their power in the Territory by taking away their rights as U.S. citizens to vote or serve on juries. This ruling led to additional rights being taken from the LDS Church and its members, including rights to property, as the federal government confiscated properties valued over \$50,000. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior disposed of the confiscated properties, both real and personal, the proceeds of which were to be for the use and benefit of district schools in Utah (Arrington, 1958). In some circumstances the U.S. government forced the LDS Church to pay rent on confiscated properties. The enforcement of these laws created financial burdens that plagued the LDS Church for several decades. From this beginning, the concept and principle of separation of church and state became part of American law and American culture.

Change in the constitutional interpretation of separation of church and state.

Many who have studied the writings of the “Founding Fathers” of the United States Constitution maintain that “church” to them meant no “one” religion or “one” denomination designated as the national or state church (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Since *Reynolds* (1878) “church” has come to mean any religious activity or observance in public in or around government-sponsored institutions (Barton, 1997). Among those who follow constitutional law, Barton (1997) notes that nearly seventy years after *Reynolds v. United States* (1878) this “revised” interpretation was cited without precedence in *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947). It is within this latter interpretational context of separation of church and state that the Supreme Court made two landmark rulings regarding release-time religious instruction and public schools.

Supreme Court rulings regarding public schools and release-time religious instruction. Two United States Supreme Court decisions have addressed questions regarding the releasing of public school students during normal school hours, thereby allowing them to receive religious instruction (LaMorte, 2002). First, in *McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948), the Court struck down plans to teach a variety of religion classes in public school buildings funded by tax dollars. The Court found that in such a setting, a state’s compulsory-education program would tend to promote religion and violate the First Amendment to the Constitution. Second, in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), the Court held that public school students could be released from compulsory education during regular school hours to attend religious instruction off school property, hence the phrase “release-time” religious instruction. In delivering this decision the Court announced, “The constitutional standard is the separation of church and state” (*Zorach v. Clauson*, 1952, p. 9). The phrasing of this judgment illustrates how the principle of separation of church and state, found in *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), is now equated with the constitutional intent of the Founding Fathers. In the past 50 or 60 years, contemporary with this ruling and since, there have been dozens of Court

judgments relative to religion and government-sponsored public education (Ascik, 1986). These decisions continue to impact and define what is currently acceptable regarding religion in public schools.

Debate concerning separation, public schools, and religion. Ascik (1986) noted that the Supreme Court, since *Everson* (1947), has applied separation of church and state to nearly every aspect of education in America. This is evident in the treatment of the topic “religion in the schools” in school law texts, which have sections regarding school prayer, Bible reading and religious literature, textbooks and teaching, religious displays and holiday observances, equal access and use of facilities, to name but a few (LaMorte, 2002). The past nearly 60 years of decisions regarding religion in public schools has seen the Court, in the opinion of some, move through phases of hostility toward religion (LaMorte, 2002) toward the establishment of a “civil religion” (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 1972; Wirth, 1992; *Lee v. Weisman*, 1992; LaMorte, 2002) and a current movement toward neutrality (Kilpatrick, 1994). Charges that the Supreme Court has “legislated from the bench” in matters regarding schools and religion have left many Americans feeling disenfranchised. Those feeling disenfranchised raise charges of secularism, the belief that religious affairs should not enter into the functions of the state, especially public education (*Webster’s*, 1980).

However, others, including Levy (1994) in his book, *The Establishment Clause*, persuasively maintain that separation of church and state, as currently interpreted by the Supreme Court, actually strengthens religion in America by keeping it separate and therefore free from government entanglement. In a lengthy article entitled, *The Williamsburg Charter: Its Importance to the Nation*, Oaks (1989) noted the historical fact

that in many areas of the United States in the 19th century there was a “de facto semi-establishment of one religion: a generalized Protestantism given dominant status in national institutions, especially in public schools” (p. 6). Obviously this borders on the reason for separation of church and state. It is a matter of historical record that, “Governmentally established religions and religious persecutions go hand in hand” (LaMorte, 2002, p. 33). Kossow (1996) pushes this side of the debate to the extreme by advocating a rigorous application of the Lemon Test (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 1972) stating that everything in school must be exclusively secular in purpose, thus bringing the debate full circle.

Regardless whether one agrees or disagrees with the concept of separation of church and state applied by the courts to the issue of schools and religion, it is the law in America. However, pressure from those feeling disenfranchised by the decisions of the Supreme Court have resulted in representatives in both the Legislative and Executive branches of government attempting to clarify the role of religion in public schools.

Legislative and executive involvement regarding religion in public schools.

Attempting to resolve questions regarding the appropriate balance of religion in public schools, both Congress and the President of the United States have entered into the debate. Congress passed the Equal Access Act (1984), which makes it illegal for any public school receiving federal financial aid to deny recognition of student-initiated groups on the basis of religious, political, or philosophical content of the speech at meetings, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993), which was intended to support individual free exercise of religion. The Supreme Court held the Equal Access Act (1984) constitutional in *Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v.*

Mergens (1990), and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993) unconstitutional in *City of Boerne v. Flores* (1997). In the later decision the Court chastised Congress for overstepping its authority and improperly expanding the interpretation of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

As Congress struggled to draft legislation that would pass the constitutional standard of the Court, U.S. President Bill Clinton, under pressure to provide leadership regarding the issue of religion and public schools, commissioned a broad-based religious coalition, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other public policy groups, to draft guidelines regarding religion in public schools (LaMorte, 2002). These guidelines, originally issued in 1995, were modified to reflect the decision in *City of Boerne v. Flores* (1997). The updated guidelines, entitled *Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1998), represent the current understanding of what is acceptable regarding religion in the public schools.

Current administrative guidelines. Current administrative guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education state that public school officials have two obligations imposed by the First Amendment. First, schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature. Second, schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity. These two principles apply to the following topics, according to the U.S. Department of Education as published in *Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1998): (a) Student prayer and religious discussion, (b) graduation prayer and baccalaureates, (c) official neutrality regarding religious activity, (d) teaching about religion, (e) student assignments, (f) religious

literature, (g) religious excusals, (h) release time, (i) teaching values, (j) student garb, and (k) provisions of Equal Access Act (1984). Within these guidelines release-time is one of 11 acceptable ways that religion may currently interact with the public school.

The present political climate for release-time religious instruction. Currently there seems to be an apparent lowering of the wall of separation between churches and public schools (Equal Access Act, 1984; *Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v. Mergens*, 1990; LaMorte, 2002), reflecting a growing concern with public school and community relations. For example, in 2000, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley produced a videotape entitled *Partners for Excellence: Families, Businesses and Communities Working Together for Schools*, a portion of which was devoted to the topic of involving faith communities in the school. Additionally, *Guidelines for School Officials, Volunteers and Mentors Participating in Public School Community Partnerships* (U. S. Department of Education, 2000) offers advice to public school administrators interested in involving faith communities in school. These guidelines supplement *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles* (U. S. Department of Education, 1998). Bilby (2002) has chronicled several faith-based organizations that currently work closely with public schools to improve student learning. According to Bilby, involving faith communities in schools as an aid to facilitate student learning is a model that has proven effective.

Additionally, although not specifically related to the subject of religion and schools, a current trend under the present administration in U. S. government is to involve faith groups in the community in order to facilitate positive change. For example, the U.S. government gave more than one billion dollars in 2003 to

organizations it considers “faith-based,” with some going to programs where prayer and spiritual guidance are central, and some to organizations that do not consider themselves religious at all (*Faith Based Groups*, 2005). Spiritual leadership and guidance and its role in the community is a topic that has exploded in the past decade (Capper, Hafner, & Keyes, 2002). This current trend possibly foreshadows a portion of analysis in Chapter Four, namely, the climate of change noted among public school administrators. Finally, despite the current trend there is a portend of stormy weather ahead regarding the line of separation of church and state in political discussions that include school vouchers, which may potentially be used for religious private or parochial education as well as public education (Fowler, 2004).

Approaches to Release-Time Religious Instruction in Literature

An initial search through traditional educational literature on the topic of release-time religious instruction yielded limited results and lacked the perspective of historical context. Ideas and laws are set forth in the literature without understanding the underlying debate regarding the doctrine of “wall of separation between church and state” (Ehrhardt, 1990; Hippel, 1969; Thomas, 1981). The concept of secularism, as defined earlier, is often discussed in a negative manner (Ericsson, Colby, & Payne, 1982; McCarthy, 1988; Baer & Carper, 1999). The literature records one study of teacher attitudes toward religious instruction in the classroom, but this pertained specifically to teaching “about” religion (Adam & Martinez, 1987). The precedent-setting case of *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), upholding the right of public school students to attend release time religious instruction classes off school premises, is frequently referred to in the literature (Nolte, 1979; Ericsson, et al., 1982; Adam & Martinez, 1987; McCarthy, 1988;

Stern, 1994). However, references regarding release-time religious instruction are generally buried in a list of acceptable ways that religion and public schools may interact, but with no evidence presented that they currently do interact and the issues surrounding this interaction (Nolte, 1979; Cobb, 1981; Thomas, 1981; Adam & Martinez, 1987; Colby, 1993; *Religion in the Public Schools: A Joint Statement of Current Law*, 1995; *Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*, 1998; Thomas, 1999).

Certain factors appear to hinder release-time religious instruction in public schools. Ericsson, et al. (1982) note logistical and legal hurdles to release-time religious instruction in public schools. They state that laws regarding the authority of school districts to adopt released-time programs and the legality of such programs vary from state to state. Furthermore, states' power to cut release-time programs by reducing the required minimum number of hours in a school day are problematic. Despite challenges, several authors advocate release-time instruction as a viable means of receiving religious education (Ericsson, et al., 1982; Colby, 1993; Baer & Carper, 1999).

How many religious groups actually participate in the practice of release-time religious instruction according to available literature? In initial searches, Trotter (1995) was the only author found that said anything about religious groups interacting via release-time religious instruction with public schools. In his article *On Board the Bible Bus* he noted that the Upper Shenandoah Valley of Virginia has schools that accommodate weekday religious education. However, he was ambiguous as to whether the classes referred to met daily, as they were interchangeably referred to as weekday and weekly. Additional probing found that this release-time program is known as Weekly

Religious Education (WRE), and is currently the subject of intense scrutiny and controversy. Debate concerning WRE is detailed in *The News Leader* in numerous articles dated February 10-16, 2005. Jones (2005) of *The News Leader* reported that ABC News, CNN, and Fox News promoted this controversy as the number four story in the nation for newspapers on Saturday, February 12, 2005. WRE will be discussed further in the next section, current practices of release-time religious instruction.

Branching out from traditional sources of educational literature attention was turned toward religious educational literature that might contain references to release-time religious instruction in public schools. Religiously oriented educational literature was also found to lack historical perspective and underlying debate regarding the original intent and purpose of the evocation of the principle of “the wall of separation between church and state,” as did the aforementioned traditional educational articles. Numerous articles focused on Catholic and Jewish release-time religious instruction, but most were written prior to the landmark Supreme Court ruling of *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). Articles prior to the 1952 decision are not applicable to the current discussion, because the parameters of the debate changed with the ruling in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). In many ways the 1952 Supreme Court ruling became a line of demarcation in the literature. Most substantive and applicable articles after 1952 pertaining to release-time religious instruction may be found in the *International Journal of Religious Education* and *Religious Education*. Of the articles written, very few were found to have direct bearing on the subject of release-time religious instruction as it is explored in this study.

However, of the few articles that were found to have application, Ham (1966) and Dierenfield (1973) stood out. For example, Ham (1966) interviewed 57 public school

principals concerning their feelings about release-time programs and found 30 percent expressed strong or favorable attitudes toward the program of release-time, 60 percent indicated general approval, and 10 percent expressed outright hostility. Five percent of those interviewed said the program should be discontinued. Ham concluded that the attitude of the principal is a major factor related to the enrollment of students in release-time classes. “Where principals favor the system, enrollments enlarge. Where principals are hostile, enrollments diminish” (p. 11).

In a somewhat related article, Dierenfield (1973) wrote that interest in release-time programs appeared to be diminishing. He observed, “Released-time religious instruction has been a part of American public education for approximately half a century. It continues, but does not seem to evidence too much dynamism or vitality” (p. 112). He then went on to state that not only did interest appear to be decreasing, but that support from public school administrators does not seem strong. Both Ham and Dierenfield suggest that enrollment in release-time religious instruction is tied to the attitude of the public high school administrator.

Arnold (1978) in a dissertation published by Oregon State University, entitled, *A Comparison of the Attitudes of Three Groups toward Released Time for Religious Instruction in Oregon*, explored the attitudes of Oregon State citizens, teachers, and church leaders toward release-time religious instruction in public schools. He concluded that teachers favored the concept though not as much as citizens generally or church leaders. He determined further that, among religious denominations, release-time programs were more favored among Latter-day Saints than other religious groups. This

study did not address public high school administrators' attitudes or perceptions regarding LDS release-time religious instruction.

Finally, search for available literature on the topic of release-time religious instruction in public schools culminated in a search of the internet. The internet has expanded the sources available for research in a major fashion. Consider for example that a Google search of the internet in the spring of 2005 listed over five million hits on the topic of "release time religious." Ten months later a similar search resulted in over 36 million hits. Apparently this topic, though mostly ignored by public school educators and traditional educational literature, is of contemporary interest in America. The number one "hit" site on the internet is a publication by the Christian Legal Society (Ericsson, et al. 1982) entitled, *Religious Release Time Education: The Overlooked Open Door in Public Schools*. This publication is cited extensively in all sources of literature cited thus far, traditional, religious, and the internet.

The focus of the internet search was narrowed in order to explore the current status of release-time religious instruction programs in America, and more particularly, public high school administrators' perceptions of such programs. The existence of current release-time religious programs in America is detailed in the following section, "practice of release-time religious education." To date no studies have been found detailing or exploring public high school administrators' perceptions of release-time religious education programs in America other than those of Ham (1966) and Dierenfield (1973), cited previously. However, in the process of searching the internet, a site, (<http://www.frc.org>), was located and a 43-page policy downloaded, entitled *Time for God: Accommodating Religious Free Exercise through Released-Time Education*

(2000). This article contained some testimonial statements attributed to public school administrators. One paragraph in the article noted that a South Carolina middle school arranged to allow a release-time education program in 1996. The program started with 120 students, the enrollments of which have since tripled. According to the article, the administrator of this school said, “Ever since the program began there has been a drastic improvement in the behavior of students” (p. 3). The article also quoted a public school administrator from Tennessee who said, “It has worked wonderfully in our school system. Such a program addresses the concerns of character education without any burden upon our own teachers or stressed budget.” The article, *Time for God* (2000), stated that the high point of religious release-time educational instruction in the U.S. came in 1947 when some two million students participated in religious release-time programs in public schools in the United States.

Current Practices of Release-Time Religious Instruction

The previously cited document, *Time for God* (2000), noted that release-time programs had been established in the United States by “Christians, The Church of the Latter-day Saints, and Muslims” (p. 13). (It should be noted that Latter-day Saints take issue being designated as a religion other than Christian and refer to the official name of the Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) In the article it states that Christians currently enroll 250,000 students nationwide in release-time programs. A passing comment is made citing 1997 statistics that over 370,000 Mormon students are enrolled in such programs. No other reference is made to the LDS release-time program. Muslim students of the Islamic faith are noted as using release-time for Friday prayers. A history of release-time religious education is also offered in the document, detailing the

“start” of release-time in 1914 in Gary, Indiana. This proffered start date and site is the only one cited in the literature (Baer & Carper, 1999).

Time for God (2000) focused on the practice of release-time religious instruction along the lines of the WRE program model described by Trotter (1995). The article noted that more than 20 states allow release-time religious education. Most of these involve elementary children K-5. In these programs children are released for 30 minutes, once a week, to attend religious instruction in local homes, churches, or on buses parked near the school. The programs are sponsored by local churches, and generally staffed by volunteer teachers. Parents sign permission slips releasing their children from the public school to attend release-time religious instruction, for and during a specified time. Other than the occasional passing comment regarding LDS release-time, such as the one cited from *Time for God* (2000), there is little to be found in the literature regarding the LDS release-time seminary program.

