

FAITH DEVELOPMENT AS EXPERIENCED BY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2017

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived development of faith as experienced by high school seniors who were currently attending Christian schools. The question prompting this study was what are the faith development experiences of Christian high school seniors? Participants came from a purposeful criterion sampling of 12 high school seniors from three Christian schools in the state of Hawai'i. One of the two theories guiding this study was James Fowler's (1981) faith development theory as it presents six sequential stages that individuals go through during faith development. The other theory guiding this study was Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as it explains how culture relates to cognitive processes. Data collection for this study included observations, student interviews, and focus groups. Data analysis for this study followed Moustakas' (1994) modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) and Saldana's (2013) first and second cycle coding strategies. The results of this study provided six themes common among Christian high school seniors: (a) Relational Side of Christian School, (b) Epistemic Side of Christian School, (c) Affective Side of Christian School, (d) Unbecoming Side of Christian School, (e) Authenticity, and (f) Church.

*Keywords:* faith formation, faith development, spiritual formation, spiritual development,

Christian school, Christian education

### **Dedication**

Above all else, I dedicate this study to God, whom without His direction, guidance, and ordering of my steps would not have been possible. He has opened doors for research that I thought were impossible. I can still remember the day when I thought about giving up and God said to me, “Read 15 pages and write one.” At that time in my life, I felt so overwhelmed by the immensity of this study and God reminded me to take it in small steps. Since then my daily goal has always been to read 15 pages of literature and write one page. Anything more than that is a bonus.

I would also like to dedicate this study to my wonderful mother, Patricia for starting me off on my own faith development many years ago. Without her commitment to God and desire to instill that same commitment in me, this study would never have happened.

Lastly, I dedicate this study to the Christian schools who participated in the study and to those students who gave of their time to provide valuable insight on faith development in Christian schools. I pray that each of you would continue to grow in your faith and in your commitment to God.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my loving wife, Jessica, for all of her inspiration, support, and extra household stuff she had to do so that I could focus on my study. Throughout this journey, she has been a constant source of encouragement and grace. She has listened to me read page after page numerous times and only fell asleep once.

I would also like to thank my three beautiful children, Keala, Makoa, and Kainoa who have had to give up their own time with Daddy so that he could do his own homework. The many interruptions to look at a new picture that one of them just colored or to go to the beach or to wrestle on the floor were constant reminders that the faith development of my own children is just as important if not more important than the faith development of others.

I would also like to thank my co-workers at Kaimuki Christian School who were gracious enough to allow me time off so that I could complete this journey. Their encouragement and eagerness to learn the results of the study served as a constant motivation.

I would like to thank my committee members, Drs. Kelly Bingham and Mark Gallagher for providing insight that was both valuable and refreshing and to my chair, Dr. James Swezey, for seeking me out and offering to chair my committee. His expertise and knowledge challenged me as both a researcher and as an educator. I am grateful for allowing us to meet and look forward to our continued friendship.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

American Association of Christian Schools (AACS)

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA)

Central Question (CQ)

Christian High School Senior (CHSS)

Christian Schools International (CSI)

`Eha Christian School (Eha CS)

`Ekahi Christian School (Ekahi CS)

`Ekolu Christian School (Ekolu CS)

`Elima Christian School (Elima CS)

`Elua Christian School (Elua CS)

Hawai`i Association of Independent Schools (HAIS)

Hawai`i Council of Private Schools (HCPS)

Hawai`i State Department of Education (HSDOE)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

New International Version (NIV)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

Sub-question 1 (SQ1)

Sub-question 2 (SQ2)

Sub-question 3 (SQ3)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

In this chapter, I will present the background, important terms, the situation to self, the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the significance of the study. Furthermore, this chapter will include the research questions, and the research plan of the study.

### **Background**

Faith development is an often misunderstood phenomenon. The complexity is largely due to the discrepancy regarding religious terms. Throughout writings on faith development, many terms such as faith, believe, trust, spiritual, and religion have been and will continue to be used almost interchangeably (Moser, 2010; Streib, 2010) because clear definitions do not exist (Barkin, Miller, & Luthar, 2015; Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & DeHaan, 2012). Because Moser (2010) and Streib (2010) acknowledge the discrepancy amongst these terms, I will address their specific nuances. Before addressing the dissimilarities between these terms, it is important to note their similarities. In one particular study (Powell, Tisdale, Willingham, Bustrum, & Allan, 2012), researchers stated the occurrence of two separate concepts, faith identity and spiritual development; however, they never attempted to delineate between the two allowing the reader to believe that the concepts of faith and spirituality were interchangeable. Second, researchers often qualify one term by using another term, such as only studying spirituality that is grounded in faith (Milacci, 2006). Third, when describing their faith experiences, adolescents do not always distinguish the difference between spirituality and religion (Fowler & Dell, 2006; Yocum, Staal, & Pinkie, 2012). For this reason, I have attempted to provide some of the available uses of and definitions for some of these terms and the delineations between them. In

the Definitions section of Chapter One I define these terms as they apply to this specific study and thus, disregarding the other possible definitions used throughout literature.

## **Faith**

In his seminal work, Westerhoff (2000) asked, “Will our children have faith?” (p. 2). He went on to use words like action, story, and verb to describe faith (Westerhoff, 2000).

Westerhoff was not referring to faith as a noun. He was not concerned whether children will have or assimilate into one specific corporate faith tradition, such as Protestantism, Catholicism, or Buddhism. Instead, Westerhoff was writing about a personal and continual devotion to something higher, more specifically, God. Westerhoff spoke of faith as a developing, molding, all-encompassing commitment. Westerhoff’s (2000) definition harkens back to the original Greek usage of the term *pisteuo*, which means to have faith (Strong, 1995, 1996). The term *pisteuo* is translated to the word believe in John 14:1, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me” (New International Version). Though Westerhoff described faith as an action, western languages do not have a verb associated with faith (Smith, 1991; Strong, 1995, 1996). Since *pistis* faith is the noun (Strong, 1996), then to do faith, *pisteuo*, would be *faithing*, which per Merriam-Webster (2015) is not a real word. Furthermore, *pistis* is the term used in Luke 7:9, “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, ‘I tell you, I have not found such great faith’.” Thus, faith carries with it both noun and verb characteristics. An individual can have and hold on to the thing, faith, and he or she can also do faith, by believing, trusting, and acting upon it. Therefore, western society uses words like believing and trusting to denote the doing or carrying out of one’s faith.

This is one of the reasons why these terms have become misconstrued. The verb form of faith, *pisteuo*, is the definition most important to this study.

Fowler (1981) argued that every individual, regardless of tradition or belief system, has faith though most would not see it as faith. He described faith as an individualistic reliance upon a higher being when everything around is darkness. For Fowler (1981), the higher being he relied on was God. McCraw (2015) referred to the higher being as the object of one's faith. For some, the object of their faith is God, for others it could be Mary, for others it could be Buddha, for others it could be Allah, and for others it could be humanity. Researchers have provided their descriptions of the various objects of one's faith. Faith in God means a deep confidence in him (McCraw, 2015). Faith in Jesus Christ means both the faithfulness of the risen Christ and the faithfulness of those who are saved in him (Downs, 2012). Faith in humanity means trust and reliance upon humanity and its potential (Preston-Roedder, 2013). Faith in oneself means depending solely on one's ability to find purpose and meaning (Dyess, 2011). Fowler (2000) also recognized a faith in the secular. Characterizing faith, Fowler and Dell (2004) noted that faith provides direction to one's life, joins the person with a community, links a person's loyalties to the loyalties of the community, and gives the individual a source of strength to face life's crises.

Faith is the individual's devotion to someone or something greater than himself or herself. In differentiating faith and religion, Westerhoff (2000) stated that faith, not religion "must become the concern of Christian education" (p. 18). The term faith carries with it a deeper commitment than terms like religious or spiritual, an almost biased commitment. Milacci (2006) described faith as, "loaded with meaning; meaning that it is grounded in historical, theological,

and etymological contexts” (p. 230). Dyess (2011) argued that faith encompasses more than the finite concepts of religion and spirituality. To be a religious person does not carry the same type of weight as someone of faith. With one’s faith comes commitment and a burden to live said faith. Faith is purposeful. Faith is specific. Contrarily, religiousness and spirituality are vague and lack definitive direction, meaning, and guidance (Milacci, 2006). The individual who embodies faith can also be spiritual and religious as he or she lives out that faith. The individual can also find fulfillment in religious practices (Yocum, 2014). However, the spiritual person and the religious person can, but may not always embody faith. The religious person who lacks faith would be emblematic to Pearce and Denton’s (2011) individual label of assenter, an individual who affiliates with a religious organization, but does not engage in religious practices.

Smith (1998) wrote that faith is “a direct encounter with God—mediated...by the sacraments or the doctrines, or the moral obligations” (p. 11). This is similar to what Buber (1951) called *Emunah* faith or relationship with God and Moberly’s (2012) knowing God instead of just knowing about him. Likewise, McCraw (2015) described faith as having two components, the epistemic component, knowledge about God and who he is and also the affective component, the spiritual and emotional aspect. Accordingly, faith is not believing in God or believing that he exists. Instead, faith is the knowing that he exists similar to knowing any tangible person. Fowler (1981) and Smith (1998) both stated that historically, faith in God means to set one’s heart upon God. Fowler (1981) and Smith (1998) continued by acknowledging that setting one’s heart on God means to love everything about God, to follow his commands whole-heartedly, and to not let anything or anyone else come between you and God. To better define faith or setting one’s heart on God, it is not assuming or accepting the existence



of God (Fowler, 1981; Smith, 1998). Faith does not require the justification of God's existence. Furthermore, to be a Christian, to be Christ-like (Westerhoff, 2000), one does not question the existence of God. Faith presupposes that God is, has always been, and will always be. God is not a mythical creature to be conjured up psychologically and believed in. To ask someone if he or she believes in God contradicts the sheer meaning of faith. While the intent may be sincere, the format is incorrect. The question should be whether an individual has set his or her heart upon God, if they love everything about God, if they follow his commands whole-heartedly, and if they do not let anything or anyone else come between them and God.

Being that faith is an intrinsic construct, faith experiences are personal, unique, and subjective to the individual. Maslow (1994) referred to these experiences as peak experiences. He discussed how peak experiences do not always happen in religious settings, but can happen anywhere that the individual experiences the transcendent. While faith is internalized within the individual, it is also expressed externally (Lee, 1980). An individual's faith is often not recognizable apart from the display of beliefs and religious traditions associated with it (Smith, 1991; Westerhoff, 2000). Faith is expressed through prayer, beliefs, rituals, ministries, worship, preaching, meditation, and the traditions of a faith community (Liu, Carter, Boehm, Annandale, & Taylor, 2014; Westerhoff, 2000). For the observer, an individual's faith experiences cannot be truly appreciated without observing the outward expression of one's faith (Droege & Ferrari, 2012).

## **Believe**

Faith in God is often misinterpreted as belief in God (Baldwin et al., 2015), but as previously stated; belief in God's existence undermines the true essence of God. Smith (1998)

provides another viewpoint in that belief means “to love” (p. 105). Furthermore, for the early Christian to say that he or she believed in God meant that he or she loved him above all else. Believing in God did not mean that he or she believed in his existence. His existence was understood as a constant reality. As it relates to the term *pisteuo*, the word believe is used in John 9:38 when Jesus heals the blind man; “Then the man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.” Conversely, the modern individual does not equate believing in God with love or complete and total surrender to him. A modern individual unknowingly can believe that God exists without loving him, irrespective of the historical implications of using the word believe.

Researchers have reasoned that a belief is based on some aspect of truth and the assumption that something must be true (Farnell, 2013; Yu & Zeng, 2014). Until an idea becomes absolute knowledge and while it is still more than an opinion, it is a belief (O Cist, 2013). To believe in a belief hints at a commitment and dedication to something that others do not believe in. To use the word belief results in recognizing that there is also disbelief. For this reason, the words believe and belief are limited in scope and do not capture the full immensity of God. To say that someone believes in God gives equal credit to the individual who says that he or she does not believe in God.

However, beliefs do provide guidance, (Baldwin et al., 2015), serve as marking points along the development of faith (Liu et al., 2014), and help individuals to translate the supernatural into natural terms (Smith, 1998). Furthermore, beliefs are shaped by experiences and experiences are experienced with the worldview of previously held beliefs (Uso-Domenech & Nescolarde-Selva, 2015). These experiences often are social in nature, thus while being individualistic, beliefs are also impacted culturally (Cromby, 2012). Beliefs are how the

individual attributes action to his or her faith. As adolescents, children are instructed on what to believe or not believe by their parents. As children mature, they learn which beliefs and unbeliefs are socially acceptable and unacceptable (Vygotsky, 1978).

## **Trust**

Another one of the words often associated with faith is trust (Fowler & Dell, 2004). However, faith is distinguishable from trust by its level of personal commitment and overall importance to the individual (McCraw, 2015). Granted, to have faith in God coincides with having trust in God. Likewise, to place trust in someone or something is akin to placing faith in someone or something. The difference is that the term trust, similar to believe, also carries with it the lack of trust or the loss of trust. While the same could be said about faith, to use the term faith transcends circumstances that would otherwise affect the notion of trust. The faithful individual continues in their faith despite all of the circumstances that would cause him or her to lose trust. Trust is conditional. Faith is not. That being said, trust is one of the first contributors to faith. An infant's first faith experience involves learning whom he or she can and cannot trust (Fowler & Dell, 2004). Trust is the seed of faith (Fowler, 1981, 2000). It is important to note that the term *pisteuo* is used in the original Greek not when referring to trust in God, but instead, God's trust in man; "On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). The closest Greek word for trust comparable to doing or having faith, as English translators have defined it, is *peitho* (Strong, 1995, 1996); "And again, 'I will put my trust in him'" (Hebrews 2:13a).

## **Spiritual**

Throughout the literature, the term spiritual and its many cognates are used synonymously with faith, but also in opposition to faith. Various authors, researchers, and study participants have placed their own definitions on spirituality and spiritual formation. Scientists and researchers often prefer to use the term spirituality instead of faith and religion, because the latter terms can inadvertently carry denominational prejudices and biases (Streib & Hood, 2011). From the results of their phenomenological research with recovering substance abusers, Williamson and Hood (2013) wrote about spiritual formation as an embodied experience. Others equated spiritual formation as a relationship with others (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008), a relationship with God (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013; Timmons, 2012), and a relationship with the Holy Spirit (Greggo & Lawrence, 2012; Thornhill, 2012). Other researchers have defined spiritual formation as being a gift from God (McMartin, Dodgen-Magee, Geevarughese, Gioielli, & Sklar, 2013). Researchers have also compared spiritual formation to reaching for or seeking out holiness or that, which is sacred (Barbu, 2012; Griffin, 2013; Pargament, 2013; Worthington, Hook, Davis, & McDaniel, 2011). Researchers have also compared it to the innate search for meaning and purpose that everybody has (Baldwin et al., 2015; Benson & Roehlepartain, 2008; Davis, Lambie, & Ieva, 2011; Judy, 2011; Kimbel & Schellenberg, 2011; Shek, 2012). Yob (2011) equated spiritual experiences with music, art, dance, and nature. The majority of participants in one study correlated spirituality within a religious setting (Baldwin et al., 2015). In another study, spirituality represented values and attitudes (Spurr et al., 2013). Spiritual formation has also been compared to the answer for all the hurt and pain in the world (Kass, 2007, 2015) and as a coping strategy (Carpenter, Laney, &

Mezullis, 2011; Denton, 2012; Hoffman, 2011; Marini & Glover-Graf, 2011; Yonker et al., 2012). Lastly, Moberg (2002) hypothesized that spirituality is a real phenomenon. Thus, spirituality and faith have many of the same characteristics and experiences and both can be developed into life-long processes.

Whereas faith and spirituality are most often associated with biblical meanings, the term spirituality is also used for non-biblical experiences as well, specifically; ways that people find hope and meaning in life. Individuals gain spiritual meaning from a variety of avenues (Dangwal & Singh, 2012; Dillon, 2012; Kurtz & White, 2015). While Rountree, Morris, and Peatfield (2012) did not provide a definition of spirituality, they did use the term when talking about the world's historical spiritual practices such as the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, Ghanaian koma mound, and vision quest pilgrimages. These traditional practices and others like them, though they are not related to the dominant religions of the world, are still spiritual in nature. They provide meaning and purpose. They give direction. They provide comfort and strength during critical times.

## **Religion**

In differentiating between faith and religion, Smith (1991) would agree that faith pertains to the quality of the person and not the system, which he would refer to as the religion. Faith, authentic or not, and the development of said faith, is understood and judged by the deeply held beliefs as expressed through religion. Whereas faith is internal and personal, religion is external and corporate. Religion allows the person of faith to practice his or her belief system (Yocum, 2014). Religion is the external expression of internal faith (Dobmeier, 2011; Hodge, 2011; Lee, 1980; McMartin et al., 2013; Neven Van Pelt, Sikkink, Pennings, & Seel, 2012; Smith, 1991;

Worthington et al., 2011). Streib (2011) described religion as an etic term, meaning it is experienced from the outsider's perspective, whereas spirituality is an emic term, meaning it is experienced from the insider's perspective. Maslow (1994) would argue in fact that religion gets in the way and can inhibit spirituality. Pargament (2013) would argue that belief in something is bigger than oneself and guides religion. Religion and religious experiences are extrinsic, tangible, and objective to the point that an individual can perform the religious act and that it is observable. Religious experiences are activities like praying, worshipping, reading the Bible, and church attendance. Activities like these occur more often during adolescence than during childhood or young adulthood (Button, Stallings, Rhee, Corley, & Hewitt, 2011). Activities like these are easy to examine because they happen outside of the body. Yonker et al. (2012) described religion as "doctrinal, institutional, ritual, and authoritarian" (p. 846). Religious experiences can be the result of intrinsic faith experiences and can also lead to faith experiences. Furthermore, religion involves the relationships and interactions with those of like-minded beliefs (Smith, 1991; Yocum, 2014).

Though God personalizes an individual's faith, an individual's first encounter with him typically takes place within religious communities. Many people state that they are religious, specifically 56% (Gallup, 2015). Forty-two percent of people view organized religion positively (Gallup, 2015). Chaves' (2011) found that 26% percent of Americans state that they are extremely religious and 70% percent of Americans believe other religions than their own can lead to an eternal life in Heaven. "The greatest predictor of the religious lives of youth is the religious lives of their parents" (Denton, 2012, p. 43). Furthermore, while teenagers statistically are religiously active, 20-year-olds are some of the most religiously inactive individuals

(Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Pearce & Denton, 2011). Studies have revealed that America is becoming a religiously diverse and pluralistic society (Chaves, 2011; Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011).

### **Faith Development**

Terminology such as spiritual formation, spiritual development, and faith formation can be summed up with faith development. Tighe (2015) acknowledged that some Evangelicals view development as a single conversion event followed by the life-long walk with Christ. Likewise, Gold (2013) also recognized faith development as a life-long process. Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) defined development as the “role of religion, the sacred, and the mystical” (p. 40) in the life of an individual. Long (2014) referred to continued development as spiritual stamina, the fortitude of an individual’s faith to withstand the pressures of life. The pressures faced can cause many people to no longer follow the beliefs of their communities and to quit participating in the religious practices that they once held on to. However, pressures faced by individuals can provide motivation to develop and strengthen one’s faith (Hardie, Pearce, & Denton, 2013; Hill, 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Maryl & Uecker, 2011).

## Christian Schools

Westerhoff (2000) regarded education as the key to developing Christian faith. The term Christian schools in this study refers to schools that may be Christian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Protestant, or Pentecostal. Kienel (2005) wrote that Christian school education, referring to all Protestant types of schools, has gone through its first and second movements and is currently in its third movement. The first movement of Christian school education was during the first-century church (Kienel, 1998). The second movement was a result of the Reformation (Kienel, 1998). Between the second and third movements, Christian schools were relatively nonexistent. However, Christian education in the form of public schools following Christian beliefs and values was still thriving. This is due in large part to John Calvin and his influence on western society and education (Gutek, 2011). A few organizations like Christian Schools International (CSI), which was founded in 1920, began during this period. With respect to the First Amendment to the Constitution and the court case *Reynolds v. United States* (1879), the government cannot inhibit or encourage one faith tradition over another (Alexander & Alexander, 2012; Essex, 2012). As a result of two court cases, *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963), Christian leaders, parents, and ministers revitalized Christian schools throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The American Association of Christian Schools (AACS, 2015) was founded in 1972 and currently serves more than 100,000 students and teachers. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI, 2012) was founded in 1978 and currently serves over 5.5 million students in more than 100 countries. Per the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) most recent data during the 2011-12 school year, the



United States had 38,062 high school seniors enrolled in Christian schools and 630,557 students in all (Broughman & Swaim, 2013).

### **Situation to Self**

Throughout this document I will be addressing theological issues that are deeply personal to many, both Christians and non-Christians. Thus, the reader may or may not acknowledge the authority and absoluteness of the Bible. Either way, I have chosen to incorporate biblical text because Christian education is grounded in the Christian Bible. To not reference the Bible as it applies to Christian terms and Christian schools lacks historical accuracy. Should interviewees reference the Bible or another sacred text during the data collection process, I will of course include it. Additionally, the Bible may be referenced during the analysis and results section and in the literature review as a secondary source when referenced by authors or researchers. Furthermore, in my writing, I will refer to God as God, Jesus as Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as Holy Spirit, and will use masculine pronouns, understanding that these masculine pronouns are all encompassing (Westerhoff, 2000). When referencing another author, I will use the name that he or she uses. Likewise, if God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit is referred to by another name or a feminine pronoun by authors or interviewees, I will include that name out of respect for the research. Understandably, my goal is not to debate theological issues, but simply to establish a common foundation from which to execute this study. With this cognizance, I can now address terms pertinent to this study.

My motivation for conducting this study first and foremost draws upon my own spiritual development of Christian faith, which started at a very young age. In my own self-reflection, I can see spiritual hurdles that I had to cross from each of Fowler's faith development stages and I

would have to place myself comfortably within Fowler's (1981) conjunctive faith stage. While I am wholeheartedly and totally committed to follow Christ as my Lord and Savior, I understand that the religious traditions that I have been a part of "are inevitably partial, limited to a particular people's experience of God and incomplete" (Fowler, 1981, p. 186). I view the symbols, rituals, and practices of my faith not as holy or righteous, but simply as tools that help me to direct my gaze and attention towards God. Furthermore, I am committed in life and in this research to better understand faith development so that others can generate their personal "identity and meaning" (Fowler, 1981, p. 198).

Second, my role as the researcher draws upon my passion for education and learning. In my own academic pursuit, I have acquired a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in education, and a master's degree in music. With everything that I have learned has come the realization that there is more to be learned. In my experience as an educator and a school administrator, I have witnessed first-hand the superficiality of Christian students' faith. Too often, many students are simply going through the motions and doing what is expected of them without any true conversion experience. Unfortunately, the Christian school environment can sometimes provide students with a false sense of reality. Thus, when students graduate and leave the protective covering, they are caught up in a world they are ill prepared to deal with. Faith has been taught in an assembly line fashion without addressing the individual's needs (Beam & Keith, 2011). I am tired of watching my students struggle to live out their faith with an ever-impending world looming on the forefront. I understand that the answer to life's toughest questions, and perhaps the root problem with all questions, cannot be answered with math or

science, but instead with faith. Furthermore, I believe that in my quest for ultimate spiritual truth, the truth will help others and myself to realize our faith potential.

