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A LIFE LIVED AT THE INTERSECTION: A CASE STUDY OF THE LEADERSHIP
AND HUMILITY OF FATHER THEODORE M. HESBURGH, C.S.C.

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business
Department of Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Mackenzie Elizabeth Lechlitner

May 2016

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Mackenzie Elizabeth Lechlitner

entitled

A Life Lived at the Intersection: A Case Study of the Leadership and Humility of
Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

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Abstract

Throughout history, societies have exhibited a deep fascination with leaders. In fact, many leaders adopted a sense of hero-affiliation due solely to the position they held. However, Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbanski (2005) paraphrased hero as an individual willing to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of others. What, then, are modern-day heroes lacking? Perhaps humility is the missing quality. Unlike heroism, humility, especially in its formal association with leadership, stands as a less explored concept. In the context of history, the value of humility has become generally associated with religiosity (Klancer, 2012). Not until 2001, when Jim Collins identified humility as a valuable virtue in the corporate world, did this examination of the intersection between leadership and humility really begin. However, one man who lived his life in this intersection well before Collins (2001a) conducted his study was Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President Emeritus of the University of Notre Dame. The present research explored the legacy of leadership Father Hesburgh and the role, if any, humility played in that story.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Father Theodore Hesburgh: A Leader with Opportunities	1
Father Theodore Hesburgh: A Leader with a Legacy	2
Leadership and Humility as Variables	4
Research Purpose and Questions	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review	6
Introduction	6
Understanding Leadership	6
Understanding Humility	10
Understanding the Intersection of Leadership and Humility	15
Understanding the College Presidency	16
Understanding the Leadership of Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.	17
Biographical Details	17
History of Hesburgh’s Leadership	20
Summary	21
Chapter 3 Methodology	22
Qualitative Case Study	22

Chapter 4 Context, Decisions, & Findings	25
Context.....	25
Decisions.....	28
Findings: Themes.....	39
Conclusion	42
Chapter 5 Discussion	44
Applications for Today	44
Implications of Themes.....	45
Limitations	47
Further Research	47
Conclusion	48
References.....	49

Chapter 1

Introduction

Father Theodore Hesburgh: A Leader with Opportunities

Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., was, by any standard, an accomplished man. In his autobiography, *God, Country, Notre Dame*, he recounted but some of the leadership opportunities with which he was presented during his lifetime:

I have traveled far and wide, far beyond the simple parish I envisioned as a young man. My obligation of service has led me into diverse yet interrelated roles: college teacher, theologian, president of a great university, counselor to four popes and six presidents. . . . I have held fourteen president appointments over the years, dealing with the social issues of our times, including civil rights, peaceful uses of atomic energy, campus unrest, amnesty for Vietnam offenders, Third World development, and immigration reform. (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. ix-x)

Few could thus dispute this man wore many hats—teacher, president, counselor, activist. Father Hesburgh acquired a breadth of experience as well as many credentials to his name.

Even with all the respect his accomplishments afforded him, Father Hesburgh concluded this list with the following sentiment: “But deep beneath it all, wherever I have been, whatever I have done, I have always and everywhere considered myself essentially a priest” (Hesburgh & Reddy, 1990, p. x). Hesburgh viewed becoming a priest as his

life's calling. He regarded the priesthood as the vocation through which he could best serve God and others and the job to which he most committed himself. Perhaps this perspective of his calling allowed Father Hesburgh to have such a powerful influence. The current study offered a glimpse into Father Hesburgh's life as an attempt to understand better this powerful influence.

Father Theodore Hesburgh: A Leader with a Legacy

Leaders in the twenty-first century, especially those in higher education, would do well to glean wisdom from individuals like Father Hesburgh who, as a leader, valued people individually while simultaneously campaigning for societal change. One expectation placed upon leaders is to lead confidently but also act practically. Father Hesburgh led Notre Dame through some of the most tumultuous times of its history. For example, he led the university through the civil rights movement during the 1960s; he guided it through the initiative of coeducation; he realigned the university focus from academically adequate to academically prestigious; he transformed campus culture by advocating for a fully excellent and fully Catholic education; and lastly, he directed the university through the student protests that occurred during the Vietnam War (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990).

Father Hesburgh made decisions on a daily basis that successfully led the students and faculty of his university with keen wisdom—and, some would argue, humility. The research of the present study emphasized how Hesburgh's leadership during the 1960s at the University of Notre Dame highlights the intersection between humility and leadership and the benefits accompanying this intersection.

Prior to his presidency, Hesburgh's work impressed many. He sold over 1,000 copies of his dissertation, *Theology of Catholic Action*; he wrote a book pertaining to consequences for college students entitled *God and the World of Man*, of which over 100,000 copies were sold; he taught and eventually chaired Notre Dame's Religion Department; he supported veterans adjustment to university living through chaplaincy, advocacy, and teaching; he served as dean of the College of Arts and Letters; and he ministered to the Notre Dame community (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990). Even with such accomplishments afforded to him through his Holy Cross priesthood, Hesburgh still felt "shaken with an attack of nerves" (p. 60) when Father John Cavanaugh announced his name as the University of Notre Dame's subsequent president. Thus, nervous yet trusting his predecessor, Hesburgh stepped into what would become the longest tenured presidency in Notre Dame's history.

Despite trepidation, Hesburgh had great dreams for the university's future. He envisioned Notre Dame as "a great Catholic university, the greatest in the world!" (Hesburgh & Reddy, 1990, p. 64). To accomplish such a dream, he knew he would need help. Hesburgh remarked, "To be great, a university needs great faculty, a great student body, and great facilities" (p. 64). He dreamed of becoming an integral part of radical transformation at Notre Dame rather than simply its leader—a desire that would find fulfillment.

Hesburgh revered leaders such as Albert Schweitzer, Abraham Herschel, Gandhi, and Mother Theresa as individuals he believed "inspired the young of our times because their lives personified what they proclaimed" (Hesburgh, 1970-1983, n.p.). Though Hesburgh never placed himself in that category, his life might position him among them.

Echoing St. Augustine, Hesburgh said, “Our words speak, but our actions shout” (Hesburgh, 1970-1983, n.p.). This statement serves as a foundation from which the current research built. It sought to understand the actions of not just a visionary leader but also an active, visionary leader. When Father Hesburgh was suggested as a case study for the research, he clearly embodied this type of visionary leadership in a number of ways. The research provided an opportunity to appreciate better not just *what* Hesburgh accomplished but also *how* he accomplished what he did. Therefore, best understanding *how* necessitated the following specific parameters and variables.

Leadership and Humility as Variables

Because the research is a case study, *leader* seemed too individualistic a term on which to settle. By contrast, *leadership*, as a variable, appeared more expansive and appropriate. Thus, the present research defined leadership as an ability to induce followers to pursue common purposes that represent the values and motivations of both the individual leader and the followers (Krishnan, 2003). Hesburgh led the Notre Dame community and beyond through confident decision-making and a deep commitment to action—in essence, he “personified what he proclaimed” (Hesburgh, 1970-1983, n.p.).

The second variable in this study is *humility*. The research defined humility as valuing and serving others through the practice of self-awareness (Dickson, 2011; Jones, 2012). Therefore, exercising humility becomes practicing a posture of genuine curiosity toward others’ wisdom without devaluing one’s self (Means, Wilson, Sturm, Biron, & Bach, 1990; Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). John Dickson, the author of *Humiltas*, analyzed whether greatness can come from humility. In particular, Dickson (2011) posited, “The most influential and inspiring people are often marked by humility” (p. 19).

Research Purpose and Questions

Building upon research such as Dickson's exploration, the research asked two similar questions: Did Father Theodore Hesburgh's life exemplify humility? If so, how did this sense of humility impact his practice of leadership? The research, therefore, endeavored to use Father Hesburgh's life to analyze how the constructs of leadership and humility intersect and determine if this model offers a more effective leadership experience for current and aspiring leaders to consider.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Though the concepts of leadership and humility have invaded conversations among influential individuals over the years, the conversation about their intersection is still quite new. Collins (2001a) reported two characteristics that separate good leaders from the great leaders: humility and will. It is not uncommon to pair the workings of a successful leader to the character trait of strong will. Rarely, however, does one pair a successful leader to the seemingly submissive trait of humility. Analyzing this relationship between leadership and humility first requires a clear, separate understanding of the two concepts. Following such a conceptual understanding, the research searched for a leadership position and an individual to fill that position in order to analyze this point of intersection and its proposed benefits more intricately. With a diverse set of responsibilities and thousands faculty and staff members, students, community members, and alumni watching, few leadership positions prove more complex than that of a college president, and few individual leaders could serve as better examples than Father Theodore Hesburgh.