However, the LDS Church enrolls approximately 362,000 students in daily religious instruction, provided by its Church Education System (CES) in the United States and in more than 140 countries around the world. In the United States, this CES religious instruction, known as “seminary,” is provided in one of three ways: home study, early-morning, and release-time. Of the three programs, the one with the highest percentage enrollment of potential students and highest completion rate is release-time. Nearly 210,000 students participate in daily LDS religious instruction in the United States, some 120,000 in release-time (CES Annual Information, 2005). Most LDS release-time programs are found in nine western states due to significant concentration of LDS population (Turner, 2004). However, projected growth patterns of the LDS Church

(Stark, 1984; 1996) make it a distinct possibility that similar LDS release-time programs may eventually be found in other areas of the country. LDS seminaries are adjacent to public high schools that allow students to be released for the purpose of religious instruction during the school day. Seminary programs for the LDS Church require a building close to the public school, qualified instructors, and support staff such as secretaries and custodians.

The LDS Church has participated in release-time religious instruction in seminaries adjacent to public high schools for 94 years, since 1912 (Berrett, 1988), and 54 years to date since the Supreme Court ruling in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). One measurable aspect of the LDS Church's commitment to religious instruction is in terms of cost. Expenditure of funds to maintain and staff LDS release-time facilities is considerable. LDS Church President, Gordon B. Hinckley (2003), recently said that more church funds are spent on Church Education (CES) than any other program except for the construction and maintenance of buildings. Release time seminaries may benefit the adjacent public school in a number of ways, including reduced demand for physical space, non-educational related expenses, reduced class loads, additional scheduling options, and reduction in full time teacher salary and benefits. In Washington State, Elms, Peck, and Stones (2003) note that LDS seminaries may result in a cost savings of several millions of dollars annually to the state general fund as well as financially benefiting individual school districts. Additionally, they note that education is a priority for members of the LDS faith who rely on the public school system to teach secular education to their children. In the situation described, of providing LDS release-time

religious instruction in the public high school setting, it is noted that the LDS Church has a vested interest in supporting public education and making the arrangement work.

Comparing Weekly Religious Education (WRE) and LDS seminary, seemingly the only current practicing examples of weekly/daily release-time religious instruction, reveals differences in the method of delivery of release-time religious instruction. The WRE program is the subject of current controversy in elementary public education in the eastern United States. For example, in a news article dated Sunday, February 13, 2005, entitled “AP: Parents challenge schoolday Bible classes in Shenandoah Valley,” it was noted that parents of elementary students that opt out of the WRE release-time program feel that their children are stigmatized, and have little to do during the time that their peers, often the majority, are in Bible classes. Under the threat of a high profile lawsuit based on *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), and massive community support, the local community school board has voted to retain WRE, with a review of the program spring 2006.

In comparison to the WRE program model, LDS release-time seminaries serve high school students in grades 9-12, not K-5, and on a daily not weekly basis. Students are released for an elective period each day to a building adjacent to the public high school. Because high school students have a choice of electives there is no apparent controversy regarding this practice, thus seemingly avoiding conflict according to the Supreme Court decision in *McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948) (Ericsson, et al., 1982), yet in keeping with the Court’s decision in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). Other provisions such as parental permission, and location off school property, as specified in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), are the same in both the LDS and

WRE programs. Finally, LDS educational support of public high school education may present a further contrast with many other faith groups of high school age students, because the LDS Church supports the public education of its youth rather than withdrawing into private or parochial schools. In this regard the LDS Church has a vested interest, as stated previously, in supporting public education and making this arrangement work.

After reviewing the literature regarding the current practices of release-time religious instruction in the United States it was determined that release-time for religious instruction is found in various and limited application in 28 states (*Time for God*, 2000; Turner, 2004), and that the LDS Church operates the oldest and largest (single denomination) release-time religious instruction program in the United States. The LDS Church uses release-time to provide religious instruction to its youth in seminaries located primarily in the western United States.

Summary

The review of literature in this chapter chronicles the legal history of release-time religious instruction in American public schools, examines approaches to release-time religious instruction in literature, and describes the contemporary practice of release-time religious instruction. In the end, it was determined that release-time for religious instruction is found in various and limited application in 28 states, and that the LDS Church operates the oldest and largest release-time religious instruction program with youth taught in seminaries located primarily in the western United States. Yet, there is scarce mention of the LDS release-time religious instruction program in the literature, except for that obtained from LDS Church's CES documents. This study seeks to

address the gap in available literature regarding the practice of LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools.

In conclusion, it is suggested that much may be gained from a study of public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions regarding the arrangement with the Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its release-time religious education program. While there is currently little apparent conflict or public debate regarding these arrangements, little is known about how these arrangements work, or are perceived by public school educators. As stated in Chapter One, it is not known if there are hidden issues that could productively be addressed by both parties, the LDS seminaries and the public schools with which they cooperate. The attitudes and perceptions gained from participants in this study will contribute to the understanding of LDS release-time seminary and the arrangement and relationship with the adjacent public high school. The results of this study may be of use to practitioners of public and religious education in a variety of applications, including policies and practices regarding release-time religious instruction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methods used in this study of public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. The chapter includes sections on research methodology, research design and methods, limitations of the study, and research ethics and validity concerns.

Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was chosen as the appropriate methodology for this study. In contrast to quantitative research, which identifies variables and tests hypotheses, qualitative research does not start with assumptions to be tested. Rather, themes and patterns are allowed to emerge from the data as the study unfolds and as participants' perspectives are explored in their natural setting. Qualitative research is an appropriate and effective methodology for the purposes of this study, to explore and portray the attitudes and perceptions of individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Creswell, 2002 & 2003; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Qualitative interviewing was the primary means of data collection. Weiss' (1994), Seidman's (1998), and Price's (2002) helpful suggestions for conducting interviews were used in designing this study, as well as Creswell's (2002) helpful insights and recommendations.

Research Design and Methods

Site and Participant Selection

In order to study public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time LDS seminary in one western state, it was first necessary to identify high schools in the state that had an adjacent LDS seminary offering release-time religious instruction. The LDS Church Educational System (CES) Area Office for the geographical region was contacted, and 20 sites were identified within the state where LDS release-time religious instruction takes place. Administrators from 16 of the 20 sites were invited to participate in the study. Not all 20 administrators were invited in order to better protect the identities of those who did participate. All but one of the invited administrators participated in the study. Thus the "sample" participating in this study represented 75 percent of the eligibility "population." The participating administrators provided a representative geographical and urban/rural cross-section of the state. Demographic information was obtained from the 15 sites that participated in this study in regard to percentage of student population that is LDS and percentage of public high school students enrolled in LDS seminary. This information is displayed in Table 1.

As indicated, the schools ranged in size from 250 to 2500 students. Over six percent of the student body, in schools where an administrator was interviewed, actively participate in LDS release time seminary. There are LDS students in the student body that choose not to participate in LDS release-time seminary. There may be some few non-LDS students that participate in LDS release-time. No effort was made to identify non-LDS students that participate in LDS release-time seminary. The number of students

enrolled in LDS release-time religious instruction in Table 1 is taken from LDS seminary area statistics (*Seminary Program Yearly Enrolled*, 2004, 2005).

Table 1. Public high schools with adjacent LDS seminary used in study.

| School | Total students | Number of LDS students in school | LDS as percent of student body | Enrolled in LDS release time seminary | Enrolled as percent of student body |
|---------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 01 | 2500 | 162 | 6.5 % | 119 | 4.8 % |
| 02 | 1370 | 153 | 11.2 % | 136 | 10 % |
| 03 | 1400 | 128 | 9.1 % | 116 | 8.3 % |
| 04 | 1950 | 223 | 11.4 % | 191 | 9.8 % |
| 05 | 1500 | 127 | 8.5 % | 94 | 6.3 % |
| 06 | 1650 | 116 | 7.0 % | 113 | 6.8 % |
| 07 | 1580 | 120 | 7.6 % | 97 | 6.0 % |
| 08 | 2000 | 81 | 4.1 % | 60 | 3.0 % |
| 09 | 1896 | 32 | 1.7 % | 19 | 1.0 % |
| 10 | 2000 | 106 | 5.3 % | 78 | 3.9 % |
| 11 | 800 | 55 | 6.9 % | 50 | 6.3 % |
| 12 | 250 | 20 | 8.0 % | 16 | 6.4 % |
| 13 | 550 | 98 | 17.8 % | 88 | 16 % |
| 14 | 650 | 103 | 15.8 % | 37 | 5.7 % |
| 15 | 600 | 36 | 6.0% | 25 | 4.2 % |
| Average | 1380 | 104 | 7.5 % | 82.6 | 6.4 % |

The 15 administrators who participated in this study were principals (13) or assistant principals (two). Most were male (13). Fourteen were white and one was a Pacific Islander. Their years in education ranged from 11 to 33, and years in administration from four to 22. This information is displayed in Table 2. In addition to this basic demographic information, the data collected in this study suggests that most participants were of the Christian faith and espouse conservative values and beliefs. For example, eight participants volunteered information about their religious affiliation, although it was not the intent of this study to solicit such information.

Table 2. Administrator composite resulting from interviews conducted.

| Interview | Type of Administrator | Race | Gender | # Yrs. In Education | # Yrs. In Administration | # of Students in School |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 01 | Principal | White | Male | 32 | 4 | 2500 |
| 02 | Principal | White | Male | 25 | 16 | 1370 |
| 03 | Principal | White | Male | 26 | 15 | 1400 |
| 04 | Assistant Principal | White | Female | 33 | 11 | 1950 |
| 05 | Principal | White | Male | 25 | 18 | 1500 |
| 06 | Principal | White | Male | 25 | 5 | 1650 |
| 07 | Principal | White | Male | 26 | 13 | 1580 |
| 08 | Principal | White | Male | 31 | 22 | 2000 |
| 09 | Assistant Principal | White | Male | 11 | 4 | 1896 |
| 10 | Principal | White | Female | 30 | 12 | 2000 |
| 11 | Principal | White | Male | 27 | 12 | 800 |
| 12 | Principal | White | Male | 35 | 13 | 250 |
| 13 | Principal | Pacific Islander | Male | 20 | 15 | 550 |
| 14 | Principal | White | Male | 27 | 18 | 650 |
| 15 | Principal | White | Male | 21 | 4 | 600 |
| Average → Demographic | Principal | White | Male | 26 | 12 | 1380 |

Several administrators shared comments regarding the Bible. One said, “There are not many answers that can’t be found in the scriptures.” Another confided that whenever he had a major decision to make in his capacity as leader in the school that he would lock the door to his office, read from his Bible, and say a prayer. These statements, along with observations made during interviews, reinforced the idea that many of the administrators questioned are religious and conservative. In a day of avowed separation of church and state it is interesting to note that 20 percent of administrators interviewed made reference to personal study of the Bible, some having the text openly displayed in their office.

The observation of conservative values and beliefs held by administrators interviewed comes as a result of experience in the interview itself and coincides with the observations of several scholars including, Tyack and Hansot (1982), who explore public

school leadership in their book, *Managers of Virtue*, and conclude that school administrators are repositories of conservative values. Also, Carlson (1972), in his study of school district superintendents, identified superintendents as being more conservative than the average American citizen, affiliated with religion, and with 75 percent indicating they attend church weekly.

Thus, a composite sketch of a participant in this study would be a principal of a high school of 1380 students. He is a white male with 26 years experience in education, including 12 in educational administration. He espouses the Christian religion and is fairly conservative in values and beliefs.

Two-Phase Study Design

This study was conducted in two phases over a two year period in one western state. As stated earlier, this study sought to explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. Questions that guided this study include: What are public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions in regard to the release-time program? What works well in this arrangement from their point of view? What does not work well in this arrangement? The following chronicles the timeline as well as the design and procedures followed in each phase of this study.

Phase one. Phase one of the study consisted of a pilot study conducted in the spring of 2004. Securing participants at first was difficult. There was apparent reluctance on the part of several administrators to discuss the topic of release-time religious instruction in the adjacent LDS seminary. It was only after repeated phone calls, a letter of introduction on university letterhead, and additional phone calls, that

appointments for interviews were scheduled. The difficulty experienced in gaining access to administrators is a topic that is addressed in detail in the preface of Chapter Four. With persistent follow-up however, eight administrators did eventually agree to be interviewed. The administrators represented selected schools in urban locations that served between 1300 and 2500 students. Interviews were conducted, guided by a set of open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A). Each interview lasted approximately one hour and generally took place in the privacy of the administrator's office. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. During the interviews and later during analysis of the data, it became evident that the release-time arrangement between the public school and the LDS seminary worked very well and was fully institutionalized, meaning it was “. . . seamlessly integrated into the routine practices of the school” (Fowler, 2004, p. 292). In the words of administrators interviewed it was simply, “the way we do things around here.”

A core category emerged from the data, represented by a metaphor that was useful in understanding the relationship between the public high school and the release-time LDS seminary. The metaphor was that the relationship between the public high school and LDS release-time seminary was like a seamless woven garment, that is, cloth made of interlacing threads; a garment worn by the community. However, in some cases the administrators noted that public perception, faculty resentment, or issues of separation of church and state make the topic of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminary one that is not generally talked about in public forums. Apparently the seamless woven garment, even though it “fits” legally and may be institutionalized into the school, is

“kept in the closet.” Consequently there is currently little conflict or public debate or even awareness concerning this arrangement.

Although this initial analysis was intriguing, it was based on a limited data set and failed to uncover possible deeper issues concerning the public high school and the release-time LDS seminary relationship. While it was clear from the data that the relationship was working, the question arose, “Why does this relationship seem to work so well?” This question became the principle focus of phase two. Additionally, it was thought possible that in smaller rural schools, or schools from another region within the state, administrators might have different perspectives of LDS release-time religious instruction. Therefore, phase two of the study expanded the data set and explored these additional issues.

Phase two. In phase two, conducted in the spring of 2005, administrators from seven additional public high schools in the same western state were added to the study. As stated, the results from phase one made it clear that the relationship between the public high school and the adjacent LDS seminary was working. In phase two, the focus narrowed somewhat to answer the question, “Why does this relationship seem to work so well?” Smaller rural schools were also included as well as schools from other areas in the state, thus introducing comparison into the study in an attempt to enhance analysis. For example, might administrators’ perceptions be different in urban versus rural schools?

The interview protocol from phase one was modified to reflect the narrower focus of phase two and to seek to explore possible deeper issues in the public high school and LDS seminary relationship (see Appendix B). Special attention in analysis was paid to

previously hidden or ignored issues in an attempt to determine areas that may productively be addressed by the public schools and the LDS seminaries with which they cooperate. The resulting analysis of data collected in phases one and two is presented in detail in Chapter Four, together with the central or core theme emerging from the analysis.

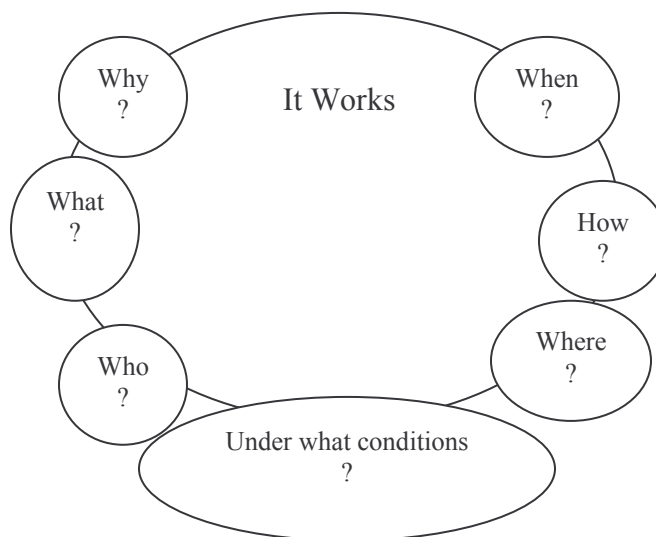
Analysis of Data

Data analysis within the qualitative research tradition generally follows a “constant-comparative” approach (Creswell, 2002). A constant-comparative approach is applicable to any kind of qualitative data, but is particularly useful in multi-site participant studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the constant-comparative approach, the researcher codes and categorizes data and constantly compares data being coded with what is already in the category, as well as comparing across categories to develop a final set of categories or themes (Creswell, 2002). While coding the data, the researcher is continually searching for new and previously unseen categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). For example, in the final analysis of data of this study the researcher combined the data of phases one and two and rigorously examined the combined data, using a series of questions to probe the primary question, “Why does this relationship work?” Figure 2 illustrates the type of questions asked by the researcher during the analysis process for this study.

Constant comparative analysis leads to the development of themes, which in turn represent patterns regarding attitudes and perceptions of participants. The final step in the analysis was to identify the central or core category resulting from the study. This is referred to as the emerging, central, or core phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). The idea that

the relationship of public high schools and release-time LDS seminaries is like a seamless woven garment, identified in phase one, is an example of an emergent core category.