Third, my role as a researcher draws upon my role as a husband and a father. One of my greatest desires is to make sure that I do anything and everything possible to provide my family with practical and effectual opportunities to develop their own personal faith in the time that I have with them. The statistics (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014; Vaidyanathan, 2011) regarding young adults who leave the Christian faith are unnerving. For this reason, I cannot sit by ignorantly and expect my children to mature spiritually. To be a better father, to be a better husband, to be a better man of faith, I need to better understand how faith is developed. By researching the experiences of others, I am embracing a single phenomenon through multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). I understand that as an individual going through my own faith development experiences, trying to also understand the faith development experience of multiple participants can present multiple realities to the same phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

My research was framed within an interpretive constructivism paradigm so that I could better understand the faith development of my participants in relation to their lives (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This study involved describing subjectively the faith development of each Christian high school senior (CHSS).

### **Problem Statement**

While Christian school graduates struggle to continue in their Christian faith after graduation (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011), they are more likely to continue in their faith when compared to graduates from other types of schools (Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014;

Vaidyanathan, 2011). In surveying young adults who have recently graduated, Kinnaman and Hawkins (2011) uncovered six reasons why Christians abandon their faith following graduation: (a) Christianity is over protective, (b) Christianity lacks depth, (c) Christianity rejects modern science and technology, (d) Christianity has too many rules, (e) Christianity is exclusive, and (f) Christianity does not allow for criticism or doubt. Likewise, Kinnaman and Hawkins (2011) wrote that the faith development experience of teenagers is “often shallow and on the surface, having more to do with cultural identification than it does with deep faith” (p. 23). Students may be going through the motions to pass Christian education classes and to blend in with the larger Christian school culture (Hill & Den Dulk, 2013; Itolondo, 2012; Rambo & Bauman, 2012).

There are two problems concerning this dilemma. The first problem is that researchers have only studied the level of faith in Christian individuals after graduation (Astin et al., 2011; Hill, 2011; Keith, 2013; Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Long, 2014; Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014; Powell et al., 2012; Vaidyanathan, 2011) or during pre-adolescent years (Keeler, 2012; Mohler, 2013) and not the development of their faith as it is happening during the teenage years (O’Shea, Wallace, Griffin, & Fitzpatrick, 2011). The second problem is that researchers have yet to examine the socialization aspect of Christian schools as students are immersed within the culture, history, and relationships (Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Gold, 2014; Hill & Den Dulk, 2013; Hoffman, 2011; Itolondo, 2012; Liu et al., 2014; Rambo & Bauman, 2012; Spurr et al., 2013).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived faith development experiences of 12 high school seniors from three different Christian schools in

the state of Hawai'i. The lived experiences of faith development were defined as prayer, Bible study, worship, service to others, encounters with God, relying upon God, and surrendering to God (Fowler, 1981; McCraw, 2015; Smith, 1998; Williamson & Hood, 2013). There were two theories that guided this study. The first theory was Fowler's (1981) faith development theory as it presents six sequential stages that help to categorize an individual's faith. The other theory guiding this study was Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as it explains how culture relates to cognitive processes.

### **Significance of the Study**

Ideally, this study helps to develop a better understanding of the faith development phenomenon in Christian high school students to add to the body of scholarly research and improve Christian school philosophy and pedagogy so that ultimately the individual student will exhibit continued Christian faith after graduation (Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014; Vaidyanathan, 2011). Second, this research benefits educators by providing relevant strategies to improve the faith development experiences of students. Third, by improving faith development practices, this research helps administrators as they lead Christian schools with the hope to develop graduates who continue in their Christian faith. Fourth, this study benefits parents who send their children to Christian schools in the hope and trust that their child will receive a strong spiritual foundation from which he or she can grow. Fifth, this study benefits religious organizations by examining the relationship between socialization and faith development (Hill & Den Dulk, 2013; Rambo & Bauman, 2012). Sixth, this study in some small part benefits Christendom as a whole and Christianity's pursuit of The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Lastly, with a fuller understanding of the faith development experience or

experiences and all of the intricacies, then future researchers have the potential to study cause and effect relationships between specific faith development constructs and continued faith.

Likewise, future researchers are able to assess whether Christian students are achieving school goals on spirituality and faith.

### **Research Questions**

Central Question (CQ): What are the faith development experiences of CHSSs? This central question was broad enough to allow for a range of experiences (Williamson & Hood, 2013) and realities (Creswell, 2013) from participants.

Sub-question 1 (SQ1): How do CHSSs describe their experiences of faith development? Williamson and Hood (2013), in a similar study, had participants who reported feelings of urgent desire for personal change, unmerited love, self-awareness of spiritual change, and fast-change/gradual-change. Self-reported descriptions like these were also revealed in this research study.

Sub-question 2 (SQ2): What meaning do CHSSs derive from faith development opportunities provided by their school? Christian schools typically have a once-a-week Chapel service, devotion times, prayer times, Bible reading times, as well as biblical integration into curriculum (McMartin et al., 2013). This study was able to determine to what extent and how students experience these services.

Sub-question 3 (SQ3): How do CHSSs describe the social aspect of faith development? Because teachers and administrators are the authority figures in a school, they are also largely responsible for the culture and climate of a school. The philosophies and beliefs held by educators are subtly being exemplified and vocalized before students. This sub-question allowed

the researcher to determine how socialization and school culture influence the faith development of students (Rambo & Bauman, 2012).

### **Definitions**

1. *Faith* – Complete and total reliance upon and surrender to God (Fowler, 1981; McCraw, 2015).
2. *Believe* – To set one’s heart upon God (Smith, 1998).
3. *Trust* – The beginning of faith (Fowler, 1981, 2000).
4. *Spiritual/Spirituality* – The search for meaning and purpose (Baldwin et al., 2015; Benson & Roehlepartain, 2008; Davis et al., 2011; Judy, 2011; Kimbel & Schellenberg, 2011; Shek, 2012).
5. *Religion* – The external expression of internal faith (Lee, 1980; McMartin et al., 2013; Neven Van Pelt et al., 2012; Smith, 1991).
6. *Faith development* – Life-long process of relying upon and surrendering to God (Fowler, 1981; Gold, 2013; McCraw, 2015; Tighe, 2015).
7. *Christian school* – Refers to schools in this study that identify as Baptist, Christian, Evangelical, Non-denominational Christian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, and/or Protestant.

### **Summary**

The growth and development of an individual’s faith is one of the most important facets of Christianity (Colossians 1:10; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3). Christian faith development is the level or extent to which an individual develops a sincere and personal relationship with God. The level or degree of faith development during the adolescent years relates to many desirable life-long behaviors (Hill & Den Dulk, 2013; Pennings et al.,

2014). Christian schools endeavor to help their students grow spiritually and therefore need to have a better understanding of the faith development experiences of their students. Thus, this transcendental phenomenological study was used to study the faith development of CHSSs to better understand how each participant's faith development experience is shaped by social culture and how the faith development experience of Christian students encourages continued faith development.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

This chapter will address the two theories that I will use to guide my research, the first being Fowler's (1981) faith development theory and the second being Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. I will first take a look at both theories separately and then I will review recent studies that have utilized each. Lastly, I will discuss how these two theories can be used together to study faith development experiences within a Christian school culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of this theoretical framework is to guide the researcher's study with a transcendental phenomenological approach, in which the researcher will view the phenomenon from a completely unbiased and fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994). Fowler's (1981) faith development theory will serve as one of the criterion for choosing suitable applicants for this study and as a template to examine the faith development experiences of participants. In order to participate in this study, each potential participant must exemplify synthetic-conventional faith. Parker (2011) wrote that, "Determining a person's faith stage is a matter of listening for the complexity of the various faith structures as they emerge via a person's description of his or her ways of relating to transcendent values" (p. 113). By carefully working with school administrators and faculty, suitable and qualified participants will be found. The faith development theory will also be used as a blueprint for finding common themes within each participant's faith development experience. By intently listening and observing the context of each experience I hope to be able to accurately describe the faith development experience individually for each participant as he or she transitions through Fowler's (1981) stages and I

also desire to accurately describe the composite faith development experience by collectively looking at all the participant's experiences.

To better understand the Christian school culture and how the students experience it, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory will also be used. Vygotsky believed that the culture of the classroom was important in the development of each individual (Bodrova, Germeroth, & Leong, 2013). Like any school environment, each of the Christian schools in this particular study will have their own unique culture comprised of language, tools, and symbols that must be examined in context (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). Furthermore, any perceived experience taken out of the larger context would lack depth and clarity. Utilizing sociocultural theory will allow me to look at the totality of the faith development experience. By examining each school's environment, each school's religious practices, each school's religious beliefs, jargon specific to each school, and historical implications, I hope to paint a broad and yet concise picture of the faith development experience.

### **Faith Development Theory**

Faith development theory was developed by Fowler (1981) as a way of categorizing the stages of an individual's faith. Religious or not, every person has deeply rooted and unwavering beliefs or convictions that guide his or her life, whether he or she uses the term faith or not (Westerhoff, 2000). According to Fowler (2001), development of faith gains its structure from three things: (a) the self, (b) the relationship of the self to others, and (c) the relationship of the self to the "ultimate Other [God]" (p. 163). He posited that there are six sequential stages and one pre-stage that are relatively based on age similar to Erickson's psychosocial stages (Miller, 2011). However, Fowler (2000; Fowler & Dell, 2004) was quick to state that individual stages

should not be more valued or less valued than other stages, nor is one stage higher or lower than another stage in worth. Stages should be utilized more as categories of faith or types of faith, all being equal and having the same worth.

Though Fowler asserted that his theory is applicable to all religious faith traditions, Fowler and Dell (2004) reference the Christian Bible and the Apostle Paul when discussing faith development. Paul understood that development is both a biological process dependent upon physical maturity (1 Corinthians 13:11-12; Ephesians 4:11-16) and a spiritual conversion process (Galatians 1:13-16), not related or conditional upon the age of the individual. Fowler and Dell (2004) agreed that early stages are for the most part, determined by age and biological processes. During earlier stages, the individual advances because he or she has reached a higher level of cognition because of physical maturity. However, spiritual conversion processes determine when and how individuals transition during later stages. Progression from one stage to the next, whether an early stage or a later stage, is largely due to the fact that the previous stage does not offer what the individual needs (Fowler, 1981, 2000). Likewise, if an individual reaches a level of equilibrium with his or her faith, he or she may remain within one of the later stages for a longer period of time. Though each of Fowler's (1981) stages are sequential and relatively based on age, if an individual reaches equilibrium or satisfaction with his or her faith, progression to the next stage may stall or even cease. An individual does not have to reach any specific stage to feel complete or whole. When wholeness or holiness is reached, at whatever stage that is, the individual ceases transitioning and remains in that stage. Likewise, Hoffman (2011) reminded us that each stage of development is equally important and that progression through the stages should be seen as development and not improvement. Likewise, individuals who have reached

the mental and social capacity to think critically about their faith and who have become dissatisfied with it may progress more rapidly through each stage or find that their transitions between stages are easier. Streib (2004) argued that later stages of faith are not impossible for adolescents and even younger children. Though later stages are termed as stages and each one builds upon the previous, later stages could be termed as types of faith (Fowler, 2001).

Furthermore, the majority of people do not progress through all of the stages. In fact, according to Fowler (1981) very few people ever reach the final stage. Because Fowler's faith development theory is not specific to any one religion or belief system, it is ideal for studying different individuals who may have experienced the same phenomenon in very different ways (Parker, 2011). Though each participant will have exhibited Christian synthetic-conventional faith and likely have experienced the same Christian school activities and practices, how each participant experienced the event is likely to be different.

I must note however that Streib (2010) and Keller and Streib (2013) disagreed with the sequentiality and structural confines of Fowler's stages. These researchers recognized the possibility that individuals can skip stages, reverse stages, and even occupy more than one stage at the same time. Theories like these are definite areas and recommendations for future research on faith development.

### **Early Stages Determined By Maturation**

The pre-stage, infancy and undifferentiated faith, and transition into the first three stages is for the most part determined by age. While some individuals may progress one to two years earlier or later, all individuals will progress through these stages at relatively the same time.

**Infancy and undifferentiated faith.** Before stage one, Fowler (1981) described a pre-faith stage, which begins at birth and continues until the acquisition of language, typically around two years of age. He also referred to it as a “primal faith” (Fowler, 2000, p. 40). Westerhoff (2000) called this stage “experienced faith” (p. 89) because it is experienced involuntarily. Essentially, the pre-stage child is not doing anything that contributes to or inhibits his or her faith. Anything regarding his or her faith is being done for the child or to the child. The beginnings of faith rest upon the love and care or absence thereof received from parents and family. Because the young child is not yet independent, he or she will naturally rely on family for food, warmth, and attention. What begins as primal reflexes turns into deliberate actions. Naturally, the child builds a foundation of trusts or mistrusts with others during this time period (Desrosiers, Kelley, & Miller, 2011; Erikson, 1993). This dependence upon and reliance upon or lack thereof upon family is the beginning of an individual’s faith, the seed of faith (Fowler, 1981).

During this stage, a child develops what Piaget called object permanence; the realization that an object continues to exist though it may be hidden or removed from sight (Miller, 2011). This is akin to trusting that something exists even when it is not in front of you. What happens during this stage determines whether an individual will be able to trust others in future stages and whether or not he or she can put faith in someone or something. Abuse, neglect, or not enough attention can drastically affect the faith development process (Fowler & Dell, 2004). If the pre-stage child does not receive needed attention, he or she might develop a mistrust in others, which can drastically affect his or her faith and ultimately the relationship with God. However, if the child receives the attention and care necessary, he or she might be well equipped to trust others

and therefore place trust in the ultimate other, God (Fowler, 1981). Though all children may develop vastly different types of trust and faith due to circumstances beyond their control, transition from this pre-stage to the first stage, intuitive-projective faith, is inevitable as they grow older and gain the ability to use language.

**Intuitive-projective faith.** Fowler's (1981) first stage happens roughly between the ages of two and seven. During this stage the child begins to use language and symbols to convey his or her desires, thoughts, and experiences. Furthermore, during this stage the adolescent individual imitates what he or she sees parents and siblings doing or not doing. Likewise, children imitate what they hear their parents and siblings saying or not saying. Children in this stage often take on the religious faith and customs of their family (Liu et al., 2014). From these visual and audial cues, children learn skills, which turn into habits, which turn into behaviors. At the beginning of this stage a child cannot determine why an action is acceptable or unacceptable, only that it is to be performed. The stage one child performs actions reflexively as opposed to purposefully. Fowler (2011) wrote that, "Cause-effect relations are poorly understood" (p. 123) during this stage. Early on in this stage, the child cannot equate an action with a purpose. Religious actions such as saying grace before a meal or attending church are performed because parents or authority figures perform them. Religious symbols and rituals are misunderstood or performed out of compliance (Fowler, 2000).

Early in this stage, a child has a wild imagination because he or she lacks the experience and maturity to fully understand the natural world. Their imagination and creativity helps to fill in the numerous gaps of knowledge not yet acquired. This stage can be difficult for children if an unguided imagination brings about terrifying or destructive images (Fowler & Dell, 2004).

However, imagery can also guide and direct stage one children towards God. Bible stories are often filled with kings, monsters, and miraculous events that resemble fairy tales. The child's imagination and naivety allow him or her be receptive to the supernaturalism of God. As the child matures and imaginative thinking turns into Piaget's concrete operational thinking (Miller, 2011) the child becomes self-aware of his or her own limitations, of life and death, and of gender differences.

Furthermore, this stage features a child's egocentric thinking transitioning from self-centeredness to the ability to think from another's perspective. As the child progresses through this stage, he or she will eventually be able to understand some of the reasoning behind and repercussions influencing religious actions. Like the previous stage transition, progressing from intuitive-projective faith to mythic-literal faith is only a matter of time.

**Mythic-literal faith.** Fowler (1981) described this stage as the time when people begin to differentiate between what is make-believe and what is real. Stage two individuals are now able to understand the significance of religious actions and perform the action purposefully. Furthermore, it is in this stage that the individual begins to value the "stories, practices, and beliefs" (Fowler, 2000, p. 43) of his or her culture. Westerhoff (2000) referred to this stage as "affiliative faith" (p. 91) because individuals participate with and receive assurance from their community. The stage two individual begins to appreciate and understand his or her culture and the traditions associated with it. Piaget called this stage the concrete operational period (Miller, 2011) when individuals begin to form an understanding of the religious traditions they are performing. The second stage generally starts around age seven and continues until the teenage years. During this stage, individual begins to look at the world from multiple perspectives.

Likewise, his or her perception of God becomes anthropomorphic whereas in stage one, the view of God was filled with symbols and feelings about God. God is now viewed as a real person and the stage two individual can think about how God perceives the world. Thus, the stage two individual is conscientious of his or her relationship and acceptance with God, family, and friends.

However, it is during this stage that the individual struggles to fully comprehend concepts such as fairness, right and wrong, punishment, and reciprocity. People in this stage believe that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (Fowler & Dell, 2004). Fowler (2011) noted that some individuals might become stuck in this stage for a longer period of time if they rely on doing good deeds for others and being a good person as their sole means for developing faith. Most individuals however transition with time from mythic-literal faith to synthetic-conventional faith.

**Synthetic-conventional faith.** Fowler (2011) titled his next stage synthetic because the individual has synthesized his or her own beliefs from society without critical analysis and conventional because the individual assumes his or her personal beliefs are universal standards. The stage three individual synthesizes the faith of his or her family, friends, and culture into his or her own identity. Subsequently, the individual naively assumes that his or her beliefs are universally accepted truths. As other faith traditions are viewed as an apostasy, this is a time period of much religious bias and even prejudice. Pearce and Denton (2011) referred to the stage three individual as an abider, because he or she is living an “institutional form of religiosity” (Denton, 2012, p. 46). The synthetic-conventional faith stage transpires during the teenage years, but can remain throughout adulthood. This can be a stage when cognitive and emotional



issues that have not been dealt with during childhood may emerge (Fowler & Dell, 2004).

Influence from people other than family members dominates this stage. Individuals in this stage begin to form relationships with and identify with other individuals whom they feel acceptance from. Stage three adolescents form bonds with like-minded individuals and separate from contrary thinkers. This stage is a return to egocentrism as individuals fully commit to specific principles without knowing the reasoning why or without fully understanding opposing ideas. This is probably why Pearce and Denton (2011) discovered that teenagers are more likely to report being more religious during this time period.

Furthermore, the stage three individual views his or her person based more upon the perception of others within the group and less upon self-concept. The stage three individual is more concerned with how others might view him or her. Vygotsky (1986) described this time in an individual's life as "one of crisis and transition" (p. 141). This is an important time in an individual's life when the opinions of others can potentially influence life and faith decisions. The adolescent views the self through the eyes of multiple peers and thus, synthesizes those views into one persona (Fowler, 2000). As a result, the stage three individual projects a self that he or she deems acceptable to others. In other words, the stage three individual behaves in ways that he or she believes others will accept and appreciate. Likewise, beliefs and values valued by significant others are synthesized by the individual. Synthesized behaviors and beliefs can be beneficial or detrimental to the individual depending on whom the stage three individual views as a significant other in his or her life. If the significant other is a person of well-developed faith, the result can be beneficial. However, if the significant other is a person of poor faith or opposing faith, the result can potentially be catastrophic to the adolescent.

Regardless of what type of significant other influences the stage three individual, the behaviors and beliefs are only synthesized superficially, behaviors and beliefs are not yet internalized. At this stage, many teenagers and adults can look like a stage four individual by going through all the stage four motions, but they lack the self-reflection and critical analysis to fully comprehend the repercussion of their behaviors and beliefs, whether the behaviors and beliefs are good or bad (Shek, 2012). Lack of or inability for critical self-reflection is the key component to synthetic-conventional faith and the key difference between synthetic-conventional faith and individuated-reflective faith. If, not always when, an adolescent or adult is able to reflect upon his or her own ideals and beliefs, he or she will transition to the individuated-reflective faith stage.

Ideally, an individual in this stage, whether he or she is able to reflect upon faith or not, is able to find self-worth in a God who loves the individual for who they are with all their strengths and weaknesses. The synthetic-conventional faith stage is the focus of this particular study.

### **Later Stages Not Determined By Maturation**

Fowler (2011) and Fowler and Dell (2004) were quick to assert that the last three individual faith development stages should not be viewed as having a greater worth than other stages. The stages are not levels one should attain, but instead they are equal categories that help to delineate faith differences amongst people. Transition between stages does not happen at the same time for everybody nor is it guaranteed that it will happen at all. Though the stages are categories and not hierarchies, one must still progress through each stage to reach the next stage. For example, it is impossible to jump from stage three, synthetic-conventional faith, to stage five, conjunctive faith, without first going through stage four, individuated-reflective faith. The

processes that transpire within each stage must take place in order for the individual to transition to the next stage.

**Individuative-reflective faith.** Stage four is when the individual is able to step outside of his or her religious box or community of like-minded individuals and reflect upon previously held beliefs and rituals (Fowler & Dell, 2004). Like previous stages, this period of a person's life can occur later on in adulthood and is not dependent on physical maturity. Fowler (2011) noted that this stage could occur as early as the young adult years when the individual leaves home to go off to college, military, marriage, or to find his or her place in the world. He recognizes this stage as the "emergence of the 'executive ego'" (Fowler, 2000, p. 49), when the individual can critically examine personal beliefs and convictions for the betterment of the self. Westerhoff (2000) would have referred to these individuals as having a "searching faith" (p. 93) because they are looking and discovering what faith means personally. This stage is typically initiated by the increased exposure to diverse cultures and religious traditions (Powell et al., 2012) as a result of exploring other cultures different to one's own. Bryant (2011) called this time in an individual's life the "crossroads" (p. 25). Byrd (2011) described this time period as a time when the beliefs held dear during one's adolescence no longer provide meaning or answer life's toughest questions. Shek (2012) described this time period as a "personal struggle and choice" (p. 3). Rockenbach, Walker, & Luzader (2012) used the word contrast to describe the dilemma at work during this stage. Pearce and Denton (2011) called this time the "search for freedom" (p. 2). Erickson coins the term "moratorium" (Fowler, 2000) to describe this time in an individual's life. This is often the time in an individual's life when he or she engages in the riskiest behaviors (Barry, Willoughby, & Clayton, 2015). Powell et al. (2012) described this

stage as when the individual tries to reconcile the social impact of his or her adolescence with the new identity that is emerging. The individual is torn between ingrained, deeply personal religious traditions and new philosophies that question the old. As is obvious, this has been the most often and recent studied stage in an individual's faith development.

