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Science perspective: a qualitative research study**

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**SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY AS APPLIED TO OD:
THE UNIQUE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE**

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

A Research Project

**Presented to the Faculty of
The Graziadio Business School
Pepperdine University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
In
Organization Development**

by

Charlotte Booth

July 2020

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This research project, completed by

CHARLOTTE BOOTH

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The Graziadio Business School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This qualitative study researched Christian Science principles, a blended approach of science and spirituality, and their relevance and contribution to the field of Organization Development. Data was gathered as to whether or not Christian Science principles should be considered a resource for handling business challenges. The 14 individuals who participated in this study were asked 15 questions that correlated to the primary three research questions. Participant's answers were collected and coded in order to analyze and determine reoccurring and prominent points in the data. The study found that some current OD methods and tools are similar in context to Christian Science principles. Those that were interviewed, found the principles to be successful in application and continue to use them as a regular practice in dealing with business issues. Discussion is provided in adopting the Christian Science principles into mainstream OD practice.

Keywords: Christian Science principles, business, organization development

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As leaders and organizations continue to search for practices to improve their efficacy, some business and government leaders around the world have been quietly using a different approach to help them face their day to day business challenges (Kemp, Clements, & Miles, 2004; Shays, 1997; Smith, Gebrels, & Davies, 1998). This approach is utilizing principles of Christian Science (CS), a religion and science, or a blended approach that aligns with some aspects of quantum physics (QP) and practices of spirituality in the workplace (Doyle, Kissock, & Huebsch, 2018; Duke, 2015; Talbot, 2020). Though people have been practicing CS for over 150 years, it has not been considered as a potential practice in the field of Organization Development (OD) as no research literature has been found addressing this idea.

OD is "a process that applies a broad range of behavioral science knowledge and practices to help organizations build their capability to change and to achieve greater effectiveness..." (Cummings & Worley, 2015, p. 1) The origins of OD are in behavioral science, and it has continued to grow and gain momentum since its emergence in the 1930s. Over the past few decades, two areas that have influenced OD are research in quantum physics (QP) and workplace spirituality (WS). Wheatley (2006) has applied theories related to QP in studying organizations, suggesting:

If we are to continue to draw from science to create and manage organizations, to design research, and to formulate ideas about organizational design, planning, economics, human motivation, and change processes (the list can be much longer), then we need to at least ground our work in the science of our times.

Wheatley. (p. 7)

Studies in QP have us re-thinking the existence of matter and re-defining our knowledge of consciousness from a brain function to a field (Doyle, 2018). How might this impact the work of those professionals who are called in to assess organization and employee behavior? How might this impact an OD practitioner as they consider their work with teams, from a group of separate minds/consciousness to the view of one consciousness which encompasses the entire team?

QP has been linked to management practices such as change management, increased leadership effectiveness, the use of dialogue, and self-managed learning, to name a few (Cunningham, 2006; Senge, 1990; Shelton & Darling, 2001; Wheatley, 2006). Shelton and Darling (2001) link quantum theory to human perception, recognizing that 80% of what managers experience in the external world is made up of their internal beliefs and assumptions. Senge (1990) discusses quantum theory as it relates to the use of dialogue as a powerful tool in team learning.

Over the years, we have seen an increase in the presence of spiritual philosophies and practice in the workplace. The use of meditation before meetings, accommodations for employee practices of prayer, retreat, or spiritual time set aside for employees, and openly discussing an organization's alignment with a greater purpose are some examples of how this has shown up in a work environment. Underlying it all is the search for a greater sense of purpose and meaning, a reason for existence, and a connection to something greater. Ultimately, a recognition that spirituality is a part of every person (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Daniel (2010) states that WS "plays an important role in developing and creating an environment that will have a positive impact on teams" (p. 442-443).

As the presence of WS grows and research in QP continues, some scholars and professionals are looking for a blended approach. "Human thinking is in need of a new model that constructs the human being and consciousness within an energetic universe that is compatible with both modern science and spiritual teachings" (Dennis, 2010, p. 511). Now might be a time for a departure from a 'science vs. spirituality' approach and an opening of thought to consider ways the two areas might work together. Walach and Reich (2015) stated, "We argue that reconnecting science and spirituality yields the best rational understanding of the world" (p. 423). Paradasan and Bindlish (2014) describe how Indian spiritual traditions are used in business management practices and Epstein (2002) explores the growing evidence and importance of religious traditions in the education of business leaders.

In addition to aligned aspects of QP and WS, CS mirrors some models that OD practitioners are using today. The founder of CS, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote and published a book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which came from Eddy's (1875) intense study of the Bible and discovery of methods that align with the healing work of Jesus. Eddy (1875) offers an OD consultant or business leader new ways of thinking when considering how to tackle business issues. This is important considering both science and spirituality could provide a more well-rounded view in understanding how to handle matters in professional and personal settings.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to consider the existing literature on CS to determine how its core principles might align and contribute to the field of OD. I also explore its current impact by interviewing OD practitioners and business leaders who use

Christian Science principles in OD activities and models such as self-management, and process consultation. This study asks the question, to what extent do core CS principles align with some OD practices and contribute to the field of OD? The potential benefit is to consider the practice of CS and its relevance to the field of OD, offering another blended approach to OD work.