Figure 2. Questions asked by the researcher of the data in this study.



Finally, the analysis of data in this study was aided by comparing data across different types of school settings, for example, rural versus urban, and across various geographical locations within the state.

Limitations

This study focuses on high school administrator's attitudes and perceptions regarding LDS release time religious instruction in one western state. Limitations include the fact that this is a single state study in a specific geographical location in the country and addresses only the perspective of public high school administrators, specifically principals and assistant principals. Several administrators have mentioned that it might be advisable to obtain the perspective of the school counselor. This is beyond the scope of this study as outlined. This limitation may affect the transferability or applicability of the findings (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001; Creswell, 2003).

Research Ethics and Validity

Why am I doing this study? Do I have any ulterior motive? Will anyone be harmed by the results of this study? Am I realistically portraying the view of the participants? These are valid questions to ask in qualitative research. Reviewers of the study are free to come to their own conclusions as they reflect on the attitudes and perspectives of the participants as represented in the study and to analyze from their own frames of references. Ultimately, time will verify the validity and applicability of the findings of this study. Whittemore, et al. (2001), in their article “Validity in Qualitative Research,” outline basic principles of fairness, hard work, honesty, and integrity in research methodology resulting in reliability, referred to as the stability of findings, and validity, represented by the truthfulness of findings. In this qualitative study it is important to note that researcher “reflexivity,” what the researcher thinks, will affect the interpretation of the data, and researcher “reactivity,” how researchers process others’ perspectives, will affect the description. As Maxwell (1996) has stated, “. . . the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and to use it productively” (p. 91). Feldman (2003) also explored these concepts in his article “Validity and Quality in Self-Study.” The bottom line is, if researchers want others to value their work, “. . . they must demonstrate that it is well founded, just, and can be trusted” (p. 28). In this context I have avoided imposing my framework or meaning upon the data and tried to understand the attitudes and perspectives of the participants and the meanings they attach to words and actions (Maxwell, 1996). I have tried to be true to the views of the participants and represent their views in an accurate manner; to me this is an

issue of trustworthiness fundamental in conducting a legitimate study. It is my intention to accurately convey participant attitudes and perspectives.

Additionally, it is important to note that the results of this qualitative study are presented thematically. A possible limitation of this approach is that all responses are not of equal weight or value. In qualitative research it is challenging to assign weight or value to participant responses. In order to address this potential limitation an attempt was made to present data emerging within themes according to percentage of participant responses. This is noted as the analysis is presented in Chapter Four. It is possible that the results of this study could be strengthened further by subjecting the results of the data to some sort of “member checking” or “triangulation” by the participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2002).

The question next arises, how can one know if the information in the study represents the view of the participants without knowing the participants? This is a threat to the validity of this study and again raises the question of credibility and trustworthiness. In order to obtain the data used in this study it is necessary to assure participants that the information they supply and their identity will be kept confidential. I have followed established ethical guidelines to protect the identity and privacy of the participants in this study. At no time will any participant in this study be identified by name or location or any comment connected to them. In the unlikely event that someone was to correctly identify the state studied I have deliberately declined to interview participants from every site, thus helping to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Based on my approach to this study, it is anticipated that no harm will come to the participants.

Could the results of this study harm the relationship between the public high schools and the LDS release-time seminary religious education program? As a LDS religious educator for 21 years, I have participated in this relationship. In my experience, separation of church and state regarding public and religious education is a principle totally engrained in our society. I have found that it is the violation, not the preservation, of this principle that creates problems for the relationship. I cannot negate the possibility that issues may arise resulting from this study that may need to be addressed by the public schools and the seminaries with which they interact. However, I am confident that the resolution of any potential issue will only serve to strengthen the relationship. Based on my approach I anticipate no harm to the relationship between public schools and adjoining LDS release-time seminaries. Indeed, it is hoped that better understandings resulting from the study will enhance such relationships.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the research methodology and design used in this study of public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. How sites were chosen and participants selected was addressed, followed by a description of the design and methods used in phase one of the study, and the narrower focus of the study in phase two. The constant comparative method of data analysis employed in this study was also described. Finally addressed were limitations of the study, and research ethics and validity concerns. The discussion of research methodology and design found in this chapter is essential in understanding the analysis of data presented next.

CHAPTER FOUR

ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries in one western state. The central theme emerging from the analysis of data is the principle of separation of church and state. This principle is the Supreme Court interpreted Constitutional intent of the "Founding Fathers" that underlies and overarches the relationship between the public school and release-time religious instruction. This principle makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time, the principle of separation of church and state allows for the legality of such arrangements. Separation of church and state appears to have become such an integral and accepted part of our United States American culture that it is taken for granted and therefore rarely verbalized; in fact, the principle was scarcely explicitly mentioned by participants in this study. Yet as an underlying or overarching principle it is everywhere present in the data. The principle of separation of church and state is manifested in three ways: (a) In community negotiation allowing release-time religious instruction, (b) in the fact that release-time religious instruction works at all and how it works, and (c) in ways the school attempts to keep the relationship quiet and out of public view or separate.

Preface to the Analysis: Gaining Access

Gaining access to public high school administrators to question them about their perception of LDS release-time religious instruction was challenging. As mentioned in

Chapter Three, Methodology, sites were selected in this western state because there was sufficient LDS population in the community to allow for the practice of release-time seminary. Also mentioned was that the administrator in this study, presented as a composite, is a white male principal with 26 years experience in education, including 12 in educational administration. The difficulty I experienced gaining access to administrators for this study possibly foreshadows one of the themes in the analysis, the administrators' attempt to "keep it quiet."

For example, initial requests for interviews were often ignored, necessitating repeated follow-up requests. In phase one of the study, it was only after an introductory letter and several phone calls that interviews were scheduled. In phase two, interviews were somewhat easier to arrange when administrators were informed that their participation in the study was part of "part two." Some difficulty in scheduling interviews was probably caused by the very busy nature of the job of high school principals. However, one secretary with whom I talked numerous times in order to arrange an audience with the administrator, said, quoting the principal, "Whoa! I'm not touching that one. Refer him to the district office!" The feeling communicated was that this topic had the potential of being controversial. This perception seemed to be correct when later a principal, in reference to our interview specifically and controversial school topics in general, declared, "District office people freak out about even talking to newspaper reporters!"

This sense of potential controversy on the part of the participants was often evident in the reception I received upon entering the schools. The most vivid example was the young principal who declined to be interviewed when I entered his office despite

an introductory letter and numerous phone calls to arrange the time and place. He knew that I had traveled nearly 350 miles to be in his office at an early hour, yet excused himself, insisting that he needed to clear the interview protocol with the district office. Once dismissed from his office, follow-up phone calls yielded no response.

Further evidence of the sense of potential controversy and hesitant administrator reception may be found in the fact that, in the course of 15 interviews, two principals invited another administrator to be present for the interview, two principals delegated the interview to an assistant administrator, and two principals insisted that the interview take place at a time other than normal school hours, all practices which, for me, indicated caution on the part of the administrators questioned. Finally, several administrators expressed “relief” at the conclusion of the interview that the experience was not what they had anticipated. Of those, two administrators stated it was because they had anticipated a challenge as to the appropriateness or legality of the practice of allowing release-time religious instruction in the school and were uncertain the direction that the discussion would go. The perception gained from administrators interviewed in this study is that this is not a topic they would choose to discuss unsolicited; however, most interviewees may be characterized as professional and accommodating.

These access issues provide a background for the following analysis of administrator perceptions regarding release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries adjacent to public high schools in one western state. It is important to note that participants’ responses are presented thematically and that all responses are not assumed to be of equal weight or value. Reviewers are invited to reach their own conclusions as they reflect on the attitudes and perspectives of the participants as represented in this

study and to analyze them from their own frames of references. Thematic presentation of data in emergent themes is discussed generally according to percentage of participant responses.

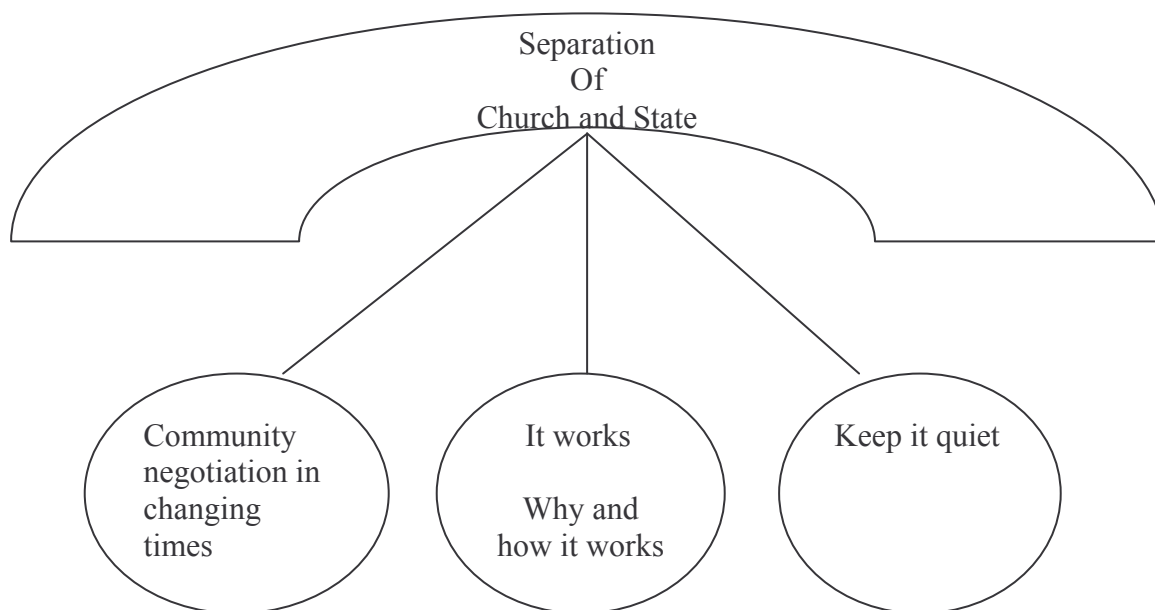
Analysis

The principle of separation of church and state in American society, as stated in the introduction, makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time, the principle of separation of church and state allows for the legality of such arrangements. One manifestation of this principle is the notion that, in order for religious release-time to be perceived as separate, it must be “kept in its place,” quiet. The discussion that follows explores administrators’ attitudes and perceptions regarding how the practice of release-time religious instruction is negotiated in the community, why and how it works, and how school districts attempt to keep this program quiet and out of public view. The development of the analysis is illustrated by the schematic in Figure 3.

The data in this study, as illustrated in Figure 3, show that the relationship of the public school with release-time religious LDS seminaries consists of three separate manifestations that reflect the overarching principle of separation of church and state. This principle of separation of church and state is the umbrella that first, shelters the school, represented by the administrator, from the storm of accusations of preference or inappropriateness; second, protects and allows for the practice of release-time religious instruction for people or groups desiring such instruction; and third, shades or maintains a separation of elements between the two educational systems of public education and

private religious education. These three manifestations of the principle of separation of church and state are discussed in the following sections.

Figure 3. Core phenomenon, separation of church and state, consisting of three separate manifestations.



Community Negotiation in Changing Times

Introduction to the theme. As noted in Chapter Two, Review of Literature, release-time religious instruction in public schools in the United States of America is constitutionally legal, provided the principle of separation of church and state is upheld. Accordingly, many states have statutory regulations providing for the practice of release-time religious instruction, and subsequent court cases have upheld the practice. However, it is within the community at the local school district level that permission for release-time religious instruction is negotiated and ultimately granted. School administrators are quick to point out that release-time religious instruction is community driven. Specifically in this study, it is the community's LDS parents and students that

want and support religious release-time instruction. Administrators say little about the legality of the program. They say a lot about community politics at the school board level and also about this program as a reflection of community values. Whatever contention or controversy there may have been regarding release-time instruction at the outset is for these administrators a thing of the past. Accountability for the decision to allow release-time religious instruction in the public high school, under the principle of separation of church and state, is borne by the community. In this context the administrators defend the practice of release-time, and for them it is a relatively easy thing to do; when questioned they simply respond, “Anyone can do it,” or, “We release students for a variety of reasons.”

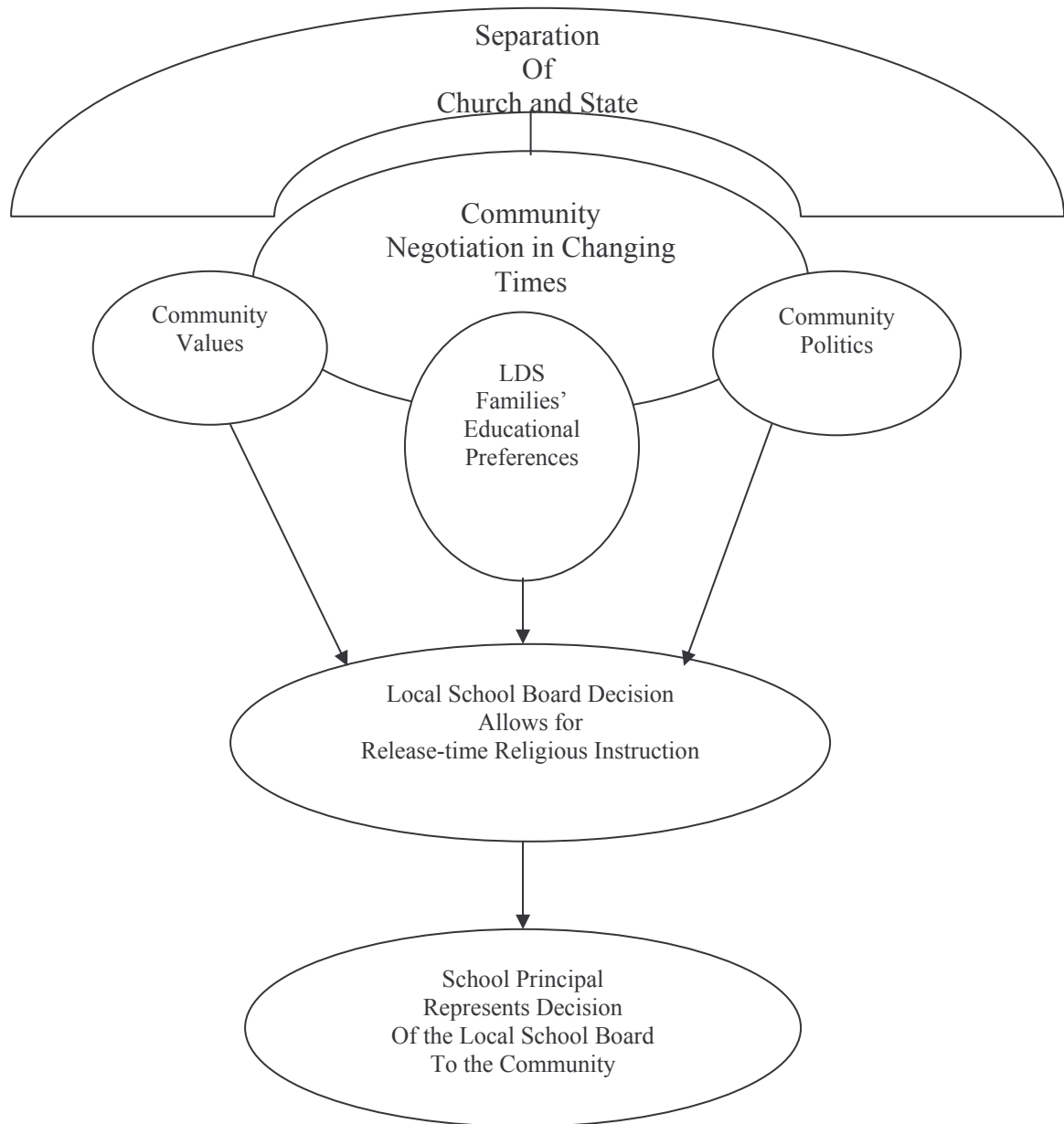
Also, as noted in Chapter Two, the LDS Church has operated seminaries adjacent to public high schools for the past 94 years and for 54 years since the Supreme Court decision affirming the legality of release-time religious instruction in public schools. However, school administrators say little about the history of association with the LDS seminary, but instead focus on the changing climate found in today’s schools. For them the current climate in American public education is to personalize learning strategies, in other words, to be more flexible and have more options. As one individual noted, “There are a multitude of reasons [to be released] and we accommodate them all, whether it be religion, sleep, job, whatever; we are more flexible in a changing world.” Another administrator commented that when the first LDS request was made to have release-time that the school embraced a closed campus policy. They indicated that at that time there was no “Running Start,” no “School-to-Work” program, no release for anything, and speculated that if the LDS Church made a similar request today it might not be so unique

given the current climate in public education. They said, “Initially there was no program that gave kids authority to come and go, and so it was a big deal.” One educator voiced his opinion regarding public education, that, “We exist to serve students; they do not exist to serve us. In order for public education to survive we must accommodate, not limit.”