Some stage four individuals may choose to hide their spiritual identities so as to avoid criticism from new peers (Bryant, 2011). Other stage four individuals however do not feel obligated to faith traditions from their past (Liu et al., 2014) because they view their parent's influence on their spiritual development as negative (Spurr et al., 2013). As stage four individuals encounter other beliefs, social systems, and communities, they are forced to reflect upon and even criticize the beliefs of their parents and home communities. "Burgeoning young adults test the spiritual concepts and commitments of adolescence" (Frye, 2014, p. 53). Many stage four individuals leave the faith traditions of their adolescence only to flounder endlessly, never settling on any one tradition (Kinnaman, 2011). This is a time when individuals "go out there and figure [faith] out" (Bryant, 2011). During this stage, spiritual meaning and purpose which was once hidden or latent can be attributed to previous ritualistic actions and symbols. These meanings can potentially disrupt the individual's faith or they can strengthen it. Unfortunately, this can be a time of isolation as people who once accepted the individual because of similar beliefs now ostracize the individual for changing his or her worldview. Religious leaders, once prevalent during adolescence can unknowingly inhibit an individual's spiritual doubt and curiosity (Hoffman, 2011). Levy and Edmiston (2014) noted that each of the participants in their studies on sexual identity and Christian upbringing experienced this stage

early on in their lives. Because of the conflict and social pressures participants faced regarding their sexual identity, they were forced to question their faith and examine its role in their lives.

However, this can also be a time when individuals separate from their faith community to “gain their own understanding of faith in order to come back and embrace the community” (Morgenthaler, Keiser, & Larson, 2014, p. 250). The grass is not always greener on the other side. Being able to step away from one’s faith and critically examine it from a fresh perspective then allows the individual to reenter his or her faith tradition with a newly found passion and commitment.

Frye (2014) explained this as a time when inherited beliefs have the potential to become self-authored beliefs. The stage four individual chooses to take responsibility for his or her beliefs and actions, knowing full well the intent, meaning, and repercussions. This is the time when faith, after being reflected upon and personally scrutinized, becomes internalized (Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2013). During this stage, the individual is likely to determine his or her career, spouse, religious affiliation, lifestyle, sexual orientation, and faith (Fowler, 2000). The individual takes ownership over his or her faith (Powell et al., 2012). For the Christian, this is where believing in God is self-initiated instead of done out of obedience to family or society (Goldschmidt, 2015). Gold (2014) referred to this as the “transition from participating in religion to living religion” (p. 227). Common characteristics of this stage that run throughout the literature are community, authenticity, spirituality, change, and openness to doubt (Keith, 2013; Powell et al., 2012). If, not when, an individual critically examines his or her faith and/or other faiths and has specifically chosen which path he or she will take, then he or she will transition from individuative-reflective faith to conjunctive faith.

**Conjunctive faith.** It is important to note here that as an individual approaches mid-life and even after, though it can happen sooner or later or not at all, the individual is forced to think about the shortness of life, the impact that he or she has had on friends, family, and the world, the legacy that he or she will leave, and what his or her future holds following death. Erickson described this time in a person's life as generativity versus stagnation (Fowler, 2000; Miller, 2011). As an individual contemplates about his or her life's productivity and worth, he or she either feels a sense of urgency to create a better life for future generations or becomes complacent and irrelative. The stagnant person is focused on the self with disregard for the other whereas the generative person has a genuine concern for the well-being of others.

As people get older and wiser and have a wealth of life experiences, their level of spirituality is likely to be higher (Hardt, Schultz, Xander, Becker, & Dragan, 2012; Pedersen, Christensen, Jensen, & Zachariae, 2013). The stage five individual is eager to learn from other faith traditions with the purpose of strengthening his or her own faith. Without imposing one's ideologies upon another, the stage five individual listens and gleans. By first gathering information, the stage five individual forms a better understanding and/or an appreciation for what he or she believes and for what others believe. By seeking out truth as it is known by other faith traditions, the stage five individual is able to better understand his or her own concept of truth (Fowler, 2000). Westerhoff (2000) called this stage "owned faith" (p. 95). Faith becomes personal to the individual. Novello (2012) described this as "inter-religious understanding and ongoing ecumenical commitment" (p. 11). Although the stage five individual is eager to learn about other faiths, this is not a time when he or she bounces between religions. By examining other religious traditions, even opposing religious traditions, individuals can enrich their own

faith (Smith, 2013). This is a time when individuals are mature enough to contemplate and analyze the substance guiding self and others. For the individual to inwardly accept and commit to his or her faith, he or she must go through this time of “private wrestling” (Morgenthaler et al., 2014, p. 252) of ideas.

The stage five individual is now able to safely reflect upon past experiences, to acknowledge past decisions whether those decisions were good or bad, to accept past hurts, recognize past blessings, and move on as a better individual. Past religious symbols that were once adored out of duty have been revealed and demystified and now used only as tools to increase one’s faith (Fowler, 2000). The stage five individual is no longer tied to any one social class, ethnicity, or religion. Personal faith development is no longer contingent upon others. Furthermore, the stage five individual is fully capable of polar tensions in his or her life, being old and young, masculine and feminine, constructive and destructive, and conscious and unconscious (Fowler, 2000). The conjunctive faith individual understands both the transcendence of and the terrestrial nature of his or her faith.

Lastly, because this stage brings about so much new information and understanding of the world, a spiritual enlightenment has occurred. The stage five individual discerns the plethora of problems plaguing this world and must choose to act or do nothing. The stage five individual is at a spiritual precipice. The stage five individual must answer the following question: Has the development of his or her faith and belief in someone or something brought the individual to completely surrender his or her life for that someone or something? Specifically, is the individual ready to sacrifice everything for a higher purpose, for a greater cause? The individual

who is not quite ready to surrender will continue within this spiritual dilemma. The individual who is ready to devote his or her life for the cause will move on to universalizing faith.

**Universalizing faith.** Fowler's sixth and final stage of faith development, universalizing faith, involves complete and total selflessness. Where the conjunctive faith individual was unable to move past the paradigm of knowing and doing, the universalizing faith individual wholeheartedly commits his or her life to a specific cause. Fowler (1981, 2011) acknowledged that very few people have ever or will ever reach this stage in faith development because it requires so much. Many individuals give their life for the cause. He presents Gandhi, Mother Theresa, and Dr. Martin Luther King as examples (Fowler, 1981). Martyrdom is often the result of universalizing faith. Stage six individuals are often more successful following their death than while they were alive. Keller and Streib (2013) discarded the plausibility of this final, almost unattainable stage. Fowler (2000) described the stage six individual as someone who has poured out his or her entire self. Furthermore, he or she no longer values power or property, but instead seeks the betterment of others, all the while in "love and trust to the radical love of God" (Fowler, 2000, p. 56). The stage six individual can cognitively understand the thinking that guides faith traditions. He or she can decipher and appreciate religious symbols and rituals and recognize the truth as well as the inconsistencies. Though he or she may be associated with a specific religious tradition, the conjunctive faith individual is well equipped to address any religious tradition. Likewise, he or she is comfortable speaking to individuals from any faith development stage. Spiritual purpose goes beyond differences. The stage six individual's faith directs the individual to help others at the expense of self.



## **Sociocultural Theory**

An individual's faith does not happen in a vacuum. A person's faith is part of his or her culture and his or her culture is joined with its history. Historical events transpire all the while influencing and affecting culture and ultimately faith. To study faith requires the researcher to examine the cultural and historical factors that have led up to this point in time. Utilizing this interpretive constructivist perspective (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) will help myself to better to study and understand the faith development phenomenon as experienced by CHSSs.

Vygotsky (1929) wrote that, "In the process of development the child not only masters the items of cultural experience, but the habits and forms of cultural behavior [and] the cultural methods of reasoning" (p. 415). How individuals experience a phenomenon is set within specific cultural and historical norms (Creswell, 2013). To construct a picture of faith development requires the researcher to look at everything contextually that is going on in and around the phenomenon (Miller, 2011). An individual's faith is what it is because of the cultural traditions preceding the present. Additionally, Smith (1991) acknowledged that culture and history also cannot be understood without examining the faith traditions associated with culture and history.

Vygotsky (1929) also wrote that, "Every cultural method of behavior, even the most complicated, can always be completely analyzed into its component nervous and psychic processes" (p. 418). Though most of Vygotsky's studies involved younger children, preschool and kindergarten age, and children with special needs, to ignore the Christian school culture as experienced by the teenager would be shortsighted. Sociocultural development takes place through imitation, mentoring, and shadowing. The student or apprentice follows along, watching the teacher or master perform cultural tasks, all the while learning. The student is not learning

by means of a reflex (classical conditioning) or spontaneity (operant conditioning) (Ferrari, Robinson, & Yasnitsky, 2010; Miller, 2011). Instead, the student is imitating what he or she sees teachers, peers, and those in authority doing. Three themes run throughout Vygotsky's writings: lines of development, zone of proximal development, and tools and signs (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978, 1981, 1986, 2011).

**Lines of development.** Vygotsky argued that all higher-level thinking is a result of the biological maturation line and social enculturation line intersecting. The maturation line means that the individual must be old enough to handle advanced concepts. The enculturation line involves society's influence on the individual. Vygotsky (1978) wrote that, "All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (p. 57). Internalizing new concepts first requires social activities utilizing those concepts even though the child may at first use the concept incorrectly (Mahn, 1999). In order for a child to learn complex skills, he or she must be mature enough cognitively and must be encapsulated within a culture willing to teach those skills. If the child is old enough to understand, but lacks the learning environment or if the culture is ideally suited for learning, but the child is too young, then skill development cannot take place (Vygotsky, 1986). Learning must first take place socially and then the child can internalize his or her learning (Vygotsky, 1981). Furthermore, Vygotsky (1986) presented that in order to understand how a concept, such as faith is formed within the individual, the researcher must examine the relationship between external social stimuli and internal developmental processes. The social aspect includes the individual, the cultural, and the historical elements (Matusov & Hayes, 2000). The internal development is that which happens cognitively inside

the individual. Similar to Fowler's (1981) early faith stages, faith looked at as a Vygotskian cognitive process, must be experienced socially before it can be internalized (Westerhoff, 2000).

Smith (1998) wrote that faith "has always been limited by psychological, sociological, and other contextual factors, by the knowledge and the temperament and the situation of the man or woman whose it is" (p. 131). Though an individual's faith can transcend this earthly world, the environment in which the individual lives will always hinder the perfecting of one's faith (Smith, 1998). This means that while culture helps to jumpstart an individual's faith, personal faith can never be fully realized within the confines of a society. Because faith is personal and specific to each individual, it eventually requires distancing oneself from the community and drawing closer to the higher source of one's faith. This is similar to how Fowler (1981) acknowledged that individuative-reflective faith eventually becomes conjunctive and personal faith for each individual.

**Zone of proximal development.** The "[zone of proximal development] is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Mahn (1999) differentiated these two concepts as everyday concepts versus scientific concepts. Concepts that would be considered everyday concepts or already mastered concepts would fall within a child's zone of actual development. These are the tasks that a child can already do without assistance. Concepts that would require the help of a teacher or a more intelligent peer would fall within a child's zone of possible development (Vygotsky, 1986, 2011). These are the tasks that a child has not yet encountered or not yet mastered. The range of learning between actual development and

possible development is the zone of proximal development. For instance, an eight-year-old child may not be able to solve a math problem more suited for a 10-year-old child. However, with adult assistance, the eight-year-old may potentially be able to solve the problem and from there be able to solve similar math problems. The function to solve the math problem has not matured developmentally within the eight-year-old yet, but it will soon so that he or she will be able to solve harder math problems in the future. “What the child is capable of doing today with the help of others, tomorrow he will be doing himself” (Vygotsky, 2011, p. 205).

Furthermore, there are more complicated tasks that are beyond the zone of proximal development. For instance, a difficult math problem, ideally suited for a 12-year-old child, that cannot be completed by an eight-year-old child even with the guidance of a teacher would fall outside of the child’s zone of proximal development. Perhaps in another couple of years these tasks will fall within the child’s zone of proximal development. With each new skill encountered and mastered, the zone of proximal development slides to encompass more advanced skills. Mastered tasks leave the zone, newly discovered tasks enter the zone, and concepts and tasks beyond the child’s comprehension lie on the forthcoming horizon.

With the zone of proximal development, when low achievers are partnered with high achievers versus adults, Vygotsky (2011) noted that high achievers and low achievers both regress to the mean ability of the group. While low achievers are able to improve and learn concepts beyond their ability with assistance of high achievers, the high achievers adversely fail to progress because they are not being challenged. For this reason, it is important that every student has another individual who can motivate and assist with higher learning, whether that individual is another student or a teacher.

**Tools and signs.** Every society has a set of cultural resources or tools at its disposal. Learning how and when to use these tools takes place throughout an individual's life. Before a child can manage the tools of a culture, he or she must first master the culture's language (Vygotsky, 1978). Through speech the child can receive cultural cues of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, history, beliefs, rules, praise, and relationship. Speech helps to solidify social bonds and establish cultural protocol. The child is able to communicate with and learn from older individuals as well as interact with peers. Both child and peer learn together the customs and traits of their culture, thus adapting to their environment (Vygotsky, 1981).

As with language, the child will become familiar with the symbols and their meanings pertinent within the culture. The "internalization of culturally produced sign systems brings about behavioral transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 7). Signs can mean symbols, actions, behaviors, gestures, visual cues, audial cues, and also the absence thereof. To each culture, signs have specific meanings and purposes known to, appreciated by, and proliferated by those within the culture. The specific meaning and use of a tool may be different for each culture that uses that tool. For instance, bowing in one culture might mean a welcoming greeting, but in another culture it might mean submission to authority.

Once the tools and signs of a culture are used and mastered socially, they begin to mold the individual personally. Vygotsky (1986) called this stage the ingrowth stage. Tools and signs are used to affect outwardly, to influence others. As a result, signs eventually affect the individual inwardly (Vygotsky, 1981). Early on, tools are used instinctively from mirroring

others within the culture. As development progresses, tools are manipulated purposefully by the individual.

### **Related Literature**

Researchers (Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Smith, 2013; Tighe, 2015), medical practitioners (Neuman, 2011), and counselors (Hall, 2007b; Parker, 2011) have all used Fowler's faith development theory as a theoretical framework to guide their research. Furthermore, Vygotsky's theory on socioculturalism has been used to study how sociocultural contexts relate to individual beliefs and practices (Flum & Kaplan, 2012; Mansour, 2011; Park, 2011; Tighe, 2015; Winterbottom & Leedy, 2014).

### **Social Enculturation**

Both Fowler (1981) and Vygotsky (1978) confirmed that an individual's development, whether faith or cognitive, is dependent upon social interactions and relationships. For Fowler (2001), relationships affect one's life experiences and can change over time. Vygotsky (1929) noted that the individual conforms to the culture, to include the language, the tools, and the behavior. He wrote that, "As human beings we actively realize and change ourselves in the varied contexts of culture and history" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131). In order to be accepted, the individual must adapt to the culture for fear of being isolated or ostracized.

Socialization takes place when an individual joins a group or an organization. The process often involves some assimilation into the dominant beliefs, behaviors, and tools. In a classroom for instance, students must learn specific standards regarding behavior and ritual (Van Brummelen, 2009). Learning these behaviors helps the child to join the classroom community, the school community, and the overall society.

Research has shown that the degree to which potential converts form bonds with the members of a group can determine their level of commitment (Rambo & Bauman, 2012). Thus, students who form emotional bonds with members of the Christian community are more likely to accept their religious teachings, practices, and beliefs. Furthermore, social connections allow for each individual to express his or her faith (Liu et al., 2014). However, Westerhoff (2000) argued that only institutionalized religion can be socially transmitted and that faith must involve a personal conversion apart from the community. This is similar to Vygotsky's (1986) ingrowth stage when eventually culture must be internalized. If faith remains superficial, it lacks a true foundation to handle the crises of life.

In the Christian school setting, the spiritual maturity of the school and its personnel can impact the faith development of the student (Bryant, 2011; Powell et al., 2012; Yocum et al., 2012). Foremost, by providing students a place where they can feel that they belong, Christian schools create a faith community (Liu et al., 2014). Hall (2007a) acknowledged that the relationships developed at a young age are similar to the type of relationship that individuals have with God. The spiritual maturity of teachers (McMartin et al., 2013; Pennings et al., 2011; Tisdale et al., 2013) and support staff like advisors, custodians, and coaches, all have an influence on the faith development of students (Hardie et al., 2013; Ripley, Yarhouse, Bekker, Jackson, Kays, & Lane, 2013; Rockenbach et al., 2012; Tighe, 2015; Vaidyanathan, 2011). Each of these adults holds an authoritative and influential position over the students. In a meta-analysis study, Jeynes (2012) found that teachers from faith-based schools have higher expectations for their students than teachers from traditional schools. In a related study, medical nurses with developed faith are more likely to nurture that same development within their

patients and their patients' families (O'Shea et al., 2011). Rambo (1993) referred to these faith developers as "advocates" (p. 66). Mason (2014) referred to them as "guides" (p. 325). Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008) referred to them as "significant others" (p. 4). Powell et al. (2012) referred to them as "mentors" (p. 178). Griffin (2013) referred to them as the "holy other" (p. 247). Student behavior is likely to reflect the leadership and guidance of these holy others.

More than just words, the actions of teachers provide a definitive portrayal of faith. How these individuals exemplify their faith through their daily interactions with students will essentially rub off onto the students. Schultz (2012) further explained this concept as when a teacher says something, it may slightly influence a student. Depending on how the teacher says it may further influence a student. Lastly, depending on how the teacher lives it will make a lasting and potentially life changing influence upon a student.

Peer relationships are also likely to influence faith development. The socialization of similar, spiritually growing individuals in a community influences each person involved to continue their spiritual maturation process (McMartin et al., 2013; Pennings et al., 2014; Powell et al., 2012). Adolescents are likely to follow the actions of the group in order to avoid exclusion or rejection. Furthermore, the opportunity to see peers maturing spiritually increases individual faith development (Hill & Den Dulk, 2013). Being sympathetic to each other's growth can strengthen bonds and increase the likelihood of continued faith. Each child provides a source of encouragement and motivation, all the while pushing each other along in the pursuit of developed faith.

Unfortunately, not all group dynamics are beneficial. Vygotsky (2011) explained that within a group of children, individuals will regress cognitively. "Regression toward the mean"



(Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 439) is a natural phenomenon that often occurs within group dynamics. Spiritually, students within a Christian school setting may potentially regress to the mean level of faith of the group. Students who start as high faith individuals could potentially lose some of their faith development after interacting with the less faithful. Furthermore, students with less faith could potentially increase their faith after interacting with those who are more faithful. While the spiritually mature individual may be attempting to pull the spiritually immature person up to his or her level, he or she may, unknowingly, be pulled down (Wright, Giovanelli, Dolan, & Edwards, 2011).

While being part of a group provides relationships, comfort, community, and serve protective purposes (Spurr et al., 2013), unfortunately, it can also shield individuals from the realization of the world outside of the community. One study noted that participants felt as if they never had the opportunity to choose their own religion, but instead it was chosen for them (Bryant, 2011). This is one of the reasons that emerging adults are ill equipped to handle the pressures of life after leaving the communities of their youth (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011). When faith is not internalized, it is superficial. The individual with superficial faith struggles as he or she encounters other faith traditions. This is emblematic of Fowler's (1981) individuative-reflective faith stage. The stage four individual encounters people from diverse faiths and lacks the substance to hold on to his or her faith.

Referring to socialization, Rambo and Bauman (2012) noted that there is limited research in this area pertaining to Christian groups. Furthermore, Barry and Christofferson (2014) and Gold (2014) made the recommendation that researchers should pursue the aspect of socialization within religious organizations. Also, there is little research regarding the faith of children

(O'Shea et al., 2011). Likewise, Liu et al. (2014) and Hoffman (2011) recommended studying the influence that culture and socialization have on faith development. Lastly, Spurr et al. (2013) recognized the need to study the social experiences of faith development.

### **Christian Schools**

At the beginning of the twentieth century in America, Christian discipleship was a way of life; it was part of society (Westerhoff, 2000). Westerhoff (2000) acknowledged that every individual was immersed within some sort of religious society, encompassing his or her community, family, public school system, church, media, and Sunday school. Similarly, Schultz (2012) argued that Christian education was originally taught in the home by the family, at school by teachers, and at church by ministers. With the decline in religious thought in America, society is left with the church school attempting to fill a massive void in the lives of young people.

Studies have shown that when adolescents become emerging adults, their faith development diminishes, with some young adults even discontinuing their faith (Hardie et al., 2013; Hill, 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Maryl & Uecker, 2011). Kinnaman and Hawkins (2011) with the Barna Research Group reported a 43% drop off between teens and young adults regarding church attendance. However, reports have shown that Conservative Protestant students are more likely to strengthen their spiritual convictions during college (Hardie et al., 2013; Maryl & Uecker, 2011). Furthermore, graduates from Christian high schools are more likely to continue developing their faith after graduation in comparison with graduates from other types of schools (Pennings et al., 2011; Vaidyanathan, 2011). In comparison with other types of schools, it would appear that Christian schools are doing an adequate job of developing

faith within their students. Furthermore, Christian education is founded upon the idea of integrating Christian principles with academic learning (Bailey, 2012). Westerhoff (2000) wrote that, “Education remains the key to faithful intentional formation” (p. xv). Christian schools are left with teaching academics and filling the void of developing faith in children.

Cultural traditions change over time and the Christian teachings of today are very different from those taught by early Christians. Smith (2013) noted that the Bible has not changed, but the reading and interpreting of the Bible has adapted to the present culture. Furthermore, individuals interpret the Bible through their cultural lens and that the translations of the Bible available, like the King James Version or the New International Version or the New Living Translation, are also impacted by cultural and social factors. Thus, the Bible has been translated into many versions by well meaning, yet fallible, men and women. Furthermore, each translated version has likewise, been interpreted and taught differently by many well-meaning, yet fallible, men and women. What this means is that Christian school curriculum, though Biblically based, is wrapped within the cultural norms and traditions of modern day churches and their interpretations of biblical text.

Fowler (2001) suggested that symbols, narratives, and practices, which in a Christian school setting will be overtly biblical, will influence the individual’s “habit, mind, and action” (p. 164). The curriculum in a Christian school, like any school, will help to shape not only learning, but also behavior. The integration of biblical theology will have an effect on a student’s faith development (Bailey, 2012; McMartin et al., 2013; Ripley et al., 2013; Tisdale et al., 2013; Yocum, 2014). Theology can readily be applied and adapted to any school subject. The Bible can be integrated into science, history, math, language arts, music, physical education,

art, etc. Integrating the Bible throughout every subject and every class will have a lasting impact upon students.

Reading the Bible and praying, daily routines at a Christian school, are experiences that are likely to deepen a student's faith (Pennings et al., 2014; Tighe, 2015). These two rituals take place often in a Christian school and they are also some of the easiest opportunities for students to participate in. To read the Bible and to pray or to hear someone do these things requires a certain amount of faith that what an individual is reading or hearing is true and worthy of giving attention to.

School-wide church services or chapel times, typically held once a week, involving a worship time and biblical message also serve to develop student faith and spirituality (Baldwin et al., 2015; McMartin et al., 2013; Ripley et al., 2013). These chapel services are active appointments where every student is not only receiving, but also actively participating in the learning process and in their faith development. This is also a time when students get to observe their teachers' faith and the faith of their peers in action. Younger students can observe older students and learn from their behaviors.

School sponsored mission trips and/or retreats are also contributors to faith development (Tighe, 2015). Most often these excursions involve some type of service or sacrifice to others. In serving others, students more fully understand God's sacrifice to each and every one of us. Individuals also form relationships with the one's that they are serving and those whom they are serving with. Thus, in the humbleness of servitude, students learn God's faithfulness and in turn the faith they have in him.