Understanding Leadership

Krishnan (2003) defined leadership as the act of “inducing followers to pursue common purposes that represent the values and motivation of both leader and followers”

(p. 345), understanding “the crux of leadership is concern for the needs and goals of followers” (p. 345). An individual is not considered a leader without anyone, whether by choice or force, following him/her. Both the leader and the follower serve as bases of analysis to examine closely the effects of leadership. Brown and Trevino (2006) explained that, in order for a successful leader to make a positive impact, s/he must choose to work for the good of others instead of the benefit of self. This practice often characterizes a leader as effective. Still, leaders must prove healthy as well as effective.

Healthy leadership. In theory, the idea of healthy leadership seems simple. Collins (2001a) explained leadership requires daily choices in order to obtain provision and consistency in the decision making process. According to Thompson (2005), some daily practices that promote healthy leadership include early morning reflection, time—both given to others and kept for oneself, sacrifice, and persistence. In addition to these practices, one of the most common habits of healthy leaders is adopting a philosophy of discipline. This adopted culture includes practices of disciplined thought and behaviors of disciplined action (Collins, 2001a). The problem, though, is that understanding this culture does not always lead to practicing it. Progress made and measured is not about the skills of an individual leader but rather the functioning of the organization as a whole.

Ethical leadership. Another researched category of leadership is ethical leadership. Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) defined leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making” (p. 595-596). Ethical leaders remain honest and trustworthy and demonstrate high integrity. They also become labeled

as fair, principled decision makers, and as individuals who “practice what they preach” (Brown et al., 2005, p. 597; Dilenschneider, 2013).

Connected to this idea of ethical leadership, additional research examined the relationship between morality and effective leadership. In this regard, transactional leadership and transformational leadership emerge as two proposed types (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978). Transactional leaders recognize current values and the effect of such values on the motivations of both leader and follower; transformational leaders do not recognize current values as fixed but rather in constant need of change and adjustment.

Level 5 leadership. In the past few decades, researchers have used adjectives such as single-minded, selfish, inflexible, and even corrosive to describe some of the characteristics exemplified in American leaders (Dilenschneider, 2013). In response to such trends, Collins (2001a) conducted one of the most thought-provoking studies of leadership to date. In particular, Collins utilized his research to address the following inquiry: “What sets great companies apart?”

Collins (2011a) and his large team of researchers started with 1,435 good companies and examined their performance over 40 years. They used this data to determine which companies made the leap from good companies to great companies, in which great coincided with stability and financial gain. In this five-year project, Collins and his team found that leadership plays a significant role in separating the good companies from the great companies.

Through the research, Collins (2001a) categorized leadership from Level 1 to Level 5. “Level 1 relates to individual capability, Level 2 to team skills, Level 3 to managerial competence, and Level 4 to leadership as traditionally conceived” (Collins,

2001b, para. 9). Level 5 leaders possess all the skills of previous levels but demonstrate something extra (Collins, 2001a, 2001b). Collins (2001a) explained that exceptional Level 5 leaders of internationally recognized or thriving companies are “self effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy . . . a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. They are more like Lincoln and Socrates than Patton or Caesar” (p. 13). Collins describes Level 5 leaders as surpassing mere goodness and success, moving into a continuity of greatness. They persevere, capitalize on opportunity, and, as one Level 5 leader put it, “never stop trying to become qualified for the job” (p. 20).

Level 5 leaders possess the distinct ability to deliver a superior performance, make a distinct impact, and leave an enduring legacy (Collins, 2005). Collins reported:

[Level 5 leaders choose to] channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It is not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—*but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.* (p. 21)

In general, Collins (2001a) found almost all Level 5 leaders encompass a stoic determination and choose to credit success to others first and to “good luck” second. Rarely, if ever, do Level 5 leaders credit the institution’s successes to themselves.

Authentic leadership. Another type of leadership that connects to this idea of selflessness is authentic leadership. This leadership type exemplifies Collin’s (2001a) emphasis on humility and will, as authentic leaders tend to be marked by altruism, virtuous decision-making, integrity, role modeling, and self-awareness (Brown et. al, 2005). Pfeffer (1992) found in an examination of various studies involving leadership that the less obsessed a leader remains with power, the more likely that leader will

positively influence his or her followers: “The focus of the leadership has to shift away from styles or features of the leader, to what the follower really needs. Addressing the genuine, long-term needs of followers is the basis of true leadership” (Krishnan, 2003, p. 349). This idea of selflessness almost directly correlates with how Brown and Trevino (2006) define ethical leadership: the most effective leaders likely “look outside themselves to other individuals” for guidance or collaboration (p. 597).

Leadership appears an extremely multifarious concept as it holds both value and volatility. It exudes value when embodied ethically through the practice of healthy habits, and it can transform those who fall under its constituency. However, leadership simultaneously represents volatility because of the availability of power often accompanying it. When individuals in leadership harness such power for the good of others—as does an authentic leader—great leadership evolves.

Understanding Humility

Whether connected to leadership or not, humility remains a complex virtue. Neither humiliation nor self-effacing submission proves synonymous with humility. Rather, Dickson (2011) explained an attitude of humility motivates a choice to understand oneself more fully. This term deserves recognition yet often highlights individuals who desire none of the acknowledgment. Humility exists as “not merely a stance to be adopted, but a concept to be lived” (Molyneaux, 2003, p. 360).

Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbanski (2005) proposed three perspectives to frame humility: historically, monotheistically, and modernly. Historically, humility involved the losing of self, the need to let go of self, and the profound understanding of human limitation. Monotheists generally understand humility as recognizing others as worthy of

love and compassion, choosing to surrender, and remaining aware of the insignificance of one's moral worth. From a modern standpoint, humility has become merely described as an accurate view of oneself. In this frame of humility, one seeks to understand the self in an attempt to gain perspective and understand one's identity in relation to others.

Humility contextualized. Cultural influence can also impact one's conceptual understanding of humility. According to a study conducted in Singapore, humility is "marked by meekness or modesty in behavior, attitude or spirit, showing deferential or submissive respect, low in rank, quality or station" (Lee & Guat, 2008, p. 14).

A different study based in the United States and conducted by Owens, Johnson, and Mitchell (2013) defined humility as "an interpersonal characteristic that emerges in social contexts that connotes, a manifested willingness to view oneself accurately, a displayed appreciation of others' strengths and contributions and teachability" (p. 1519). The differences between this definition and that from Singapore highlight the positive and negative associations of humility with regard to cultural perception. Culture does not necessarily influence humility itself but rather the value placed on humility.

The differences between cultural understandings of humility lessen as humility becomes practiced. Lee and Guat (2008) identified five themes pertaining to the expression of humility in Singapore: self-awareness, open-mindedness, admitting mistakes, generosity in sharing, and recognizing and promoting the deserving participant. In addition, Bain (2004) found trust in any relationship almost inevitably pairs with humility. Humility, therefore, often creates opportunities for trust and sincere curiosity in relationships, because a genuine desire to learn from and with others is cultivated.

Humility embodied. “Humility is not a particularly trendy virtue” (Klancer, 2012, p. 662), though its popularity certainly appears to have grown. Collins’s study, published in 2001, offered but as one example of this popularity growth. However, in order to appreciate humility’s journey as an embodied characteristic, an understanding of its roots proves essential. Two particular individuals whose lives and work exemplify the some of the earliest notations of humility are the Confucian master Zhu Xi (AD 743-784) and the Christian saint Thomas of Aquinas (AD 1225-1274).