Therefore, the idea was communicated that we live in changing times regarding education and how it is accessed and obtained. Changes in technology and business, according to administrators in this study, have helped create a climate of change in the public schools. Accessing religious instruction in this changing educational environment did not seem an unreasonable request to the participants in this study. In this context, the first manifestation of the underlying or overarching principle of separation of church and state that emerged from this study was that community negotiation in changing times allows for release-time religious instruction in the public high school. Community values, LDS families’ educational preferences, and community politics are some of the dimensions of and influences on community negotiation, noted by administrators interviewed, which allow for the practice of release-time religious instruction. Community negotiation to allow for the practice of release-time religious instruction adjacent to public schools is within the boundaries of and under the principle of separation of church and state.

In this first manifestation (see Figure 4), the process of allowing release-time religious instruction is begun as LDS families’ approach the local school board with the proposal to allow for release-time, as allowed by law, and as part of their educational preference. Public high school administrators spoke quite candidly about the values and politics in the community that are part of negotiating release-time seminary.

Figure 4. First manifestation: The process of community negotiation in changing times results in the public high school principal reflecting the local school board decision to the community.



Administrators that took part in this study state that the local school board represents the community and has the role of rendering the policy decision whether or not to allow for the practice of release-time seminary. In this arrangement, the administrator

merely reflects back to the community the decision of the school board. Each of the components, according to administrators' attitudes and perspectives, that are part of community negotiation, namely, community values, LDS Families' educational preferences, community politics, local school board, visually represented in Figure 4, will be presented in the following sections. In the end it is easy to see the attitudes and perspectives of administrators in this study, that is, that they are in a position of neutrality regarding the decision to allow the practice of release-time religious instruction in the public high school. The attitude of these administrators is that the practice of release-time LDS seminary, adjacent to the public high school is a community decision and they support that decision and reflect the decision back to the community.

Community values. There are two points regarding community values that administrators in this study mention and model; these are local community religious values and cooperation with religious or faith-based groups. Cooperation between religious or faith-based groups and government sponsored agencies, such as public education, reflect a current national trend.

First, there are local community religious values. Administrators interviewed demonstrated a willingness to honor these values and cooperate with religious groups. They often commented about local churches, religious involvement in the community, youth ministers helping in and around the school, periodic religious practices and observations and holidays that were part of community/school relations. In this context, one administrator said, "This is a very religious community. Nobody really gives a lot of thought to this [LDS seminary] being a strange situation in any way." Another remarked,

I think that schools need to reflect the values of this community, and there is a strong Mormon establishment in this community. If our inner-church council got together and bought a house across the street and offered religious instruction . . . would I allow that? Absolutely.

Modeling good values and good citizenship could be characterized as being part of a religious or “traditional” value system and was important to administrators in this study. They did not see major differences regarding fundamental values between community, school, or the LDS church. One said, “Seminary does real positive things for kids. Anything that is teaching students to be kind, to know the difference between right and wrong, to help one another is something that I am in favor of.” This particular administrator said that the school attempts to do the same thing. In this context administrators only had positive things to say regarding LDS seminary. There was even one administrator that candidly remarked, “Do I see eye to eye with them theologically? Absolutely not. But I do not for a moment doubt the integrity of their value system.” Administrators favor teaching values to students, and, because community values are reflected in LDS seminary, the seminary is regarded positively by administrators. Religious values also seemed to be personally important to administrators in this study, and were modeled by many as discussed in site and participant selection, Chapter Three, Research Methodology and Design.

The second point concerning community values addressed by participants was that nearly half of the administrators questioned cited the need to accommodate community values in the public school. Thirty-three percent indicated the need for values to be part of a child’s education. Several administrators mentioned the need to educate

the “whole child.” One specifically mentioned Michael Fullan’s book, written to school administrators and entitled, *Leading in a Culture of Change*. He noted that the first principle Fullan spoke toward is moral purpose and the importance of having a value system as part of public education. Reaching out to accommodate community and religious values seems to be an extension of being flexible and presenting more options to students in how all aspects of “holistic” education are accessed.

Finally, as noted in the Review of Literature, Chapter Two, cooperation between religious or faith-based groups and government sponsored agencies reflects a current national trend. This is modeled by participants in this study by the way they seek to cooperate with faith-based organizations in the community.

LDS families’ educational preferences. Sandwiched between acceptable community values and community politics (see Figure 4) are the LDS families’ educational preferences. LDS families, parents and youth, want and support release-time seminary according to administrators in this study. Administrators said that state statutes provide for religious release-time instruction, and that LDS families could potentially force the program upon a school district. However, as one principal noted, “Legally I suspect that they could force a district to allow seminary, but they do not need to. We work with them, though in our state it is up to the individual school districts.” Another said, “It is not that we are fighting it, we are not making it hard for them. We are working with them.” Most administrators that took part in this study indicated that release-time was allowed because of the local district school board responding to the values and needs of the community.

Part of this seemingly cordial and accommodating relationship is the perception of administrators that LDS families are very supportive of public education. “The support we have been given is outstanding.” “They don’t beat us up!” Generally speaking, administrators in this study feel that LDS parents have a very effective working relationship with the schools, that their leaders are very supportive of the schools, and that they have the same end in mind, which is the successful education of their children. However, one participant in the study found LDS parents to be very aggressive and demanding, particularly when it came to working out their student’s schedule, but that was an exception; the rest indicated that were very impressed with the LDS family structure and support received from the LDS community. However, despite LDS family support in the school and community, the start of an LDS release-time seminary program in a school district always seems to be marked by controversy and contention.

Community politics. Nearly half of the administrators in this study used words like “controversial,” “contentious,” and “fight” in describing the start of LDS release-time religious instruction in the school district. Very few of those interviewed were employed as an administrator when the program was started, but most indicated that it did not begin without a struggle. One participant indicated that it wasn’t a “real uproar,” but that some community members were concerned that, “one group is getting something exclusive to others.” They then addressed this conflict by indicating that such concerns are easily remedied by saying, that anyone can offer a similar program. They said,

Obviously we make it available to everyone, and so the conflict, if there is one in this community, is not between the whole idea of release-time for religion, it is that , why does one religious group get it and why does

another not? I think we have handled that in a way that kind of diffuses the potential for that. And that is, that if another religious group comes up with some other option, with something else, that they would like to do then we will look at that proposal. It has never gotten that far. We make it available to the other religious groups and they have never come up with anything.

Administrators often indicated that they would support other religions offering programs similar to LDS release-time seminary.

However, the idea that the LDS Church has excessive influence in the community and has somehow gained a favored position still comes up despite assurances that other churches may offer a similar program. For example, one rural school administrator commented on the perceived LDS influence in community politics, saying, “A lady came to my office not too long ago and said, ‘You know . . . there are two groups that drive this community, the Mormons and the rich Mormons!’ That is how the community feels about it.”

Two administrators used the term, “LDS Mafia.” One said the perception seems to exist among some in the community that there is an LDS “group” that exerts political control and uses money to sway opinion. He indicated that the close physical proximity of the seminary and the fact that the seminary tries to support the school can inadvertently fuel this community misperception. For example, he related an incident that occurred during a local school board meeting where a proposed change in the master schedule was presented to the board, and community input was solicited. In humorous fashion he related,

LDS parents, many of them, jumped on the bandwagon to publicly support a change to a six period day. Well, at this meeting we had a parent who just wasn't informed and just almost read enough to be dangerous, was making accusations of the LDS running the school. The influence that they had in this building and the amount of money that they are putting into our program should not influence our decision of going to the six period day. And I was wondering where is that money going? And they even said a million dollars. "They put a million dollars a year into our school and so they feel that they have the right to dictate policy," is about what the person was saying. And I turned to our assistant principal and whispered, "Why haven't we seen this million dollars?" But that's the negative perception. Because they are close and because they know that we have release-time and then because the parents are so vocal.

However, another administrator interviewed in this study indicated that the source of this contention is not specifically with the LDS Church, but religion in general, and the amount of influence that religious groups wield generally in community politics. As this administrator noted, "There are people who are biased toward all religions."

Nonetheless, 33 percent of administrators in this study indicated that the LDS community does represent a "powerful influence" in the community. These administrators recognized the influence of LDS families in the community and noted that they are active participants in the educational process and therefore visible in community politics. Seven of the 15 administrators interviewed said that it is the right of the LDS people to influence community politics; said one, "anyone has the right to influence."

Another administrator maintained that the LDS people are, “no more influential than any other group, undo influence is just a perception, not a fact.”

Finally, according to the participants in this study, after all the politics of negotiation are concluded, it is the local school board that decides whether or not to allow religious release-time instruction.

Local school board. Regardless of the conflicts and politics of negotiation, ultimately it is the local school board that grants the LDS families’ petition for religious instruction release. One participant remarked, “Its release-time that parents have asked for and our school board has indicated that this is something that they are willing to do.” In other words, the decision is made by the local school board after community negotiation, and administrators merely represent that decision back to the community.

However, there were two issues that came up regarding local school boards decision to allow release-time instruction. First, in addition to the foregoing dialogue on community politics, several administrators speculated that the source of concern for local school boards was the issue of separation of church and state. Said one, “I wonder what did cause the problem originally? Just a guess was, you know, the separation of church and state issues that the school board was worried about. I think those have been addressed many times over.”

Second, an issue that seems to add fuel to the fire of controversy regarding LDS political influence was the issue of LDS school board members. One third of those interviewed noted the perceived impact and influence of having an LDS member on the school board. This was particularly noticeable in a community that had roughly a 10 percent LDS population but had two LDS members out of five total members on the

school board. In other words, there was 40 percent of community representation that were members of the LDS Church on the school board. The attitude of the administrator interviewed was one of concern that these LDS board members have consistent and equal interest for all students, not just LDS students. The implication of this administrator was that the influence of LDS members on the school board may have created partiality toward the policy allowing LDS religious release-time instruction. However, in two other instances when LDS school board members were mentioned it was in the context that they were among the most supportive and competent members on the board, in each case serving more than 12 years on the school boards in their districts.

Despite these issues, local school boards in each district did reach a decision to allow release-time religious instruction after the process of community negotiation; administrators merely represent that decision back to the community.

Administrators represent community. Professionally, school administrators interviewed represent their community. In other words, once the community accepts the premise of a religious release time program, always with approval by the local school board, public high school administrators accommodate the program. It becomes an integral part of how things are done in their school. Administrators interviewed had no problem answering the question, “How long has the LDS seminary been associated with your school?” Answers were remarkably similar; “Always,” “as long as I have been here,” “forever,” “inherited” and so forth. Therefore, despite the hesitancy of some administrators to participate in this study and the difficulty experienced in gaining access to them to discuss the relationship of the public high school with the LDS seminary, the perception I came away with is that the school administrators are prepared to defend the

relationship with the LDS seminary. Said one, “I don’t mind the criticism we get, because I believe it pays off for kids. It is the kids asking for it.” The responsibility for the existence of LDS seminary therefore is perceived not to be the burden of the principal, but the community. Administrators in this study never took responsibility for the existence of LDS release-time religious instruction.

In this context, issues of community negotiation regarding release-time LDS seminary do not really matter to the public school administrator. Release-time is offered at their school. Principals do not relate strong feelings about it. It is essentially a non-issue. When they are questioned as to why LDS release-time religious instruction is part of their schools, they respond almost universally, “anyone can do it,” and this despite the fact that some may personally disagree with the approach theologically or may not feel that it has place in today’s public education system. Two statements from the data illustrate the point that “anyone can do it.” First,

Regarding separation of church and state, if someone wants to take it to court then that is something for the attorneys and courts to decide and we will do whatever they say. But until then we assume that we are acting within the law. With regard to separation of church and state, as long as it is not being funded by the government, as long as they are not receiving credit from the school district then you cannot argue that this is somehow violating separation of church and state. It is being done and offered to any religious institution who wants to put together a program and petition the district to do so.

Second, “Sometimes there are people out there that think that we shouldn’t be releasing kids for this, but my response to them is that any organization that is religious that wants a release can do that.”

Administrators in this study wanted to make the distinction that release-time, as practiced in their schools, is not just for LDS seminary students, but, “It is for the student that works at Taco Bell and then wants to come back to school.” They are very cognizant that release-time must be available to all students. Reasons for release-time include work, health, discipline, and religion, to name a few. It is within this context that school administrators embrace and defend the practice of LDS release-time religious instruction in their school because it is allowed under law, it has been established by the community and local school board, “It is part of the way we do things around here,” and “Anyone can do it.”

Summary. Once a community accepts a religious release time program, with approval by the local school board, public high school administrators accommodate the request. It becomes an integral part of how things are done in their school. Administrators merely reflect the decision of the school board back to the community. In this capacity administrators are buffered from criticism and assume a position of neutrality. The concept of the public high school administrator being in a position of neutrality, and merely reflecting back to the community the end result of the decision of the local school board, after the politics of community negotiation, is demonstrated in the illustration in Figure 4.

In approaching the second emergent manifestation of the central theme of this study it is important to recall, as noted in phase one of this study described in Chapter

Three, that the program of release-time for religious instruction, specifically LDS seminary; “works.” Therefore, the second manifestation emerging from the central theme of separation of church and state may be found in addressing the question, “Why does it work?”

LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction Works

Introduction. The principle of separation of church and state makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time the principle allows for the legality of such arrangements. Without this principle, backed by case law, there would be no discussion of this topic. Phase one of this study, as reviewed in Chapter Three, Research Methodology and Design, determined that release from public high schools for religious instruction in LDS seminaries “works” fairly seamlessly.

Data from phase two reinforced the findings of phase one that LDS release-time seminary works well in the public high school setting. As data from both phases of the study were analyzed it was noted that 80 percent of administrators interviewed responded either favorably or neutrally to questions regarding the relationship with the LDS seminary. Nothing negative was ever said in response. Administrators’ responses regarding this relationship are summarized in Table 3.

The responses shown in Table 3 indicate that administrators are used to having LDS release-time religious instruction associated with their school and that it is apparently not a negative relationship. Several times, either at the beginning or the end of the interview, the administrator expressed curiosity as to what others’ attitudes and perceptions were. Some indicated that while things were going well at their school that

they thought that other schools might be having a problem with the program, but they personally or their school had no problem with this arrangement.

Table 3. Response to inquiry regarding the relationship of the public high school and the LDS release-time seminary.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Interview | Tell me about the current arrangement/relationship with the LDS release-time seminary. |
| 01 | Work well together. Very good relationship. Very smooth operation. |
| 02 | Well integrated. |
| 03 | We started together. (Respect evident) |
| 04 | Working O.K. here, really. |
| 05 | Seamless |
| 06 | Good working relationship (respect evident) |
| 07 | All the local schools do business this way. This is the way we do it. |
| 08 | Casual. Fine. It works. |
| 09 | |
| 10 | What relationship? I don't know anything about it as an institutionalized function. |
| 11 | |
| 12 | It is not a problem until it is a problem. So far it has not been. It is well established. |
| 13 | |
| 14 | We are all one community here. |
| 15 | No problem. I sense that there are considerably more conflicts over the issue than exist here. My perspective . . . there isn't. |

As stated previously, part of the reason for conducting phase two of this study was to find the answer to the question, “Why does it work?” In addressing this question the following sub-themes emerged from the data: (a) Because kids go; (b) because they are good kids; (c) because the seminary building is close; (d) because participating students and the LDS Church bear the cost; (e) because the LDS seminary does all the adjusting; (f) because it is a legitimate program; and (g) because it is a legal program. Supplementing and supporting these sub-themes were several administrators’ responses to their own hypothetical question, “Under what conditions might it not work?”

Because kids go. Why does LDS release-time religious instruction, seminary, work? It works because kids go. When all is said and done that is the fundamental bottom line answer in the opinion of the administrators questioned. After all the community negotiation and posturing, after all the contention and legal maneuverings, after parental request and school board analysis and granting permission, after land is procured and a building built and supplied and a teacher secured, the bottom line is the same; it works because kids go. “It is the kids asking for it.” This is the answer of nearly 75 percent of administrators interviewed. They support the program because it is supported by the students. A couple of administrators questioned pressure within the LDS community for students to take seminary; however, since numbers enrolled are always less than the number of eligible LDS students, it is clear that this program involves student choice (see Table 1; Turner, 2006).