Thesis Outline

This chapter posed the question of applying CS principles in business and as a contribution to the field of the OD. Chapter 2 focuses on a review of existing literature and research relevant to Christian Science and spirituality practices in the workplace. It also looks at OD practices that align with CS theories and practices. Chapter 3 details the design and methodology used to structure interviews with OD consultants and business leaders who are currently doing work in this arena and how this information will be measured and analyzed. Chapter 4 describes the findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the data. Chapter 5 summarizes the conclusion of the study and provides insights and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter takes a deeper dive into what is currently understood and practiced in the areas of Christian Science. This chapter notes similarities with QP and CS as well as similarities between OD practices and CS. It also provides a look at how some spiritual practices are showing up in the workplace and the impact they are having on the business environment. The look at WS offers a foundation and consideration for the readiness of receiving CS principles in a business environment.

Core Principles of Christian Science

Christian Science's foundation comes from the belief of a higher power, God, that fills all space. The science in its foundation comes from studying the first chapter of Genesis where creation starts and is completed by God, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis, 1:31). The science is in studying this as reality and arguing from the standpoint of cause and effect (Eddy, 1875, p. 207). The assertion is that God fills all space and is spiritual, or cause, and the effect is the reality of who we all are as the creation of this God. The belief is that God is not a deity that exists in heaven, looking down on mortals to judge and exact punishment or reward. The CS God is all-encompassing and is also referred to using the seven synonyms of Divine Mind, Soul, Spirit, Truth, Love, Life, and Principle. God or Life is not male or female only; it includes all feminine and masculine qualities (Eddy, 1875, p. 587). God or Life is not separate from its creation but consists of all creation in its existence. Therefore, every human being is never separated from God or each other; they are all a part of one whole being and all a part of one Mind. Each being (e.g., human, animal, insect, plant) is understood to be a reflection of the one Mind or Spirit, and that Spirit is expressing itself

(Eddy, 1875, p. 191). This foundational belief leads to theories of how people communicate and form relationships, the impact of their thoughts and beliefs on their bodies, along with how they contribute to and shape their own experience. Thus, the science of CS is based on deductive reasoning from the standpoint of an all-encompassing God (Lang, 2019). This a departure from attention focused on the physical senses to find actual reality, or cause and effect, as it is hard to rely on the material to prove the spiritual.

CS has been around since the late 1800s, and its theories have been practiced by business and governments officials around the world since (Kemp, Clements, & Miles, 2004; Shays, 1997; Smith, Gabrel, & Davies, 1998; Talbot, 2020). Though CS is often considered just a religion, it has been practiced with effective and verified (three eyewitnesses of each healing) results for over 150 years (Lang, 2019). Buskirk (1904) writes when referring to the overwhelming number of successful applications of CS,

There is still another and greater reason why a large aggregation of instances of successful "works" in the ministry of Christian Science are of persuasive significance to the thoughtful investigator. This greater reason is to be found in the essential difference between experimental "works" in healing sickness and sin and those which are demonstrative. (p. 399)

Physicians and researchers have discovered the positive impact of prayer on the health and well-being of patients. Studies show that those that have religious practices live longer, have a better recovery rate from sickness, experience less chronic illness, and have fewer stress-related challenges like high blood pressure (Epperly, 2000; Lee &

Newberg, 2005). They have related the importance of including spirituality with scientific research in order to understand better the body and health.

The founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, was born in 1821 in a religious home to devout Calvin parents, both from established New England families. Mary was the last of six children, a very bright child with health issues, so most of her schooling was done at home. She was a voracious reader with an insatiable curiosity for learning and a deep faith in God. At the age of 5, Eddy declared that someday she would write a book. She spent the first half of her life looking for remedies to cure several chronic health issues. This study led her to try out the latest in western medical cures along with alternative medicines such as acupuncture and homeopathy; however, none brought her permanent relief. One evening, when a fall on the ice proved to be almost fatal, she finally stumbled upon a glimpse of the science she would later write about by experiencing a permanent healing just a week later of her severe injuries (a broken spine and internal injuries) and longstanding health issues. Though the physician who diagnosed her declared it a miracle, she knew that she had found what she had spent the last several decades looking for. The realization that Life (God) and its manifestation is the only reality of existence (Peel, 1966).

Eddy's (1875) book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, was a dissertation in and of itself. Her question was, is it possible to heal disease, sin, and death, the way Jesus did thousands of years earlier? The literature review was an in-depth study of the Bible. Her private collection included over 45 different bibles along with books on bible reference and history. The methodology was putting into practice the ideas and theories she discovered through bible research, a healing approach she applied to

thousands of cases that came her way. Her approach was applying the foundational premises for healing that she learned from her study of the Bible that God is all-in-all and that all beings are expressions of this omnipotent higher power and created of the same substance, which is Spirit. Healing occurred when she firmly argued these points and saw a different reality than the material senses procured. The findings of her dissertation were the healings that transpired, and the recommendations were that people should consider applying this methodology to experience the same results that she did.

Eddy's achievements (especially as a woman in the late 1800s to early 1900s) of writing a book, starting a publishing company, three periodicals, an international newspaper, and a church paled in comparison to the enduring messages that she articulated in her books. Messages that asked the reader to think more deeply, look more closely, love without judgment, and see more than what the physical reality presented. The second paragraph in her book states, "The time for thinkers has come," (Eddy, 1875, p. vii) asks us to consider a more deliberate and thoughtful way to approach work in relationships, business, health, and the way we see the world. The science she speaks of is holistic, as it includes all aspects of life.