One of these curricular experiences alone may not have any effect on the participant, but total immersion within a religious society such as a Christian school is likely to instill like-minded values and rituals. Whether or not a student agrees with Christian teachings upon entering a Christian school, he or she will be influenced significantly by the Christian relationships and practices contained within.

Regarding Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, faith development experiences within a Christian school that are too complicated to grasp cognitively or too transcendent to fully understand psychologically may lie beyond the student's zone of proximal development or they may fall within the zone, requiring teacher assistance. For instance, biblical concepts that are only understood with the assistance of a teacher today have the potential to be understood tomorrow with no assistance. Religious rituals performed out of compliance and obedience today will be performed out of devotion tomorrow. Witnessing a water baptism for the first time, but not fully understanding the theology behind it and then learning the theology broadens one's faith horizon. Likewise, hearing a classmate pray for the healing of a family member and then being able to also pray for healing brings prayer into the student's zone of proximal development. Believing in God today will transpire to cherishing God more than anything else tomorrow (Smith, 1998).

Furthermore, there is a level of optimal development (Vygotsky, 1978) where the child is being challenged just enough to grasp new concepts or doctrine without getting entangled in difficult curriculum or theology. This optimal level of development requires educators who are sensitive to the faith development stage (Fowler, 1981) of each of their students. Individualized discipleship, personalized for each specific student allows for a smooth progression of spiritual

growth. This is likened to using Gardner's (2011) theory of multiple intelligences where educators personalize instruction to meet the individual needs and abilities of each student in their class. Ideally, educators are able to personalize instruction to meet the individual faith stage for each student in their class all the while maintaining an optimal level of faith development.

### **Faith Development Experience**

Much of the literature regarding faith development and Christian school students takes place after graduation during the young adult years. Many of the studies involve comparing different population groups and uncovering the demographics for each group. Specifically, a longitudinal study (Pennings et al., 2011) using graduates from Protestant schools revealed that academics and faith development are negatively correlated. Schools, typically Catholic, that emphasize science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related courses produce graduates who attend prestigious institutions and then work in high-paying professions and consequently, are more likely to discontinue their spiritual development (Jeynes, 2012). Adversely, Protestant schools, which emphasize spiritual formation produce graduates who attend smaller colleges, work in service or health related professions, but also continue to develop their faith after graduation. Furthermore, Protestant school graduates are more active in their religious practice and are more likely to believe the inerrancy of the Bible in comparison with graduates from other types of religious schools (Pennings et al., 2014). While the research is able to correlate type of schooling with behaviors, because of its design, the available research is unable to describe why the faith development of Protestant school graduates continues after graduation. Thus, Powell et al. (2012) in studying emerging adult faith development,

recommended that future studies study faith development during the high school years.

Likewise, Fowler and Dell (2004) recommended that religious educators continue to study the faith development of children and adolescents. Appropriately, Shek (2012) revealed that less than 1% of all the studies examined address the spirituality of adolescents.

Recently, researchers conducted a mixed-methods study on the faith status of college students from a Pentecostal institution (Pennings et al., 2011). A similar, yet quantitative study involved studying the faith status of affluent adolescents (Barkin et al., 2015). In both of these studies, correlations were made between demographics and faith development. In a qualitative study conducted on recovering substance abusers (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013), researchers brought to light the faith development experiences of participants. In both quantitative and qualitative fashion, these studies reveal the common themes participants have regarding their faith development: (a) experiencing some type of crisis, (b) engaging in religious traditions and/or rituals, (c) establishing and maintain relationships with mentors and peers, and (d) having a relationship with God. Much of the research on faith development recognizes that some type of crisis precedes faith development. Fowler (1981) and Denton (2012) called this struggle a disruption. Parks (2000) called it a shipwreck. Powell et al. (2012) called it going through difficult times. Manglos (2012) called it a faith pinnacle moment. Yob (2011) called it a feelingful moment.

The crisis that anticipates faith development has been described as personal suffering (Dyess, 2011; Gall, Charbonneau, & Florack, 2011; Gottheil & Groth-Marnat, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2013; Rockenbach et al., 2012), feelings of stress (Manglos, 2012; Yocum, 2014, Yocum et al., 2012), feelings of wrongness (O'Shea et al., 2011), feelings of pain (Rockenbach et al.,

2012), feelings of loneliness (Bryant, 2011), times of crisis (Greyson & Khanna, 2014; Timmons, 2012; Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013), and family disruptions like divorce, separation, and/or death (Denton, 2012). Many of the individuals who experienced the crisis events agree that their faith was initiated or strengthened because of the crisis. It is worth noting that in some studies participants recounted how their faith development occurred quickly and/or slowly (Keller & Streib, 2013; Levy & Edmiston, 2014; Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013). Other participants recognize the surrounding all-encompassing environment during their faith development experience, specifically the sounds present (Bailey & Yocum, 2015). Each of these noemata (Moustakas, 1994) expresses how the participants experienced their faith development.

Within a Christian school environment, students can share the same experiences; for instance, studying about creation in science, singing hymns in choir, or praying for each other's needs. However, the way in which each student experiences these experiences differs. Relating this to faith development within a Christian school setting, the experience itself, the noema (Moustakas, 1994), is the cultural tradition, the ritual, the reading of the Bible, the singing of worship songs, the act of praying, the theological discussion, the water baptism, the counseling and/or discipleship received from teachers, the supernatural encounter with God, etc. How the experience is perceived, the noesis (Moustakas, 1994), can involve joy, fear, stress, apathy, transcendence, etc. The noema can be universal for multiple people, meaning more than one person can experience the same event. However, the noesis, how the event is experienced, is likely different for everyone involved. Williamson and Hood (2011, 2013) revealed common noemata (Moustakas, 1994) from their participants' faith development experiences such as (a) a



deeply felt desire for personal change, (b) a desire to connect with others, and (c) an awareness of faith development.

The greatest experience an individual can have is the “relation to and grounding in the Holy” (Fowler, 2001, p. 165). Relationship with God is the key to Christian faith. As such, individuals often recount their faith development as a relationship with God (Dyess, 2011; Hall, 2007a; Powell et al., 2012). Others remember physical encounters with God (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013). Others recount spiritual intimacy and friendship with God (Fowler, 2000; Liu et al., 2014). Still others remember being understood and accepted by God (Liu et al., 2014). Other individuals recall baptisms of the Holy Spirit (Williamson & Hood, 2011). In a study by Chaves (2011), 64% of Americans reported that they knew God and 36% reported that they had a born-again experience with God. For an individual to report on his or her experience with God and/or having had a born-again experience reveals a brief glimpse into an individual’s faith development experience.

Researchers have conducted phenomenological studies on faith development for college students (Pennings et al., 2011; Bryant, 2011), recovering adult substance abusers (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013), church youth groups (Tighe, 2015) and elementary age Christian school students (Keeler, 2012; Mohler, 2013). Presently, I have not found any studies that examine the faith development experiences of Christian high school students prior to graduation. Furthermore, the majority of the available studies on faith development are quantitative, correlational, cause-and-affect, or they address the demographic characteristics of Christian school graduates during their young adult years. There is no research that I have found that

specifically studies the lived faith development experiences of Christian school secondary students.

### **Summary**

The level of an individual's faith has considerable impact upon the entirety of his or her life (Neuman, 2011). Faith impacts an individual's worldview. Faith impacts an individual's choices. Likewise, choices, experiences, and worldview also impact faith. As people develop their faith, their experiences contrast. Every individual's journey is unique (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011). People do not develop at the same rate, nor do they attain the same level of faith (Fowler, 1981). God, family, peers, society, and culture all affect an individual's faith development.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

In this chapter, I will present the research design, procedures, participants, setting, data collection, and data analysis used in my study. Because faith development is an individual experience, I have chosen a research design that will allow me to better understand individual lived faith development experiences.

### **Design**

This qualitative study was a transcendental phenomenological design. A qualitative study was the most appropriate method for studying the lived experiences of concept formation (Vygotsky, 1986), such as the formation of faith (Spurr et al., 2013). The method of transcendental phenomenology comes from the work of Immanuel Kant (1911), Edmund Husserl (1973/1964), and Clark Moustakas (1994).

Kant was ahead of his time and his contemporaries and likewise, faced much criticism, even until today (Husserl, Kein, & Pohl, 1974). Coining the term “transcendental logic” (Tolley, 2012, p. 417), Kant used it to describe pure, universal, and absolute principles. All phenomena occur within these transcendental principles. He clarified by explaining how the “finality of nature is a transcendental principle” (Kant, 1911, p. 21) whereas the ability to choose life’s course is a metaphysical principle. Kant proposed that phenomena could be understood transcendently in their purest form, apart from what is already known. Transcendental logic transcends pre-conceived notions, it transcends what has already been written about the phenomenon, it transcends biases, and it looks at the phenomenon as if it were brand new to this world having never been studied or examined.

Husserl (1977) further explained transcendental through the use of ego. Each phenomenon can be understood from the experiencer's transcendental ego. A single phenomenon, though multiple individuals may experience it, is specific and personal to each person and thus, experienced differently. Husserl (1977) wrote that, "The Objective World...derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, from me as the transcendental Ego" (p. 582). This egotistical framework allows the researcher to potentially deduce new information from the phenomenon. Husserl (1973/1964) also brought clarity to the term phenomenon, defining it as the "appearance and that which appears" (p. 11). This coincides with the noema and the noesis. The noema, or what occurred, is that which appears. The noesis, or how it occurred, is the appearance. Pertaining to faith development, an individual praying would be the noema, that which appears. How the individual is praying, how the praying transpired, how the praying influences him or her, and how he or she perceives that the prayer is received are types of noeses or appearances.

Building upon the work of Kant and Husserl, Moustakas (1994) wrote that, "Phenomenology...attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment [to reach] a transcendental state of freshness" (p. 41). As the researcher, it is important to not let my personal faith experiences cloud my judgment. Hall (2007a) warned that researchers can "be unwittingly reductionistic" (p. 18) when analyzing the faith experiences of others. Hall's concern was that researchers who have experienced their own faith development will unknowingly prejudge the faith development experiences of participants. To ensure that my own biases did not infiltrate the research, I employed epoche (Husserl, 1973/1964, 1977; Moustakas, 1994) by limiting my own experiences and biases so that the phenomenon could be looked at

from a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994). Only after first critically examining and reflecting upon my own faith development with its ups and downs, highs and lows, relationships, traditions, mistakes, wanderings, sufferings, emptiness, joys, etc. could I attempt to examine the faith development of others (Maslow, 1994; Yocum, 2014). I needed to re-walk my faith development journey before I could understand the faith development journey of someone else (Byrd, 2011; Kimbel & Schellenberg, 2011). The first step in this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine myself as both researcher and researchee, to ask myself the same questions, to observe my religious practices and relationships, to critically look at the religious symbols I hold dear, to reflect upon those events in my life that had and have an effect on my spiritual journey, and to explore from an outsider's perspective the religious cultures I am or have been associated with. While the epoche was no easy task, in preparation for this study, Moustakas (1994) and Rockenbach et al. (2013) encouraged the researcher to practice complete transparency with oneself and writing down of prejudgments. By reflecting upon one's own personal biases and faith development journey, I as the researcher was humbled (Judy, 2011) and able to limit my personal beliefs (Powell et al., 2012). With the epoche process completed and my own experiences bracketed out, I could then proceed to study the experiences of others. The next step involved collecting data through observations, interviews, and focus groups at each of the three schools with the participants.

### **Research Questions**

CQ: What are the faith development experiences of CHSSs?

SQ1: How do CHSSs describe their experiences of faith development?

SQ2: What meaning do CHSSs derive from faith development opportunities provided by their school?

SQ3: How do CHSSs describe the social aspect of faith development?

### **Setting**

Nationally, in 2011-2012, 68% of private schools were religiously affiliated (Broughman & Swaim, 2013). In that same year, the student-to-teacher ratio for religiously affiliated secondary schools was 11.6 students for every one teacher (Broughman & Swaim, 2013). According to NCES (2014), Christian school enrollment has been on the decline for the last 18 years.

Locally, the students of Hawai'i's schools come from a variety of ethnic, economical, and religious backgrounds. Ethnically, Hawai'i is one of the most diverse regions in America. The largest percentage of the population is Asian/Filipino with 37.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The next largest group falls within the category of Two-or-More-Races with 33.1%, followed by Caucasian with 26.6%, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander with 10%, Hispanic with 9.8%, and African American with 2.3%.

Regarding school enrollment, the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HSDOE) (2015) enrollment data for the 2014-2015 school year states that there were 9,516 seniors enrolled within public education that year. On the private school side, the Hawai'i Council of Private School's (HCPS) most recent enrollment report (2013) states that Hawai'i had 4,663 seniors dispersed between Christian schools, non-Christian religious schools, and non-religious private schools. Although Hawai'i does not have the most private schools or private school students, the state of Hawai'i boasts one of the highest per capita K-12 private school

enrollments at around 22% according to the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) (2012; HSDOE, 2014).

The setting for this particular study took place in three of the largest co-educational Christian high schools in Hawai'i, `Ekahi Christian School (Ekahi CS), `Elua Christian School (Elua CS), and `Ekolu Christian School (Ekolu CS), [pseudonyms]. Each of these high schools were also associated with an elementary and middle school. Elua CS and Ekolu CS were housed on the same campus as their elementary and middle school counterparts. Ekahi CS had a separate campus from its elementary campus. Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS were associated with and governed by their respective local churches and Elua CS was independently owned and operated. Ekolu CS had a policy that required at least one parent to be Christian and attend an evangelical Bible-teaching church regularly in order for his/her child to be enrolled. Ekahi CS and Elua CS had no such policy. All three high schools were fully accredited or licensed with various accrediting agencies such as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC, 2014), ACSI, HAIS, and HCPS. The schools did not publicize the ethnic backgrounds of their students. Although these three schools were some of the largest Christian high schools in Hawai'i, they were small in comparison to the other private schools within the state. From HCPS's 2013 enrollment report, Ekahi CS enrolled approximately 1.1% of the total number of seniors attending a private school that year. Elua CS enrolled slightly more at 2.1% and Ekolu CS sits at less than 0.1% of the total number of private school seniors.

In regards to socioeconomic status these schools did not report on the finances of the students in attendance or their families; however, according to the 2014 U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income for Hawai'i was \$67,402, higher than the national average of \$53,046.

Similarly, according to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (2015), Hawai'i's cost of living was higher than all the other states. Hawai'i residents paid on average 11% more for healthcare, 53% more for transportation, 56% more for groceries, 125% more for housing, and 127% more for utilities (Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, 2015).

As if these statistics were not daunting enough, they do not account for the extra costs associated with private school tuition, school uniforms, and extracurricular fees. Appropriately, Ekahi CS's annual tuition for a senior was comparable to the state private school tuition average of \$9,386 (HCPS, 2010). In comparison, Elua CS seniors paid approximately \$1,500 less than the state average and Ekolu CS seniors paid almost \$3,000 less than the state average (HCPS, 2010). The socioeconomic status of the participants for this study likely reflected Barkin et al. (2015) study involving affluent adolescents.

At the same time, these schools did not report on the religious affiliations of their students or their families. While maintaining a personal relationship with Christ was encouraged in each of these schools, it was not required for admission, attendance, or graduation. However, through the interview process, I discovered that Ekolu CS does require that for every student, at least one parent must attend church. Ekahi CS and Elua CS do not have this requirement. In looking at their respective websites, each of these schools integrates biblical teaching with academics and expects their students to develop spiritually and use their God-given talents accordingly. That being said, according to Association of Religion Data Archives' (ARDA) 2010 report, the county of Honolulu's largest religious traditions are Catholicism with 46.4%, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with 13%, Buddhism with 7.5%, International



Church of the Foursquare Gospel with 7%, Non-denominational with 5.7%, Southern Baptist Convention with 3.8%, and Assemblies of God with 3.2%. Given that this study featured 12 individuals, though the individuals attended Christian high schools, there does remain a certain amount of potential that one or more of the participants came from a Christian family and yet still exemplified Christian synthetic-conventional faith.

I chose to study Christian schools because according to the research, Christian schools are more effective at instilling faith development within their students in comparison to other religious traditions (Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014; Vaidyanathan, 2011). Likewise, adolescents who come from affluent families (Barkin et al., 2015) with strong faith commitments during their teenage years (Denton, 2012) are more likely to continue their faith throughout their emerging adult years. Furthermore, although many of the original Christian schools in Hawai'i began as Christian schools and were founded upon Christian principles, many have subsequently lessened their Christian emphasis. Without pointing out the secularization and pluralism (Fowler, 2000; Fowler & Dell, 2004; Schaeffer, 2005; Schultz, 2012) at work amongst Christian schools or the potential watering down of Christian principles for the sake of boosting enrollment numbers or pleasing the masses, I chose these three schools based upon information on their websites and word-of-mouth opinions. Subsequently, I found four seniors from each of these schools that fit the criteria I set.

### **Participants**

While I am utilizing Moustakas' (1994) methodology for this study and incorporating strategies from Denzin and Lincoln (2011), I will refer to participants as participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) instead of co-researchers, which Moustakas chooses to use, and instead of active

partners, which Denzin and Lincoln choose to use. Also, none of the participants in this study were or will be one of my personal students. However, I did conduct a pilot study utilizing three of my former students to test the reliability of my interview questions and practice my interviewing skills.

For this study, I employed purposeful criterion sampling to ensure that each of the 12 participants (four from each of the three Christian high schools) had experienced the phenomenon of faith development (Creswell, 2013). There were four criteria that I was looking for in my participants. First, I was only interested in studying students who had been enrolled at the same Christian school for all 4 years of high school. After completing the first 3 years in the same school, by the fourth year, each participant was more likely to be well integrated socially and culturally (Vygotsky, 1978), thus allowing me to study his or her experiences from a sociocultural framework.

Second, I was only interested in studying students who, based on their faith development, fell within Fowler's (1981) synthetic-conventional faith stage. Tighe (2015) stated that when an adolescent reaches the synthetic-conventional stage, "the brain has matured enough to provide the ability to deduce implications cognitively" (p. 71). Thus, this will be a perfect stage in which the participant can reflect upon and bring to light his or her faith development experiences. One particular study on faith and religion did not require participants to exhibit the characteristics of any one faith or religious tradition (Griffin, 2013). However, in a study involving faith and breast cancer patients, Pedersen, Christensen, Jensen, and Zachariae (2013) recommended that future studies distinguish faith in God versus faith in other higher powers. Likewise, Westerhoff (2000) wrote that, "It is God's historical and liberating action in Jesus Christ that is the final

authority and the foundation for Christian faith” (p. 31). Thus, this study aimed to address the characteristics of having faith in and on God, specifically exploring the faith development experiences of CHSSs who professed or exhibited Christianity. With the assistance of school administrators and teachers, I selected participants that exhibited a Christian synthetic-conventional faith with the Judeo-Christian God as the source and subject of that faith. An administrator or teacher was able to vouch for the participant’s faith development as having most if not all of the following characteristics that typically diminish during young adulthood (Pennings et al., 2011; Pennings et al., 2014):

- Attended church two or more times a month (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Read the Bible three to four times a week (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Prayed to God three to four times a week (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).
- Had been baptized in water (Matthew 28:18-20).

The participant may or may not have also exhibited the following characteristics:

- Gained acceptance and appreciation from his or her school peers and their image of the participant (Fowler, 1981, 2000).
- By combining or synthesizing these self-images, participant formed an identity that he or she deemed as acceptable by others (Fowler, 2000).
- Synthesized the Christian beliefs and values of family, peers, and community without critical reflection as to why.

- Questioned Christianity and its teachings, but was not able to critically understand or reflect upon what they were choosing to believe (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2004).
- Viewed Christian symbols as sacred without fully comprehending their meaning (Fowler, 1981).
- Viewed God as anthropomorphic and personal, yet still incomprehensibly transcendent (Fowler, 1981, 2000).

Lastly, I am seeking participants who have the ability to send and receive emails (Mason, 2014). This will allow me to send interview transcripts back to the interviewees so that they can read and correct any misinformation. Using these four criteria to find these participants, I will seek the assistance of the principal/headmaster, registrar, and teacher/s familiar with the student's faith development. The teacher could be a homeroom teacher, Christian education teacher, or a biblical studies teacher.

In studies involving college students, researchers have found significant differences between males and females (Bryant, 2007; Holmes, Roedder, and Flowers, 2004; Rennick, Smedley, Fisher, Wallace, & Kim, 2013). Reluctantly, because of the population demographics of my research sites and the use of purposeful and criterion sampling, I was unable to acquire an even number of males and females from each school.

This particular study was not concerned with ethnicity, age, or socioeconomic status; only academic year in school, faith development stage, and gender. However, because some of the participants were minors, parental consent was required to participate in this particular study.

## **Procedures**

First, I submitted his finished dissertation proposal to the research consultant for review. Second, with research consultant approval, I then defended the proposal before the dissertation committee. Third, after successfully defending the proposal, I, within five working days, submitted the dissertation proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) along with the application and any other additional material. The IRB application form is located in Appendix A. Fourth, I sought consent from each of the three research sites schools that I wanted to conduct his research in. A sample modeled after Rubin and Rubin (2012) is located in Appendix B. Fifth, once I met with school personnel to discuss which students met the specified criteria and consequently, those students had been identified, I sought parental consent. A sample is located in Appendix C. Appendix K contains the adult participant consent for students who were older than 18 years of age. Participants were informed of the content of the study, that they could refuse to answer any question they want, that they could withdraw from the study at any time, that they would be allowed to review the results of the study, and that they had the right to withdraw any comments that they had made (Spurr et al., 2013). Sixth, after receiving school administrative consent and parental consent, I began collecting data from the participants.

Data collection for each school included one observation of a school-wide chapel service, one observation of a biblical studies or Christian education course, one interview with each student, and a focus group with all four students. The first observation was during a school-wide chapel or church service time. The chapel service took place in a large enough room so that the researcher could be a complete observer (Creswell, 2013). However, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated there is no such thing as a completely detached observation. The second observation took

place during a Bible or Christian education class. Because of the likelihood that this class took place within a smaller area, I assumed the role of a nonparticipant/observer as participant, able to gain access into the classroom and “record data without direct involvement” (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). Whenever possible, I chose to complete the observations first so that I could familiarize myself with the environment and to allow “the future interviewees to get to know [me before I] start asking them questions” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 27). Each of the four interviews took place in a semi-structured fashion. Follow up and probe questions were used to check accuracy, clarity, and comprehension. Lastly, each focus group session involved all four participants from each individual school. Byrd (2011) found that when Christians construct and verbalize their faith development experiences with other like-minded Christians in a safe environment, they are more likely to engage in conversation. Both of the observations, the interviews, and the focus group were video and/or audio recorded and later transcribed. Furthermore, the researcher used a field journal to record any personal notes or thoughts from each observation, interview, and focus group (Griffin, 2013). The researcher’s journal notes, the video recordings, the audio recordings, and the transcriptions were transferred to an external hard drive and locked in a safe to ensure participant safety and privacy. Data analysis involved Moustakas’ (1994) modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana’s (2014) and Saldana’s (2013) first and second cycle coding strategies. The results and conclusions are compiled into Chapter Four and Chapter Five, respectively.