In Zhu’s exploration of life, sagehood, and discovery, he never specifically defined humility as a virtue by name. Still, by example and teaching, his regard for the virtue of humility wove throughout his character (Klancer, 2012). Zhu valued and recognized the vast amount of improvement that was consistent possibility. He also deeply treasured the “finitude of human intellect” (p. 664) in both himself and others. In essence, Zhu believed the virtue of humility came as a pleasant product of recognizing one’s own limitation—not a devaluing sense of self but rather a deeper sense of self-awareness. Zhu actively surrounded himself with others in order that he might discover more of his own limitations.

With more stated loyalty to humility than Zhu, Thomas of Aquinas devoted a great deal of his time to evidence humility as a virtue. In this regard, Thomas’ work grew from his view of God. Just as Christians view God as holy and blameless, he revered God’s example of humility in choosing to subject Himself to people who, by their nature, were sinners. Similar to Zhu Xi, Thomas held the strong perspective of humility as an avenue through which to consider one’s own deficiency (Klancer, 2012), because in this deficiency, one can most readily recognize the value of others. Thomas added that, in

this same practice, one can appropriately become confident of his or her own gifts, as those gifts help compensate for others' deficiencies. Zhu Xi and Thomas of Aquinas represented two different belief systems, spiritual commitments, centuries, and cultures, but, together, they helped birth an interwoven definition of the virtue of humility.

An interwoven definition, consequently, creates an urgency to learn continually in order for people to remember all they do not know rather than rest in a state of believing they already learned all they need to know. As both Zhu Xi and Thomas of Aquinas demonstrated through their lives and work, this virtue of humility proves more connected to daily choices than grand visions. This mindset becomes displayed in one's liturgies, not only needing practice but also fostering.

Humility in higher education. Jones (2012) viewed higher education as one particular context that serves as an excellent atmosphere in which to foster the virtue of humility. The processes Jones labeled as sophisticated development and reflective teaching offer two possible avenues through which to encourage students to understand the deeper meaning of humility. In addition to these two avenues, an exploration of the characteristics that might complement humility (i.e. service, kindness, sacrifice, etc.) provides another helpful perspective. "There is an intimate relation between intellectual humility and intellectual confidence" (p. 698), similar to the complementary virtues of courage and caution. Both courage and caution naturally relate to the cognitive state of fear. In a similar manner, both humility and confidence relate to the cognitive state of "poise or balance" (p. 698). Jones described this relationship:

If humility is not gained, there is a danger of the virtue of intellectual confidence becoming the vice of *arrogance*; and if confidence is not gained, there is a

corresponding danger of the virtue of intellectual humility becoming the vice of *intellectual cowardice*. The intellectually confident and humble person is thus cognitively balanced, believing as and when he or she should. (p. 698)

This cognitive balance exemplifies but one of the benefits of practicing a confidently humble demeanor.

Building upon the notion of balance as a positive state of being, the daily practice of achieving such balance leads into a deliberate openness. The virtues of confidence and humility also closely relate to—some might argue prove inseparable from—open-mindedness. Within balanced individuals exists the ability to acknowledge their own biases and perspectives in order to admit, “that it may be *they*—and not those who disagree with them—who have missed something” (Jones, 2012, p. 709). Ultimately, this recognition communicates knowledge that *they* have a great deal to learn from others.

Another way to understand humility, according to Means et al. (1990), comes with “an increase in the valuation of others and not a decrease in the valuation of self” (p. 214). Palmer (2007) explained, “We experience *humility* not because we have fought and lost but because humility is the only lens through which great things can be seen—and once we have seen them, humility is the only posture possible” (p. 110). Therefore, in consideration of these various understandings and the higher education context of this study, the current research defined humility as the valuing and serving of others through the practice of self-awareness. Therefore, one way to express humility comes with practicing a posture of genuine curiosity toward others’ wisdom but not at the expense of devaluing one’s own self.

Understanding the Intersection of Leadership and Humility

Tension in the Intersection. Leadership most often shares an association with power. This association is placed in various categories from hero to tyrant to savior and even to friend. Simultaneously, humility most often shares an association with meekness, death to self, lack of assertiveness, and a low position in rank (Lee & Guat, 2008). In an effort to understand these seemingly unrelated concepts, Collins (2001a) identified humility as the characteristic that separates good leaders from great leaders. This claim, therefore, prompts further exploration of the intersection between leadership and humility as well as the positive effects of this intersection on followers.

Four years after the research by Collins (2001a), Morris et al. (2005) chose to conduct a study on leadership virtues—like humility—that might motivate leader-like behaviors. With regard to followers' attraction, they found humility and charisma emerged on opposite ends of the spectrum; a charismatic leader proved more likely to gain notice than a leader displaying humility.

Another tension at the intersection of leadership and humility lies in the fact that adopting a posture of humility for the sake of one's self devalues the characteristic before even garnering observation. In essence, at the moment an individual tries to become less selfish for appearance, that individual has already misplaced the concept of humility. The following example illustrates such a tension: "Actors who thank their directors but truly believe that they were solely responsible for the film's success are being modest but not humble. This suggests that authentic humility leads to modesty but that modesty may not reflect true humility" (Morris et al., 2005, p. 1332). Thus, though seen extrinsically, for humility to become authentic, its motivation must remain intrinsic (Palmer, 2007).

Characteristics of the Intersection. In identifying authentically humble leaders, Morris et al. (2005) found various consistent characteristics. These characteristics included a willingness to self-examine and offer support for their followers. Humble leaders also displayed high levels of emotional intelligence. These consistencies also found appeared to prompt positive feedback from followers of these leaders. Followers showed signs of admiration, respect, trust, and a desire to emulate practices, in addition to a deep sense of loyalty to these leaders as people (Dickson, 2011; Morris et al., 2005). Similarly, Collins (2001a) found the biggest difference between self-serving and others-serving leadership came in the legacy of greatness that others-serving leaders left behind.

Understanding the College Presidency

The college presidency stands as one leadership position requiring ongoing excellence. College presidents have immense responsibility and are expected to “lead multifaceted, complex organizations with a complicated system of shared governance that makes leading them a very different challenge from that met by other leaders” (Carlo, 2014, p. 1). In addition to this difficult task, public interest in their decisions remains acute due to a significant connection to the community as a whole. Presidents are, at the very least, public figures within their communities. At any given time, college presidents are expected to connect with students, evaluate and lead faculty, and set forth a vision to engage all people connected to the institution. Their pursuit of this vision as well as their follow-through often directly determine their level of success.

Having acknowledged these difficulties, perhaps a greater problem lies in the fact that “there is no single, objective definition of success or failure in the higher education presidency” (Carlo, 2014, p. 3). The Association of Governing Boards of Universities

and Colleges (AGB, 2015) emphasizes the need for governing boards to perform ongoing assessment of college and university presidents and thus create guidelines by which boards can assess college and university presidents. For example, AGB developed five key elements in *The Annual Presidential Review* that suggest actions such as a president's written self-assessment, based on mutually agreed-upon goals and a board evaluation of the president's performance in meeting said goals. However, even with formative assessment, the legacy of a higher education president can remain unpredictable (Schuemann, 2014). Consequently, this legacy often becomes defined as "the state of affairs" at the conclusion of a presidential term (Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Schuemann, 2014).

Understanding the Leadership of Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.

With regard to the consideration of college presidents as leaders, Father Hesburgh beseeches a president not to view oneself as irreplaceable, positing humility as both truth and virtue (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1999). Hesburgh also added that college presidents should thank people often and accept the brokenness that comes with being human; with such an approach, others will embrace a realistic, shared vision as opposed to a mission broadcast from a high, unknown force, full of expectations irrational for human capacity (Hesburgh, 1994). His thoughtful, impassioned words demonstrate that Father Hesburgh valued the intersection of leadership and humility throughout many facets of his presidency (1952-1987) at the University of Notre Dame.

Biographical Details

Family. Theodore Martin Hesburgh was born on May 25, 1917, in Syracuse, New York, as the second of five children in a Catholic family (Hesburgh, 1990). He

lived in what he deemed a “typical Catholic household of the period” (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. 7). He attended Catholic school, was encouraged to be religious, never ate meat on Fridays, and rarely lied or cheated. From an early age, Hesburgh demonstrated a significant level of maturity. Hesburgh sensed his calling to the priesthood at the age of 12, though he did not formally act on this calling until his late teens. Few scholars or friends would dispute his potential in leadership was innate (Ames & Stritch, 1989; Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990).