Because they are good kids. Students that participate in LDS release-time religious instruction are “good kids.” They are well integrated into the high school student body. They are “regular kids,” and “just sort of blend.” Sixty-seven percent of those interviewed shared this opinion. They felt that seminary students interact well with other students and as a group are as socially well adjusted as any of the other students. There was no sense of LDS students proselytizing in any school. There is a sense that these kids want to get along with others in the school and do not want to be perceived as being different. These students simply attend seminary and come back as part of their routine. Said one,

I don't think they see themselves as different from any other student. I think they are just here. They participate in our activities. They are gone

a period and they come back. I don't think the other students perceive them as being different. I doubt that they even know that they are leaving, because with a six period day you are not with the same kids all day long.

Said another,

I think they are more accepting of each other than probably their parents even like, but they are pretty accepting of all their peers. That is where the real world is. I think they don't have a need to be different or unique in a way that is negative. I think 20 or 25 years ago they were a little more isolated and more cliquish and more judgmental. I just see them trying to be more accepting of kids.

In short, LDS release-time students seem to act and interact just like any other student. However, that is not all that was expressed. Although these students blend in they also stick out. They stick out academically, athletically, as school leaders, in citizenship and good conduct.

Sixty percent of administrators questioned indicated that, academically, LDS release-time seminary students are among the top in the school. Several remarked that LDS students are sought after by the faculty to have in their classes. Said one, "A lot of faculty are happy to get them because they think they are hard workers." Over half characterized these youth as being school leaders. Several cited current or past student body presidents and officers that were LDS and remarked on their leadership as being exemplary. One principal commented on a meeting with fellow administrators and shared a remark made to him by another principal. This principal made an "offhand"

remark about Mormon students in schools with which they were familiar. According to the administrator interviewed this principal said,

I have been to a lot of schools in my career and everywhere I went the Mormons seem to be the academic, the “A” students, the athletes, the leaders. Why is that? Why do Mormons seem to be on the top of everything?

Administrators often characterized LDS students in this stereotypical fashion. Additionally, 40 percent of the administrators associated these youth as coming from strong families and having strong family support. Stable family relationships were credited with assisting in the student’s academic success as was the higher socioeconomic (SES) status of those families. Twenty percent of administrators mentioned higher SES in relation to LDS families and one discoursed at length on the strong correlation that higher SES has been shown to have on test scores. Twenty-seven percent stated that LDS students had fewer discipline problems, and were less willing to break rules, training, and guidelines.

Twenty percent identified LDS release-time seminary students as “typical white students,” and one administrator indicated that white and LDS go together. Certainly there were schools, whose administrators participated in this study, where students were predominantly white. For example, one administrator in a pre-dominantly white school said, “They are just regular kids. We don’t have a lot of minorities. We don’t have a lot of non-speaking-English kids. We are pretty ‘white bread and mayonnaise.’ Everybody kind of gets along and is tolerant of people.” On the other hand, another administrator in a more diverse school setting commented, “The biggest advantage our kids have is that

they get to know all different kinds of people, rich, poor, Black, White, Hispanic, whatever . . . It helps alleviate problems that come when you don't understand something about a culture." This administrator also felt that LDS students "fit in."

Because the seminary building is close. According to the administrators in this study, LDS release-time religious instruction works because it is close. Over 93 percent indicated that proximity of the LDS seminary works well. The seminary is very easy to access, and there are generally no transportation problems or safety concerns, though one administrator mentioned that a LDS seminary student suffered a broken leg when he was struck by a vehicle during lunch time while crossing the street between the seminary and the school. In two instances where students were required to travel further than a couple of blocks the issue of safety was brought up, but administrators noted that, since the students were released from the school by parental request, the burden of safety was on the parents, the family and the sponsoring institution, not the public school.

The proximity of the seminary to the school allows for ease in scheduling and minimizes disruption. In the words of one administrator,

It absolutely creates zero problems for us. We don't have issues of kids being late, either coming to or going from. I don't want to say it's a non-relationship, its just so seamless that it doesn't create an issue. Nobody talks about it. . . . Its so seamless its just like another one of our classrooms.

While every administrator seems to agree with the positive aspect of proximity cited above, not all agree that there are no problems regarding issues of promptness going to or coming from seminary.

The issue of promptness came up during four interviews, or 27 percent, of administrators questioned in this study. One mentioned that students going to release-time occasionally lingered in the halls longer than they should and when confronted about where they should be would often answer, “I have seminary, I can be late.” The opinion of the administrator was that the teacher at the seminary allowed more time to get to the class than was needed. The more common complaint, occurring in 20 percent of the interviews, was that the students returning from release-time religious instruction were too early in the halls. The issue was that they were being released early from seminary in order for them not to be late to their next class, but that they really didn’t need to be since they were so close. After noting that returning students are occasionally early in the halls one administrator said, “They work hard to comply.”

In both cases of being late going to seminary or returning early, public school administrators seemed to be quick to defend the practice of the release-time seminary students by insisting that they “work on that.” In another instance where promptness was cited as a sometimes issue the administrator excused the behavior as being typical of kids in general.

Because participating students and the LDS Church bear the cost. There is a cost associated for students that choose to participate in seminary. Ninety-three percent of administrators interviewed mentioned credits in some way. Ninety-three percent of those comments were in the context of students being short on credits toward graduation, and 67 percent mentioned credit shortages as a problem for students that participate in release-time seminary. Administrators would explain the number of credits required by the state to graduate, and the number of credits required by the district and then explain

the cost in lost credits for those participating in LDS seminary. The most common number of credits short, if a student participates in LDS seminary for all four years of high school, was two credits.

LDS release-time seminary students make up deficient credits in a variety of ways. The most common ways include taking extra classes before or after school, taking classes at a nearby university or college or completing a correspondence course. Administrators who commented in this area noted that makeup classes must meet state mandated standards to count as credit toward high school graduation. Waivers are granted only to those who qualify under strict district policies that govern all students and may include such things as work release, participation in extra-curricular activities, community projects, driver's education courses and so forth. No preference regarding waivers is given to students that participate in LDS seminary. Some administrators award a "discretionary" quarter credit, up to a full credit, to any student who passes all four areas on the state-mandated test. This incentive credit is appealing to LDS seminary students. One administrator explained,

They take potentially 1/6 of their high school education time to go across to the seminary during school time. These kids sometimes become credit deficient or they are unable to explore all of the opportunities that they might like to in a high school. They end up scrounging for any kind of credit opportunities that we give. For example, one of the incentives that we are using, you have to do it to get your diploma, is that we give kids a 1/4 credit for each of the four areas [state mandated test] that they pass. It is just kind of an elective credit. LDS kids eat that up because they can

get a whole credit and all of a sudden they've offset a year's worth of seminary time as far as credit goes. Another thing that they can do is earn credit here is up to $\frac{1}{2}$ credit for being involved in athletics through their four years. $\frac{1}{4}$ credit per sport up a maximum of a $\frac{1}{2}$ credit. They take advantage of that. We have a community service credit for students who want to get involved in community service. A lot of the LDS kids get involved in that because they have to find ways to scrounge up, primarily elective credit, for their transcript because they are spending their elective credit time going across the street to the LDS classes during school time. And still I see a lot of kids hooking up with some kind of college correspondence credit for some kind of class that they really need for where they are going because they just didn't have time to take it here because they committed $\frac{1}{6}$ of their educational time to walking across the street for their religious time during school time. I think its an accepted part of their culture and this is just something that they are going to do. But it costs them. It costs those kids.

Because of schedule limitations caused by having fewer elective credits available to them, students in LDS seminary have little room for error. These students cannot afford to fail classes and hope to attend release-time religious instruction and graduate from high school. Therefore, the typical LDS seminary student is perceived as being a conscientious and serious student. Said one administrator in this study, "They are focused because they know that their time is valuable and they don't want to repeat." Administrators note that the burden in this arrangement is all on the participating student,

whose day is often longer and more demanding than other students. Because LDS seminary students are perceived as more diligent, teachers generally prefer to have them in their classes. In a day of high stakes testing due to federal and state mandates, LDS release-time seminary students are perceived to raise the academic climate in the school.

The idea that taking seminary costs kids is one of the most frequently cited perceptions among public high school administrators in this study. They note that the burden is borne by the students who attend seminary and that the burden is not on the school. Another aspect of “bearing the cost” became evident as administrators in this study spoke of the financial cost to the LDS Church to provide release-time religious education for its youth.

Twenty percent of administrators mentioned the expense required to construct and staff a release-time religious instruction facility. One noted that the cost involved was probably the biggest reason other churches do not participate in the program. Two noted that state funding formulas allow a student to be released for a period or two and still claim the student as a full time equivalent, thus providing an added financial benefit to the public school. One noted outright that the LDS seminary saved the school money. He said, “I would be sure to ask about the financial impacts for schools with regard to having this arrangement, because it saves our school some money; those kids not being here results in one less teacher.” This administrator proceeded to outline how public schools that have an adjacent LDS seminary receive a double financial cost benefit. For example, he noted that students that are released for one period to attend LDS seminary are gone from the school for 12.5 percent of the day, yet the school collects funds from the state general fund and the local levy for the full student FTE. Additionally, the school

is saved a teacher salary or two, together with associated benefits. He noted other multiple cost factors of secretarial, custodial, physical plant, and other non educational related costs (NERC) that the school saves by having a LDS seminary program. The cost of a release-time LDS seminary program is borne by the LDS Church.

Because the LDS seminary does all the adjusting. Unanimously, administrators interviewed in this study stated that LDS release-time seminaries did all the adjusting to the school's schedule. No adjustment was ever made because of the seminary's needs. Administrators were quick to point out the LDS seminary is more than willing to work with any schedule and was totally flexible. "We say it and they do it" is the consensus attitude. As one principal summarized, "These are powerful relationship issues." One noted that the only adjustment the school has ever had to make was listing "seminary" on the master schedule when the LDS Church made it available.

However, the data suggests that this is not universally true. For example, because significant numbers of LDS students seek alternative credits to meet graduation requirements, some take a "zero hour" class which might necessitate the school providing an early class and teacher, thus accommodating and adjusting in part due to the presence of the LDS seminary. Also, in some cases school schedules have had to be adjusted regarding the offering of "singleton" college prep classes, that is, college prep classes that have only one section each term. Since many LDS students are among the more academic, college-bound students who need such courses, this has been a source of scheduling problem, particularly in small rural districts.

Another evidence of school adjusting to seminary was the school that had a policy that required students to attend six classes daily. Once LDS release-time seminary was

granted approval in the district, the school board had to change the policy to say that students had to be in five of the six classes offered by the school daily. This policy was modified after community input and negotiation, as captured in theme one of this analysis. In general, however, the data support administrators' contention that the seminary does all the adjusting. To further illustrate this point, three administrators, 20 percent of the participants, noted that on at least one occasion the teacher of the LDS seminary had approached the school with a request to more equally balance class loads. Apparently the issue involved several very small seminary classes of single digit numbers of students and then a very large class or two of perhaps 40 or more students. School administrators feel that such requests are out of line with the principle of separation of church and state. In other words, the seminary's problems are their own, and administrators will not take school time or resources to solve them. One administrator, who had worked closely with a seminary teacher for seven or eight years, related this conversation:

We don't schedule kids based on your need at the seminary and because you have too many kids third hour is not my problem, because I have to staff the building equally and I've got to make sure that classes are balanced throughout the day. I don't balance seminary classes, and I don't adjust a kid's schedule based on what you need at the seminary. We had that discussion my first year here and we haven't had to do that since then.

This particular administrator went on to say that this conversation was cordially received by the CES teacher and that the seminary strives to ensure that all is done according to school policy. Schools schedule academic classes as the highest priority and

seminary is the lowest priority, or what is leftover. Administrators feel that in this regard they are not willing to grant preferential treatment to the LDS seminary and also that the seminary does not want to be perceived as receiving preferential treatment. As one participant said, “They cooperate. They know we know. They do not ask for more than we can give.”

Because it is legitimate. Administrators in this study suggest that LDS release-time religious instruction works because it is “legitimate,” meaning that LDS students released for religious instruction have something to do and some place to go. In other words, LDS seminary students once released do not run around unsupervised. This factor was suggested by 93 percent of administrators’ interviewed. However, one administrator reported receiving a phone call from some irate neighbors that high school kids were running around unsupervised in a nearby park during lunch. After some research this administrator concluded that the students were LDS seminary students having a picnic, which the administrator noted was “perfectly O.K., since they were not my students at that time.” Recalling that incident brought another memory to mind for this administrator, who shared the following,

I was late pulling onto campus and saw a van stopped at a stop sign. The kids in the van did a “Chinese fire drill” and mooned me. When they saw it was me they said, “Oh no!” And so I chased them into school, and I caught them, and the poor woman who was driving the van came in and she was totally chagrined. That was sort of my “moonied by the Mormons moment!” But that was just kids. That is not the seminary’s problem.

The structure and close supervision provided by the LDS seminary instructors was often commented on by administrators in very positive terms. Another incident that was shared provides further insight regarding the expectation that, once a student is released to an LDS seminary, they are supervised. In this case a woman approached the administrator to have her son released from school for a period “like those Mormon kids.” The principal responded,

Sure, I will release him to go to seminary if you want him to. [He said she shook her head vigorously and said, “No!”] [Laugh] If you are asking me to release your son to have a prep like the teachers the answer is no. You have to have something to do. I am not going to have your son roaming around sixth period while everyone else is in class, but if you want to release him to go to seminary, yeah he can go, or to go to some other [supervised] place. So we worked out an arrangement. He stays home first period and arrives late. She was happy with that, but I am not going to release a kid to roam the hallways with nothing to do.

Administrators seem to agree that LDS seminary works not only because the students are supervised and have something to do, but also because they have somewhere to go. In other words, seminary works because, physically, students have a legitimate place to go, and that place is not only close, it is also attractive (Refer to the photographs included in Chapter One, Figure 1). In fact, some participants implied that the seminary building was an extension, almost, of the public school setting. One slip of the tongue was noted when one [non LDS] administrator said, “We’ve got . . . They’ve got a great facility!” Such comments support the idea that participants in this study sensed students

that participate in LDS release-time seminary have a “safe” and appropriate place to go. Finally, regarding the LDS seminary physical facility, many administrators seemed to have never entered the seminary building. In fact, fewer than 25 percent indicated that they had ever been in the seminary. However, most would go to the seminary if required, for, said one, “Those are our kids over there!” When pressed to show the location of the LDS seminary, most of the administrators interviewed indicated the general physical location of the seminary building punctuated with several gestures into the air as to the general route one would follow to get there.

Because it is legal. Administrators in this study think that release-time religious instruction works because it is legal. This reason is placed last because it is hardly ever explicitly mentioned, although it is ever present. As stated several times, the principle of separation of church and state makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time it allows for the legality of such arrangements. Few administrators mention this fact. Only one, in response to the query, “Why do you have release-time LDS seminary at your school?”, said that it was because the program was legal. This is what is meant by stating at the outset that these principles are so much a part of American culture that they are often taken for granted or unspoken. One administrator, near the end of the interview, did state that the reason LDS release-time seminary is accommodated is because it is the law. This administrator then went on to say, “I think if the law didn’t say anything specifically, I would still work with families to accommodate it. I mean, it’s the basis of how we should run.” Thus, the data indicate that these administrators represent the values of their community as allowed by law and are careful and professional in their

approach to the community in reflecting back those values. In the case of LDS release-time religious instruction, the overall feeling of the administrators is that as long as the courts and state statutes allow for release-time, they will support and defend the practice. Therefore, they support it because it is legal and allowed.