Though the founder was one of the most famous women in her time, Christian Science is quietly practiced and not well-known today. However, in 2014 Mary Baker Eddy was listed as one of "100 Most Significant Americans of All Time" in Smithsonian Magazine. Her book was recorded as one of the "75 Books by Women Whose Words Have Changed the World," by the Women's National Book Association. In the past 150 years, there have been over 275,000 articles, audio programs, and verified testimonies

from the late 1800s to today published online supporting the application of this science (Christian Science JSH-online, n.d.).

Christian Science and Quantum Physics

Eddy (1875) states, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all" (p. 468). A bold statement where she defines existence and life. This was a different type of science and religion that was a departure from mainstream thought during her day (Lang, 2019). Since God is understood as being entirely spiritual, a spiritual being that fills all space, one might ask how did men, women, and children become material human beings? CS argues that they are not; that what we experience in the material world, and even a physical body, is simply a manifestation of our perception and beliefs. This is where theories of QP might be considered.

"Quantum physics is the study of what everything is made of and how it behaves at the atomic and subatomic levels" (Sha & Xiu, 2018, p.2-2). It is the study of life itself. QP has already proved that what appears to be solid matter is not necessarily so and that there is an all-encompassing energy that exists everywhere (Sha & Xiu, 2018). Quantum mechanics study and explain how the smallest particles and energy behave, noticing that matter itself does not exist until it is measured and observed. However, measurement cannot happen without consciousness and conscious thought has to precede observation (Gerber, Russ, & Doyle, 2002). This is important as we look at human behavior, group behavior, and origins of consciousness because physics is foundational to biology and psychology. Doyle (2018) discusses how experiments in QP have asserted that

consciousness is a field rather than a particle. A field which exists everywhere, not an electron in the brain.

Some QP theories could have a direct impact on how we look at human existence, interaction, and behavior. For example, consider the research of how particles of matter behave. The Double Slit experiment shows that a particle behaves differently depending on whether it is observed or not. A particle shot through two slits will behave like a wave if no one (or thing) is watching it but, once it is observed, it acts like a particle (Darling, 2007). CS principles align with this in that it suggests that what we experience in our day to day life is based on beliefs, expectations, perceptions, and assumptions, and they may not necessarily be reality. CS examines how our observation or focused thought can influence our state of health and our day to day experience, including our interaction with others. CS principles assert that if, instead, our reasoning starts with the basis that God fills all space and is all good as cause, the effect would have to be different and more in line with an all-good God (Eddy, 1875, p. 114). In other words, CS starts from a different deductive premise than a physical universe and therefore rejects a picture of what the five material senses often report as reality. Some could offer that a large part of what we experience today is due to social constructionism, and CS provides a different opportunity to discuss and define what reality is (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013).

One study of QP suggested the presence of an energy force that fills all space. Quantum physicists supported what Scottish theoretical physicist Peter Higgs theorized back in 1964, an existence of a field of energy, the Higgs Field, that is all-encompassing (Bussey, 2016, p. 22). If we look at where quantum physics intersects spirituality, we have a new level of consciousness and connectedness to consider. For example, the

effects of positive thinking and visioning can be seen in a scientific light when you understand that when a particle is observed, it changes its behavior and creates a different effect, and that this effect could be felt over an all-encompassing field.

CS goes beyond positive thinking in that it defines the core of existence as an all-encompassing God, a universal consciousness made up of only good, not just an energy field that is subject to the whims of chaos. CS also asserts that how we choose to focus our thought and what we expect to see can impact experience and enable us to see more clearly the existence of the all-good universal consciousness (Eddy, 1875, p. xi).

Spirituality Practices in the Workplace

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define spirituality as "The recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (p. 137). Years of research have suggested that spirituality in the workplace can be impactful, and the interest in this area has increased in the past decade (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Many of today's leaders understand the need that employees have of wanting a sense of purpose and meaning in their work. Miller and Ewest (2013) suggest that WS can help increase employee satisfaction and productivity. Daniel (2010) indicates that spirituality in the workplace creates an environment of trust, respect, and creativity which are critical to building strong, effective teams.

So, what spirituality practices have we seen emerging in the workplace and what do they assert? As mentioned earlier, practices of meditation at the start of a meeting, yoga as a way to focus attention, and executive offsites that resemble spiritual retreats of reflection and alignment of values are all finding their ways into the corporate

environment. Cacioppe (2000) says, "Successful corporate leaders of the twenty-first century will be spiritual leaders. They will be comfortable with their spirituality, and they will know how to nurture spiritual development in others" (p. 50). In this sense, spirituality refers to not only religion but to connectedness to a whole. A belief that we are all connected to a greater whole with an underlying sense of goodness. In Google's in-depth study on teams in 2012, they discovered that it was not about combining the best people to make the best team but rather the way the team interacted and what the team valued that made all the difference. Norms such as trust, vulnerability, connectedness, psychological safety, and social sensitivity were inherent in a successful team's behavior (Duhigg, 2016). Demonstrating that the intangible aspects of heart, emotion, and soul were needed beyond the intellectual skills to have a highly functioning team.