The Congregation of the Holy Cross. Father Hesburgh first heard about the religious order, the Congregation of the Holy Cross from Father Tom Duffy when he was an alter boy in eighth grade (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990). Father Duffy first suggested Hesburgh attend the high school seminary at Notre Dame and became a committed champion to Hesburgh’s calling to the priesthood. According to Hesburgh, belonging to the Congregation of the Holy Cross, in essence, entailed living among a community of peers and taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. With fondness toward the religious order, Hesburgh said, “I had what I needed, and needed nothing more” (p. xi). Not only did Hesburgh have what he needed, but he also expressed gratitude for the freedom to accept non-clerical opportunities the order afforded him. To understand this freedom, though, one must understand more about the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Reverend Basil Moreau, C.S.C., founded the Congregation of the Holy Cross. Blessed Moreau, as he is affectionately known, established the order “[t]o fill the spiritual and educational void of Post-Revolutionary France” (Congregation of the Holy Cross, 2014a, para. 4). He desired for the brothers of the order to be educators in faith—particularly through the avenues of education, parish, and mission. Though these three

commitments initially developed in response to the calamity of its founding times, the order remains strongly committed to them today. Blessed Morearu, C.S.C. said, “While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven” (Congregation of the Holy Cross, 2014b, para. 1). Hesburgh became fully dedicated to God and the parish, but like the order to which he belonged, he also became dedicated to education and mission, both of which, at times, seem to fall outside of his perceived clerical duties—hence why freedom to him was so freely given.

Hesburgh began his affiliation with the Congregation of the Holy Cross when he arrived to Notre Dame’s campus in September of 1934, as a seventeen-year-old boy ready to train “for the priesthood” (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. 14). His time as a student and seminarian at Notre Dame included a plethora of life-changing opportunities. While at Notre Dame, he attended classes like most students, with the addition of more rules and an intensive, yearlong stint working at Rolling Prairie—a Holy Cross-owned, low-functioning farm Hesburgh compared to militant boot camp—between his first and second year as a student. He was also selected to study at the world-renowned Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, from which he returned home early due to the violence of World War II. After returning home, he studied and served in Washington D.C. at Holy Cross College before returning to Notre Dame to receive ordination as a priest. Once ordained, he returned to Washington D.C. to study for his doctorate in sacred theology at Catholic University of America, a degree which he earned just two years after his arrival. Hesburgh’s giftedness and service seemed to serve as propellers that continued to put opportunities in his quickly moving path.

After obtaining a doctoral degree and serving in various roles such as chaplain, theology department chair, and executive vice president, Hesburgh served as president of the University of Notre Dame from 1952 to 1987 (Hesburgh, 1990). Throughout his time as Notre Dame's leader, the success and recognition he gained for both himself and the university is undeniably monumental. Not only was his tenured presidency the longest in Notre Dame history, but his presidency also became recognized as one of the most successful in American higher education history (Ames & Stritch, 1989; Hogan, 2009).

History of Hesburgh's Leadership

Hesburgh was thus a man of significant accomplishment. In addition to being an ordained priest, receiving his doctorate, and becoming president of Notre Dame, he also received 150 honorary degrees in his lifetime. Throughout his presidency, he served as a lead in the fight for civil rights; maintained loyalty to his faith and the people close to him; consulted multiple presidents and popes—in addition to the fact that he worked with and for his students; approved the admission of women to the university; and supervised Notre Dame's endowment growth 40 times over the amount at the beginning of his tenure. Through all of these accomplishments, perhaps the most noteworthy achievement among them is that Hesburgh lived the entirety of his life as a man who practiced what he preached (Ames & Stritch, 1989; Hesburgh, 1969, 1974, 1976; McAward, 2014).

During Father Hesburgh's 35-year tenure, he adopted five discourses for educational growth, which he asked and encouraged his staff to follow: conducting self-examination, striving for excellence, pursuing the good in everyday life, seeking to garner transforming wisdom and setting an example for others (Hesburgh, 1994).

Hesburgh (1994) also outlined for his faculty and staff a specific checklist of steps to follow while working for the university's greater good. The steps reflected on the motivation and mindset behind decision-making—Hesburgh challenged the community at Notre Dame to make decisions not because they appear simple or cheap or popular but because they are right. Father Hesburgh not only promoted this perspective but lived it; he was a man willing to make decisions not for the betterment of himself but for the betterment of those around him.

Summary

Through an exploration of Father Hesburgh's story, the present research analyzed the intersection of leadership and humility and its potential positive effect on leaders. In addition, it examined the impact of this intersection on followers. Through definitions of leadership and humility, both individually and collectively, a brief outline of the college presidency, and a brief description of the life and leadership of Hesburgh, humility begins to surface as a virtue embodied by Father Hesburgh.

At the beginning of his autobiography, Hesburgh shared that, if his tombstone held only one word, it would hold the word *Priest* (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990). Replace priest with the word activist or teacher—among many other roles—and the sentiment remains equally remarkable, as these roles necessitate a choice to remain in a position of service and sacrifice. By simply observing the way Father Hesburgh lived his life, one could argue he held humility in high regard. Therefore, the current study explored whether or not leadership and humility, in both definition and practice, intersect in the life of Father Hesburgh, and if so, how this intersection influenced the decisions of this beloved Catholic leader.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Qualitative Case Study

Purpose and Method. This qualitative, narrative case study approach worked to identify the “essence” of one human’s experience while also requiring some inference from the researcher (Creswell, 2013). For this case study, the human experience was Father Hesburgh’s leadership with an additional analysis of how humility influences this leadership. The organization of this case study followed a sequenced structure of Hesburgh’s life. Document analysis guided the exploration of potential correlation between Father Hesburgh’s leadership and humility with the peaceful prosperity of Notre Dame during 1960s. The research sought to explore how, if at all, humility contributed to making Hesburgh a more effective college president and national leader.

Case Study Design. A case study design entails a “systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (Bromley, 1990, p. 302), and that phenomenon “may be an object of study, as well as a product of the inquiry” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). This design proved particularly useful because it involves the analysis of a real-life situation case within a bounded system (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). The real-life situation in the study was Father Hesburgh’s presidential leadership choices, and the bounded system was his presidency from 1960 to 1974 at Notre Dame. The added support of minor statistical description

became particularly helpful for the study in order to support the minimal inference of the researcher (Yin, 2009). An example of this statistical description comes in the student enrollment charts from 1960 to 1974. The researcher used a single instrumental case study for this exploration, which focused on the “issue” (Stake, 1995) of the intersection of leadership and humility in Father Hesburgh’s life.

The research is also historical research or a historiography, as Hesburgh passed away on February 26, 2015 (University of Notre Dame, 2016a). This historical case study attempted to recapture events, people, and situations in Father Hesburgh’s life to show how Hesburgh’s contributions, interactions, and efforts can still influence and shape the present. The research moved beyond facts and investigated the purposes and ideas those facts represent. Historical research works to learn from the past, ask questions in order to seek answers, discover implications, and make connections to the future (Berg, 1995).

Sources and Process Utilized for Study. A large portion of research done for this case study took place in the university [of Notre Dame] archives, located on the sixth floor of the Theodore M. Hesburgh Library, on Notre Dame’s campus. The researcher compiled articles, books, speeches, and various other historical sources. In order to analyze the documents, the researcher used the three primary parts of traditional historical analysis proposed by Connors (1992): external criticism, internal criticism, and synthesis of materials. These parts do not exist as a step-by-step process but rather function as repeated steps that can happen in various orders. External criticism examines the types of sources available and determines which ones the researcher uses. Internal criticism assesses the sources found by the researcher; it also includes a search for bias

from the researcher and confirmation of claims made by the researcher. The final stage involves synthesizing materials. At this point, the researcher provided structure to the compiled sources, gathers generalizations, cause and effects, and patterns and themes.