### **The Researcher’s Role**

I identify as a Pentecostal Christian who sees faith development as a series of escalating processes, building upon previous steps. Like Fowler (1981), I view faith in stages. However, I

also agree with Streib (2010) and Keller and Streib (2013) regarding the reversibility of faith and inter- or dual-stage faith. To revert back to a previous stage or to display characteristics from multiple stages as Streib and Keller propose can be possible. While reflecting upon my own faith development journey, I see myself as having characteristics of conjunctive faith.

Specifically, I recognize the emergence of egocentrism and that I have objectively and critically chosen my “beliefs, values, and commitments” (Fowler, 2000, p. 49). Furthermore, I am aware of the polar tensions regarding old and young and masculine and feminine at work in my life (Fowler, 2000). Also, religious symbols that were once idolized in my life and then deconstructed are now used as tools to facilitate my faith experiences (Fowler, 1981). The last area of conjunctive faith for me to fully understand, and perhaps the hardest, is that truth is complex. Only recently have I been able to understand the importance that every tradition has its own interpretation of truth. What is true for me may not be true for someone else. Likewise, what is true for someone else may not be true for me, but I can still honor his or her tradition, respect and learn his or her concept of truth, use this appreciation to more fully formulate my own understanding of truth, and further my own faith development.

Some of my biases included the usage of Christian jargon as well as legalistic Christianity. Ironically, I also was wary of increasing secularization within Christianity today. Lastly, I was apprehensive that participants within this study would answer questions or behave in ways that they viewed as appropriate and acceptable Christian behaviors. Vygotsky (1986) warned that this is one of the problems when studying a concept’s formation, such as faith development. Participants could potentially give answers or descriptions that are rehearsed, textbook, and ready-made, instead of true and honest experiential descriptions. In other words, I

was worried that participants were going to say what they thought I want them to say; the right answers instead of the true answers (Phillips, 2011).

Because this was a transcendental phenomenological study, as the primary researcher in this study, I was the lone instrument to collect and analyze all the data. Likewise, because transcendental phenomenological methodology involves epoche, my personal faith development experiences were bracketed out so that I could more clearly understand each student's experiences (Rockenbach et al., 2013). If I had not bracketed out my own experiences, my passion to see students continue in their faith development could have involuntarily skewed my interpretations of the experiences and my own experiences and biases may have caused me to disregard important items from the participants' experiences. Furthermore, I assumed that each participant could verbalize his or her faith development experience into words during an interview (Spurr et al., 2013). I also assumed that teachers and/or administrators could adequately assess which students had and had not developed their faith so that students who had spiritually developed could be included in this study.

Pertaining to the chapel service observation, my ideal role was to be a complete observer (Creswell, 2013) with no interaction with the group being observed. For the classroom observation, my role was to be that of a nonparticipant/observer as participant (Creswell, 2013) with limited interaction. For the interview, my role would be to form a mutual relationship of trust with each participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The purpose of this was to increase the likelihood that participants would answer questions honestly and openly. For the focus group, my role was to serve as a facilitator in order "to move the conversation along" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 30). For ethical concerns, I ensured that none of the participants in the study were my



students or were going to be my students; with exception, I utilized three of my former students in the pilot study to test my interview questions for clarity and accuracy.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection began in May of 2016 and included two observations at each of the three schools, one large-scale observation involving a school-wide chapel service and one small-scale observation involving a classroom, interviews with each participant from each school, and three focus groups, one with each of the groups of participants from each school. Based upon the timeline of events and coordinating my schedule with school schedules, I could conduct school interviews sequentially. This lessened the chance of participants prepping each other and thus, rehearsing their answers. All research material, video recordings, audio recordings, interview and focus group transcriptions, and textural-structural descriptions were stored on the researcher's external hard drive and locked in a safe when not in use.

After completing two of the observations, I conducted a pilot study to further refine the interview questions (Creswell, 2013). I purposefully waited on the pilot study until after I had conducted a few of the observations. By observing chapel services and classes, I could more directly word my interview questions and thus, my pilot study was more effectively used. The pilot study involved two interviews and a focus group with three students. The participants for the interviews and the focus group were three of my former students who attended a separate Christian high school from the ones involved in the study. Like the 12 research participants, I also obtained permission from school personnel, parental consent, and adult participant consent. This documentation is located in Appendix I, Appendix J, and Appendix L respectively.

### **Chapel and Classroom Observation**

Creswell (2013) described observation research as one of the “key tools for collecting data” (p. 166). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Silverman (2011) all recommended observation research for studying culture. Regarding observations, Miller (2011) provided five recommendations in the Vygotskian approach that can be used within this study: (a) examine both student and teacher behavior and how each responds to their interactions, (b) examine what the student can do alone and with teacher guidance, (c) examine the shift in responsibility from teacher to student, (d) examine the teacher’s teaching style of guiding and prompting the student, and (e) examine how school culture and history determine teacher to student interaction.

For each of the three schools involved in this study, I conducted one chapel service observation at which twelfth-grade students attended. The participants that I interviewed later in this study were not required to participate in this observation. The length of these observations was dependent upon the school’s regular schedule. Most chapel services were about 30-45 minutes in length. I chose to observe chapel services because they often involve worship time, prayer time, a Godly or scriptural message, and the religious symbols pertinent to each institution’s culture. I scheduled my observation through school policy and administrative personnel and did not have to make my presence obvious to students, faculty, or support staff. I made every effort to be a complete observer, but had to be a nonparticipant/observer as participant (Creswell, 2013) because of the setup of the room. In looking at the “physical setting, participants, activities, interactions, conversations,” (Creswell, 2013) and my own impressions, I was able to better understand how students experience the chapel service. Before moving on to collecting more data, I began analyzing the large-scale observation. By analyzing

data and collecting data at the same time, I tried to ensure reliability of the findings (Spurr et al., 2013). By pausing here to examine what was going on in the chapel service, I could focus my interview questions specifically for each school and for each participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). My preference was to video record and audio record the observation. However, due to school limitations and legal issues, video recording an entire group of students was not always possible. For one school, I was only able to record the audio. Along with the recordings, I maintained a chapel observation protocol located in Appendix E.

The classroom observation lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. I observed two twelfth-grade apologetics classes and one Grades 9-12 Christian education course. Like the previous large-scale observation, the participants that I interviewed were not required to be a part of this class. I specifically chose this type of class because the subject material promised to hold the most information regarding faith experiences through curriculum and instruction. During the classroom observation, my role was that of nonparticipant/observer as participant (Creswell, 2013). Again, my preference was to use both video and audio recording capability. If school policy did not allow to video record, then I would have used only audio recordings. However, I was allowed to video record all three classroom observations. During the observation, the teacher and students were most assuredly aware of my presence. Along with the recordings, I maintained a classroom observation protocol located in Appendix F.

## **Interviews**

Morgenthaler et al. (2014) wrote, “Faith becomes visible to others when a child can verbalize a prayer or a belief” (p. 253). I chose to use interviews to collect data because interviews provide rich descriptions (Moustakas, 1994) of each participant’s experiences in his

or her own words. Vygotsky (1986) noted that before puberty, an individual does not have the ability to verbalize the personal formation of a concept, faith development for instance. By focusing on older adolescents who have gone through or are going through puberty, I hoped to catch adolescents, as they were able to formulate and provide rich descriptions of their faith development experiences. For each participant, I engaged him or her in a face-to-face semi-structured responsive interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews lasted 30-60 minutes in length and took place at the participant's school in a comfortable setting where the participant would not feel hesitant to share his or her experiences. This occurred during school hours. As with the observations, the interviews were audio recorded and video recorded. The researcher used bracketing to eliminate the researcher's knowledge and experiences from influencing participants. Furthermore, the researcher worked hard to not lead the participants to answer in any specific way. The researcher's personal faith development experiences were not shared with the participants so as to not create an unethical situation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Interview questions were checked for accuracy with the pilot study. Furthermore, interview questions were directly related to the research questions (Creswell, 2013), but did not inadvertently lead the interviewee to answer in specific ways (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, I carefully worded my questions so as not to assume anything on the part of the participant. However, my questions presupposed that the participant has had some faith development experience or experiences because of the second criteria to participate in this study, that he or she had a synthetic-conventional type faith. I began my interview with warm-up questions (Baldwin et al., 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012) to build a friendly relationship in the hopes to elicit sincere and in depth answers to the seven main questions that followed. In studying

spirituality, Hall (2007b) referred to these warm-up questions as the preparation phase. Baldwin et al. (2015) used these warm-up questions to build a rapport with the participant. Because many of the participants in this study had experienced the faith development phenomenon in similar ways, the noema, it is important to establish trust so that they feel comfortable recounting how the experience was personally, the noesis. Creswell (2013) noted that in phenomenological interviews, the researcher must have skill to ask the relevant questions and patience to allow the participant time to answer. Hall (2007b) referred to this time of patiently waiting and allowing the interviewee to formulate his or her faith experience into words as the incubation phase. The moment that the interviewee is able to voice his or her experiences and provide meaning, Hall (2007b) referred to as the illumination phase. This is also when I as the researcher was able to be receptive to verbal and non-verbal cues (Baldwin et al., 2015; Moustakas, 1994). To elucidate participant responses, I summarized the response and repeated it for the participant so that he or she could check my comprehension (Baldwin et al., 2015). Furthermore, I emailed the transcription from the interview to the interviewee for review (Baldwin et al., 2015; Mason, 2014; Rockenbach et al., 2012). I have included my interview questions here as well as in Appendix G.

#### Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for CHSSs

##### *Warm-up Questions*

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you attended this school? (Baldwin et al., 2015).
4. What is your email address? (Mason, 2014).

5. What pseudonym or fake name would you like me to use when I write up the results of this study?
6. What are your favorite subjects or activities at school? (Fowler, 2000).
7. What things do you enjoy doing when you are not at school? (Baldwin et al., 2015).

The purpose of the warm-up questions was to build a rapport with the interviewee (Baldwin et al., 2015; Mason, 2014). By first establishing trust and a non-judgmental relationship, I hoped to gain truthful answers to the main questions. Likewise, by familiarizing myself with the participant's curricular activities, I was able to better understand the socialization experiences he or she may have experienced (Fowler, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

*Main Questions:*

1. What does the word faith mean to you (Baldwin et al., 2015; Spurr et al., 2013)?
2. What would be the opposite of faith (Spurr et al., 2013)?
3. How does someone gain more faith or lose faith (Liu et al., 2014)?

The first three main questions dealt with the participant's understanding of faith. By beginning in this way, I could then make sense of his or her personal experiences developing said faith (Baldwin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2014; Spurr et al., 2013). For each individual participant, his or her concept of faith and faith development would likely have its own intricacies. Thus, it was important to understand his or her individual faith.

4. Throughout your high school career, what types of faith experiences have you had here at school and how have they affected you (Mason, 2014; Pedersen, Christensen, Jensen, & Zachariae, 2013; Spurr et al., 2013)?

The fourth interview question then directed the focus on to the CQ and SQ1 (Mason, 2014). I wanted to know what experiences each participant has had and if those experiences were the same or different from other participants. For instance, one participant may have recalled singing in chapel while another participant may have recalled the message.

5. Without these faith development experiences, how would your life be different (Mason, 2014)?

Interview question five was designed to address research SQ2 as participants provide their own personal meaning for their faith development experiences and the significance thereof (Mason, 2014). For instance, memorizing a Bible scripture or discussing evolution versus creation could have had different meanings to different participants. When multiple meanings were presented for the same experience, a clearer picture of the experience came to light (McMartin et al., 2013; Williamson & Hood, 2013).

6. In what ways have you had encounters with God (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013)?

Question six related back to Williamson and Hood's (2011, 2013) studies where participants recall having encounters with God. Furthermore, this question was directly related back to the purpose statement as well as SQ1.

7. How have you relied upon or surrendered to God (Fowler, 1981; Gold, 2013; McCraw, 2015; Tighe, 2015)?

Question seven related to the purpose statement and the definition of faith posited in this study. Furthermore, Fowler (1981) recognized that surrendering to God is one of the clear signs of faith.

8. How would you describe your faith in comparison to the faith of your classmates and teachers (Baldwin et al., 2015)?

Question eight was related to SQ3 and aimed to address the socialization aspect of Christian schools and whether or not their faith development experiences acculturated students the same. By asking participants to compare and contrast their faith with the faith of their peers and their teachers, the degree of socialization or lack thereof was evident (Baldwin et al., 2015; Rambo & Bauman, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978)).

9. In what ways do you express your faith (Droege & Ferrari, 2012; Lee, 1980; Liu et al., 2014; Smith, 1991; Westerhoff, 2000)?

The final interview question harkened back to the difference between faith and believe, that faith requires action. Similarly, this question is related to SQ2 as participants convey the personal ways in which they expressed their faith.

#### *Toning Down Questions:*

1. Now that you know that this study is about faith development, is there anything you can think of that I did not ask, but I should have? (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).
2. Are there any questions you have about this study or about faith development? (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The purpose of the toning down questions was to gather any more pertinent information that I may have overlooked from my interview questions. Perhaps there was a unique circumstance regarding an individual participant or a specific school.



## **Focus Groups**

I conducted three focus groups, one at each school with the four students from each school. Each focus group lasted 45-90 minutes and occurred during school hours. Two of the focus group sessions were video recorded and one was audio recorded and like the interviews, transcribed. Focus groups allowed for the participants to agree with, disagree with, or modify peer responses to questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interaction and dialogue amongst peers provided valuable data regarding the sociocultural influence on faith development. As the facilitator of the discussion, I allowed all participants adequate time to convey their thoughts and did not allow any one particular person to dominate the conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). However, because I was also studying how culture influences faith, I balanced this with an understanding that I did not want to inhibit any one participant from acting within their normal cultural routine. In referencing Noaks and Wincup (2004), Silverman (2013) recommended that the researcher “stand back from the discussion so that group dynamics can emerge” (p. 162). This also allowed the participants to take ownership of the topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012).

Utilizing a focus group to collect data ran the risk that participants could inadvertently share confidential information about other participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, I encouraged the participants to keep information that was shared within the focus group confidential. Furthermore, it is the researcher’s belief that the knowledge gained from this particular study on faith development outweighed the risks of anonymity.

Open-ended semi-structured questions prepared in advance and checked using the pilot study were asked to gain valuable descriptions about faith development. Likewise, questions

were developed using data collected from interview material. General questions were asked that pertain to the group as a whole and not to any one individual (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Similar to the interview findings, I emailed the results from each focus group to the participants for their review (Baldwin et al., 2015; Mason, 2014; Rockenbach et al., 2012). I have included my focus group questions here as well as in Appendix H. Similar to the interview format, questions used for the focus groups began less direct and transitioned to more specific questions. However, because a relationship had already been established with the participants, warm-up questions were slightly more focused than during the interviews. Also, I included fewer questions to allow more time for participants to discuss and interact when formulating responses.

#### Standardized Open-Ended Focus Group Questions for CHSSs

##### *Warm-up Questions*

1. If I were a parent thinking about sending my child to this high school, what would you say? (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).
2. What have been some of your most memorable experiences at this school?

Like the interview questions, the purpose of the warm-up questions for the focus group was to build rapport (Baldwin et al., 2015; Mason, 2014) and to examine the social dynamics on relatively easy questions. Because the participants were discussing memorable experiences, they should have felt comfortable opening up in a focus group situation.

3. What relationships with people at this school have had the greatest impact on your life? (Hoffman, 2011).

Warm-up question three allowed for further discussion regarding socialization (Hoffman, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). This question revealed if and which relationships with peers, faculty, staff, or a combination of these had impacted each participant's faith development.

4. What are some things that this school does really well and what are some areas that it could improve upon? (Fowler, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Warm-up question four prompted the participants to think critically and personally about their school (Fowler, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This was designed as a warm-up for main question two when I asked the participants to think critically about their faith development experiences.

#### Main Questions:

1. Each of you shared with me your definition of the word faith and your experiences here at school developing your faith. How does someone go about developing his or her faith (Fowler, 2000)?

The first main question was designed to foster discussion amongst participants regarding their faith and was directly related to the CQ, SQ1, and SQ2 (Fowler, 2000).

2. If you could change anything about your faith development experiences here at school, what would it be? (Silverman, 2013).

This question may have been difficult to answer, but I hope that it encouraged participants to think critically and selfishly about their faith.

3. I am assuming that the majority of students at this school are Christian, but not every student. How is that possible when you attend the same classes, the same chapel services, and listen to the same teachers?
4. Would your faith be any different if you had attended a different high school, and if so, how?

Main questions three and four were directly related to research SQ3 and address Christian school socialization and whether or not it has had any impact upon the participants (Vygotsky, 1978). Ideally, answers to these questions revealed how Christian culture differs from the perceived cultures of other schools.

#### Toning Down Questions:

1. Are there any questions you have about this study or about faith development? (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Again, this last question provided the participants with one last chance to share pertinent information regarding their faith development and the experiences provided by their respective high schools.

### **Data Analysis**

First, before conducting any research and before analyzing data I formulated my own personal experience with faith development (Moustakas, 1994). Second, analysis began following the first chapel observation. By analyzing the first observation, I was able to better formulate interview and focus group questions. Third, I knew that participants would use other terms such as spirituality, religion, and believe when describing their faith development

experiences (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Being cognizant of this and of my definitions for these terms, I carefully decided when a participant was using these terms to describe his or her faith experience or something else, like organized religion. Furthermore, the essence of an experience was what Vygotsky (1986) referred to as the thought hidden behind what was actually said. This is akin to reading between the lines. Vygotsky (1986) went on to say that in order for the researcher to understand a phenomenon, he or she must understand the thought process and the motivation behind the phenomenon.

Data analysis was ongoing during the data collection phase and continued after data collection was complete. Data analysis included “writing marginal notes, drafting summaries of field notes, and noting relationships among the categories” (Creswell, 2013, p. 180).

Furthermore, I made use of metaphors, coding, code counting, and built a “logical chain of evidence” (Creswell, 2013, p. 181). First cycle codes were grouped into second cycle codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2013). I used values coding, in vivo coding, and emotion coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2013) to analyze the data from all four data sources. Values coding was suitable because it specifically addressed the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the experiences. In vivo coding worked well because it utilized the actual words and language of the culture being studied. And emotion coding worked well because faith development is often associated with emotions (Dyess, 2011; Gall et al., 2011; Gottheil & Groth-Marnat, 2011; Pedersen, Christensen, Jensen, & Zachariae, 2013; Rockenbach et al., 2012). These three coding strategies were ideal for studying culture and faith development.

To analyze the observations, I used coding strategies for the audio and video recordings and my observation protocol. Codes from each of the chapel observations from each of the schools were then categorized into themes. Likewise, codes from each of the classroom observations were categorized into themes. From these themes, two composite structural descriptions were formed for each school, one for the chapel observations and one for the classroom observations. Furthermore, two composite structural descriptions were formed comprising all of the schools combined, one for the chapel observations and one for the classroom observations.

To analyze interviews, I used a combination of Moustakas' (1994) modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) in vivo coding, values coding, and emotion coding. The first step was to formulate a full description of my own faith development experience.

1. Consider my own statements as important to the experience.
2. Record all relevant statements.
3. Use first cycle and second cycle coding to cluster non-repetitive statements into themes.
4. Synthesize these themes into my own textural description of faith development.

The next step was to get a full description of faith development as experienced by each of the participants (Powell et al., 2012). Similar to the observations, textural descriptions for each participant were formed based on each of the interviews from each school.

The focus groups were used as a way to check my analysis of the interviews and observations as well as to gain more data that could be coded and categorized. By combining the

results from each of the observations, focus groups, and individual textural descriptions from each of the participant interviews, I was able to form a composite structural description of faith development.

### **Trustworthiness**

To ensure trustworthiness from a naturalistic perspective, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) terms of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the data being presented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is akin to the term validity in quantitative research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) and verisimilitude in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Credibility questions whether the evidence being presented is enough to warrant action.

Thus, to ensure credibility, I as the researcher triangulated data from the four sources used in this study: chapel observation, classroom observation, interview, and focus group. Each data source served as a reference for subsequent data sources regarding the faith development phenomenon. Similar and dissimilar themes across data sources were acknowledged and taken in to account. For instance, events that the researcher witnessed during observations also came to light during the interviews as participants answered questions. Accordingly, the interviewee may not have reference observed events and thus the researcher chose to question why such events lacked significance on the part of the participant. Following interviews, I allowed participants to review their answers and make changes as necessary. Having participants review their interview and focus group transcriptions for mistakes, ambiguities, or further details improved trustworthiness (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability refers to the consistency of the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) and whether or not it could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Likewise, the study and the researcher's questions were directly related to the phenomenon being researched.

First, to ensure dependability, I clearly stated my role as the researcher and the primary instrument to collect data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Second, I was transparent in the outline and design of this study (Silverman, 2013). Third, I conducted a pilot study of the interview questions and the focus group questions to refine the structure and intent of each question (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Lastly, a committee of three qualified and experienced researchers reviewed this study before publication (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability refers to the extent that the findings of the study are the result of the participants and not the researcher's biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, the study should be neutral and free from any outside influence (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

To ensure confirmability, I clearly stated my own biases and my strategies for bracketing out my own experiences of the phenomenon. Second, I provided a detailed description of how the data was collected and analyzed. Following the collection of the data, I revised the analysis section to further describe how the data was analyzed and interpreted (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Silverman, 2013). Third, by employing reflexivity, I was cognizant of my own experiences and how they impacted my writing and interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2013). Lastly, all conclusions were accompanied with examples directly from the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).



## **Transferability**

Transferability refers to whether the results of the study could be applied to other similar situations (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In order to do this, the researcher created a thick description of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013).

To ensure transferability, I selected three schools of different Christian denominations. Thus, the results are transferable to a range of Christian institutions. Second, I described in detail each chapel observation, each classroom observation, each interview atmosphere, and each focus group atmosphere (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This accompanied video and audio recordings and meticulous interview and focus group transcriptions. The individual and composite textural descriptions were both broad and detailed (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, I have provided examples where these methods could be tested in the future (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

## **Ethical Considerations**

To address ethical considerations, the research topic was disclosed prior to the study. Parental and participant consent were attained and participants received confidentiality that their names, named person/s, and named institution/s were not published. Furthermore, participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell, 2013) and could have refused to answer any questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) without repercussion. Ethically, I was able to ensure that information that I collected would remain confidential. Adversely, participants were encouraged, but not contracted to confidentiality. As with any research project, I was obligated to report any negligence or abuse if I had witnessed such.

### **Summary**

In summary, I began gathering data from 12 participants from a variety of data sources. While studying faith development, I did not impress upon the participants my views or ideas. By using a transcendental phenomenological methodology, my goal was to ensure an ethical study that could provide a rich description of the faith development experience of the CHSS.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

Again, the purpose of this study was to describe the lived faith development experiences of 12 high school seniors from three different Christian schools in Hawai'i. In this chapter, I will present a rich description of the lived faith development experiences of each of the 12 participants. I will also provide the results from the pilot study and the results from the full study, including textural descriptions of each chapel observation, each classroom observation, and two composite descriptions. This is followed by the theme development and the answering of the research questions.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study included 12 adolescents between 17 and 18 years old. Each of them attended their respective private Christian high schools for all four years of high school. Many of them also attended the companion elementary and middle schools associated with their respective high schools. High school administrative personnel and teachers recommended these 12 students because they fit the criteria for participation in this study. Two other students were initially recommended, however, upon interviewing, it was discovered that they did not fit the criteria. Each participant's ethnicity included various combinations of Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, and Korean. This was in keeping with the fact that 70.8% of Hawai'i's population is comprised of multiethnic individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). For the reason that there are no clear delineations between ethnicities and because participant ethnicity is not pertinent to the study, I chose not to include the ethnicity of each participant. In the span of four weeks, I interviewed these 12 individuals, nine females and

three males, while also observing their respective chapels and classes. All of them were dealing with the pressures of graduating high school and the anxiety that college was looming. Table 1 shows the breakdown by school.