WS can show up in organizations and OD practices in many ways. Sometimes it is in their efforts to drive environmentally friendly programs and sustainability, which can speak to a sense of purpose and creating a positive impact in the world. Other times, it might be the use of meditation during teambuilding or in defining values, purpose, or a mission that works towards a greater good. Today, as more companies develop their diversity and inclusion efforts, spirituality is often at the root of those messages with the language of respect, equality, connectedness, compassion, and authenticity. Some researchers have indicated that companies and consulting organizations are moving towards a fourth wave of instilling spirituality within the corporate culture (Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999).

Since WS often finds its roots in religious philosophies, it might be helpful to note how eastern and western religious beliefs intersect with CS theories. Taoism, an eastern

philosophical tradition or religion dating back to the 4th century BCE, states that there is one universal energy source, Tao, that we are all connected to. It is how we interact and engage with this energy source that determines our experience (Zai, 2018, p. 12). This aligns with CS principles and the assertion of one omnipresent being.

The Church of Religious Science also believes that there is one whole collective being and that this being fills all space (Holmes, 1926). Members of this church believe that observation and thought focused on matter influence the experience we have with matter. That consciousness is the primal cause and matter just a result of our beliefs and perceptions. Hinduism asserts this theory as well, stating that the world we see around us is an illusion that is created by our thoughts and perceptions (Flood, 1996). However, scientists often don't take these philosophies into account when researching reality.

Walton (2017) wrote,

It seems, then, that there are scientists, philosophers, psychologists and spiritual thinkers who consider there to be a reality that exists beyond the material; and yet the emphasis in academic research is on research methodologies which assume a material basis to reality and do not question the nature and scope of consciousness. This is a gap in the research that I suggest needs to be addressed.

(p. 27)

Organization Development Models and Christian Science

In order to consider how CS principles might contribute and align with the field of OD, it is helpful to review OD models currently being used that have similarities with CS concepts. Those OD models are Appreciative Inquiry, Self as Instrument, Process Consultation, and Open Space Technology.

CS and Appreciative Inquiry

An example of how CS and OD overlap can be found by examining Mac Donald (1956), a businessman who was tasked with merging departments and a reorganization of the company he worked for. He utilized a Christian Science approach, and the result proved to be successful for the department and company. His approach was to acknowledge that he was a reflection of the all-knowing, all-good one Mind, which enabled him to see problems with greater clarity, accessing an infinite source, one intellect, to gain the best perspective. OD practitioners use a similar approach called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). AI is a choice to look at change or problem solving from the standpoint of what is possible, focusing on the good that can be achieved or leveraged. For example, a consulting company had made recommendations to fix the issue, which was to get rid of people who were considered no longer useful to the company. The businessman first took the time to pray to the one Mind, which led him to focus on the good and future possibilities for all, listening to God for the right decisions who provides insight, direction, and employment for all. The Appreciative Inquiry 5-D Cycle model (Define, Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny) includes a philosophy that says that the things that we focus on eventually become our reality. AI's Define and Discover are about looking at what is currently working well. Dreaming and Designing are about looking at what the possibilities are and how to turn them into reality (Cooperrider, 1987). CS takes this same approach with an added foundation of a belief in God or Mind as universal intelligence, thereby providing a sense of certainty that the best solution has to come to consciousness. The result in the

businessman's case was that everyone remained employed, the reorganization was harmonious, and the company performed better than it ever had.

CS and Self as Instrument

As we consider the work of OD, many consultants work on self-management, or self-awareness, and their own biases so that they do not carry those biases into work with companies. In the OD field, much has been written about the use of self as the consultant's first mechanism in working with a client. Cummings and Worley (2015) refer to it as "one of the cornerstone skills in OD" (p. 48) and Jamieson (2010) says, "Situations involving use of self are continuous in our lives as helping professionals. The greater our awareness of these situations, the better chance we have to effectively manage ourselves" (p. 4).

A greater understanding of self helps to check biases, beliefs, and blind spots in order to be a clean slate for the client, staying objective for the purpose of understanding, and helping the client get clarity on their issues. CS asserts that self originates in the one 'I Am' or the one all-in-all being, God (Eddy, 1875, p. 588). Self-awareness from this standpoint is that a true knowledge of self is the knowledge of each person as a reflection of the great I Am (God), which originates all good. That knowledge says that as a reflection of the one Mind, we are not imperfect beings with random thoughts that are good or bad. If we are entirely expressing our true selfhood, we can only express good (Eddy, 1875, p. 261). Understanding this idea taps into the power of the one Mind, which knows all. However, if we are not aware of ourselves as the reflection of the one great Mind, we can be influenced by suggestions and thoughts that try to convince us that we are something else, separated from God, and less than his perfect reflection (Eddy, 1875,

p. 227). Eddy (1896) says, "The hour has struck for Christian Scientist to do their own work; to demonstrate self-knowledge and self-government" (p. 317). Eddy (1896) is advocating for knowing self as an idea or reflection of one Mind and self-governing by asserting that truth and therefore rejecting any thought that is contrary to that truth. Eddy (1875) says, "The admission to one's self that man is God's own likeness sets man free to master the infinite idea" (p. 90).