Due to the large quantity of material in the archives written by and about Father Hesburgh, the researcher mainly considered primary sources written by Hesburgh during the years mentioned previously, 1960 to 1974. After compiling sources and outlining themes, the researcher then cross-referenced this data with the definitions provided in the literature review. Some inference and judgment were required of the researcher as to how, and if, the intersection of leadership and humility affected influential decisions Father Hesburgh made.

Because leadership continues to necessitate change and innovation, the research analysis of Father's Hesburgh's life offered a timely model for application by a variety of leaders today.

Chapter 4

Context, Decisions, & Findings

Context

The separation of generations. The intersection of leadership and humility as considered through Father Theodore Hesburgh proves best analyzed after first developing a thorough understanding of the changing institutional and national contexts in which he served. One specific aspect of the cultural shift of the 1960s in the United States was active change (Gitlin, 1987). Young people across the nation, particularly those enrolled in universities, started to question both the authenticity of the so-called *American dream* and those who clung so desperately to it. As the Baby Boomers from 1946 to 1964 grew up, a significant crisis in the meaning of authority surfaced. Rebellion—or at least the illusion of it—rose and spread quickly. The traditional voice of an elder no longer held its once weighty influence on the young. Peer influence called for immediate change, and the flood of mass media furthered this movement. In *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, Gitlin explained,

The young insisted that their life situation was unprecedented (and therefore they had no one to follow); the older, that they *did* understand, so well, and with so many years' advantage, that they knew better (and therefore should be followed).
(p. 19)

In some places, healthy communication became strained between the young and the old.

In its place grew assumptions and deep misunderstandings.

In many cases, parents assumed their children's rejection of authority equated to a dismissal of morality. However, Gitlin (1987) argued otherwise, writing that middle class children "wanted to live out the commitments to justice, peace, equality, and personal freedoms which their parents professed" (p. 19). The younger generation desired action toward equality. They felt strongly that the generation before them had preached such values but not abided by them. Simultaneously, the more traditional outlook of most in the older generation considered the younger generation's opinions and actions disrespectful. This perceived disrespect weighed heavily on the older adults' dismissal of listening to the "inexperienced" youth. Therefore, the divide between the old and the young widened as the civil pursuits of racial, sexual, and economic equality began to consume university and college campuses across the nation.

The unrest of the University. The pursuit of equality in the 1960s transpired in various ways. In particular, diverse and complicated demonstrations began to wreak havoc on university campuses across the country. The civil rights movement and the Vietnam War seized the headlines of the student movement. During the fall of 1964, rebellion fueled the students at the University of California, Berkeley (UC–Berkeley) to press forward with mass meetings, tense negotiations, and public demonstration (Lipset & Altbach, 1969; The Bancroft Library, n.d.). Meanwhile, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) began to organize an antiwar march on Washington, D.C. for the following year (Lipset & Altbach, 1969). As the war effort in Vietnam escalated, so too did students' distaste for authority. In the fall of 1967, students organized a sit-in at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (UWM) to protest chemical weapons—a protest that

followed by the infamous bombing of Sterling Hall at UWM three years later. This bombing resulted in the death of an innocent postdoctoral researcher, Robert Fassnacht (Kasparack, Malone, & Schock, 2004; Keniston, 1971). Unfortunately, the push for peace and anti-military sentiments often led to such outbursts of violence.

Students also became increasingly hostile toward any type of armed service presence—military, police, or otherwise—as demonstrated by the damage done from 1967 to 1968. During these two years, Stop the Draft protests took place at the Oakland Army Induction Center in California through nonviolent civil disobedience; marches persisted in Washington, D.C.; and racial inequalities continued to fuel conflict at places like South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland. Additionally, the second largest uprising took place at Columbia University in New York City on April 23, 1968, and absolute chaos broke out in Chicago on April 5, 1968. Masses gathered to protest the war and demand the removal of troops by supporting Eugene’s McCarthy’s nomination for President. Eventually, this tragic outburst became known as the Chicago Riots due to the confrontations between the police and protesters reaching an unprecedented level of violence. Two years later, in May 1970, the battle raged on between police and students, which resulted in six students’ deaths—four at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, and two at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi (Hesburgh, 1970; Keniston, 1971). The 1960s in America were unpredictable. While some universities remained aloof, for others peace hid in the shadows. Meanwhile, cultural respect between the young and the old continued to be a concern.

Tension at Notre Dame. Few individuals at Notre Dame escaped the brewing

cultural uproar's impact. With the steady rise in its academic prestige—thanks to its presidential leader gaining steady recognition for his public service—Notre Dame flirted with a growing limelight. Still, somehow, the students of Notre Dame reacted to this cultural shift in a unique way. Indeed, the anti-authority phenomenon reached Notre Dame and volatility tempted its students, but violence in response to cultural change or the war never prevailed (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990).

The small, everyday decisions—not the lofty, long-term decisions—made by Notre Dame students also set this population of young people apart from much of the crowd. For example, during the 1971-1972 academic year, Notre Dame hosted over thirty academic lectures on the topic of non-violence. A consistent group of students seemed committed to rational thought, not merely mass radicalism, which captivated many other campuses at that time (Staff Writer, 1963). Rationality, however, does not equate a lack of fervor. Notre Dame students still had opinions, which they often shared boldly. Perhaps the difference, though, was that the Notre Dame administration listened to the students, sometimes agreed with them, and modeled a way of taking action without hurting themselves or others.

Decisions

Father Hesburgh's active leadership. Father Hesburgh and his administration were in place as leadership over Notre Dame's campus for nearly a decade as the campus readied itself for the 1960s. Hesburgh and the administration were no strangers to taking action, nor were they unaware of the students' current view of authority. Hesburgh (1970) commented, "I think the generality of young people, for better or for worse, have a feeling that we've got our priorities all wrong" (n.p.). With the brink of the unrest on

the horizon, Notre Dame's administration desired to help students fight the injustices prevalent in American society, not inhibit them—as long as the fight took place without violence (Staff Writer, 1971). Father Hesburgh's actions provided an example of such a peaceful fight in which he fought for what he believed within the existing system, through words, actions, and non-violent demonstration (Hesburgh, n.d.c; *Notre Dame Alumnus*, 1976; Staff Writer, 1966a, 1966b; University of Notre Dame, 2016c).

Consequently, Notre Dame students saw in their president and leader a passionate pursuit of equality, as Father Hesburgh worked alongside the Presidents of the United States and other figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to fight for racial equality (Staff Writer, 1963). Hesburgh served, and eventually chaired, the United States Civil Rights Commission, a Presidentially-appointed post. Through such service, students watched a white, privileged male challenge a system that, for all intents and purposes, only promoted his status. Not intended to praise Hesburgh, this statement acknowledges that this model did not seem to be one students saw often during this era (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990; University of Notre Dame, 2016c).

During an interview with the *Anchorage News*, Father Hesburgh (1970) expressed his desire “to give young people many options” (n.p.). His work on the Gates Commission (the President's Commission for an All-Volunteer Army) greatly exemplified his care and dedication to providing freedom of choice. Never receiving a penny for such commissions—due to what he named his higher calling as a priest (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990)—Hesburgh spent countless hours researching the benefits and costs of freedom-based initiatives (Hesburgh, 1970). Hesburgh believed, whether or not the majority of students continued, “to try to improve things within the framework of

the system” depended upon the “kind of success” students had (n.p.). Therefore, Father Hesburgh strove to prepare Notre Dame students for such success within the system.

The authority struggle. Despite Hesburgh’s best efforts, strife between young and old at Notre Dame still surfaced. The authority struggle that lacked balance between expression and order appeared present in various ways. Though not desiring to limit a student’s right to demonstrate or exercise free speech, the administration wanted to insure students used such demonstrations for peaceful and constructive purposes. Even still, a few previous decisions voiced support by the administration and fueled students’ skepticism of this open-minded commitment to expression.