Table 1

*Participant Characteristics for Each School*

	<u>Ekahi CS</u>		<u>Elua CS</u>		<u>Ekolu CS</u>	
<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
Gender	4	N/A	2	2	3	1
Christian Home	2	N/A	2	2	3	1
Non-Christian Home	2	N/A	-	-	-	-
Saved Since Attending Christian School	1	N/A	-	-	1	-
Saved Prior to Attending Christian School	3	N/A	2	2	2	1
Plans to Attend State College	-	N/A	1	2	-	-
Plans to Attend Christian College	1	N/A	1	-	1	1
Plans to Attend Community College	1	N/A	-	-	-	-
College Plans Unknown	2	N/A	-	-	2	-

Each of the interview participants and/or their parents signed the appropriate consent forms (Appendices C & K) prior to being interviewed. After transcribing each interview, I sent an email copy back to the participant for them to check. The participant had the opportunity to make changes as needed. Only one participant, Sarah, made a minor change. An introduction to the participants is located below in alphabetical order. Pseudonyms are provided to protect their individual privacy. Named persons and institutions are also referenced using pseudonyms.

**Anna: `Ekahi Christian School**

Anna is an 18-year-old female senior at Ekahi CS. Being raised in a Christian home, she recalled that her faith, “consciously began when [she] was probably 14 or 15” years old. She attended Ekahi CS, where her mom worked, from kindergarten through twelfth-grade. Anna was extremely positive about her experiences and relationships at Ekahi CS. While at school, Anna enjoyed studying history and literature and detested math. When not at school, she loved reading and writing poetry. She loved looking at and painting Renaissance style art. Anna also volunteered at her local church in Sunday School and proclaimed that she preferred to serve “in the back” and not “on stage.” An eternal optimist, Anna stated, “I think in God’s plan, you can never be completely lost.”

Early in Anna’s interview, it was obvious that she was a little nervous. Her answers seemed short and direct, almost wanting to get through the interview as quickly as possible. Once she became more familiar with me, she began opening up and provided wonderful details about her faith experiences. Throughout the interview, she often combined her answers with biblical scriptures and was able to formulate answers clearly. Regarding her faith, she described it as, “Faith in God...Jesus Christ who is my Savior...my Redeemer...my Hope in the

Future...the Greatest Love of My Life...my Direction in Life...my Purpose...my Reason for Being...[and] my Rock.” Anna used numerous metaphors to emphasize her faith in and reliance upon God. In describing how her family was once going through a difficult time and she did not know how to respond, she recalled God saying:

I have the answers when you don't have the answers and I have a plan for you to prosper and not to harm and a plan for your family to prosper and not to harm. I promise it's gonna be hard and...you're gonna be persecuted...you're gonna feel like the world's all against you, but I've got you through it.

It was unclear whether or not this reference to Jeremiah 29:11 was Anna hearing God's audible voice, recalling the verse from her own reading of it, or recalling the verse from hearing it preached or taught. Regarding communication from God, she also stated, “I definitely do think that [God's] using every opportunity in my life to talk to me in His ways...which is awesome.” In remembering a stressful time in her life, she recalled a conversation with God where she said, “I can't deal with this right now. I give it up to You.” For Anna, her relationship with God involves one-on-one intimate personal communication rather than impersonal ambiguous prayers to a higher being. Regarding her high school, Anna stated that, “One of the biggest parts of [Ekahi CS] contributing to my faith is that people have modeled out what it is to love one another.” Regarding her teachers, Anna stated that, “They're willing to tell me...their personal stories or tell me where they've failed...tell me things they love and talk about God and just be honest.” Regarding her twelfth-grade classmates, Anna stated that, “I think I know everyone personally...I think we're all just moving towards [faith] and just getting deeper.” Anna is both confident in who she is and where her faith is.

**Eric: `Elua Christian School**

Eric was a quiet and hesitant 17-year-old male senior at Elua CS who often provided short and thoughtful one-word answers for both his interview and for the focus group. His attempts to further detail his high school experience seemed difficult for him, if not uninteresting. Eric described his church background as having attended church every week with his Christian parents and growing up in a “strong, strong Christian family.” A student at Elua CS since sixth grade, Eric recounted, “Every day you’re taught about God and you always have Chapel...it keeps me accountable and helps me to grow stronger.” Eric’s favorite subject in school was math though he considered school “pretty hard” because he’s “not that smart” and had “to always study a lot.” More comfortable on the baseball diamond playing shortstop or on the basketball court playing point guard, Eric was a phenomenal athlete and team leader for his respective teams. In talking about his team leadership style, he said it’s about “being an example” and “being a good person to others watching you and to build them up.” At the time of this interview, Eric was planning on attending a secular state university.

The phrase, working hard, constantly came up in both Eric’s interview and his focus group. Specifically, he said, “I feel like [God] taught me how to be a hard worker and to never give up...to always try your best even when you fail and to just keep pushing.” When asked about faith, Eric said, “I express [my faith] by my actions of doing everything based on what...is right to God...like never slacking.” Furthermore, he described it as, “practicing in your daily life what you believe.” For Eric, it seemed as if his personal faith was based on his actions and his work ethic as much as, if not more than, his belief system. When asked about the possibility of

someone losing faith, he stated, “I don’t think you can cause if you do than you probably didn’t have faith in the first place.”

Regarding Elua CS, Eric stated, “I think [Elua CS’s] good if you wanna stay accountable with God, but in a way it’s a little too sheltered.” He went on to eventually say, “You don’t really see like the real world...if you go to college and you don’t go to a Christian college, you’re not gonna be ready.” Eric’s concern was a real one affecting many Christian school graduates today. His concern was further laid out as he addressed his classmates’ work ethic. Specifically, he said, “I feel like you shouldn’t just do Bible [class] just to get the grade. You should wanna do it to learn about God.” It was obvious that Eric was burdened by the thought that his humble attitude and quiet leadership style to follow God were potentially going unnoticed or ignored by his adolescent peers.

### **Gabby: `Ekolu Christian School**

Gabby was a confident and mature 18-year-old female senior at Ekolu CS who was aware of her own areas of disbelief and because of that, made conscious efforts to develop her faith. She was raised in a Christian home, grew up in a Christian church, regularly attended youth group, and was homeschooled until fifth grade when she began attending Ekolu CS. Her favorite subjects were Bible and history. She enjoyed Bible because as she put it, “You’re always learning something new even though it’s the same passage” and ironically, she enjoyed history, “because it never changes.” Gabby’s favorite activity was volleyball and she planned to play intramurals while attending a private Christian university. When asked about the future of her faith after high school, Gabby was well aware of the unfortunate statistics of Christian adolescents abandoning their faith during young adulthood. She responded with, “I don’t want



to be a statistic and so I think just practical Christian living...having a routine to read the Bible...finding a church...all that goes into keeping my faith strong.”

Gabby often interchanged the concepts of faith and hope, a correlation paralleled in Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Gabby explained it like this:

Faith is a belief in something...faith is something you believe...faith is something that you can't directly see...hope on the other hand is the belief in the future and the belief in a plan for yourself and for other people so when I say that faith and hope are together, I say that I'm believing in Someone that I can't see and I believe that They have a greater purpose for me.

Gabby later contrasted her faith and hope comparison with a deeper, more intimate and honest look into her understanding of faith. “Experiences and trials help increase your faith, but I also think that you can have faith in certain areas and then have like a weaker faith in other aspects.” She explained, “I know God is there and I know that He's real, but often times, I feel like I doubt His power in certain situations...I don't know if He's gonna get me out of this trial...I don't know if He's gonna help me.”

Yearning for anything and everything that would contribute to her faith, Gabby eagerly read her Bible, prayed consistently, participated in her youth group, and longed for opportunities to serve others. While in high school, Gabby unsuccessfully petitioned Ekoru CS to allow a small group Bible study on campus available to students if they wanted to meet as a way to encourage them and allow them the opportunity “to be real with each other.” Worried for her

peers' spiritual walk, she reasoned, "When you don't switch things up and when you're stuck in the same routine...you get used to it and it sort of becomes like just going through the motions and I think that could be dangerous in someone's walk." Though she never suggested it to school administration, Gabby wished that Ekolu CS would have provided more opportunities for students to get away from school and to serve the less fortunate in her community. Her reason was, "So that we're able to see what the real world is like and what people go through and it'll help us like realize how blessed we are." Though Gabby's idea to reach out to her community was never realized and she was unable to create a small group on campus, she did have numerous endorsements for Ekolu CS. In one instance, she commended Mr. Fole for taking notice of her struggle with depression and anxiety and his willingness to pray for her. In another instance, Gabby pointed out that the teachers "really care about your walk with the Lord" and Ekolu CS is a "good school to get a biblical foundation." Remembering her teachers' pedagogical style, she said, "They teach from a literal perspective from the Bible which is important because other teachers can twist and manipulate the Word and I think it's important that their doctrines are correct and sound." Furthermore, "I think each of the teachers relate everything that they teach back to the Word and back to God."

Gabby's spiritual maturity was most noticeable in the times that she recalled seeking God's direction before making any important decisions. When an opportunity came up for her to either do missions work in Cambodia or Mexico, she felt God leading her to go to Mexico instead of Cambodia. During another period in her life, she noted "I definitely feel like God has told me to end some relationships both inside and outside of school because they weren't

spiritually edifying.” In her young 18 years, Gabby had an amazing sense for hearing God’s voice speaking to her.

### **Grace: `Elua Christian School**

Grace was an athletic 17-year-old female senior who had attended Elua CS since she was a 2-year-old. A little timid and reserved, when she did speak, she spoke with wisdom and understanding beyond her age. Her interests included math, reading, portrait photography, and athletics. She also held a part-time job at a local ice cream shop in preparation for her plan to attend a secular state university. Grace got saved in sixth grade at a school retreat. Recounting the middle school experience, she said:

I remember the message being...you don’t know when your life is gonna end...life’s a vapor and...where do you think you’re gonna be going and...my dad had just finished stage four cancer and...I was just meditating on that...my dad’s life coulda been wiped away, but he’s still alive today...praise Jesus for that...but that really had me thinking and then I went to one of my friends who was saved and I was like, ‘I wanna know and have this relationship with God’.

Grace referenced many difficult times in her life like her father’s cancer, when her parents were going through a divorce, her rebellious teenage stage, and her own medical issues. Grace had endured her own repeated health problems and an emergency surgery as a teenager. She had to leave school for a while, give up her active lifestyle, and longed to “go back to [her] normal life.” In a moment of desperation, she prayed and cried out to God, “Why are You doing this to

me? I don't know what I did." Through extensive prayer, Grace boldly was able to say, "OK Lord, I'll trust You with this and I'll keep going, but it's in Your will if I can continue to go on."

Grace reluctantly described her time in high school as a testing ground amongst her non-Christian peers, but was thankful for the Godly example she saw from her teachers. She described teachers as not just faculty, but mentors, helpers, friends, exemplars, and sisters. She was especially encouraged by the patience of her teachers and the "Fruit of the Spirit" that they modeled for students. "[Teachers] have the patience...they have the strength...and that's I think only given through God." Furthermore, she exclaimed, "If I didn't have the [teacher] examples I had, I would have just probably completely lost faith in God and I wouldn't be where I am today." Grace recalled one of her classes taught by Mr. Bram. She appreciated his willingness to discuss controversial topics within Christianity today such as homosexuality in the church, the possibility of falling away from one's faith, and real-life morality questions. She noted, "that topic really blew my mind and I love interacting and getting those questions in." Like many adolescents, Grace was searching and questioning her faith. She wanted to know why she should believe what she believed. Regarding faith, Grace acknowledged:

It's hard work...it's not just gonna come to you...it's a growing challenge that you have to face and you have to work with. It's not just gonna be there a second and just stay there forever. You gotta work for it and you gotta just fully understand and know what you have a faith and believe in.

### **Jamie: `Elua Christian School**

Jamie was a happy, confident, caring, and friendly 18-year-old female senior at Elua CS who brought joy to anyone around her. Though she was always willing to answer any and every question, she was quite humble and encouraging in allowing her fellow focus group participants to speak their minds. A fully committed Christian, she referenced her church and playing piano on the worship team as being the source of her faith development more so than having attended Elua CS. An attendee since Kindergarten, Jamie enjoyed studying math and was involved in many activities including the basketball team, student body council, and various other leadership positions. During her ninth-grade year, Jamie claimed that God got a hold of her heart and only then did she start “becoming extroverted.”

Jamie’s faith is what it is because she personally worked for it. She stated, “I want to take my faith seriously.” Jamie was open and honest regarding Elua CS. She offered great insight and presented both the positive and negative experiences. Speaking for Elua CS’s related elementary campus, Jamie stated, “Elementary is really good...I think it’s really good for [student’s] faith.” Unfortunately, when Jamie highlighted individual areas that Elua CS contributed to her faith, she also repeatedly referenced Elua CS’s limited approach to developing the faith of the student body. Representing the positives, Jamie alluded to a few key friends and teachers. She stated:

I love [my best friend] to death...but we never got close until maybe like three or four years ago when she actually started coming to our church...so like I hang out with her at church...I hang out with her at school and now she’s my best friend in the whole world and I think if I went to public school...it’d be harder for me to find a very close friend

because maybe they wouldn't be a Christian and they wouldn't be the type of person to pour into me and to edify me...[we] whip out our Bibles...play music...[and] read the word together.

Jamie and her best friend were supportive towards each other and encouraged each other's faith because developing their faith was important to them. Even with Elua CS's efforts to contribute spiritually to its students, these two young ladies saw the need for deeper, more intimate faith. Jamie also remembered a different friend who instead, challenged her spiritual walk while at the same time strengthening it. She recalled:

I had a friend growing up and like we've been through a lot together and he would be like, 'If God's real, how does He do this?' or like, 'Why would God do bad things in my life?'...those are real questions and...that causes you to really dig deep and like dive into the Word and I think for me like instead of repelling me from God and like, 'Oh, why does He do that?'...it caused me to grow more.

With both of Jamie's peers, they contributed to her faith. One partnered with her as they walked together in faith. The other peer forced Jamie to better understand what she believed and why she believed it. Jamie also acknowledged Elua CS's week devoted to faith development as an opportunity to grow spiritually. She also commended various teachers and pastors for how they challenged her spiritually. Specifically, "[Mr. Lyons] really showed me like the reality of the Bible in the way he lived and the way like he taught."

Sadly, Jamie also pointed out her concerns with Elua CS. "[Ms. Gonzales] gets mad and upset and then she goes straight to the Bible and reads a scripture and we're like...HMMMM?"

Jamie and her classmates were quick to recognize the hypocrisy in Ms. Gonzales' actions. Furthermore, Jamie was concerned that her classmates were unable to relate with their teachers. She stated:

It's hard for [students] to relate [to teachers] cause these teachers are like... 'I got saved when I was three and I've been in the church ever since'...and a lot of students here are like, 'I haven't...how can I be a Christian if I'm not like you?'

Jamie's concern is that for the majority of Elua CS teachers, they were raised in primarily Christian environments and conversely, the majority of Elua CS students come from non-Christian homes. To coincide with this, Jamie also felt that pastors and chapel speakers would too often use scare tactics in their messages to students. In perhaps the most telling of responses, Jamie stated:

I experience God here at Elua CS through the time that I spend with Him...there's not a lot of open room...to grow your relationship with God personally...cause a lot of the times I hear from God here, it's because I'm doing my devo's during a study hall or a free period and...I hear from God during chapels, but not as much as when I take time to myself and actually dive into the Word by myself.

Jamie also spoke about Elua CS as being a testing ground for her faith. She stated that many of her peers viewed devotions and discipleship as assignments. Opportunities to grow spiritually were considered pointless homework that was going to be graded. However, regarding her peers who were also picked for this study, she exclaimed, "These guys are solid...I think a very small percentage of our grade is solid...I think that a lot of people put on a show here." Furthermore,

she stated, “To say how many people come in and actually get saved, I think like they think they get saved and...they’re not...so a really small percentage”

**Malia: `Ekahi Christian School**

Malia was an active and bubbly 17-year-old female senior at Ekahi CS who had no problem with expounding on interview questions. Easily able to communicate, she frequently veered her responses to various tangents only to steer them back to the topic in a round-a-bout way. She recounted an opportunity to serve the homeless and the importance of “just letting God’s Spirit like just take control and speak through you.” Malia’s interests included studying history and anything sports related. Not afraid to try something new, she regularly went out for different sports just for the challenge. She prided herself on an eclectic music collection, minus country music. An attendee since seventh grade and a Christian all her life, she recalled, “How great has God kept me safe and like, He protected me and made sure I didn’t have all this weight on my shoulders.” Malia was a realist with a positive outlook on life, understanding that she was inevitably going to fail in certain areas, but at the same time, she learned to trust in God despite her failures. She further expressed her anxiety regarding the future with, “I was uncomfortable with the fact I didn’t know what I was gonna do next year, but then like, sometimes you’re not gonna know the answer, but it’s rather a step into your faith and trust in God.” In Malia’s own words at the time of this interview, her future plans included, “community college and a lot of Jesus.”

Malia referenced the “Godly relationship” she had with her classmates, describing it as, “what a community of friends should look like.” She stated, “We’re so close to each other...if things are wrong, we’re like, ‘We love you...Jesus loves you...but you need to work on this’.”



Furthermore, after likening the individual personalities of her friends to attributes of God, she said, “And it just makes you like wanna know more about God because you see it through people...like even though we’re sinful and all...you see different traits of God and you’re just kind of amazed by that.”

Malia acknowledged Ekahi CS’s contribution to her spiritual foundation and adherence to biblical truths despite the beliefs and opinions of some of her siblings. She declared, “Ekahi CS has really helped me like really understand on a deeper level what I believe.” Furthermore, in a conversation with a sibling regarding a moral dilemma, she exclaimed, “That’s not true and that’s not like what God intended.” Malia constantly referenced the importance of being pushed out of one’s comfort zone in order to grow spiritually. Specifically, she was thrust into various leadership positions on campus that humbled her, taught her servant leadership, and taught her the importance of being a role model. She stated, “It was kinda just learning to be put in uncomfortable situations and just relying on Him and trusting on Him.” Furthermore, she exclaimed:

You could put your hope and trust in like things that are of this world like boys or school books or your reputation, but like none of those things are gonna be lasting or gonna have much substance in life, but then faith to me is putting your hope and trust in God.

#### **Michael: `Ekolu Christian School**

Michael was a 17-year-old male senior at Ekolu CS who was eager to move on to the private Christian university where he was going to study mechanical engineering. Michael recalled enjoying the various Bible classes that he had taken and the integration of Bible within

his other subjects like science, math, physics, English, and church history. He declared, “It’s not just one Bible class and that’s it...it’s a lifestyle!” Michael hesitantly confessed his difficulty to stay motivated during the last few weeks of his senior year before graduation. Having already been accepted to his preferred college and having completed enough quality work to graduate with at least a C average, Michael was apathetic towards finishing with anything higher. When asked if anything could motivate Michael to finish strong, he acknowledged Mr. Tokunaga’s mentorship and godly counsel as a source of encouragement and motivation. Before attending Ekolu CS, Michael remembered his experience at another Christian middle school. He stated, “I went to quote-unquote Christian school...they didn’t teach Bible...all they taught was theistic evolution and before coming here I thought theistic evolution was a pretty sane idea.” In comparison, Michael described Ekolu CS’s Bible classes as, “They help us build a foundation because they help us prove our faith.” In describing Ekolu CS as a whole, Michael said:

Everyone’s like a close knit family and that really helps our [*sic*] kinda incubate...kinda nourish the...faith because like everybody’s so friendly...they feel like family...like brother and sister...like you can go up to them and you can pray with them...with the teachers and principals...like you did something wrong...they’ll punish you for it, but they’ll come back with you like with the grace of God...they’ll talk to you about it...help you through it...they’ll open the Bible with you...do like a quick devotion...they’ll do like micro-adjustments...we’re all really close together...family environment...that’s really important.

Michael had two very different Christian experiences with two different Christian schools. His own first-hand comparison helped him to develop his own appreciation for faith development experiences.

In Michael's definition of faith, he loosely recited his version of Hebrews 11:1. In his words, "Faith is something that the things hoped for that you can't see so that's basically what I base faith off of...that definition alone." When asked if an individual's faith could increase, Michael refuted the idea believing that "it's something that you already have to have." Interestingly, Michael believed that an individual could walk in faith and then through circumstances, begin to be cautious, start doubting God, and eventually decrease his/her faith.

#### **Nichole: `Ekolu Christian School**

Nichole was a 17-year-old female senior at Ekolu CS who was always willing to encourage others during difficult situations. Generally a positive person, Nichole never let her circumstances determine her attitude. When asked about how she expressed her faith, she exclaimed, "It would be through loving and encouraging others...being kind to one another." Nichole recalled giving hugs, praying for people, and daily reminding classmates of God's authority over all circumstances. Having attended Ekolu CS since seventh grade, she enjoyed Latin and economics. Furthermore, Nichole regularly volunteered at other elementary schools, tutoring students in Latin.

Nichole referenced two key people in her life who contributed to her faith. The first individual was a committed Christian who Nichole looked up to who eventually let her down. Regarding the woman, Nichole stated, "She was one of my mentors...and we all thought that she

would keep the faith...but she ended up losing it because she wanted to go her own way.” What could have been a catastrophic event for Michelle’s faith caused her to realize the truth of putting one’s faith in God rather than a person. The second individual was a teacher who caught Nichole cheating on a test and used the opportunity to teach Nichole both an academic lesson and a spiritual lesson at the same time. Nichole said:

I cheated because I wasn’t ready for a test and she caught me, but...she’s been helping me in my studies and she did like devotions with me and...we would read devotions to each other...it was like Oswald Chambers’, *My Utmost for His Highest* and those devotions really helped me to grow in my faith and not to make the same mistake again.

Finding a spiritual mentor for Nichole was crucial in developing her faith. She said that there have been quite a few teachers and peers at Ekolu CS who have helped keep her and each other accountable. She acknowledged:

To get faith, you have to really know what you’re believing in and I would say...to...have faith in God, you have to like really know that He actually does exist and...here at [Ekolu CS], they teach you all of the things about creation and historical and scientific [sic] facts about why God would exist and how the Bible is like accurate.

Nichole valued her time at Ekolu CS and saw it as a vital component to her faith development. When asked about the faith development experiences provided by Ekolu CS, Nichole said that she would not change any of them and would love more of them, but she did recommend a mission trip to one of the other Hawaiian Islands to “preach the Gospel over there or help build a school.”