It is quite a different standpoint to consider self and others as God's likeness, and this standpoint influences the work that happens with clients. In order to do this work, a person would need to quiet their thought, to connect to the ever-presence. This is the same way some use meditation to silence the noise in their head and focus (Eddy, 1875, p. 14). The scientific reasoning would argue from the standpoint that if God, Mind, is all and is all good than the OD consultant and their client must be a reflection of this one Mind. Reasoning from this standpoint allows the consultant access to this infinite intelligence and leads to a different way of communicating and appraising the ideas that surface.

CS and Process Consultation

Another area to consider is process consultation or the approach that is used by an OD consultant to work with their client. In his book, *Flawless Consulting*, Block (2011) talks about the presenting problem versus the underlying problem, asserting that the presenting problem is often not the real problem. The consultant must do their analysis and discovery before attempting to work on the client's problem to ensure the right problem is being solved (Block, 2011, pp. 166-168). Schein (1999) also talks from the standpoint of inquiry, asking the right questions so that the consultant and client can

diagnose the issue together, creating greater awareness in the client and helping them to learn to diagnose better (pp. 9-10).

CS takes this stance as well when dealing with issues in business, relationships, or physical health. When a problem arises, the first course of action is to identify the error and it is rarely what seems to be presenting itself. Eddy (1875) uses the term 'error' to describe the presenting problem and Truth as what needs to be seen. Eddy (1875) says, "A knowledge of error and of its operations must precede that understanding of Truth which destroys error" (p. 252).

A woman shared a story about being verbally attacked by a neighbor when she and her husband went to look at a lot they planned to build on (Reiman, 2014). She was shocked by the neighbor's behavior, but she quietly affirmed to herself that the real error needed to be seen. Through discussion and expressed care towards the neighbor, it was revealed that he was concerned that building on the lot would cause flooding to his home. They all worked together to remedy the issue, which prevented future flooding to the neighbor's lot and allowed the couple to build their new home. The relationship between the couple and the neighbor flourished from there.

CS and Open Space Technology

Similarities between CS and OD are found when looking at a large group intervention model called Open Space Technology by Owen (1998). Open space organizes a conference in a way that lets people move from discussion to discussion, exercising 'The Law of Two Feet' as they feel the need. It affirms that "Whoever comes are the right people" (p. 58) and "Whatever happens is the only thing that could have" (p. 58) in order to create an open thought and willingness to let the right ideas unfold as they

will. CS asserts this theory, stating that if there is one omnipresent Spirit there is an inherent flow to life and events (Eddy, 1875, p. 295). At all times, we are all 'in our right place' as expressions of this Spirit, and the more we acknowledge this, the more access we have to ideas and direction that bring the most harmony and success. A well-known passage from the Bible claims, "in him, we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts, 17:28). Kaufman (2019) states:

There is no other Mind, but God, the Mind we all reflect. So, there are not many minds with competing purposes or conflicting motives, and we have every reason to reject suggestions that there are. God is the only power and is the loving Father and Mother of us all. Divine Mind is the only communicator, and this Mind reveals what we need to know. (p. 4)

Similarities in CS and OD can be discerned and utilizing CS principles of acknowledging one Mind, for example, could change the way an OD practitioner approaches work in team dynamics, leadership development, organizational design, and change management.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to consider the existing literature on CS to determine how its core principles might align and contribute to the field of OD. The present study also explores its current impact by interviewing OD practitioners and business leaders who use Christian Science principles in OD activities and models such as self-management and process consultation. Data was gathered on specific ways OD consultants and business leaders used CS principles in business-related challenges. This chapter captures the purpose of the research by discussing the data and research methodologies. The methodology includes study participants, procedures, and analysis methods to further explore the research question: Do CS core principles align and contribute to the field of OD?

Research Design

The foundation of this research was partly derived from examining existing literature in CS and analyzing comparisons of core principles of CS with some OD practices. Based on this analysis, more study was initiated by gathering subjects from various industries to collect qualitative data to explore how CS principles were currently being used in a business setting. A qualitative research approach made the most sense for this study as it is based on individual practice and application of theories and principles founded on a belief system.

Study Participants

I observed that Christian Scientists appear to be more private in their study and outward sharing of their beliefs, and therefore found participants by snowball sampling (Stringer, 2014). I started with four known subjects who were business leaders and OD

consultants. More subjects were found through referrals from the original four subjects, and referrals from those subjects. Eventually, a sample size of 14 subjects was reached.

Subjects had to have knowledge of CS practices and applied CS principles to business challenges at some part in their career to be included in this study. While some subjects continue to use this method; others have ceased using this approach. Subjects had various degrees of knowledge of OD methodology and practices, which provided opinion data as to similarities and differences of CS and OD. Virtual interviews were conducted by phone or Zoom. These interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Qualitative data was collected in structured interviews by asking open-ended questions to determine how subjects used CS in business challenges. The subjects were asked what compels the use of these principles, what is the level of effectiveness, and what makes them choose this approach over other ways. They were also asked how CS principles are similar or different from OD principles. Subjects were asked for current and past examples of utilization of CS theories and their observation of the effectiveness of this approach. Other data gathered was opinions of utilizing Eddy's (1875) writings as resource books for OD consultants and if the mainstream business population would accept these approaches as credible and efficacious.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were complete, the qualitative data was organized and reviewed to provide a general sense of the information and gain some overall meaning. A coding process was then done to organize the data into prominent themes (Creswell, 2018). Once themes were identified, each interview was re-evaluated to compare prominent themes with each subject, holding up the theme within the context of the