The 1960s brought a variety of challenges; leading amid such turmoil required consistency and conviction. Father Hesburgh watched, with the rest of the nation, as his colleagues’ jobs “became jobs of coping with violence rather than acting rationally within an educational system” (Hesburgh, 1970, n.p.). Scrutiny ran high; trust fell low; authority was often despised. The cultural revolution of the fight for equality invaded Notre Dame, and Father Hesburgh was never far from the core of this societal problem.

Responding to racism. Racism was an inequality, like many others, Father Hesburgh did not believe should exist. In particular, Father Hesburgh viewed racism as “the greatest moral problem of our time” (Hesburgh, n.d.e, p. 17). For Notre Dame, the crippling nature of racism was not just an issue that made students uncomfortable but an issue their president and leader loathed. In order to combat the complete lack of opportunities for African Americans on Notre Dame’s campus, Father Hesburgh established the Committee on Negro Enrollment (CONE).

Unfortunately, though, this effort received quick criticism due to the still-high

cost of tuition at Notre Dame (Valkenaar, 1965). In response to this criticism and the low number of African American students at Notre Dame, CONE began a university enrollment initiative. During this drive, Notre Dame admissions officers reached out to Catholic high schools around the country for names of African American students whose grades reflected an eligibility to attend Notre Dame. Of the 75% of schools who responded, all recommended students received information about the university, a note encouraging them to apply, and a letter from Father Hesburgh (Staff Writer, 1965).

As Notre Dame began to enroll more African American students, many people still shared Buck McFadden's sentiment printed in *The Voice*: "The University of Notre Dame is indeed desegregated, but by no means integrated" (p. 2). In 1965, African American students did not make up even 1% of the population and, nine years later, had only risen to just over 2% (Enrollment Statistics for Minorities, 1975).

Even still, in an effort to help African American students, as well as students of other races feel more at home, Hesburgh and other Notre Dame leaders began additional changes (*Notre Dame Bulletin*, 1970-1971). One such change was the addition of the Black Studies Program (BSP) to the curriculum. This new track, open to all students, grew out of recognition that "the needs and aspirations of black students to include the study of their culture and societal problem that have bearing on their lives" (*Notre Dame Alumnus*, 1967, p. 6). However, even decisions like the BSP could not subjugate the oppression African American students still experienced at Notre Dame. Therefore, the BSP's start date was delayed, and David Krashna, an African American student, believed the delay to be "just another case of the great white father image of paternalism which black people have been experiencing since the first black men arrived on the soil" (p. 6).

Though Hesburgh did not respond to Krashna specifically, he appeared very much aware of the racial inequalities at hand. In reference to one of his public appointments, Hesburgh (1960) recalled the following:

There wasn't a man among us who did not recognize that there were literally millions of people qualified to vote who were not able to vote for the next President of the United States, much less for their Senators, Congressmen and state officials. We had seen some of these people. They weren't units to us. They were flesh and blood people. (p. 4)

Hesburgh's awareness of racial disparity did not necessarily produce solutions, but his speeches and actions in opposition to this societal lesion demonstrated—at the very least—his willingness to engage with the injustices facing racial minorities.

A socioeconomic stratification. In addition to the racial disparity in existence, Father Hesburgh and the Notre Dame community noticed a socioeconomic disproportion in access in South Bend. More specifically, they realized the majority of low-income high school students in the South Bend area had little to no intention of going to college. This bleak future of youth concerned Father Hesburgh as well as the students of the university. In response, Notre Dame students threw themselves into community partnerships in an attempt to address this educational disparity. Programs such as Upward Bound (Staff Writer, 1966b) and Big Brothers (Staff Writer, 1966a) developed to fight peacefully the injustices Notre Dame students saw in their own community. Meanwhile, Father Hesburgh continued to strive for nonviolent action in other areas of concern on campus, as well as on a national scale.

The protests of the war in Vietnam. The 1960s produced layer-upon-layer of

societal expression wrought with discontentment in the United States. By the mid-to-late 1960s, the Vietnam War had joined daily discourse on Notre Dame's campus. In 1964, Notre Dame's Student Senate adopted an Open Speaker's Policy (Newspaper Cartoon, 1964)—a policy adopted by administration four years later (*Notre Dame Student Manual*, 1968-1969). This policy allowed both the students and the administration of Notre Dame to bring anyone to campus they desired. The only requirement was that the guest's appearance complied with a peaceful, academic community. Notre Dame's administration wanted to indicate clearly to the students they had no desire to encroach upon their rights to demonstrate. Actions such as the Open Speaker's Policy and statements made by Father Hesburgh (n.d.e), like the one below, supported this claim:

We should listen to everyone and be ready to discuss anything with anyone.

Especially, we should respect everyone's intellectual sincerity and hope for open-mindedness, not necessarily agreement, with what we and they have to say, what we and they also believe or doubt. Openness to all is the best way of bringing all together across the gulf of deep-set misunderstanding and prejudices. (p. 12)

In 1968, the same year the administration adopted the Open Speaker's Policy, a list of Student Rights was written in the Student Handbook, and the Board of Trustees approved the Student Life Council (Student Handbook, 1969). This council promised to a representation of faculty, administration, and students functioning to make decisions ranging from the admittance of African American students to food services to the approval of proposals created to reiterate the "University's policy of free peaceful demonstrations" (Staff Writer, 1966a, n.p.). Peaceful demonstrations, whether against war or otherwise, were monitored but not suppressed at Notre Dame. Hesburgh (1970)

expressed, “I’d rather see them [youth] politically conscious than politically apathetic as they have always been in the past” (n.p.). He did not communicate fear of students but rather faith in them.

Another topic of contention was Notre Dame housing a local Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) unit on campus. Due to the vast controversy surrounding the war, many other universities, such as Harvard University and Columbia University, opted to discontinue their ROTC programs. However, Father Hesburgh and Notre Dame chose to keep theirs open, despite these units being accused of functioning as “killing schools” (Smith, 1970, p. 8). Once again, Hesburgh made a bold decision in good faith toward his students. In many ways, the ROTC conflict served as a metaphor for people’s opinions of the war at large. As a leader, Hesburgh wanted his students to exist alongside one another in spite of their differences and engage with the social affairs at hand. Without complete certainty of how to strike such a balance, Hesburgh opted for two tactics: leading by example and empowering Notre Dame’s students.

Upon learning of a student plot to burn down the ROTC building in 1969, Hesburgh made sure to express his agreement with the students’ opposition to the student Vietnam War but not for the destruction of ROTC, as he advocated for the need of an conscience, well-educated military. He spoke at a student rally and was so well received by the students that many students came to his office for copies of his speech. In an attempt to make the views expressed by Hesburgh in his speech known, those students then went door-to-door in the surrounding community and collected over 23,000 copies, signed by South Bend residents. The signatures were given by individuals who supported Father Hesburgh’s opposition to the Vietnam War and reasons for advocating the

ROTC's continuation on Notre Dame's campus. Father Hesburgh then packaged all the signed speeches and mailed them to President Nixon (University of Notre Dame, 2016c).

Co-education at Notre Dame. In addition to the unpredictability of the war, the roles and opportunities for women in America continued to change too. Prior to 1965, no female ever enrolled as a student at Notre Dame. Due to some male students of Notre Dame adopting a crass view of the opposite sex and seeing "girls solely as objects of dating" (Anonymous, 1968, n.p.), Father Hesburgh and the administration intervened. They developed the Co-Exchange System (Co-Ex) in order to improve the relationship between the men of Notre Dame and the women of St. Mary's College (SMC), who often became the brunt of such objectifying remarks (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990).

The Co-Ex program was meant to be exactly as it was called, an exchange. Neither school benefited financially; rather, Father Hesburgh most desired to improve social interactions between the men of Notre Dame and young women. Co-Ex could hardly be called a massive success, therefore Hesburgh desired a more permanent way for Notre Dame to "include the other half of the human race" in its "business of educating students for leadership" (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. 182). He first attempted to establish a merger with SMC, but at the last minute, SMC's administration backed out in fear the college would "lose all of its identity" (View from across the road, 1971, n.p.). With no other schools willing to merge, the institution "quietly admitted fifteen hundred women" (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. 182).