Under what conditions might it not work? An interesting side note to this sub-theme is the hypothetical question posed by some of the participants along the lines of, “Under what conditions might religious release-time not work?” In half of those instances the administrator answered his own hypothetical question. Following are examples from the data,

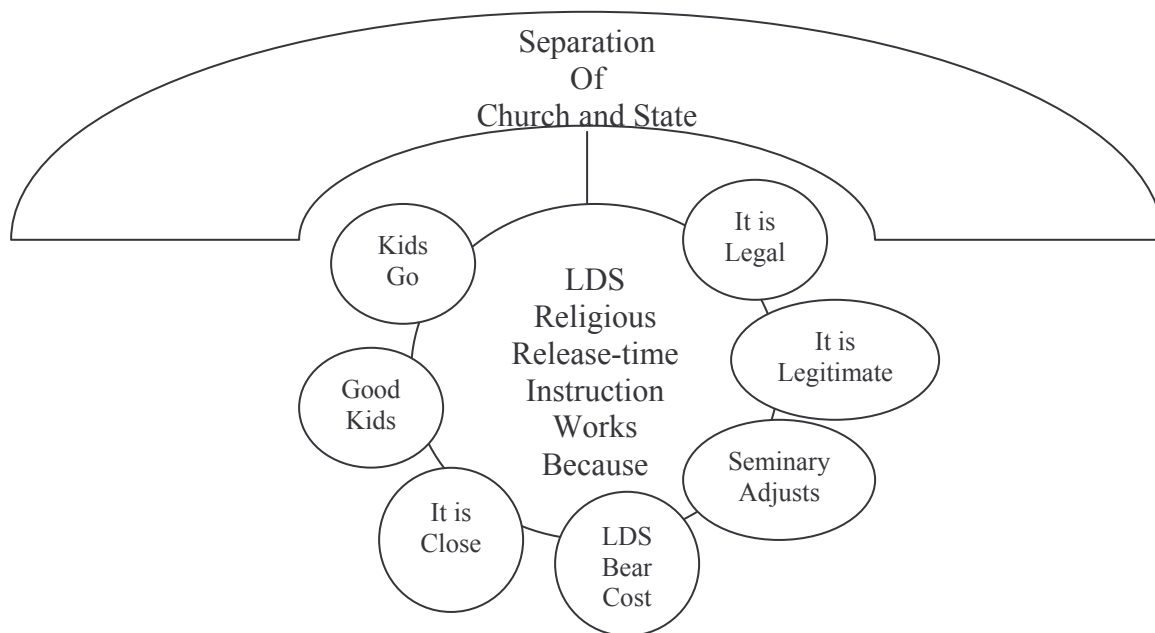
1. **If** you had a situation where you had a group that was causing a lot of problems and they were still getting release-time, I think you would see districts and school boards and administrators probably fighting it a little bit more. I think that is definitely a positive, in that release-time doesn’t detract from those kids being good students and good citizens. I think that is one of the reasons why districts do work closely with (pause) that group.
2. They have a respect for others. They have a work ethic. They are coming from a real base of strong families. **If** that wasn’t the case . . . the fact that it goes so well has to do with their strong families, their strong educational kids, their strong involved kids, I think that has a lot to with the fact that its pretty amiable, and I think the other thing that was a big part of it here is that one of our board members for the last 12 years was from the Church.

3. Timing. Students don't have transportation issues. **If** we didn't have the seminary real close and we had to bus them? That would be a good issue. But since we don't have to worry about it we don't. Even if they paid for the busing, there is still time.
4. Now, when you come towards allowing religious instruction off campus you know the state says that five periods make up a full day. So we can actually offer off campus and not effect our funding for one thing. So these are kind of like extra classes. A kid could take five classes in this building, and not take two classes, and I can still claim that child as a full FTE. Now, would we still do that **if** it cost the school? Now that would be an interesting question.

To summarize, the relationship might not work well if the religious group was overbearing, demanding and hard to get along with or their students were not well-behaved good students or citizens. It might not work well if the seminary were not in close proximity to the school. Certainly the relationship would not work if services were required to be provided by the school as that is against the law and the principle of separation of church and state. Finally, it might not work if funding was scaled back to schools that participated in release time seminary. In conclusion, it is probable that violation of any of the seven listed reasons as to why LDS seminary works might jeopardize the program to some extent and therefore result in it not working well. However, the program of LDS release-time religious instruction not only works, but works well from the perspective administrators participating in this study.

Summary. As noted at the beginning of this theme, LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction Works, the principle of separation of church and state makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time the principle allows for the legality of such arrangements. Figure 5 illustrates the major theme and sub-themes that have been presented in this section.

Figure 5. Second manifestation: LDS seminaries exist and work well within the context of and under the principle of separation of church and state.



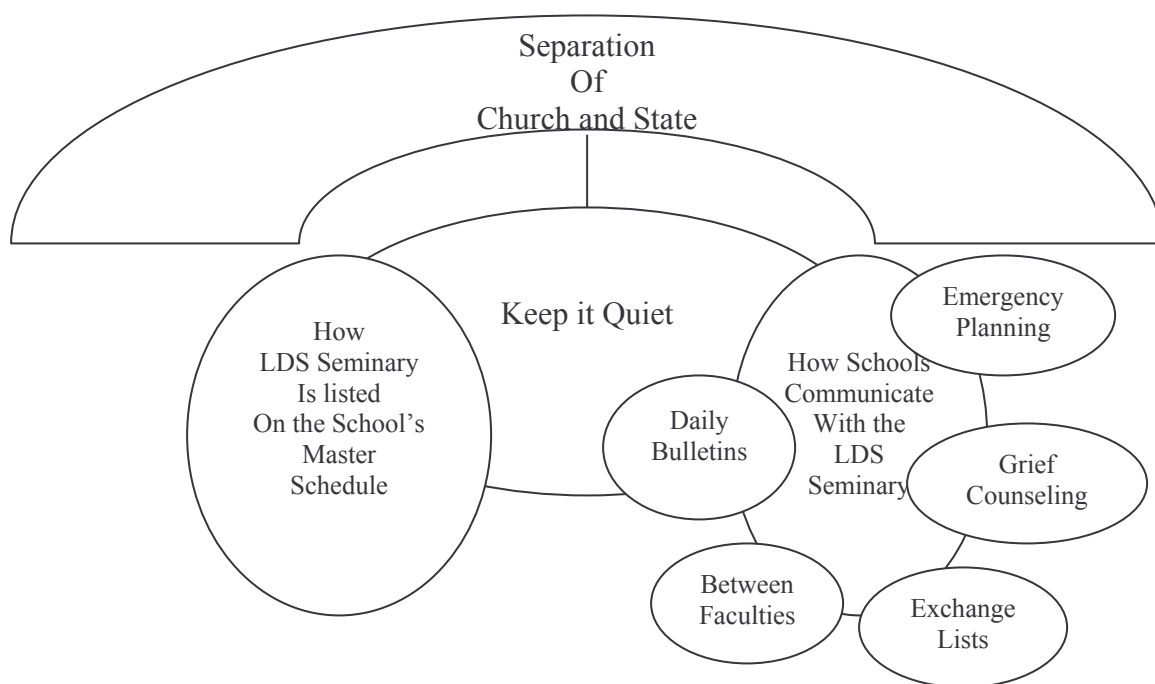
Knowing reasons why LDS seminary works well provides a backdrop to the final manifestation of the core phenomenon of separation of church and state, keeping the relationship quiet.

Keep it Quiet

Introduction. The third identifiable manifestation (see Figure 6) of the core phenomenon is the idea that the program of LDS release-time seminary needs to be not

only separate, but kept quiet. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Preface to the Analysis: Gaining Access, this third manifestation of the central theme was possibly foreshadowed by the difficulty experienced in gaining access to public high school administrators in order to discuss the subject of this study. The sense gained from talking to these administrators is that they would like to avoid controversy if at all possible. The data also suggest that these administrators think LDS seminary participants and faculty would rather avoid controversy as well. This is particularly evident in the data presented in the second manifestation of the central theme regarding the perception that, “The LDS seminary does all the adjusting.”

Figure 6. Third manifestation: “Keep it Quiet,” under overarching principle of separation of church and state.



Two behaviors on the part of school personnel illustrate the desire to keep the relationship with the LDS seminary “quiet”; first, how seminary is listed on the public

high school master schedule, and second, how communication with the seminary is conducted. The way that these behaviors are conducted seems to reassure school personnel that the principle of separation of church and state is maintained. Figure 6 shows the relationship of these two behaviors to the theme of “Keep it Quiet,” as well as the sub themes under “how to communicate.” Each of these topics is discussed in the following sections.

How seminary is listed on the public high school master schedule. LDS release-time religious instruction is commonly called seminary. When you say “seminary” in a school associated with LDS release-time religious instruction everyone knows what you are talking about. However, it is unlikely to find “seminary” listed on any school’s master schedule in the western state studied. The reason suggested by administrators in this study is that schools want to avoid even the appearance of impropriety in regard to separation of church and state.

Across the interviews, the two most common ways to list seminary on the master schedule were “off campus” or something with the word “release” in it, such as “release time” or “religious release.” Two administrators said that the program was listed as seminary, but when asked to find it on the master schedule, they searched in vain. They admitted they thought it was listed as seminary, but apparently it was something else. The most unique listing was “study hall,” which obviously is inaccurate. One administrator, after indicating that the master schedule listed LDS seminary as “release time,” quickly said, “It doesn’t say seminary!” Another, whose master schedule indicated seminary as “off campus,” noted, “We don’t have LDS on the schedule.” Yet,

in conversations, LDS release-time religious instruction is commonly referred to as seminary by administrators. Table 4 illustrates this point.

Table 4. How LDS seminary is listed on the public high school master schedule.

| Interview | Referred to by students/faculty as. . . | Listed on master schedule as. . . |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 01 | Seminary | Open Hour |
| 02 | Seminary | Off Campus or Open Period |
| 03 | Seminary | Off Campus |
| 04 | Seminary | Open Period |
| 05 | Seminary | ? |
| 06 | Seminary | Release Time |
| 07 | Seminary | Off Campus |
| 08 | Seminary | Study Hall |
| 09 | Seminary | Seminary |
| 10 | Seminary | Release Time |
| 11 | Seminary | Religious Release |
| 12 | Seminary | LDS Seminar |
| 13 | Seminary | ? |
| 14 | Seminary | Seminary |
| 15 | ? | ? |

How schools designate LDS release-time instruction is an area that seems to be a “lightning rod” for the separation of church and state issue. As has been noted, schools are very careful not to list seminary as seminary even though everyone knows it is seminary. The following dialogue illustrates this tension. The administrator remarked,

. . . open period, which in our designation we knew was seminary although we couldn’t call it seminary. Actually we called it seminary for one semester and got in trouble with the [school] district attorney. He said, “You can’t have that in there.” We said, “It’s a place holder, its no credit, its nothing.” But he didn’t like the idea of that being on the schedule so we changed it to open period or off campus or something . . . but we knew what it was.

In other words, to make sure that they kept an appropriate separation, administrators interviewed felt that they could not put “seminary” on their master schedule. It is interesting to note that the administrator quoted above saw no problem with the use of the word “seminary” to designate LDS release-time, but that legally the school district attorney would not risk impropriety or potential lawsuit over the issue of separation of church and state. In this particular case the administrator continued,

There is some feeling about church/state separation issues and so forth, is the school district promoting this or allowing it? Where is the line between promoting and allowing? In fact, that was you know . . . when I made the mistake of creating a course called “seminary” and putting it on the schedule, it probably didn’t last a full semester, but when I did that then that’s when I was told, “No, now you are stepping over the line allowing and getting too intertwined or too involved.” That is always something that you have to be aware of, you want to be supportive of the kids and their families who want to do this program, but at the same time you want to make sure that the school itself is sort of neutral on it.

School administrators interviewed as part of this study note that the public school programs and the LDS seminary program are very separate. They pointedly state that not only is the LDS release-time program separate from the public high school, it is also not part of their curriculum and is neither controlled, condoned, or disapproved of by the school. Somehow not having the initials “LDS,” or the word “seminary,” on the master schedule reinforces for them the idea of separation of church and state.

How communication takes place with the seminary. Because the LDS seminary is so close, and participating students come and go just like any other class in the high school, it is necessary that the seminary and the school communicate in order to avoid disrupting learning. However, maintaining the principle of separation of church and state is often manifested in the way that communication is negotiated. The most common form of communication between the seminary and the school is an email or bulletin, or sometimes a phone call, explaining the day's or week's schedule and events. This communication allows the seminary to adjust its schedule to fit the school's schedule. In the case of a daily bulletin a student that attended LDS seminary and was going to the seminary was usually the preferred carrier. It is generally regarded as inappropriate for the seminary to have a "mailbox" for announcements at the school. Though this arrangement would be for the purpose of facilitating communication, it would have the appearance of mingling church and state. One school used to have a box designated for the seminary where announcements were placed, but this was discontinued, because, as the administrator noted, of perception of violation of separation of church and state:

He [seminary teacher] used to have a mailbox in the faculty room, just like everybody that works in this building, and it was just a communication piece. But there was some discussion about "should he have a mailbox?" And it got into (pause) "Well, he is not really an employee of the building, and we don't have other non-employees with our mailbox." And then of course they brought up the church and state issue again. "If it is an issue with you folks. . ." (pause) Its not a problem (pause). I talked to Jim (pseudonym) and we worked out a deal, and he said he understood. He

didn't want to make any waves, and so we just keep a folder by the receptionist and he knows where it is and he will come in and just get [it].

Note that in the foregoing quote the administrator called the LDS seminary teacher by his first name. That was not uncommon throughout the data. Eighty-seven percent of administrators had met the LDS seminary teacher or faculty. Two mentioned that the individual was known by the title of "brother." Nearly half, 47 percent, knew the seminary teacher on a first name basis. Only two had never met the LDS seminary instructor, one in an urban and one in a rural school, yet both administrators indicated that they would welcome contact and would like to meet the instructor and see a relationship built. In fact, after noting that the LDS seminary teacher never visited their building, the urban administrator that had not met the seminary teacher said,

I think it would be a good idea if they came over and said, "Hi. We are from the seminary. We want you to know we are there. If you have any problems releasing, safety, anything, or if there is anything we can do, if we are causing any problems for you over there, let us know."

Overall, administrators in this study felt that it was important to have good communication and relationships with the LDS seminary faculty because "those are our students over there and we need to connect with them." This was probably most noticeable in several instances where the school delivered items to the seminary to be handed out during a designated period, for example, report cards. On a similar note, one administrator stated, "We don't want to say, 'Stay on your side of the street,' because we certainly don't feel that way about them." Most indicated that they would feel

comfortable visiting the seminary, and some had been there to visit, though they would hasten to explain that such visits did not take place very often.

Generally speaking, administrators in this study seemed to hold LDS seminary teachers in high regard. Nothing negative was ever said about LDS seminary teachers. Public school administrators seemed to be of the opinion that LDS seminary personnel supervised the students well and made all the adjustments so as to not impact the school in a negative way.

Another aspect of communication is the fact that very few verify with the seminary that those who sign up for LDS release-time actually attend. This is an area that is considered to be crossing the line of separation. In response to the probing question, "Do you check lists to see if students that sign up actually attend seminary?" One administrator responded, "No. That is probably the crossover between the school and the church that we can't get involved in. We can't baby-sit their kids and I don't think they want us to."

However, another administrator stated that it was their school's policy to ensure that the paper work is correct and that students are in seminary with the parent's knowledge. This administrator had an experience that precipitated the need to exchange lists, because, "I got burned!" By exchanging lists with the LDS seminary the school maintains accountability for students that are released. According to the principal just cited, such accountability eliminates potential problems with any student who says they are going to seminary and then simply disappears for a period without attending seminary, and no one is the wiser. Another concern of this administrator is students who might enroll in LDS release-time seminary without parental permission. Both scenarios

are unacceptable to this administrator who recognized the need to exchange lists. He explained,

How do we maintain accountability? When they leave for release-time we send a list over and they know who to expect, and if they get somebody who doesn't show, then they will let us know and say "Hey, so and so is not coming." We haven't really had hardly any problems. For our accountability, since it says release, it doesn't say where or what, for us they are out of the building. If they happen to be in the building, then we want to know what is going on, why aren't you over there. Also, a student that is not supposed to be going over, showing up.

This particular administrator because of previous experience, had procedures in place that tracked not just LDS release-time seminary students, but any student that had an open period throughout the day. This was the only administrator interviewed as part of this study that decisively indicated that he exchanged lists with the LDS seminary or thought it appropriate to do so.

Two additional areas of communication with the LDS release-time seminary were mentioned by administrators. The first was in the case of a tragedy and grief counseling. Four principals, 27 percent, expressed appreciation to the LDS seminary for times of support when there were school-related tragedies. In fact, one administrator pointed to a plastic bag of books and clothing that lay beside his desk and indicated that he had just cleaned out the locker of a young man who earlier in the week had committed suicide. He was going to deliver this bag to the parents of that young man later in the day. Each administrator that mentioned tragedy or grief counseling felt that the support of the LDS

seminary and the discussion and teaching received there was beneficial to the students that were released. In cases of tragedy one of the first calls several administrators made was to notify the LDS seminary teacher of the tragedy.