complete interview and determining if there were variations within the theme or further alignment. Direct quotes were pulled and notated to support themes (Creswell, 2018). Examples shared of CS principles used in business challenges were analyzed by looking at the issue, the method used, the perceived effectiveness, and the potential connection to OD models and practices.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research study and design, participants of the study, and data analysis. The chapter also covered the questions used to gather data on how CS principles are being used in the business environment, along with opinions collected on CS relevance to OD practices. Chapter 4 will discuss the details of the data that was gathered along with the overall research findings.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter presents the results of 14 interviews with business professionals who have used CS core principles in business challenges. This chapter summates the analysis of the qualitative data gathered and presents themes that emerged when analyzing the data. The more prominent themes that emerged were: 1) The practice of being still and listening, 2) Daily practice, 3) God as Mind or Principle, 4) Notated differences in using CS principles, and 5) experiences and observations of sharing CS principles.

The Practice of Being Still and Listening

One of the first questions asked in each interview was how the subject responded to a crisis or challenge at work. Out of 14 interviews, 12 mentioned that the first thing they do when faced with an issue is to stop and listen. One participant said, "I get very still, and I listen." The listening was listening to the one Mind, the infinite source of intellect (Eddy, 1875). Some described getting answers immediately, or definitive steps to take to resolve an issue. Others described a heightened sense of intuition that guided their actions throughout the day. Some talked about situations that seemed to be impossible to fix in the time needed to resolve them. For example, a sales and marketing executive from a start-up spoke about a time when they were profoundly listening about what to do about a payroll issue that looked like it might be the final tipping point to a bankruptcy. They were led to consider the relationship between seller and buyer as one that consisted of two people working together and meeting needs, not at opposite sides of the table. An idea occurred to this participant to reach out to a particular client. What led from there was a meeting with this client who said that they needed to get \$200K off their books to spend on an advertising campaign before the end of the week, and they wanted

his company to run the campaign. The sale was made on the Tuesday before the Friday payroll. If they had not closed this sale, the employees would have been furloughed. This participant said that not only did this solve the payroll issue, but their financial problems ceased after that incident.

One participant who was a former president of a prominent fast-food chain talks about the idea of genuinely listening and looking for, "the answer that blesses everyone - the shareholder, employee, and customer." This participant pointed out that what they experienced was that "ownership managed their stock price rather than the business."

They told this story:

The company was having a tight time money-wise; the board didn't want to give any increases, and they were going to put a freeze on all increases in wages. I was president of the company, and I was on the board, and I said, that's not going to happen, or I'm not going to be here. I said now's the time when there's a crisis in the company; you want the morale of your employees to be the highest they can be, so we're going to give them increases, and the business will improve. Employees are the key to satisfying the customers, which are the key to earnings, not cutting back, and not hurting the employees for the benefit of the stock price. That's not the way we run our company, and it's not our standard.

Shortly following this meeting, they were visiting one of their stores and talking with the employees. The conversation led them to discover an idea for a new menu item. They added it to their menu and this new item increased sales by 25% and became the most popular item they had. The company has since been bought and folded into another; however, you can still find discussion about this particular menu item online today. The participant indicated that by deeply listening and standing for Principle, the right ideas came to surface with a solution that blessed everyone.

An OD consultant described listening as monitoring their thoughts and not listening to the negative thoughts in their head, opinions about leaders being difficult, or

companies being ineffective. Instead, this participant “[listened] to what God is saying about these people or systems.” This participant continued, "okay, God, what do you want me to see today about this client or company? How can I bring more harmony or fulfill your purpose?" This participant went on to say, "in Christian Science, we don't just take what the physical senses are telling us on the surface of things as facts or reality." This points to the need to listen with a spiritual sense and determine the underlying issue or error and to stay with the Truth (Eddy, 1875, p. 95).

Daily Morning Practice

11 participants also talked about a daily practice of spending time first thing in the morning in prayer and study of the Bible Lesson, a lesson that is the same for everyone around the world for that week. Eddy (1936) created 26 topics to be studied weekly, each lesson consisting of passages from the King James Bible and the Science and Health. This practice is considered to be a way to align to the one Mind before the day, and its challenges begin. An OD consultant described it this way:

An approach that I try to do every day is to have really quiet metaphysical spiritual time in my morning, reading a combination of passages from the Bible and Science and Health. Considering how will I mentally show up to these different meetings and I guess what I mean by that is, it really comes from my Christian Science practice so I could humanly write the best change management plan or whatever is required. If it's not guided and it's not directed by Mind, God, it could be pretty pointless.

A participant shared that they used their time traveling to work and home as time for connecting to God, Mind, to prepare their day. They said they really spent the first part of their day listening and letting go of any preconceived idea of how they thought the day would go, creating an openness to listen to right ideas of action. Another OD professional used the time spent in traffic to listen to a recorded version of the bible lesson and

prepare their thought for the day before they arrived at work. Each subject attributed their morning preparation to more productive days and harmonious meetings. One OD internal consultant's boss told others that they never failed. This consultant attributed their success to the daily preparation in prayer and study along with a deep listening throughout the day to determine the best actions to take.