Father Hesburgh led Notre Dame into its first full year as a co-educational institution in the fall of 1974. Hesburgh later said, "Coeducation has had a marvelous effect on Notre Dame" (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990, p. 182). According to Hesburgh

(n.d.c), “Prejudice, the enemy of equality and equal rights among men and women, has deep roots in history” (p. 2). Thus, a decision that contradicted such roots did not come without strife or commotion. Still, Hesburgh willingly endured said commotion as he committed himself to bettering all those involved: the institution, its women, and its men.

The difference in leadership. During the 1960s, Notre Dame’s administration, faculty, staff, and students felt the obvious tension between students desiring the freedom of expression and administration trying desperately to keep peace. This strain of different goals proved nearly inescapable for a university or college campus, with Notre Dame as no exception. An exception, however, was Notre Dame’s reaction to this tension under the leadership of Father Hesburgh. As it pertained to the student body, violence did not accompany the administration and students’ somewhat adversary relationship. Again, Hesburgh expressed to students he was against violence, not freedom.

Following the abovementioned mailed packaged of 23,000-signed speeches, tension still mounted between the university leadership and students. In an attempt to calm what Father Hesburgh felt was a great storm, he wrote an eight-page letter to the Notre Dame community. In this letter, Hesburgh communicated clearly that Notre Dame administration would not tolerate any force in replace of rational, verbal persuasion. Notre Dame students would have 15 minutes to desist. Then, if they had not moved, an additional five minutes would offer a last chance before the student(s) experienced immediate expulsion from the community. Once expelled, students could be held accountable by the law and charged as trespassers. President Nixon and many universities across the country followed Hesburgh’s lead and enacted this same strategy (*Notre Dame Alumnus*, 1969).

This very policy adopted around the country was tested not more than a month later on Notre Dame's campus. Students staged a sit-in outside of a meeting for Central Intelligence Agency and Dow Chemical Company recruiters. Though most protestors left within the 15 minutes, 10 students did not. Five students were expelled, and five more were suspended (Wintrose, 1969). Like at many universities around the country, misunderstandings between the students and the administration proved prevalent, yet, at Notre Dame, the two groups still seemed to function as ideological allies. A mutual partnership grew out of an attitude demonstrated by Hesburgh that, though violence would not be tolerated from students, understanding and empathy would be required (University of Notre Dame, 2016c).

A public stance. When racial tensions rose, Father Hesburgh stood with men like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and urged the resistant American society toward integration and equal rights for all races. In his speech entitled *The End of Apartheid in America*, Hesburgh (n.d.e) said:

From so many races and colors, from so many nationalities and religions, from so many cultures and classes, we derive and unleash the best to form a most unusual nation that is talented and strong and beautiful because from such great diversity, and even despite such diversity, we incorporate the best of all and we are one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all. (p. 18-19)

Father Hesburgh's leadership did not cause Notre Dame to reach a perfectly integrated racial status. Rather, he did not cower in the societal fight for equality. He believed change of racial perspective had to be recognized as a nonnegotiable aspect of the fight for equality and opportunity for all people. Through his service and chairmanship of the

United States Civil Rights Commission, Hesburgh stood among the great civil rights leaders of that time and “practiced what he preached.” He fought not for what caused the least commotion but for what provided the most opportunity for increased equality for all.

Hesburgh (n.d.d) said, “Students must learn to live with rapid, abrupt, and even frightening change. Learning will be correlative with life” (p. 5). He never viewed the civil rights movement as a one or two decision movement (Hesburgh, n.d.b). Instead, he saw it as a movement of daily decisions, daily sacrifice, and daily care. During one of the many commencement speeches, Hesburgh (1960b) challenged the students of the University of Rhode Island:

Passion for justice will or will not be a value in your life. If it is, it will enable you and others, if it is not, injustice will degrade others and you, too. [...] Find within you some good aspirations that transcend your own personal pleasure and indulgence. (p. 17)

With a passion for justice, Hesburgh provided a compelling vision that empowered others to become motivated by the same passion.

In the 1960s, one such group of “others” many leaders felt afraid to empower was the youth. By contrast, Father Hesburgh loyally addressed the predicament many students faced and the courage they displayed: “If only all of us have the courage to dream and to do, to think of what might be if equality of opportunity becomes a reality for every American” (Hesburgh, n.d.e, p. 18). Perhaps this perspective of an “other” he allowed himself to admire, in addition to his genuine ability to relate to this youthful fervor for change, gave the Notre Dame students just enough reason to trust this elder.

This trust proved well earned. A week after Hesburgh outlined the “Tough 15-

minute Rule” to his students, President Nixon requested that he advise Vice President Spiro Agnew about federal legislation to control student violence on college and university campuses. Agnew and state governors planned to meet and vote on said legislation. In response to the letter, Hesburgh wrote to the vice president opposing any sort of federal action regarding this issue. He argued students were often depicted unfairly and inaccurately. He posited the colleges and universities as better suited to handle and respond to their own communities. While many college presidents at the time struggled to keep their jobs, Hesburgh lobbied for less outside help and more trust in students (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990; University of Notre Dame, 2016c).

Findings: Themes

Throughout the course of his life, Father Hesburgh committed himself to other-centered leadership, and, through that humility, four themes emerged: equality, conviction, connectedness, and civil service for the other.

Equality. Father Hesburgh (n.d.c) said, “Civil rights does not even fully encompass the problem, the title should be changed to ‘human rights.’ . . . These human rights are what should guide us toward fighting for social justice around the world” (p. 4). Limiting any individual’s opportunity never sat comfortably with Father Hesburgh. Equality represented a lifestyle to him—a lifestyle he recognized as laced with privilege. Recognition of this privilege, however, did not mean Father Hesburgh was unwilling to give it up, should that offer a more authentic taste of true equality. In his speech, “Civil Right: The Continuing Challenge,” Hesburgh (n.d.b) argued:

If we are to overcome once and for all the disease of racial discrimination, which has afflicted us throughout our history, we must be willing to favor those

segments of our population which have suffered the effects of that discrimination until the disease is eliminated. The burden this places on those of us who have been favored in the past is clearly a small price to pay for a nation of true equality.

(p. 14)

Though willing to sacrifice privilege and status, one uncompromising value in his life he would not desert was his principle.

Conviction. Father Hesburgh was asked to serve in various government appointments. After prayer and consideration, he often accepted such positions, so long as such engagements allowed him to serve under his conditions. For example, conditions of moral dimension, personal integrity, volunteer status, clerical uniform, religious approval, and the right to serve each role as a priest allowed Hesburgh to fill these roles authentically (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990). The jobs required conviction of character, and Hesburgh spoke and acted not for popularity's sake but out of conviction. At the National Science Foundation Board Dinner in 1962, Hesburgh displayed such conviction:

What I have to say may not be popular, but then I never have thought this to be a good reason for not saying something that should be said. Anyway, most statements that are popular and safe are also generally dull. This you should be spared. (p. 1)

Popularity, at its core, is selfish. As a result, for Hesburgh to live out conviction disregarding popularity for the equality and good of others highlights a rare form of care for those individuals and groups within his sphere of influence.

Connectedness. In addition to Father Hesburgh's commitment to equality and unwavering conviction, his life also reflected the power of connectedness. He viewed

this trait as a responsibility bestowed on every human being. He spoke of this charge at a luncheon address during the Civil Rights Conference in February 1960:

But I say that when it comes to civil rights if you so much as meet another human being in the course of your life, and all of us meet many, then you cannot be uncommitted on this problem. This is not the kind of problem about which a person can be detached. Because of the fact that you walk down a street, or live in a neighborhood, or work in an office, or get on a bus, or talk to anyone you are involved in this problem and you must take a stand. This, I say, is the great pressing reality of this problem: it involves the personal commitment of every American citizen. (Hesburgh, 1960a, n.p.)

In many ways, beckoning every human to action further supports Father Hesburgh's embodiment of humility with regard to his view of himself and others. Without a belief that connectedness mattered, Hesburgh's service as a leader looks drastically different. His loyalty toward the pursuit of opportunity for others communicated advocacy for common goals and group effort. Hesburgh (n.d.c) remarked, "I suspect that we will achieve our common hopes together or not at all" (p. 8). Perhaps this togetherness drove Hesburgh toward a lifetime commitment of civil service, which must be identified as the fourth theme displayed by the intersection of humility and leadership in his life.