Finally, with regard to communication, is what to do in the case of an emergency? How can the school communicate with the LDS seminary in the case of a lockdown, bomb threat or other hazardous situation? Most administrators that brought up this topic had access to the phone number of the seminary. One even went so far as to know the cell phone of the LDS seminary instructor. Another noted that the seminary was asked to purchase a school radio for approximately \$350 just in case of such an emergency. These administrators indicated that they did not want their students coming back into harm's way. One school went so far as to incorporate the seminary building, because of proximity, into its evacuation plan. However this "line item" was removed when several parents called and said, "I don't want my child going to the LDS seminary building!" To which the administrator confided, "This would be a critical incident situation where you might have a gunman or something in here, so who would care what you think then!"

However, even emergencies do not relax barriers of communication when it comes to separation of church and state. This principle is illustrated in the following story shared by one administrator.

Several years ago I was principal over here at the elementary (gestured west) and it was funny, because our sewer line clogged up. I called the young man at the seminary, because they were close and said, "Hey, we need to use your bathrooms. I've got 400 little kids that are going to need (pause) because I had to find bathrooms quick for some people. You can't

have a school with a bunch of little kids and no bathroom that is working! That is a no go. And the young man was so funny, said (voice went to a breathless, hushed voice) “Well, I’ll have to check. I’ll have to check and see.” He never got back to us and so I had to figure it out elsewhere. I won’t use his name, but one of their leaders found out and called me up and said, “I have talked to our young man and if anything like that ever happens again please let us know, because you go use what you need to use.” I think the young man just wasn’t secure enough about, “Oh no! I don’t know if I can let them come over here or not?!”

The perspective of this administrator is that the emergency created a reason to relax the strict rule of separation of church and state. This story is representative of potential miscommunication between the LDS release-time seminary faculty and public high school personnel.

In short, how the public school communicates with the LDS seminary might depend on who is looking and what they think of the communication. According to the administrators interviewed, communication is necessary and desired, but held to a minimum and adjusted as deemed appropriate.

Summary. School administrators, as representatives of the public high school and the community, maintain the principle of separation of church and state as it pertains specifically to LDS release-time religious instruction. As noted, schools are very careful how they list LDS seminary on their master schedule. Also, essential communication between the public high school and the LDS seminary may often be a delicate problem.

How communication takes place can be tricky to negotiate in the school community and causes expressed concerns about “crossing the line of separation.”

Summary

As noted at the outset of this analysis, the purpose of this study was to explore public high school administrators’ attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries in one western state. The central theme emerging from the analysis of data is that the legal principle of separation of church and state underlies and overarches the relationship between the public school and release-time religious instruction. This principle makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time; at the same time, the principle of separation of church and state allows for the legality of such arrangements. Separation of church and state appears to have become such an integral and accepted part of our United States American culture that it is taken for granted and therefore rarely verbalized; in fact, the principle was scarcely explicitly mentioned by participants in this study. Yet as an underlying or overarching principle it is everywhere present in the data. The principle of separation of church and state is manifested in three ways expressed by administrators: First, in community negotiation allowing LDS release-time seminary; second, in the fact that LDS release-time religious instruction works at all and how it works; and, third, in ways the school attempts to keep the relationship quiet and out of public view or separate. Administrators are of the opinion that the program of LDS release-time seminary will continue to work in the future, providing the conditions and law remain the same.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. Questions that guided every aspect the study were: What are public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions in regard to LDS release-time religious instruction? What works well in this arrangement from their point of view? What does not work well in this arrangement?

Chapter Four presented the analysis of data in which the metaphor of an umbrella was used to describe the emergent central or core phenomenon represented by the overarching principle of separation of church and state in America. Three separate manifestations of the principle of separation of church and state were presented, namely, (a) community negotiation in changing times allows release-time religious instruction, (b) why LDS release-time religious instruction works, and (c) ways the school attempts to keep the relationship quiet and out of public view or separate.

This chapter first presents the conclusions of this study, in other words, what was found and what does it all mean? Next, the implications of the study are discussed, with specific application to public high school administrators and local school boards, LDS CES personnel and LDS families, and other religious denominations that currently participate in release-time religious instruction, or may in the future consider release-time

religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public schools. Implications for further study based on the conclusions of this study will also be discussed.

Conclusions

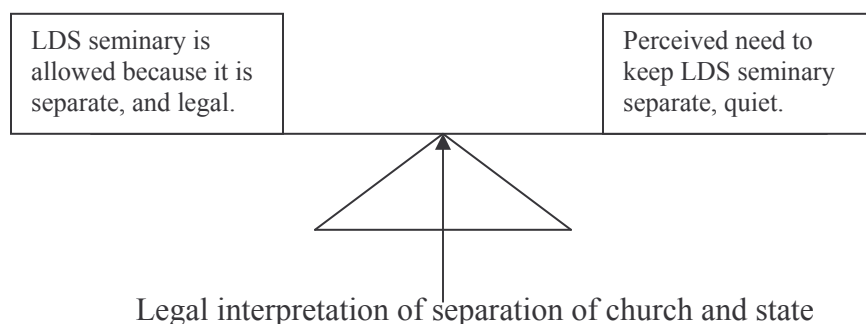
Analysis of data from this study of public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time LDS seminary resulted in the following conclusions: (a) Separation of church and state and its legal interpretation provides a fulcrum point for the existence and maintenance of LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools; (b) LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools is not just "allowed," but works well or seamlessly due to many identifiable reasons; and (c) public high school administrators do not take responsibility for, but support students' choice to attend the release-time LDS seminary program, as per community decision and local school policy allowing release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to the public high school.

Separation of Church and State Provides a Fulcrum Point

As noted in Chapter Two, in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952) the United States Supreme Court held that public school students could be released from compulsory education during regular school hours to attend religious instruction off school property. The principle of separation of church and state, as applied in this ruling, makes it necessary for religious groups that want daytime religious instruction for youth to establish programs like release-time, at the same time allowing for the legality of such arrangements. It is concluded from this study that the principle of separation of church and state acts much like a fulcrum point in maintaining balance in the relationship with the public school. On one hand the principle allows the release-time religious instruction

program to exist because it is separate, and legal. On the other hand, there is an “unwritten order of things” that suggests that it is important to keep this arrangement quiet in order to maintain an appropriate relationship of separation of church and state. Figure 7 illustrates the concept that the principle of separation of church and state provides a fulcrum point for the existence and maintenance of LDS release-time seminary.

Figure 7. Separation of church and state and its legal interpretations provides a fulcrum point for the existence, and maintenance, of LDS release-time seminary.



Evidence from the literature supporting the conclusion that LDS seminary is allowed because it is separate and legal is found in the legal application of the Supreme Court ruling in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). Parenthetically, it is ironic that the principle of separation of church and state when first cited in case law resulted in the disenfranchisement of the LDS Church in *Reynolds v. United States* (1878); it is the same overarching principle that now provides for the existence and maintenance of the program of LDS release-time seminary adjacent to public high schools today.

Evidence from the data that there is a perceived “unwritten order of things” to keep this arrangement between the LDS seminary and the adjacent public high school quiet in order to maintain an appropriate relationship of separation of church and state

may be found in several themes in the data, including how LDS seminary is listed on the public high school master schedule, how communication takes place with the LDS seminary, and concern that LDS members of local school boards avoid the appearance of favoritism regarding the program of LDS seminary.

In the introduction to Chapter Four, *Administrators' Attitudes and Perceptions*, it was noted that separation of church and state appears to have become such an integral and accepted part of our United States American culture that it is taken for granted and therefore rarely verbalized; in fact, the principle was scarcely explicitly mentioned by participants in this study. However, it is abundantly clear in the data, including the examples of how the school keeps the relationship “quiet.” Keeping the relationship quiet between the LDS seminary and the adjacent public high school, perhaps between religion and public schooling in general, has resulted in little discussion of this arrangement in the literature. As displayed in Figure 7, the principle of separation of church and state provides a fulcrum point for the legal existence and quiet maintenance of LDS release-time seminary.

Release-Time LDS Seminary Works Well for Many Reasons

From the analysis of data in this study, it may be concluded that LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools is not just “allowed,” but works well or seamlessly due to many identifiable reasons discussed in Chapter Four. For example, it was found that communities that allow LDS release-time religious instruction respect and admire religious values; thus LDS seminary works because it reflects community values. Additionally, today’s public schools maintain the attitude of accommodating student choice in a flexible and changing society. Time for religious

instruction is considered by the participants of this study to be part of the concept of educating the whole child. Many public high schools today release students for a variety of reasons including work, sleep, health, and religion. In this context, release-time for religious instruction is found to be a significant part of a student's education.

Literature reviewed for this study show that the LDS Church has made significant financial and organizational investment into its release-time religious instruction program adjacent to public high schools. Results from this study show that school administrators are somewhat aware of the cost savings benefit of having an adjacent LDS seminary. This supports the assertion made in *Time for God* (2000) and the study by Elms, Peck, and Stones (2003) that monetary savings are realized by schools that allow release-time religious instruction.

As noted in Chapter Two, there is a vested interest on the part of the LDS Church to make the relationship with the public high school work. In contrast to many other faith-based organizations, the LDS Church relies on the public school system to educate its youth rather than withdrawing into private or parochial schools (Clark, 1938). Additionally, LDS Church leaders support public education teachers by telling its members that “disrespect for teachers, in public schools or in Church schools, brings trouble at home as well” (Packer, 1983, p. 67).

The support of LDS parents in the community for public schools also helps the relationship work between LDS seminary and the public high school. In Chapter Four it was noted that many administrators are of the opinion that LDS parents “don't beat us up,” and give “outstanding support.” LDS parents were found to actively participate on local school boards. While there were occasional concerns regarding perceived

preferential treatment toward the LDS seminary, there was also marked admiration for exemplary service to the public schools. LDS families were often characterized as “stable” and associated with higher socioeconomic status. Administrators often expressed appreciation for academic achievements of LDS youth, including good scores on state mandated testing, with credit often being given to supportive parents.

The public high school model of core classes and elective periods spread over a multi-period day was found to contribute well to LDS seminary working seamlessly in the public high school environment. Additionally, all the reasons cited in the Chapter Four section, LDS Release-Time Religious Instruction Works, are concluded to be applicable in this section, namely, (a) because the seminary building is close, (b) because students that take seminary and the LDS Church bear the cost, (c) because the LDS seminary does all the adjusting, (d) because students that are released from the public high school have someplace to go and something to do during the time they are released. In other words, it is legitimate, and (e) because it is legal.

Finally, the “bottom line” conclusion resulting from the participants in this study, as to why release-time LDS seminary works, comes down to the simple fact that “kids go.” Simply stated, given a choice, the majority of LDS youth choose to participate in LDS release-time religious instruction. Students participating in LDS seminary are also characterized as “good kids” in a variety of ways discussed in Chapter Four. This conclusion seems to verify the testimonial statements in *Time for God* (2000), cited in Chapter Two, that release-time religious instruction has a positive impact on public schools.

Public High School Administrators are not Responsible for, but Support Students' Choice to Attend Release-Time LDS Seminary







Public high school administrators do not take responsibility for, but support students' choice to attend the release-time LDS seminary program, as per community decision and local school policy allowing release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to the public high school. In reaching this conclusion, it was found that administrators do not take responsibility for the decision allowing release-time religious instruction at the public high school. They merely represent the results of the local school board decision allowing release for religious instruction back to the community, often saying, "Anyone can do it." In this regard administrators are in a position of neutrality on the issue of release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to the public high school. Not only were the administrators' questioned neutral in their attitude toward LDS seminary, but their own personal bias, if any, was found to have no bearing on the success or failure of the program of release-time. This finding contradicts the conclusions reached by Ham (1966), and suggested by Dierenfield (1973), that enrollment in release-time religious education is dependent to some degree on the attitude of the public high school administrator.

Additionally, even though it was noted in Chapter Three that public high school administrators interviewed as part of this study were generally religious and conservative (Carlson, 1972; Tyack & Hansot, 1982), it may be concluded from analysis of data that administrators' level of religiosity appeared to have no bearing on the existence, maintenance, or success of the LDS release-time seminary program.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study may have implications for policy and practice (see Figure 8) for public high school administrators and local school boards, LDS Church Education System personnel and LDS families, and other religious denominations that currently participate in release-time religious instruction, or may in the future consider release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public schools.

Figure 8. Matrix for implications resulting from the conclusions of the study.

| Conclusions → | Conclusion 1 | Conclusion 2 | Conclusion 3 |
|--|---|--|---|
| Implications For  | Separation of church and state and its legal interpretations provides a fulcrum point for the existence and maintenance of release-time religious instruction | Release-time religious instruction patterned after the LDS model works very well in the public high school setting | Public school administrators are not responsible for release-time religious instruction, but support students' choice to participate, as allowed by school policy |
| Public High School Administrators and Local School Board |  |  |  |
| LDS CES Personnel and LDS families |  | Implications for Policy & Practice | |
| Other Religious Denominations |  | | |

The following sections will discuss implications for each group related to each of the three major conclusions of the study. Figure 8 represents graphically the organization of this discussion.

Public High School Administrators and Local School Board

The fulcrum point of separation of church and state which provides for both the legality of release-time religious instruction and the perceived need to keep that relationship quiet has had a “muting effect” on informing public school administrators regarding the relationship of the public school and release-time religious instruction. The first and most obvious implication for public high school administrators and local school boards is that because of this study there is now reliable information regarding the nature of the relationship of public schools with programs of release-time religious instruction. This study is thought to be the first of its kind exploring the relationship of release-time religious instruction with the public school from the perspective of high school administrators. The results of this study constitute a step toward informing public high school administrators of the relationship between the public school and release-time religious instruction from the perspective of the public high school administrator.

Along these lines, Campbell (2002) conducted a study regarding teacher knowledge of church and state issues. In his dissertation entitled, *High School Teachers’ Knowledge of Legal Parameters Regarding Church/State Issues*, he concluded that respondents had considerable misperceptions about church/state legal parameters. He suggested teacher in-service training to understand the nature and proper place of religion in the public schools. He also stated that many educators expressed interest on becoming informed regarding the topic of his study. I agree with Campbell’s assessment that there

is an interest by public school educators in becoming informed regarding legal topics involving separation of church and state. Many participants in this study expressed an interest in what other administrators' perspectives were regarding the subject of release-time LDS seminary and requested I share the results of this study with them at the conclusion of the study.

Second, the fact that the LDS model of release-time religious instruction works very well or seamlessly in the public high school setting may help inform local school boards considering the formation of policy allowing release-time religious instruction adjacent to public schools under their jurisdiction. In this context, recall the words of Fowler (2004),

The final stage of implementation is institutionalization, the period during which an innovation is incorporated into the organization. A policy has been fully institutionalized when it has been *seamlessly* integrated into the routine practices of the school or district. No longer perceived as new or special, it has become the way we do things around here. (p. 292)

As noted in Chapter Two, the LDS Church has participated in release-time religious instruction in seminaries adjacent to public high schools for 94 years, and 54 years since the Supreme Court ruling in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), and has successfully adapted its release-time religious instruction program into the routine practices of the public high school. This may explain in part why there has been so little conflict or public debate regarding this arrangement. For local school boards considering implementing LDS release-time religious instruction in a local public high school, it may be worth reviewing

the financial backing, and professional organizational structure, of the LDS Church Educational System.

Even though the results of this study show that LDS release-time religious instruction works well in the public high school there are policies that might be considered by local school districts that may save possible future embarrassment or litigation. For example, it is recommended that the public school review lists of students released for the purpose of religious instruction with the sponsoring religious institution faculty. As noted in the section on communication in Chapter Four, this is an important issue of accountability which may prevent students from exploiting a potential loophole in the system and slip away unsupervised for the designated hour. Consider, if there is no school policy or practice requiring communication in exchanging student lists, students may sign up, not attend, and neither the public school nor the release-time religious institution would be the wiser. Such a scenario could possibly result in potential liability for the public school.

Finally, it is suggested that public high school administrators, by becoming informed regarding their role in the relationship with adjacent release-time religious instruction, need not be hesitant in discussing the relationship with adjacent release-time religious instruction programs. Properly understanding this relationship will allow public high school administrators to confidently reflect to the community their role in this relationship and field questions from a position of neutrality. If public high school administrators had this knowledge perhaps they would not be so reticent in discussing the relationship of release-time religious instruction with the public school, and the difficulty

I experienced in gaining access with the participants of this study would be a thing of the past.