God as Mind or Principle

When asked to identify or define more about God, 90% of the subjects would refer to the synonyms of Mind or Principle in describing God's direction or influence on the issue they were facing. The other 10% used the synonyms of Spirit and Love. Eddy (1875) defines Mind as "The only I, or Us" (p. 591) and Principle as "omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Being" (pp. 465-466). An OD consultant shared that in working with clients for over 20 years, they realized, "my role was never to be the smartest person in the room. It was to hear what Mind was saying." And the way they looked at gaining new clients was that "Mind would put me with whoever needed me."

Another participant practiced the principle of one Mind when they were asked to help get their boss' computer unlocked so the boss could use it for a big presentation. This participant's boss had tried and failed to get it opened but had to rush to another meeting. The participant had never known any of the passwords; however, after being still, listening, and affirming God's all presence and intelligence, they felt compelled to go to the computer and type in a word which turned out to be the password. They shared that they rejoiced in this issue being solved but accepted it as another proof of the principles of the science they were practicing.

Notated Differences in Using CS Principles

One participant shared the difference of working with a Christian Science approach when they would, instead, start out with a reactive approach to an issue:

I lost my temper plenty, and it never worked out. But when I took that calm, quiet approach, I recognized that the same Mind was speaking to them and that there was an answer that would bless us both. I just didn't react to their personality. I just responded to the common good for both of us. It was amazing how immediately the other side would calm down, change their position. And we would find the elegant answer. The answer that was the simplest and was not readily apparent. And, you know, it's really a case of turning to the Father. All healing is inspiration; all growth, all success comes from inspiration.

Another participant did not discover Christian Science principles until they were in college. Growing up in the Methodist church, they always had a strong belief in God, but the religious tenets in her church did not wholly meet their need. Later, when they were healed of a longstanding physical issue by applying Christian Science principles, they noticed that their outlook had changed. They said, "The physical healing was one thing, but I had one more year of school, and it just gave me a different understanding about how to take on school issues – it just began to shift and change my life so, so much."

One OD consultant shared when considering how to start each new job:

Ideally, I would use a CS approach to processing every moment of my conscious experience – an awareness of myself as a reflection of God and having all perspectives, decisions, and actions flow from that. I experienced distractions from a mortal or societal view, a framework and argument for more human or conventional approaches as an alternative to truly listening to spiritual intuition, which is God.

Similarities between CS and OD

Five subjects talked about the similarities between CS and OD tools. One OD consultant said,

I think it's very interesting because I've been to a couple of non-CS events like corporate retreats or a leadership summit, and there is so much that actually is

really connecting to that sense of listening like a meditation before a talk or before a workshop. It's maybe slightly different theories than Christian Science prayer, but it's similar in that it's trying to weed out the distractions.

Another businessman referenced several leadership development programs that include principles that they considered aligning with CS (e.g., Tony Robbins, "Unleash The Power Within," and the Landmark Forum program). They went on to say:

The way that I think about it is that I mean, consistent with CS, there's one truth that is universal that applies to everything. And then regardless of whether you're a Christian Scientist or you're Tony Robbins, you apply different words to that truth as you're communicating out. And sometimes it's a lot of truth and a few words, and sometimes you take just a tiny little bit of the truth, and you add lots of your own words and marketing spin to it and other things. But it all comes back to the same truth.

One OD consultant compared AI to CS, stating that they were very similar and that it was one of the reasons they used the model. This participant found that many of their clients were receptive to the expectation of good that is a principle of AI and CS.

Sharing CS Principles

There were mixed results when asking the question about whether CS principles could be considered a resource for OD consultants. Two subjects talked about the difficulty and discrimination involved when voicing these ideas. One consultant shared that, "My thing was never to try to convert people to Christian Science. It was to use the ideas and apply them so much that people would say, how are you thinking? And that's what happened over the years. I think it's a Thoreau quote, 'I can't hear your words because your life speaks so loudly.'" They went on to say that they would explain it this way, "I started talking to them about their ability to hear deeper answers. And that they had to quit thinking that all of their intelligence was in the brain. And that's honestly how most of my God conversations took place." They told them, "there is another intelligence

that is completely accessible. And what you have to do is acknowledge it and be receptive to it and get quiet enough to hear it." When asked about needing to have a Christian or Bible-based background to understand or be open to using Science and Health as a resource book, the participant had this to say:

I think that book is for everybody. I don't think you have to have a Christian background. I think you can be an agnostic or an atheist. And the reason I say that is I've seen people come into it in very non-Christian doors. It just the sheer logic of it that appealed to them.... it's a book for anyone who is at all spiritually curious.

An attorney who works on the east coast shared that in the conservative law firm where they work, talking about CS principles would not be well received. They explained how cynicism and pessimism permeated the culture, and it would take a lot of courage to bring up the ideas prevalent in CS about universal goodness. They explained it as a hostility directed towards anyone who brought up any kind of spirituality. They went on to describe how the recent suicide of a partner had started to change the conversation. They expressed that the senior partners saw that they needed to look to other models and ideas to support their employees. Generally, however, they did not think that CS principles would be well received in more conservative, institutional environments like law and finance.