Civil service. Father Hesburgh lived as a man with an agenda to serve and promote transformation. For example, though he often made reference to Notre Dame in his speeches, it was not out of self-promotion. Rather, he utilized an informed critical eye to call attention to the need for change and engagement at the institution he knew best (Hesburgh, n.d.a). In a commencement speech to the students of the University of

Wyoming in June 1964, Hesburgh urged, “Social justice and social charity are achieved by deeds, not by words, and not automatically by laws or by legal decisions . . . We need to help our neighbors achieve the human dignity that is inherently theirs” (p. 5). This call to serve one’s neighbor informed much of Hesburgh’s leadership and inspired his own commitment to civil service and the promotion of civil service in generations to come: “Each generation must find its own path of service and sacrifice I believe that the quality of life in America is largely dependent upon our ability to share our blessings with others less fortunate” (Hesburgh, 1964a, p. 13). As a leader, Hesburgh found ways to share his many blessings often.

Conclusion

Father Hesburgh was neither an African American, nor a woman, nor a youth during his leadership at Notre Dame. He was a white, privileged, Catholic priest who never received monetary compensation for any of his public service appointments (Hesburgh & Reedy, 1990). Hesburgh worked hard and believed deeply in equality of opportunity both at Notre Dame and in the world. He made decisions for the betterment of others and urged others to believe in and advocate for change:

If universities are to face the changes of our times effectively, and not be swallowed up in the change, each one of us university people, must, I think, be men of courage, of commitment, dedicated to justices, to the great human values of Western Culture, unafraid to speak out whether it is popular or not, knowing where we stand and why, unashamed of our moral, as well as our intellectual, commitment. We cannot expect the best of this new world unless we help create it, for such is our task and such is the ancient civilizing glory of our universities.

(Hesburgh, 1964b, p. 23)

His daily choices to promote equal opportunity for all came not from popular response but from conviction to help others grow in what he named the most important virtues for which to pray: wisdom, patience, courage, grace, and humility (Hesburgh, 1968).

As a result of his belief in the need for equality, Father Hesburgh fought for everyone. With conviction, he responded to a need to lead others with dignity and shared empowerment. Out of connectedness to those around him, he maintained a teachable spirit and drew others to follow his charitable ways—ways fostered through his involvement of continued civil service.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Application for Today

Father Hesburgh's example of leadership as the president of Notre Dame provides several areas of application for leaders today. Specifically, the intersection of his humility as a leader challenges the call of college and university leaders today. The following recommendations are inspired by one man's story and are offered as guideposts for leaders in higher education. Additionally, these recommendations are intended to serve as suggestions regarding visible humility, and how to identify this virtue in leaders.

The primary recommendation is for leaders to consider themselves among the university, and not above it. To be the president of Notre Dame, Father Hesburgh knew he needed the help of many. He also proved that being the president of Notre Dame was not his only priority. He actively cared about the global, national, and local communities. Whether giving a speech at a student program or writing to the White House, Hesburgh advocated for peaceful change he believed would most benefit all constituencies.

Additionally, to live in the intersection of leadership and humility, higher education leaders must stay invested in global, national, and local spheres of influence. However, only through engagement of cultural change and a willingness to give time and resources sacrificially can leaders achieve the aforementioned influence. To know the needs of the greater community, a leader has actually to know the greater community.

A third recommendation is leaders must prioritize service to others both in and outside of their university. As with Father Hesburgh, such service does not require leaders to devalue university work. Rather, this service has the potential to provide leaders with a humble perspective of how their institutional identity best fits and serves its corresponding society. The institution, like its leader, has the opportunity to practice self-awareness and glean wisdom from the successful practices happening outside of it.

In the same way individuals living at the intersection of humility and leadership must serve, they must also view themselves as fully capable and seasonably dispensable in their community. Father Hesburgh viewed himself as among others because he knew he could not make Notre Dame “the greatest Catholic university in the world” (Hesburgh and Reedy, 1990) without others’ help. He also realized, as a leader, he could only be the best for the university for a time. The moment at which leaders view themselves as indispensable, their priority shifts from community to self, and conviction is lost.

In some ways, Father’s Hesburgh’s vow of poverty taken at the beginning of his priesthood provided him with an advantage. As a priest, he committed to unwavering convictions long before he became a prominent leader. Higher education leaders must establish and exemplify a deep sense of conviction that embodies humility long before their term of leadership.

Implication of Themes

The current research study defined leadership as an ability to induce followers to pursue common purposes that represent the values and motivations of both the individual leader and the followers (Krishnan, 2003). Likewise, the research defined humility as valuing and serving others through the practice of self-awareness, which, in turn, causes a

practice of curiosity toward others' wisdom without devaluing oneself (Means et al., 1990; Owens, Johnson, and Mitchell, 2013). Father Hesburgh's value of others through the practice of self-awareness very much informed his ability to induce followers to pursue purpose representative of his convictions and usually the values of those following him. He led with others in mind but also chose not to abandon his own ideals faith, service, and conviction and therefore provided a steadiness in the unruly decade of the 1960s that the instability of higher education desperately needed. Notre Dame flourished under Hesburgh's leadership, despite the hardship of the times. With the volatility of higher education in question today, what better time for its leaders to fulfill the need so many institutions have for humility-driven leaders?

Though leading out of this intersection of leadership and humility proves unique among corporate leaders, the themes of equality, conviction, connectedness, and civil service noted in Father Hesburgh's life certainly display avenues on which leaders today can begin to practice self-awareness and curiosity of others' wisdom without devaluing themselves. Additionally, if leaders desire to create and promote positive change out of this intersection, they must assume more than a posture of humility; they must practice an active posture of humility in which such a mindset informs their decision-making.

During Hesburgh's presidency, "Notre Dame doubled its enrollment, added 40 buildings, grew its endowment from \$9 million to \$350 million, increased student aid from \$20,000 to \$40 million, and upped the average faculty salary from \$5,400 to \$50,800" (University of Notre Dame, 2016b, para. 1). If leaders desire to make such a difference, they do well to imitate Father Hesburgh: believe in and fight for equality, value conviction, connect with those in the communities, and engage in civil service.

Limitations

The very nature of a narrative case study is a limitation. Interpretation of motive of the subject is left entirely up to the researcher, based on information gathered.

Additionally, despite the researcher's extensive level of analysis done of one man's life, the case study only reflects the course of one man's life.

Another limitation came with the fact that the researcher did not conduct any interviews for the study. Interviewing individuals who knew Father Hesburgh could validate or invalidate certain inferred motivations. Again, this element of research could produce a stronger case.

Further Research

The possibilities for further research to analyze the intersection of leadership and humility prove numerous. First, the need to further define *active humility* exists. This definition, paired with an extended study that explores the question of *How do we see humility?*, could then become further described and analyzed. In essence, further research is needed to provide some type of framework as to how to measure humility in one's life and thus identify the trait in future leaders.

Next, opportunity exists to conduct a qualitative study in which the researcher identifies a humble leader based on the definitions provided in the literature review. The researcher could then interview those working subordinately, laterally, and potentially professionally above to the chosen individual to understand how the intersection of leadership and humility does or does not affect each constituent's experience.

Finally, a study similar to that of Collins (2001) conducted with leaders in higher education could provide highly helpful perspective. In answer to the question, "What sets

great higher education leaders apart from *good* higher education leaders?” one of the criteria of Collins’s *great* leaders was whether an individual left his or her respective corporations in better overall health than when her or she arrived (Collins, 2005).

Perhaps if this correlation proved the same for *great* leaders in higher educations, institutions would not only value leaders exemplifying humility, but they would also seek them out.

Conclusion

This case study did not seek to glorify one man’s life or story. Theodore M. Hesburgh was considered an exceptional leader by most he influenced but to merely celebrate his style of leadership would prove a great disservice to his legacy. What his story causes is pause—a pause to wonder: Does leadership infused with humility actually make any type of difference? I believe Father Hesburgh’s life communicates that it does.

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