LDS Church Education System Personnel and LDS Families

Since the LDS Church Educational System has successfully operated seminaries adjacent to public high schools for the past 94 years there do not appear to be many suggestions regarding changes in LDS policy for this program. However, there are several implications for practice, based on the conclusions of this study, which might be advisable. First, it is recommended that LDS CES teachers continue to encourage promptness from students participating in release-time religious instruction. This is part of maintaining the quiet and seamless relationship with the public school. Also, based on participant responses in this study it is further recommended that CES teachers take the time to meet the administrator of the adjacent public high school and, as deemed appropriate, solicit feedback to accommodate the school within the bounds of separation of church and state. The practice of meticulously reviewing school lists of those released to the seminary, and if necessary reporting discrepancies to the school, as outlined earlier, is recommended.

Another suggestion is to remember the parameters of the principle of separation of church and state, and not ask for more than the public school can give. For example, sometimes CES teachers see the need to address uneven loads in release-time classes created by unequal distribution of students released during the periods of the school day. A practical solution to the dilemma of schools' refusing to balance classes is to simply notify the school counseling office of a limit placed on each class' enrollment. Schools may not balance classes, but they understand well the concept of class limits and, if

requested, may accommodate that request. For example, a limit of 30 students per class may result in one class of 30 and another of 15, but that beats a possible alternative of 40 students in one class and five students in another.

For LDS families, in implementing initial requests for release-time religious instruction for their children, it is advisable to remember that it is not the decision of the public high school administrator. Parents should work with the local school board in establishing policy to allow release-time religious instruction in a local school district. However, once a program of release-time religious instruction is in place, it is advisable to exercise kindness and patience toward school personnel who are working hard to accommodate requests for release-time religious instruction and avoid being negative or demanding, particularly to school counselors. Parents and students participating in release-time religious instruction may wish to periodically thank the public high school administrator for supporting and honoring students' choice to participate in release-time religious instruction.

Other Religious Denominations

The first implication resulting from this study for other religious denominations and faith-based organizations is that release-time religious instruction works for the LDS Church and may work for them. However, few religious denominations take advantage of this legal arrangement. For example, the Center for Law and Freedom of the Christian Legal Society in a 30 page document entitled, *Religious Release Time Education: The Overlooked Open Door in Public Schools* (Ericsson, Colby, & Payne, 1982), states that religious release-time instruction is an opportunity overlooked by most parents, clergymen, and educators. Many religiously oriented parents withdraw their children into

private or parochial schools in order for them to receive instruction in religious values. In a day of avowed separation of church and state, and at times even perceived hostility toward religion (see Chapter Two, Review of Literature), it is interesting that there is a very successful, working model of LDS daily release-time religious instruction in public high schools. Again, if the program of release-time religious instruction works for youth participating in LDS seminary, it may work for other religious denominations.

During this past year a University of North Carolina researcher published a book entitled *Soul Searching*. In exhaustive fashion the author set forth in text an examination of the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers. By her own admission the author was surprised to find Mormon (LDS) youth at the top of nearly every measure of religiosity studied. Smith (2005) found that LDS teens are most likely among all U.S. teens to hold religious beliefs similar to their parents. Perhaps there is no correlation with the success of the LDS release-time seminary program and the findings of Smith's study, yet the implication remains that emulation of the LDS model by other religious denominations may result in inculcating religious values in the denominations' youth. It is probable that the LDS support of public education, while providing the legally allowed practice of release-time religious instruction, has resulted in the findings posted by Smith. For example, consider the CES internal study that reports that 93 percent of LDS seminary graduates marry in LDS temples and 82 percent of young men graduating from LDS seminary plan to serve full-time LDS missions, both factors important in the LDS culture and value system (CES, Seminary Participation Study, 1994).

Another implication from this study is that the LDS model of release-time religious instruction may provide a solution to the conflict surrounding the WRE release-

time program documented in Chapter Two. As noted previously, in comparison to the WRE program model, LDS release-time seminaries serve high school students in grades 9-12, not K-5, and on a daily not weekly basis. Students are released for an elective period each day to a building adjacent to the public high school. Because high school students have a choice of electives there is no apparent controversy regarding this practice, thus seemingly avoiding conflict according to the Supreme Court decision in *McCollum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71* (1948) (Ericsson, et al., 1982), yet in keeping with the Court's decision in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). Other provisions such as parental permission, and location off school property, as specified in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), are the same in both the LDS and WRE programs.

The problem is that some students that opt out of the WRE release-time program feel stigmatized and have little to do during the time that their peers, often the majority, are in religion classes. It is recommended that the solution to this problem may be as simple as changing a portion of the daily/weekly elementary school schedule to an elective system, similar to a high school schedule, in order to accommodate the request for release-time religious instruction and avoid conflict and controversy. Even if this proposed solution was not tried it is almost certain that solutions are available to accommodate religious release-time in communities that value religious instruction.

Participants in this study stated repeatedly that they would welcome other religions' release-time programs conditioned upon local school board approval. In the words of the participants, "Anyone can do it." Again, the implication is that if this program works for the LDS Church it may work for other religious denominations or faith-based organizations. Instituting a program of release-time religious instruction

patterned after the LDS model, and experience of 94 years, may present a viable option to other religious denominations that seek alternatives to withdrawing their youth into private or parochial schools in order to include religious instruction in a student's core curriculum. Through release-time religious instruction time-honored religious values may be taught and passed along to the rising generation. Consider the statement by Packer (1994), LDS General Authority speaking about the beginning of the LDS release-time religious instruction program, ". . . when it was installed it was nice, but really not critically needed. It has had time to flourish and now helps to protect our youth from all that we face" (p. 92).

Summary of the Study

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries. Questions that guided the study were: What are public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions in regard to LDS release-time religious instruction? What works well in this arrangement from their point of view? What does not work well in this arrangement?

As has been demonstrated, analysis of data from this study resulted in the following conclusions: (a) Separation of church and state and its legal interpretation provides a fulcrum point for the existence and maintenance of LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools; (b) LDS release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public high schools is not just "allowed," but works well or seamlessly due to many identifiable reasons; and (c) public high school administrators do not take responsibility for, but support students' choice to attend the

release-time LDS seminary program, as per community decision and local school policy allowing release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to the public high school.

Implications drawn from the conclusions of this study may impact policy and practice for (a) public high school administrators and local school boards, (b) LDS CES personnel and LDS families, and (c) other religious denominations that currently participate in release-time religious instruction or may in the future consider release-time religious instruction in facilities adjacent to public schools.

Implications for Further Study

Several participants in this study suggested that public school counselors be interviewed for their attitude and perspective regarding this arrangement. Adding the perspectives and attitudes of public high school counselors could add to the knowledge distilled from this study. Also, administrators in this study often remarked that “Teachers feel that. . .,” or “Teachers think that. . . .” Interviewing public high school teachers regarding their attitudes and perspectives might contribute to the conclusions reached by this study.

Additionally, studies could be performed to verify statements made by administrators that took part in this study. For example, does the stable LDS family environment, observed by the participants, really result in higher socioeconomic status, and increased performance on mandated tests? Are a greater proportion of students that are released to LDS seminary involved as school leaders or in extra curricular activities than the average public high school student? Do LDS seminary faculty really uphold the principle of separation of church and state? There are numerous interesting questions that could be addressed as a result of the conclusions reached in this study.

Finally, it has been suggested that the LDS model of release-time religious instruction may avoid the conflict and controversy of the WRE model. Perhaps separate case studies could be conducted that examine different models of release-time religious instruction and a cross-case analysis could be conducted.

It is hoped that this study exploring public high school administrators' attitudes and perceptions of release-time religious instruction in LDS seminaries will create awareness of this unique arrangement and relationship, hitherto unexamined in the educational literature.

References

- Adam, H., & Martinez, C. (1987). *Summary of the critical issues in religious education in the public schools*. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from [Http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD).
- Alexander, K., & Alexander, D. M. (1992). *American public school law* (3rd ed.). St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company.
- AP: *Parents challenge schoolday Bible classes in Shenandoah Valley*. (2005, February 13). Retrieved February 13, 2005, from <http://www.newsleader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050213>.
- Arnold, R. J. (1978). A comparison of attitudes of three groups toward released time for religious instruction in Oregon. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oregon State University, Corvallis.
- Arrington, L. J. (1958). *Great basin kingdom: An economic history of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ascik, T. R. (1986). The courts and education. *The World & I*, 1(3-4), 661-675.
- Baer, R. A., & Carper, J. C. (1999). Spirituality and the public schools: An evangelical perspective. *Educational Leadership*, 56(4), 33-37.
- Barton, D. (1993). *America's godly heritage*. Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press.
- Barton, D. (1997). *Original intent: The courts, the Constitution, and religion*. Aledo, TX: Wallbuilder Press.
- Berrett, W. E. (1988). *A miracle in weekday religious education*. Salt Lake City, UT: Salt Lake Printing Center.
- Bilby, S. B. (2002). Community-driven school reform: Parents making a difference in education. *Mott Mosaic*, 1(2), 4-10.
- Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, 496 U.S. 226 (1990).
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Campbell, J. R. (2002). High school teachers' knowledge of legal parameters regarding church/state issues. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- Capper, C. A., Hafner, M. M., & Keyes, M. W. (2002). The role of community in

spiritually centered leadership for justice. In G. Furman (Ed.), *School as community: From promise to practice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Carlson, R. O. (1972). *School superintendents: Careers and performance*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.

CES annual information update (2005). Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CES, seminary enrollment/dropout study (1990-1994). Research Information Division. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CES, seminary participation study (1994). Research Information Division. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

City of Boerne v. Flores, 521 U.S. 507 (1997).

Clark, J. R. Jr. (1938). *The charted course of the church in education*. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Cobb, J. J. (1981). *Church-state: Religious practices*. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from Http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD.

Colby, K. W. (1993). Religious freedom in the public school setting. *Momentum*, 24(4), 55-59.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dierenfield, R. B. (1973). Religion in public schools: Its current status. *Religious Education*, 68, 96-114.

Ehrhardt, C. (1990). Religion in public schools: Free exercise, information, and neutrality. *Updating School Board Policies*, 21(1), 1-3.

Elms, R. T., Peck, D. W., & Stones, E. E. (2003). The financial cost benefit of release-time LDS seminaries, *Washington State University graduate education finance class*. ESD 1-2-3. Pasco, WA.

Equal Access Act of 1984, 20 U.S.C. § 4071-74.

Ericsson, S. E., Colby, K., & Payne, R. (1982). *Religious release time education: The*

overlooked open door in public schools. Oak Park, IL: Center for Law and Religious Freedom of the Christian Legal Society.

Everson v. Board of Education of Township Ewing, 330 U.S. 1 (1947).

Faith based groups given \$1 billion in 2003. (2005, January 3). *The Columbia Basin Herald*, p. 8.

Feldman, A. (2003). Validity and quality in self-study. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 26-28.

Fowler, F. C. (2004). *Policy studies for educational leaders*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Guidelines for school officials, volunteers and mentors participating in public school community partnerships. (2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Ham, H. M. (1966, September). Evaluating released time. *International Journal of Religious Education*, 43, 3-14.

Hinckley, G. B. (2003). A challenging time - a wonderful time [Satellite broadcast]. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Hippel, J. F. E. (1969). *The "wall of separation" between church and state*. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD

Jones, J. D. (2005, February 13). WRE debate draws national attention. *The News Leader*, p. A1.

Kilpatrick, J. (1994, July 7-8). Justices may be ready to ease hostile neutrality toward religion. *Deseret News*, p. A20.

Kossow, J. R. (1996). Preaching to the public school choir: The establishment clause, Rachel Bauchman, and the search for the elusive bright line. *Florida State University Law Review*, 24(1), 79-105.

LaMorte, M. W. (2002). *School law: Cases and concepts* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992).

Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

Levy, L. W. (1994). *The establishment clause: Religion and the first amendment*. Chapel

Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

McCarthy, M. M. (1988). *Religious challenges to the public school curriculum. Policy Memo Series No. 3*. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD

McCullum v. Board of Education of School District No. 71, 333 U. S. 203 (1948).

Nolte, M. C. (1979). *Teaching moral and spiritual values in public schools: Legal implications*. Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD

Oaks, D. H. (1989). *The Williamsburg Charter: Its importance to the nation, U.S. West Educational Symposium*. Boise, ID: Boise State University.

Packer, B. K. (1983, May). Agency and control. *Ensign*, 66-68.

Packer, B. K. (1994). *Teach the scriptures. Charge to religious educators* (3rd ed.). Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Partners for excellence: Families, businesses and communities working together for schools. Satellite town meeting #74. (2000). [Videotape]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Price, B. (2002). Laddered questions and qualitative data research interviews. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37(3), 273-281.

Religion in the public schools: A joint statement of current law. (1995). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Religious expression in public schools: A statement of principles. (1998). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb.

Republican party platform of 1856. Retrieved November 10, 2004, from <http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/r1856.html>

Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Seminary program yearly enrolled.* (2004). CES U.S. Northwest Area Office. Seattle, WA.
- Seminary program yearly enrolled.* (2005). CES U.S. Northwest Area Office. Seattle, WA.
- Smith, C. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stark, R. (1984). The rise of a new world faith. *Review of Religious Research*, 26(1), 18-27.
- Stark, R. (1996). So far, so good: A brief assessment of Mormon membership. *Review of Religious Research*, 38(2).
- Stern, M. D. (1994). *Religion and the Public schools: A summary of the law.* Retrieved October 28, 2004, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=RecordD
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tesch, R. (2004, Spring). Washington State University. Advanced Qualitative Research class, EDAD 537, Gail Furman, teacher. E. E. Stones, class notes. Pullman, WA.
- Thomas, O. S. (1999). Legal leeway on church-state in schools. *School Administrator*, 56(1), 12-16.
- Thomas, S. B. (1981). Religious practices in the schools: Alternatives to the "wall of separation" between church and state. *Texas Tech Journal of Education*, 8(3), 181-188.
- Time for God: Accommodating religious free exercise through released-time education.* (2000). Washington, DC: The Family Research Council.
- Trotter, A. (1995). On board the Bible bus. *Executive Educator*, 17(12), 14-16.
- Turner, M. (2004). Secretary to CES administrator John Beck. E. E. Stones. (Information from a phone conversation). Moses Lake, WA.
- Turner, M. (2006). CES Central Office secretary. E. E. Stones. (Information from a phone conversation). Moses Lake, WA.
- Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982) *Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 1820-1980.* New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

- Webster's new world dictionary of the American language: Second college edition.* (1980). New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies.* New York, NY: Free Press.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11*(4), 522-537.
- Wirth, L. M. (1992, July 20-21). Nontheistic, amoral, civil religion. *Deseret News*, p. B6.
- Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306 (1952).

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Public High School Administrator Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been principal/assistant principal? How many students, faculty? How long have you been in administration? Did/where teach? (Price, 2002)
2. What do you know about release-time religious instruction and public schools?
3. How would you describe the past/current relationship of the release-time LDS seminary with your school?
4. How would you describe your personal relationship with the LDS seminary faculty/release-time LDS students?
5. How would you describe the interaction of LDS release-time seminary students with other students at your school?
6. What works well being adjacent to an LDS seminary? (positive commendation?)
7. What problems or issues result from being adjacent to an LDS seminary? (Probes. . .conflicts between what is taught there vs. here? Negatives/barriers?)
8. What do you see in the future regarding your school and the LDS release-time seminary?
9. Are there other release-time religious groups at your school? (If yes) What is your relationship with them? How are they similar/different from LDS release-time students?
10. Would you like to comment further on anything you have said?
11. Is there anything you feel that I should have asked, that I didn't, or that you would like to tell me regarding our discussion of the LDS Seminary?

Appendix B

Public High School Administrator Interview Protocol - Phase Two

1. How long have you been principal/assistant principal? How many students, faculty? How long have you been in administration? Did/where teach? (Price, 2002)
2. What do you know about release-time religious instruction and public schools?
3. Are there other release-time religious groups at your school? (If yes) What is your relationship with them? How are they similar/different from LDS release-time?
4. Tell me about your school's history of association with the LDS seminary.
5. Tell me about the current arrangement with the LDS release-time seminary.
(probe)
6. What works well being adjacent to an LDS seminary? (Any positive commendation? Probe for concrete examples)
7. What problems or issues result from being adjacent to an LDS seminary?
(Probes. . .conflicts between what is taught there vs. here? Negatives/barriers?)
8. Tell me about the release-time students. Tell me about the LDS seminary faculty.
9. What do you see in the future regarding your school and the LDS release-time seminary?
10. Would you like to comment further on anything you have said?
11. Is there anything you feel that I should have asked, that I didn't, or that you would like to tell me regarding our discussion of the LDS Seminary?

***Assure them of confidentiality and thank them for time.