### **Reese: `Ekolu Christian School**

Reese was an introverted and athletic 18-year-old female senior at Ekolu CS who enjoyed English class because it allowed her to put her thoughts and feelings on paper instead of having to talk in the front of the class. For this reason, Reese preferred social media as a way to encourage fellow Christians rather than having to talk to them. An attendee since fourth grade, Reese enjoyed playing basketball and soccer and hanging out with friends. When not studying or with friends, Reese worked at her family's restaurant. She was planning on attending a community college for a couple of years and then transferring to a secular state university.

Reese rehashed events in her life personally where she made poor choices and family events where she had to endure criticism and judgement from other people. As a result, she remembered praying and asking for God's forgiveness. She said, "It just felt like the stone was lifted up so that was when I knew I had to depend on God if I ever wanted to get out of it." Reese acknowledged how God used different people to speak to her during that difficult time including one of her close friends who "actually listened" and did not "initially judge" her. Reese went on to say:

If you put in the time to...read your devotions and pray... [God will] speak to you more and then you'll like just get more wisdom...by reading His word and stuff...if you actually try to understand it, He'll reveal things that you might not have known.

Reese had to face the results of her poor choices, deal with family issues, and endure criticism and hypocrisy from people she thought she could trust; all the while, holding on to her faith. Although Reese described her previous Christian school as, "They didn't really encourage you

[or] say, ‘Oh, I’ll pray for you’,” she did not let circumstances or other people determine her faith. Thankfully, at Ekolu CS Reese had teachers in her life who helped her during this potentially lonely time. She attributed her growing faith to Mr. Machida’s mentorship, consistent prayer, and accountability. Reese also endorsed her teacher, Mr. Rye, for his “confidence in the Lord” to talk with anybody about God regardless of who they are or what they are going through. She also listened to her basketball coach’s wisdom when he said, “You shouldn’t look down on any one person.” In response to how she was able to overcome everything, she recited a portion of 1 John 4:4, “Greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world.” Unfortunately, Reese had to learn the hard way that Christians do not live up to their own expectations. Her experiences helped to make her humble and sincere in her faith. In helping to keep her peers accountable, she said, “I just have to keep myself in check and follow what I tell them.” Reese recognized that she needs to work on her language and how she treats others when she gets upset. Regarding her faith, Reese stated, “Whatever you put in, you get out.”

### **Robert: `Elua Christian School**

Robert was a bright and confident, yet humorous 18-year-old male senior at Elua CS. He attended Elua CS from seventh- through twelfth-grade and at the time, was planning to attend a secular state university. His interests included hands-on experiments in science, sprinting for the track and field team, and playing video games with his friends. Raised in a Christian home, Robert was already a Christian before attending Elua CS. In his description of faith, Robert saw the construct as being twofold, first, belief in the historical accuracy of Jesus’ life and ministry and second, faith in Jesus’ supernatural power to help and guide us in the present.

At the beginning of the interview, Robert viewed faith as an all or nothing construct. He stated, “You have it or you don’t.” Later in the interview, perhaps after more reflection, Robert considered that faith could get stronger “through...maturing and...relationship with Christ through like reading the Bible” and experiencing “what God is doing in your life.” He also noted that faith could become not as strong if an individual gets “lazy or burned out” or starts “doing their own thing and they’re not focused on God.” Robert’s dichotomy is perhaps due to the spiritual polarity on his campus. He reluctantly noted:

There are also a lot of kids who I’d say probably most likely aren’t Christians at all...in the high school, you have to already know what you believe, cause I think a lot of the people in the high school...it’s not super Christian...there’s a lot of people who are gonna challenge what you believe...It really depends on what you choose to do...how you wanna do it or if you want to at all...I think just being here doesn’t really force you to grow.

Robert’s brilliance came from his ability to think critically about his classmates, his teachers, and Elua CS as a whole. While not attempting to belittle his high school, Robert showed deep concern for both his classmates’ academic and spiritual well-being. In his own words, he desired to be a spiritual “thermostat on [his] campus...setting the spiritual temperature [and] how to be an example to the younger students.” It was evident through Robert’s interview and the focus group that he was highly concerned with the spiritual well-being of his classmates and could also easily discern which classmates exemplified Christian characteristics and those who did not. He stated, “If you’re talking in the sense [of whether classmates] have faith in Christ...you can tell by the stuff they do.” He went on to state, “People act differently at

different times...so if you know them like however they really are...you could have a better judgement on if they have faith or not.”

Furthermore, Robert questioned some of the attributes of Elua CS’s chapel service. He wondered whether or not the policy to sing only hymns in chapel was actually helping to engage students in worship. Also, he recommended that Elua CS allow students to lead the chapel instead of having staff lead it. His ideas did not seem to come from a selfish motivation, but instead from a concerned student wanting a more engaging chapel service for his classmates.

### **Sarah: `Ekahi Christian School**

Sarah was an eloquent and charismatic 18-year-old female senior at Ekahi CS with a spiritual maturity and biblical knowledge better than most seasoned pastors that I have known. With a gift of discourse, Sarah had no problem discussing her personal faith and her school. Sarah’s boldness and comfort with talking to others allowed her to openly share God with Christians and non-Christians. Sarah grew up in church and has been a Christian all her life. Furthermore, her mother was a teacher at Ekahi CS. Sarah regularly volunteered on her church’s worship team. Having attended Ekahi CS since fifth grade, Sarah’s favorite subjects included every subject except science and math. She really enjoyed rhetoric and apologetics. She also participated on Ekahi CS’s Speech and Debate Team and the Drama Team. Because of her wealth of biblical knowledge and faith development experiences, Sarah declared:

It was easy for me to attribute faith to my knowledge of what I thought I knew because...I could recite Bible verses and recite stories and maybe say the appropriate things at the right time and say the fancy sounding prayer at the right time, but...over the



years realizing that faith is not just what you can spout out and I actually had a revelation at [church] in middle school...everything kind of clicked when the lines blurred together of knowledge and actual faith.

In Sarah's wisdom, she understood her own need for personal faith versus biblical smarts. Sarah realized her faith development advantage with her foundation of biblical knowledge, but also admitted that Christians can "go blindly into [their] faith and just go with the...monotony of...God is great." She further described the Christian school monotony epidemic with words like, "complacent" and "skimming by in your faith." Sarah was concerned that Christian school students today "say the Bible or spew John 3:16 [but are] not always relating to the heart." Lastly, she emphasized that Christians must "actively pursue" their faith instead of just going through the motions of Christianity.

Sarah was quite excited to tell me about her fellow peers and teachers at Ekahi CS.

Regarding her peers, she exclaimed:

I've been privileged to have an amazing class of people who not only just go to school and spit out knowledge they know, but are also actively pursuing their faith and then we've been able to create a community...where we talk about God outside the classroom or we talk about what we learned at church in the classroom...the people in my class truly are the closest friends I've ever had and...we've been able to see each other grow in spiritual maturity and...we talk about our struggles and we're able to keep each other accountable.

Sarah's joy in talking about her classmates was a result of their freedom and openness to discuss their faith in school and out of school. Their friendships were substantial, committed, selfless, and honest, rather than superficial and meaningless. Regarding her relationship with teachers at Ekahi CS, she exclaimed:

I've had the privilege to talk with some of the teachers just about personal things and about things that I'm struggling with, with my faith...I've been able to talk to...my rhetoric teacher who's also the Latin teacher and also...the Speech and Debate coach...she's been kind of like...not only a coach, a teacher, but like a mentor and like a therapist counselor for me...just kind of the holistic community of the education and academics hand-in-hand with the...spiritual support of other people.

Sarah described the relationship she has with her teachers as caring, quality, authentic, discipleship, parent-like, therapeutic, loving, and rare.

### **Trish: `Ekahi Christian School**

Trish was a 17-year-old female senior who, in comparison to her classmates, had only attended Ekahi CS for four years. Before that, she had attended a separate Christian school. Trish's favorite classes were apologetics, music theory honors, art, and literature. She also enjoyed participating on the basketball team, the volleyball team, and serving on the school worship team. Trish was an accomplished musician, able to sing, play bass guitar, acoustic guitar, and ukulele. Trish's skills motivated her to apply to a private Christian college to study music ministry. In her free time, Trish enjoyed watching Korean dramas, playing music, going to the beach, hanging out with friends, and attending a Presbyterian church.

In describing her faith, Trish often compared faith to letting go of control. Specifically, she said, “Faith is...I don’t wanna say something like, we do out of impulse or something you do recklessly, but it’s putting trust in God...trying to let go of control which is really hard for me personally.” Trish recalled growing up in a non-Christian, out-of-control household, thus the reason for her desire to control things. Referencing Ekahi CS, Trish noted, that Ekahi CS “does a good job completely...demolishing your plans and...teaching you that life doesn’t always go the way that you plan it to go and faith has really been my life saver.” Regarding the opposite of faith, Trish defined it as, “perfectionism.” For Trish, individuals who are caught up with being perfect at everything that they do lack the ability to faithfully trust God. More clearly, faith in God requires a willingness to acknowledge being imperfect and the need to be dependent on God. Trish went on to also recommend that true Christians should not compartmentalize their faith; meaning, faith, family, and school are not to stay in compartmentalized boxes, but instead, faith should encompass all areas of a Christian’s life.

I appreciated Trish for her willingness to discuss topics that many Christians would often shy away from. She was more than comfortable sharing about the tough and painful situations from her life. Her willingness as a research participant to be open and honest painted an emotional picture of her full dependence upon God as he carried her through some very difficult and very real times. In her most telling statement, she confessed, “God is always there when I fall.” Throughout the interview and focus group, Trish often relayed a heartbroken story followed by a victorious declaration of God’s grace and power. For example, when asked about how her life would be different if she was not attending Ekahi CS, Trish exclaimed, “I’d probably be pregnant...atheist...drugs...my relationship with my parents probably would have

gotten worse...stupid decisions with boys.” Thankfully, Trish followed up this hypothetical situation with, “[Ekahi CS] keeps you accountable.” In even recounting her past as a former bisexual, she said, “By God’s grace I don’t know how I got pulled out of it.” Like many young women, Trish also stated, “When I was 13, I was obese.” Trish’s physical appearance notwithstanding, in her mind, she recalled that her opinion of herself contributed to many of her poor decisions. She followed this statement by proclaiming, “How much God loves me...He gave His only Son to die for me and that was something that has helped me to deal with my body issues.” This last statement by Trish harkens back to the chapel service I observed at Ekahi CS. Though it appeared as if no one was interested in the message, something obviously struck a chord with Trish.

Trish attributed much of her spiritual transformation to Ekahi CS. She cited the joy of the people around her. Specifically, “I found it so weird that people smiled.” Remembering a painful past with a music manager, she recalled, “I started hating music and then I heard worship music [at Ekahi CS] for the first time.” She referenced Ekahi CS’s teachers and their understanding to discuss sensitive topics and questions that she had. Specifically, “I would always be brushed off [at my former Christian school] and I was kind of turned off to religion because I never had my questions answered.” She concluded by saying, “Ekahi CS was definitely the message of love cause I’d never experienced that before.”

## **Results**

This section includes the results from the Pilot Study and how it impacted the Full Study as well as the results from the Full Study.

### **Pilot Study**

The pilot study occurred at `Eha Christian School (Eha CS), a school similar in size and demographics to Ekahi CS, Elua CS, and Ekolu CS. Conducting the pilot study proved beneficial on four accounts in preparation for the full study. First, it allowed me as a novice researcher to practice my interview skills, specifically being able to respond to initial answers with follow-up questions. Second, it caused me to reword a few of my interview questions as well as change my interview style during some questions to gather more personal individualized responses. Third, I realized that the pilot study participants provided examples of faith development experiences, encounters with God, and experiences surrendering to God that occurred in their respective school, but while they were in middle school or elementary school. This unforeseen outcome would need to be accounted for during the full study. Fourth, it allowed me to evaluate the extent to which the standing literature on faith development correlated to the experiences of these current Christian high school seniors. This last point confirmed my suspicion that this is a poorly understood phenomenon and warrants conducting the full study.

Perhaps because my pilot study participants had been Christian school students since elementary school, the first main interview question, “What does the word faith mean to you?”, elicited a loose recitation of Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen.” For this reason, in the full study interviews, I purposefully chose to pause here and let the silence and waiting serve as an encouragement to the participants to expand on their answer after giving me their learned answer.

For the third main interview question, I chose to reword it from, “How does someone get faith or lose faith?” to “How does someone gain more faith or lose faith?” The reason for this was because participants were already talking about themselves and their peers as having substantial faith. Therefore, the concept of getting faith seemed redundant, while the idea of gaining more faith seemed more in tune with the participants.

All the pilot study participants had attended the same Christian school from elementary on, not just for the four years of high school. Because of this aspect, a few of their answers to main interview questions four, six, and seven, warm-up focus group questions two, three, and four, and main focus group questions two, three, and four referenced middle school and elementary school experiences. The referenced preadolescent experiences were often the backstories, the catalysts, or the motivators behind recent high school experiences. For this reason, I did not discourage students when they talked about experiences that had occurred prior to high school. However, because this study was a focus on the faith development experiences of Christian high school seniors as experienced while in high school, I did ask participants to clarify at which grade specific events occurred. I explain later how I coded these experiences.

I learned from the pilot study that main interview question five, “Without these faith development experiences, how would your life be different?”, could be personalized to each participant. Thus, with each interview, I reworded question five to say, “Without the faith

development experiences you just mentioned such as...”, and I would fill in the blank. This change was done primarily to demonstrate to the research participant that I was listening and paying attention to their responses.

Regarding main interview question six, “In what ways have you had encounters with God?”, the pilot study delivered mixed reviews. One participant understood the question and was able to answer with confidence. For another participant, the question seemed unbelievable or unimaginable. I speculated that this discrepancy was due to having had the experience versus not having had the experience. Therefore, in each interview, I worded the question as it is written and based on the participant’s response, either provided clarification or choose not to.

Regarding main interview question eight, “How would you describe your faith in comparison to the faith of your classmates and teachers?”, I discovered from the pilot study that this two-part question was better understood if I divided it into two questions. I would ask about their classmates’ faith and then in a separate question, I would ask about their teachers’ faith. The pilot study also revealed that this question had the potential to create an uneasiness and awkwardness on the part of the participant as they think and discuss the faith of their classmates. For this reason, when asking this specific question, I chose to use a more comforting and reassuring voice in comparison to the other questions.

### **Full Study Results**

In the results section, I will first provide textural descriptions of the three chapel observations and the three classroom observations. This will be followed by the progression of code development to theme development.

For the textural descriptions, I first described each of the three chapel observations individually followed by a composite description for the chapel observation. Second, I described each of the three classroom observations individually followed by a composite description for the classroom observation. The textural descriptions for each observation are focused only on the observation itself as I perceived it. Because faith development is internal and only observable once faith is expressed, I was unable to determine how or if the research participants developed spiritually as a result of the chapel service experience. To explain, the research participants and the rest of the student body for Ekahi CS seemed unenthused during the chapel service observation and I described it as such in my textural description. However, during the interview process, I discovered that Trish recalled the general concept of the chapel message while describing her own personal faith. Though she did not reference any scripture or the speaker, she understood the importance of God's design in sending his son to die on a cross for our salvation.

**`Ekahi Christian School's chapel observation.** The chapel service took place mid-morning for 15 minutes, a daily occurrence at Ekahi CS. It was in a large open-air, rectangular, multipurpose room that was also used for lunch, afterschool activities, and special events. The room as well as other rooms on campus were leased by Ekahi CS from a neighboring church. One wall was set up to serve as a cafeteria lunch line. The opposite wall was set up with a projector and podium. The two adjacent walls were filled with jalousie windows to allow for trade winds to blow through. While there were four ceiling fans in this space, the trade winds provided most of the cool air. The room seemed bare of any religious symbols other than the school logo, the church name, and the scriptures presented on the projector. Chairs were set up



into neat rows facing the podium. Extra chairs, tables, and sound equipment were also stored in the room

There were approximately 70 students and seven faculty. The students and teachers entered informally and did not appear to have any assigned seating. Students sat in the prearranged rows, while teachers sat in individual chairs along the perimeter of the room. The students were wearing school uniforms comprised of button up dress shirts combined with either dress slacks, shorts, or skirts. Likewise, teachers were dressed business casual.

Chapel began with a teacher giving an announcement to the students, looking for volunteers to help with a drama project. This was followed by the speaker opening in prayer and then giving the last of a three-part message on Romans 3:21-26, which he put on the projector:

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood-to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

The speaker used this scripture, along with Romans 3:9-18 and John 12:27-28, to present God's ultimate plan for his son Jesus as an atonement for our sins. The message was presented in a dry,

lecture-type format with a few rhetorical questions and light-hearted humor, followed by laughter from students and teachers. Though there were minimal conversations amongst students, for the most part, the students were respectful and attentive to the message. It did not appear as though any students or teachers were taking notes or following along in their Bibles, but the students could bring small snacks and drinks to chapel. Chapel concluded with a prayer from the speaker, instructions from another teacher, and the students stacking chairs around the perimeter of the room.

Given that the format of this chapel was primarily lecture-type, on first glance, it was difficult to ascertain whether any faith development occurred. Students sat in their chairs while staring at the speaker and the scriptures presented on the screen. Without any formal assessment of student learning, the message could have gone over their heads. The message could be hitting home with some of the students. The message could be boring to other students. On the appearance of this chapel observation alone, it seemed bland. Students came in, they sat down, they were preached to for 15 minutes, and they left without an opportunity to respond either verbally, physically, or spiritually. Though the appearance of this chapel service looked disengaging, it was only after conducting the interviews that I could tell whether this experience contributed to the faith development of students.

**Elua Christian School's chapel observation.** The chapel service was about 25 minutes long and took place right before lunch. Elua CS's chapel service occurred once-a-week and included students from ninth- through twelfth-grade. The chapel space was a large fully-enclosed room with chairs lined up in rows with a center aisle. Additional chairs for faculty were placed around the perimeter of the room. At the front of the room there was a central

podium with the school's crest, a Bible on a small table, and a projector for displaying lyrics. At the front-left, there was an American flag and a fake palm tree. At the front-right, there was a Christian flag and another fake palm tree. On the far right of the room there was also a grand piano.

The chapel service contained about 80 students and eight faculty. The student's school uniforms consisted of monogrammed t-shirts or polo shirts with dress shorts or pants. The students appeared to be able to wear whatever type of jacket that they wanted to. Faculty were dressed business casual.

The order of events for chapel seemed structured. Students and faculty knew when to sit, when to stand, when to pray, and when to sing. Though it appeared liturgical, all the students were engaged, at least physically, for the responsive portion of the service. Chapel began with a brief announcement from a teacher about his desire for the students to work hard as they come to the end of the school year. This concept of working hard also came up when one of the research participants was discussing how he expresses his faith. Following the announcement, a different faculty member asked the students to all stand and sing the hymn *Across the Lands*, accompanied by a pianist on the grand piano. This was followed by the same teacher leading the students in The Pledge of Allegiance, the Pledge to the Christian Flag, and the Pledge to the Bible. The teacher then transitioned into praying for the students, for the speaker, and for the message. Students were then instructed to sit as they sang *Because He Lives*. The chapel speaker was a regular guest speaker from the mainland. His message title was "Practical Life Helps for Real-Life Problems." The aim of his message was accountability. He regularly used inflections and emotion in his voice to try and keep the attention of the students. Providing some of his personal

life stories, he encouraged the students to find a “band of brothers or sisters and some more experienced individuals to be accountable to.” While the speaker was trying to elicit feedback from the students, they were not outwardly reciprocating. However, the message was not fully lost. While a few students were sleeping during the message, others were actively taking notes. Furthermore, the concept of “band of brothers” did come up during the interviews when Robert talked about the time he prayed for God to give him friends that he could trust, that he could depend on, and that would also check up on him. Furthermore, Jamie also likened her best friend to an accountability partner. Together they would read the Bible, play worship music, and pray for each other. At the conclusion of his message, he encouraged the students to seek out either Christian friends or respected faculty members who could serve as accountability partners. He finished by closing in prayer and releasing the students. Seizing a teachable moment, as soon as he released the students, the speaker immediately walk down the center aisle to talk privately with a student who had been noticeably sleeping throughout the message. Not wanting to embarrass him publicly, the speaker spoke quietly with him for a few minutes before letting him rejoin his classmates.

**Ekolu Christian School’s chapel observation.** Chapel at Ekolu CS was a once-a-week event with approximately 50 students from ninth- through twelfth-grade and an associate pastor. Chapel occurred immediately after lunch for 45 minutes, which could account for the students being lethargic during chapel. The chapel was conducted in a room that appeared to be a social studies or American history classroom. The associate pastor was seated at a black office chair near a teacher’s desk at the front of the classroom while students sat either at desks, stand-a-lone chairs, or four-to-a-table facing the dry-erase board in the front of the class. In the corner to the

left of the teacher there was a Christian flag. On the left wall, there were three posters, one containing seven scriptural rules for student behavior in the classroom, one with The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), and one with Reverend Jacob Duche's prayer from the 1<sup>st</sup> Continental Congress in 1774 (Federer, 2015). Located in the right corner of the classroom was a piano, a guitar, and a keyboard, but they were not used. Also on the right were multiple cabinets with additional supplies stored on top of them.

Each grade level trickled in independently and seemed to sit wherever they wanted to. The students wore their uniform polo shirts with either skirts, shorts, or slacks. The associate pastor was dressed business casual. The ratio of 50 students to one adult did not seem to cause disruptions.

Chapel began with the pastor opening with prayer. Per the pastor, the message for the chapel service was from Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" and Colossians 3:16, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Ironically, the pastor spent the first 30 minutes of class talking about the inductive Bible study process, specifically, observation, interpretation, and application (Stewart, 2012). Most of the chapel service was unengaging lecture and mostly rhetorical questions. I did notice three questions that were asked specifically for responses. All three questions were answered by the same student. I noticed a few students taking notes, a few students with their heads on the desks, and one student visibly sleeping. There were very few

side conversations on the part of the students. Even with such a large class, whether students were engaged or not, they were certainly not disrupting the class.

If I had not been told that this was a chapel service, I would have assumed it was a hermeneutics course. Most of the students seemed disinterested in the topic or the teacher. From an educator's perspective, the student-to-teacher interaction did not seem conducive to learning or engagement. However, from a spiritual perspective, perhaps this chapel service format has proven to be the most successful way for Ekolu CS. This was the chapel experience that these students had for this particular day. It was not right or wrong educationally. It was the experience that I observed. Yet, none of the research participants from Ekolu CS mentioned anything about chapel in either their interviews or the focus group.

**Composite chapel observation.** This composite chapel observation encompasses the three chapel observations involved in this study. In all three Christian high school chapels, the experience involves students listening to one speaker as he or she presents a very specific biblical truth pertinent to adolescents. The speaker will often use personal stories and humor to engage the students. It is expected that students who connect with the message will respond privately in their own personal life or that they will initiate a meeting with a teacher or mentor later. An outward response to the message during the chapel service is not expected. More specifically, the speaker will not actively ask if any students want to commit their lives to Christ, using the terminology to be saved. The biblical truth is presented to the students, but it is up to them whether or not they will choose to apply the concept.