Ultimately, 12 subjects stated that they felt the principles were helpful to everyone, and they would share them with others. Four specified that it was better to use more universal terms in explaining the CS principles like "Universe" rather than "God." Two subjects commented that Eddy's (1875) writing and how the extensive vocabulary, combined with being from the 1800s, can make reading through her primary textbook a more arduous task.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the research findings and summarized the reoccurring messages in the data acquired through the interviews. Chapter 5 will complete the study and consider the research findings to either refute or support the data that came through the literature review. Implications for CS practice in the OD field will be outlined, limitations will be discussed, and proposed recommendations will be reviewed.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to consider the existing literature on CS to determine how its core principles might align and contribute to the field of OD. The present study also explores its current impact by interviewing OD practitioners and business leaders who use Christian Science principles in OD activities and models such as self-management and process consultation. This study asked the question: to what extent do core CS principles align with some OD practices and contribute to the field of OD? This chapter completes the study and will discuss the research findings to either refute or support the data collected. Implications for CS practice in the OD field will be outlined, limitations will be discussed, and proposed recommendations will be reviewed.

Conclusions and Interpretations

While there was no literature explicitly linking OD work to CS principles, the literature that was reviewed in the research project provided some interesting parallels and helped build a groundwork to look at how CS principles might align to current WS spiritual practices, concur with some QP theories, and align and contribute to the OD field. Since the OD field has been influenced by QP and WS, I started there. The similarities between CS principles of matter and QP research of matter helped to provide some common ground between a religion-based practice and emerging research in science. The literature on WS provided arguments toward the readiness of the business environment today to accept spiritually grounded practices that improve the workplace culture. Several sources stated the need for businesses to have more spirituality minded leaders and culture, and to consider an interconnected consciousness as QP research indicates (Bussey, 2016; Cacioppe, 2000; Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999).

The data from the interviews linked similarities between OD and CS. One similarity between CS principles and OD practice was the idea of being still and listening. The examples shared by subjects are similar to the way some OD consultants approach prepping for a client meeting. They meditate to clear their thoughts and make sure they are present for their client. They practice deep listening during the meeting to understand not just the words that are said, but those things that are not said or expressed. In other words, something that might show up in non-verbal cues or actions; responding to the client with data they receive or intuitive ideas to ask the right questions to uncover an underlying issue. The difference between the two approaches is that a CS approach acknowledges one Mind in action without separation between beings. An affirmation that it is not two (or more) minds that are trying to understand each other but one Mind in which all ideas (or beings) have access to infinite intelligence or knowing.

The CS practice of morning prayer and study could also be considered similar to the way some OD practitioners are disciplined to their approach of meditation, engaging in it two times a day, morning, and evening. Again, a practice often utilized to help the practitioner to stay grounded and present throughout the day, despite the challenges that arise.

Despite the similarities between OD and CS, it is important to discuss the differences if CS is going to be considered something that can contribute to the field of OD. The first notable difference is that those who practice CS approach every challenge with the belief that there is a higher power, a Divine Mind, that is a guide and infinite resource for whoever takes steps to access it. Their reasoning begins with a "perfect God and perfect man – as the basis of thought and demonstration" (Eddy, 1875, p. 259). This

premise indicates a different, more orderly world than the chaotic one Wheatley (2006) describes. According to CS principles, the chaotic world is one that is illusionary, resulting from a culmination of assumptions and beliefs. In other words, that we are separate from this higher power and left on our own to live in a reactive universe (Eddy, 1875, p. 307). This world leaves us at a disadvantage, unable to harness and tap into a greater power of Divine Mind, Truth, and Life.

The possibility of the CS defined reality was reflected in the stories shared in the interviews. Utilizing CS principles and arguing from that standpoint, a subject shared their confidence that financial issues would be solved, and another shared their assurance that even an unknown password could be provided. Another noted benefit that the practice of CS principles provide (if one believes them) is that certainty that the right answer to any situation will also be provided by a higher being that has the greatest knowledge and viewpoint than any individual could possibly offer on their own.

Implications of Research

Though the foundation that CS starts from is vastly different from what most business leaders or OD professionals perceive to be true about existence, as we see movement towards accepting discoveries in QP and growing practices of WS there might be a possibility of its acceptance. A doorway to it might be through an OD consultant. Business leaders will often call on OD consultants in order to consider an outside perspective when they are looking for new ways of approaching reoccurring problems.

It is a real possibility that as research moves us towards a different reality, one that acknowledges the power our own beliefs and attention have over our experience, OD will need an updated model to consider how to work with organizations. A model that

sees one all-connected being. For example, consider how different work with teams might be if an OD consultant started with the CS principle approach that there is only one Mind – not many minds that are trying to understand each other. Or a CS approach towards diversity and inclusion that asserts each individual comes from only one parent, Father-Mother God, which creates us all as equals, its valued and loved children.

Study Limitations

The limitations of this research primarily originate from looking at an approach using a belief-based system. As most lean on physical science to inform, some could argue that the results they experienced in using CS principles are more a product of faith and positive thinking rather than a principle of an all-knowing Mind guiding, communicating, and directing action and choices.

Availability of participants proved to be challenging as well. Many potential subjects were contacted (including high ranking government officials and prominent business leaders); however, conducting a study during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the availability of subjects who were invited to participate.

Summary of Learnings

Though CS principles can be perceived by some to be a radical departure from what most scientists assert about the universe, the movement towards QP and more spirituality seems to indicate that these principles may seem less and less extreme as individuals accept new ways of seeing the world. OD is a field that uses scientific data and spiritually grounded practices to help heal cultural dysfunctions, develop leaders, and design more profitable and productive businesses. It is vitally important that the OD field use tools and models that reflect the growth of the times.

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