**Ekahi Christian School's classroom observation.** For Ekahi CS, I observed an early morning, 45-minute, twelfth-grade senior seminar class where students and a faculty member were discussing how their faith and worldview were going to impact their lives after graduation. The class location was a long conference room style with one large window at the end. The space was taken up with a large, long oval table in the middle surrounded by high-back chairs. Though the layout of the room made it look like it was strictly for business, the room also had a microwave, a refrigerator, a toaster, and a sink. Subsequently, the room also served as a pantry, teacher breakroom, and teacher lunchroom. Besides student Bibles and a few small pictures on the walls, there were no bold Christian symbols in the room.

The class was comprised of seven students, six females and one male, and one female teacher, Mrs. Jeffers. One of the female students was remarkably younger than the rest of the class even though she was still a senior academically. All students were dressed in their school uniforms of button up shirts with shorts, skirts, or slacks. The teacher was dressed professionally. All individuals were seated around the conference table.

The topic of the day involved where and what the students would be doing after graduation and how their faith was going to impact their decisions. Mrs. Jeffers was leading the discussion by throwing out hypothetical apologetic questions and allowing the students to go around the table providing their input. Furthermore, she often played devil's advocate, causing the students to think critically. Mrs. Jeffers also shared some of her own personal experiences to lighten the mood and encourage discussion. She seemed more like a friend, or mentor, or confidant, rather than a teacher. Likewise, the students seemed to connect with her real-life stories. It appears no one was afraid to participate in the discussion. The dialogue balanced

between serious and jovial. Students were comfortable discussing personal reflections with humor and seriousness. The atmosphere of the class seemed retrospective and a little somber as students acknowledged all that they had accomplished throughout the year and throughout their elementary and secondary school years, more specifically, relationships, trials, experiences, friends who have left, friends who have stayed, and the commitment to stay connected with current friends.

The small class size and the predominantly female population seemed to contribute to the open dialogue and discussion. Though the students came from various spiritual backgrounds, each student was comfortable talking about his/her future aspiration as it aligned with his/her faith. The relationship that the students had with Mrs. Jeffers was personified in how Malia remembered a separate conversation that she had with this teacher about not having a dramatic personal salvation testimony filled with bad choices and horrible experiences. Malia recalled, “[Mrs. Jeffers] told me, ‘[Malia], everybody has their own purpose and everyone has their own stories and those stories are tailored to how you fulfill God’s will and how you’re gonna pour out into people’.” Regarding Mrs. Jeffers, Anna said, “She’s an incredible person that is someone we can look up to and someone that can encourage us...and I love it.”

**Elua Christian School’s classroom observation.** The classroom observation at Elua CS entailed a twelfth-grade level apologetics course. The classroom looked like a typical high school classroom with desks neatly arranged in rows, a projector, a dry erase board, a teacher’s desk, a few book shelves, and minimal decorations. While there were a few random posters hanging on the walls, none were overtly Christian. This classroom could have been a language arts classroom, a U.S. history class, or a calculus class.



The class was made up of four boys, seven girls, and one male teacher, Mr. Damante. Students were dressed in their school uniforms of polo shirts and either dress slacks, skirts, or shorts. Mr. Damante was dressed business casual. Mr. Damante's casual personality seemed to set an inviting tone for the students as they came in. He was both firm in regards to reminding students to turn in their outstanding assignments and relaxed in asking students about recent family members who have been sick. Class began with prayer, specifically for sick family members of the students.

Earlier in the year, the students were assigned the task of writing down biblically related questions that would be addressed at a later date. This was the later date. Mr. Damante presented the questions one-by-one and opened the floor for discussion. The questions were:

1. If someone is a Christian, but they commit suicide, do they still go to Heaven?
2. Are there any sins in the Bible that are unforgivable?
3. Does the Bible directly address drug use?
  - a. Marijuana
  - b. Alcohol
  - c. Caffeine
4. Why does Elua CS not allow dancing even though people danced and celebrated in the Bible?

For each question, Mr. Damante presented various schools of thought, historical facts, and his own ideas, but left the decision making to each individual student. For question one, Mr. Damante referenced the lives of Samson (Judges 16) and Jonah (Jonah 1). For question two, he talked about Matthew 12:23-31. For question three, he referenced Ephesians 5:18-20. For

question four, he ran out of class time as the students were laughing about Elua CS's policy regarding dancing.

The discussion did not provide concrete answers to any of the questions, but instead, caused students to think critically about their personal lives. Mr. Damante did a solid job of presenting biblical wisdom and sound historical teaching as it applies to real-life situations. Students seemed to agree with Mr. Damante and did not provide any contradictions. Students also seemed most responsive to the discussion on alcohol and drug use. Perhaps this was the most prominent topic in their lives. Apparently, Mr. Damante's teaching style made an impact on some of his students. Regarding this, Jamie said, "[He will] challenge you [to] pick something this week that you can do for somebody else or do to serve God." For Jamie, this was a motivator and obviously contributed to her faith. When asked how this challenge was viewed by her non-Christian classmates, she said, "A lot of people treat that like homework." This was a sad reality of biblically related homework. Some students viewed the assignment as an opportunity to grow spiritually while other students viewed the assignment as a grade. Either way, it is the same faith development experience, only it is experienced in very different ways.

**`Ekolu Christian School's classroom observation.** The observation involved an afternoon, 45-minute senior level Bible class filled with more than 20 students, Senior Pastor Leong leading the class, and an invited guest pastor. The classroom looked like the stereotypical classroom with desks arranged in rows, a larger table at the front for both the pastor and the guest speaker, and a dry-erase board at the front of the classroom. Some students had to sit on stand-alone chairs in the back of the classroom because there were not enough desks for everyone. The classroom is void of any religious symbols with the exception of a poster

containing seven scriptural rules for student behavior in the classroom and a poster with The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17). Excluding the two pastors leading the class, the appearance of the classroom did not seem to personify Christianity.

Students were dressed in their school uniforms of polo shirts and either dress slacks or shorts. The two pastors were dressed business casual.

The lesson plan involved discussing the book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Geisler & Turek, 2004). Most of the class time involved lecture by both pastors with some rhetorical questions. Some students were taking notes. Some students seemed to be listening attentively. Some students provided input. Overall, Mr. Leong posed many scenarios to contradict the students' faith as a way to test their worldviews. Initially, students did not outwardly show any conviction of faith besides physically sitting in the classroom and listening to the lecture. By the end of class, the students appeared to realize the substance or lack thereof of their faith.

The students seemed to respect Mr. Leong as an authority figure and as a confidant, mentor, and counselor. Though the students did not all interact with the class discussion, they all seemed engaged through eye contact and body posture. As a spiritual leader, Mr. Leong seemed to have gained the students' respect in how he cared for and mentored them both corporately and individually. Regarding his relationship with students, Michael said, "I really like how [Mr. Leong] really integrates students...into the curriculum." Furthermore, Reese stated, "[Mr. Leong will] talk to you about what you did wrong...and then he'll try and find ways to fix it and he'll pray with you." Gabby recalled, "[Mr. Leong] has definitely helped me personally."

**Composite classroom observation.** This composite classroom observation encompasses only the three classroom observations involved in this study. In all three, a senior level Bible class begins well before the bell rings. These Bible teachers are deeply connected to their students. The teachers are aware of problems at home, problems with school, problems with friends, and problems spiritually. Whereas the typical chapel experience seems impersonal, the average Bible class is much more relational. When students enter the classroom, the teacher can immediately tell what is going on in their lives. The teacher is able to quickly adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of the students whether that need is prayer, counseling, or mentoring. Furthermore, the teacher adapts the class lesson plan to incorporate the students' immediate lives and their real-life concerns and issues.

### **Theme Development**

The results from each data collection method were coded using value coding, emotion coding, and in vivo coding and yielded a total of 12 sets of codes (Appendices M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, and Y). With each set of codes, I included the total occurrences of each code for each school, the total occurrences for all schools combined, and the average number of occurrences for all schools combined. The 12 different code sets were then reduced down to one final code list (Appendix Z). This code list was then reduced into categories (Appendix AA) and then the subsequent categories were combined into themes (Appendix BB).

The chapel and classroom observations in and of themselves did not yield very many codes. After analyzing the interviews and the focus groups, the initial code list was increased to

include the volume of information. Subsequently, the chapel and classroom observations were re-coded to include the newly formed codes as a result of the interview and focus group analysis.

Like I stated previously, some interview and focus group responses referenced events that occurred prior to high school. Often, the referenced prior experiences were the backstories, the catalysts, or the motivators behind the high school experiences. For this reason, I need to explain the five different ways in which these various pre-events were coded. First, if I as the researcher considered a pre-event to be completely unrelated to faith development, I did not code the event. An example of this was Grace when she talked about her fourth grade teacher becoming one of her good friends. While this was a nice sentiment, in the context of which Grace was referring to, it was not related to faith development. Second, if I as the researcher considered a pre-event to be its own faith development experience, but considered it to be too generalized to be directly related to a high school occurring faith development experience, I did not code the event though I may have referenced it in the participant's biography section of Chapter Four as a way to better understand the participant. An example of this was Sarah when she talked about her time in middle school when personal faith and biblical knowledge started coming together for her. While this was an example of a faith development experience for Sarah and it contributed to her faith development as a whole, it was not a direct and immediate catalyst for a high school faith development experience. Third, if I as the researcher considered a pre-event to be a direct cause of a high school occurring faith development experience, I coded the event. An example of this was Nichole when she recalled cheating on a test in eighth grade. After which, the teacher began tutoring and doing devotions with Nichole that continued through high school, thus creating a faith development experience for her. Fourth, if I as the researcher considered the participant to

be comparing or contrasting a pre-event to a high school experience, I coded the event. An example of this was Robert when he compared his experience during the elementary years at Elua CS versus his high school years at Elua CS. Understanding Robert's previous experience provides a deeper understanding of his high school experience. Lastly, if I as the researcher considered the event to be ongoing, initiated before high school and continued into high school, I coded the event. An example of this was Gabby when she said, "Ever since fifth grade, I've compared my academic training to friends in my youth group that go to public school and just the privilege that I have to get a biblical foundation before I go off to college." Though this self-awareness routine was initiated in elementary school, because it continued through high school, I chose to code it.

**Value coding.** The first coding involved running all three chapel observations through value coding. Faith is often referred to as a value that individuals hold dear. Individuals likewise, have many things that are of value to them. For this reason, I started with value coding. This yielded an initial total of 16 codes located in Table 2.

Table 2

*Sixteen Initial Codes*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Real-Life Application	1	1	-	2	0.67
2	Worship/Singing/ Music	1	1	-	2	0.67
3	Bible Verses	1	-	1	2	0.67
4	Knowledge and Faith	1	-	3	4	1.33
5	Community of Faith	1	1	1	3	1.00
6	Encouragement	-	3	1	4	1.33
7	Accountability	-	3	1	4	1.33
8	Bible Integrated Curriculum	1	1	1	3	1.00
9	Teacher Faith	1	1	1	3	1.00
10	Bad Experience with School	2	2	-	4	1.33
11	Pray for Others	1	1	1	3	1.00
12	Caring Teachers/Principals	1	1	1	3	1.00
13	Reading and Understanding the Bible	2	-	3	5	1.67
14	Reference to Jesus	1	-	1	2	0.67
15	Reference to Chapel	1	1	1	3	1.00
16	Individual Prayer	1	1	1	3	1.00
Total Codes		16	17	17		

The next coding step involved using these same 16 codes to value code the classroom observations. When I followed this up by value coding the interviews, it became apparent that the observations did not yield enough initial codes to analyze the interviews and subsequently, the focus groups. Prematurely, my first cycle interview value coding yielded an unmanageable 216 codes (Appendix O). Thus, in comparing the observation value coding with the first cycle interview value coding, I developed a second cycle value coding (Appendix P) for the interviews which I used to recode the chapel observations (Appendix M) and the classroom observations (Appendix N). This second cycle value coding was then used to code the focus groups (Appendix Q).

**Emotion coding.** After completing the value coding, I then began emotion coding the observations. The emotions presented had to be delineated by what the emotion was, who was having the emotion, and who the emotion was directed towards. For instance, the research participant may have been experiencing love or they may have been telling a story of someone else experiencing love. Subsequently, the emotion of love is often directional in nature. For instance, the research participant may have been experiencing love towards God or they may have been experiencing love towards their classmates. As a result of this process, the emotion coding for the chapel observations, the classroom observations, the interviews, and the focus groups yielded 31 codes located in Appendices R, S, T, and U respectively. The Ekahi CS group, comprised of all females, yielded the most occurrences of these emotion codes. This could mean that females are more emotional or it could mean that females are more readily able to communicate their emotions.



**In vivo coding.** Lastly, I used in vivo coding to make sense of the data. In vivo coding was the most difficult. Although each participant had similar faith characteristics due to his/her synthetic-conventional faith and having attended similar Christian schools, each participant did vary in his/her use of Christian terminology. Many of the in vivo codes had to include cognates. For instance, the in vivo code of belief also included: believe, believer, unbeliever, and believer-ish [*sic*]. The analysis for the chapel observations, the classroom observations, and interviews, and the focus groups resulted in 50 codes located in Appendices V, W, X, and Y respectively.

**Final codes.** By looking at the value coding, the emotion coding, and the in vivo coding for each of the four data collection methods at all three research sites, I was able to pick out the most descriptive and representative final codes which are located in Appendix Z. I included the code, the data collection and coding strategy used, the frequency for each school, and the average frequency count for all schools combined. Codes that occurred more frequently were chosen for the final codes, but with subjectivity. First, some codes were more frequent, but they only occurred in one school. Second, some codes were more frequent, but they were a result of one person referring to the same concept multiple times. While the concept in both scenarios was important, as the researcher, I saw it more as an outlier than as a commonality. Thus, I chose codes that may have occurred less frequently, but were common amongst all three schools or multiple research participants. Third, some coding strategies, emotion coding for instance did not produce many codes for the chapel observation and the classroom observation. In comparison to other coding strategies, the frequencies are vastly different. However, I chose to include one or two of the highest frequencies from each coding strategy even though the code may not have occurred more than three or four times. I did this because, though the code did not

occur frequently overall, it was the most frequent code for that specific data collection method and coding strategy. For the chapel observation and the classroom observation, emotion coding was very similar throughout. The emotions of the speaker/teacher and the students were almost identical despite being different schools, different students, and different topics being addressed. Also, regarding emotion coding, all the emotions were in hindsight except laughter. The participants relayed past memories that ranged from anger to love, but their stories were often told with humor and laughter. For this reason, laughter received high frequency counts.

In general, the interviews and the focus groups produced more codes than the chapel observation and the classroom observation. Typically, the chapel observations yielded the fewest codes and the interviews produced the most codes. I suspect this was because during the interviews and focus groups, more than just one person was painting the faith development picture. Usually, female participants provided greater detail and emotion when describing their experiences. Ekahi CS, comprised of all female interview participants who were very good friends and comfortable sharing, provided the most in depth interviews and focus groups and they registered the most codes. Next, Elua CS, comprised of four very different interview participants, three girls and one boy, did not provide as many codes. The Ekolu CS interview participants, also three girls and one boy, were more familiar with each other, but did not garner as many codes as Ekahi CS.

**Categories.** The final codes were then categorized. This is located in Appendix AA. The categories include: authenticity, curriculum, deity, faith, joy, knowledge, lack of faith, negative motivators, non-school related, questions, and relationships.

The category of authenticity refers to the use of the word real, specifically, real world, real-world experiences, real-life application, real self, and being real with your faith. This desire for authenticity and honesty was prevalent in the study.

The category of curriculum refers to classes or lesson plans that had an impact on the participants spiritually. Often the participants enjoyed classes with biblical integration.

The category of deity is used to show how God and/or Jesus was referenced. While the Holy Spirit was referenced, he was not referenced enough to justify coding.

The category of faith refers to references to a belief, believing in something, growing spiritually, and having a change of heart. All of the interview participants associated the word faith with God. Many of the participants viewed faith only in reference to God. Often, the participants would begin discussing their faith and never say God, though from the description, God was implied.

The category of joy refers to laughter and happiness. Many times, participants would discuss both happy and sad moments from their past with humor and laughing.

The category of knowledge refers to biblical knowledge, not directly involved in building faith. This would be akin to a chapel speaker referencing a Bible scripture. The category also refers to biblical history and biblical facts.

The category of lack of faith refers to when participants, teachers, and/or speakers would discuss people who are apathetic towards Christian faith. It also refers to how the participants discuss what the opposite of faith would be.

The category of negative motivators refers to the sad and/or scary moments in individual's lives that motivate them to grow closer to God. These can include bad experiences, fears, sadness, and uncertainty.

The category of non-school related refers to church, church attendance, and church related activities. In this study, church was referenced far more often than family, Christian parents, or Christian home. However, it is often the case, but not always, that adolescents who attend church regularly, do so with their parents and families. While the faith of parents was brought up in interviews, it was not referenced to the extent of church.

The category of questions refers to the faith related questions that adolescents often have. It also refers to this time in adolescents' lives when they are searching spiritually for who and what they are going to believe.

By far, the largest category is relationships. This includes: relationships with friends, relationships with teachers and principals, relationships with parents, and the emotions associated with these relationships. After completing the coding and categorizing, I developed six common themes: (a) Relational Side of Christian School, (b) Epistemic Side of Christian School, (c) Affective Side of Christian School, (d) Unbecoming Side of Christian School, (e) Authenticity, and (f) Church. I included these themes along with their corresponding categories and codes in Appendix BB.

**Relational side of Christian school.** Because relationships were so dominant in this study, the first theme is the relational side of Christian school. This includes teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, teacher-God relationships, and student-God

relationships. The participants in this study were yearning for deep and meaningful relationships with peers and teachers. The most meaningful relationships brought mutual encouragement, accountability, help, and love. Regarding peers, Malia stated, “We all encourage each other in our faith to just keep pursuing God.” Furthermore, Trish stated, “We strengthen together and support each other...keep each other accountable.” In regards to teacher and school influence, Grace stated, “The love of like the teachers and everything that really encourages me in my faith.” Furthermore, Reese stated, “[Teachers] keep you accountable here and they really encourage you in your walk.” Nichole stated, “The teachers and the administrators, like [Mrs. Daniels] ...they give you attention and they really focus on you...helping us to be accountable...to not make bad decisions...keep us on track with our work and our relationship with God.” Anna noted, “One of the biggest parts of [Ekahi CS] contributing to my faith is that people have modeled out what it is to love one another.” Likewise, Gabby said, “My teachers inspire me...I love teachers...I wish I could be a teacher.” Regarding the community of faith, Malia noted, “We’re able to just be role models of what a community of friends should look like.” Furthermore, Sarah defined her Ekahi CS as a, “holistic community of the education and academics hand-in-hand with the spiritual support of other people.” Michael defined Ekolu CS as, “A close-knit family...like brother and sister...you can go up to them and you can pray with them...we’re all really close together...family environment...that’s really important.”

Reflecting upon her conversion, Grace stated, “I went to one of my [classmates] who was saved and I was like, ... ‘I wanna know...and have this relationship with God...I wanna be saved’.” Furthermore, Trish stated, “I feel myself like going deeper in my relationship with [God] just through talking with other people about issues.”

**Epistemic side of Christian school.** The second theme for this study is the epistemic side of Christian school, referring to McCraw's (2015) first component of faith. This includes the integration of the Bible with other subjects, the teaching strategies of teachers, how concepts were taught and learned, work ethic, and academic knowledge of the Bible. This is separate from theme three, the affective component of faith (McCraw, 2015). Whereas the epistemic component refers to knowledge of God, the affective component refers to the inward affect that this knowledge has on the individual's faith. Epistemic also refers to the homework and classwork associated with Christian school. These are tangible entities that do not require conversion or faith development. In Gabby's words, "[The Bible is] always just interesting and the fact that it never stays the same...like you're always learning something new even though it's the same passage." In Malia's words, "I learned that the Bible isn't just a book that you can...like a fortune cookie...it's like a book about Jesus and how much He loves us." In Michael's words, "The Bible classes that we take...they help us build a better foundation because they help us prove our faith." He also stated, "I really like how [teachers are] integrating Bible into everything...it's not just one Bible class and that's it...it's a lifestyle." Trish noted, "I think what makes Ekahi CS so much different than other schools...especially other religious schools is that they incorporate the Bible and Jesus in everything that they do." Regarding the teachers at Ekolu CS, Gabby noted, "They teach from a literal perspective from the Bible which is important because other teachers can twist and manipulate the Word." Regarding teaching strategies, Grace said, "[Teachers] have the patience...they have the strength...and that's I think only given through God." Jamie noted, "A lot has caused me to grow whether it be chapel messages from teachers or pastors that come in...I think I've grown a

lot from the challenges that teachers and pastors have also given me.” Malia stated, “[Teachers] do it in such a loving way and a mature way because they have more life experience.” In regards to homework, Eric said, “[God is] more important than my school work and stuff...put him first and then just let him take care of it...and just work hard...don’t work for the grade...work to please him.” Furthermore, Jamie confessed, “I think a lot of people treat [devotions] more like homework rather than growing in your relationship with God.”

**Affective side of Christian school.** The third theme for this study is the affective side of Christian school, referring to McCraw’s (2015) second component of faith. This includes specific references to individual faith, references to God, references to Jesus and/or Christ, references to the Holy Spirit, discussions about beliefs, discussions about trust, discussions about hope, and testimonies of life-changing events and/or salvation. In Gabby’s words, “Faith [is] believing in the unseen, but what it means to me...I interchange faith and hope...knowing that there’s something...there’s someone greater out there that’s always watching you.” Baker (2015) explained the relation between faith and hope like this, “We can have hope that each day the sun will rise in the morning [and] the wind will blow our hair, [but] faith is the belief that these events will occur and life will continue and improve” (p. 559). Einsohn (2014) explained the relation this way, “Hope is the function of want and wish, and faith is a function of trust and conviction” (p. 136). Medically speaking, care providers will often choose to use the term hope instead of faith when dealing with patients (Cooper, Ferguson, Bodurtha, & Smith, 2014). This is because hoping for the best is a universal notion, whereas to use the concept of faith requires a higher level of confidence and certainty regarding the outcome, a certainty that healthcare providers do not have and/or would not want to wager their careers on. Grace described faith as,

“believing in something with like your whole heart without actually having proof of it.” Jaimie described faith as, “understanding how to believe in a God that loves you when you have no idea why or you have no idea who he is and...revolving your life around him when you’ve never seen him.” Robert described faith as a belief that Jesus “died on the cross.” Malia described faith as, “putting your hope and trust in God.” Malia went on to say, “Letting God’s Spirit like just take control and speak through you...I think that’s a form of faith.” Anna described faith as, “a larger force that provides a hope and identity and trust.”

**Unbecoming side of Christian school.** The fourth theme for this study is the unbecoming side of Christianity, the faults that Christians have, the feelings of doubt, the mistakes, the bad experiences, and the bad feelings that Christians develop, sometimes towards other Christians or towards Christian institutions. These negative experiences are often direct influencers on increasing faith. Sarah recalled:

I kinda see this a little bit in my generation of...my peers and the teens nowadays is...a constant uncertainty...they’re all trying to search for something, cause we’re all trying to search for truth ultimately, but...being lukewarm and dipping...into different things.

Along the same lines, Gabby said:

Often times...people fall away from the Lord in a Christian school because it can be so religious and so full of tradition and I think that when you don’t switch things up and when you’re stuck in the same routine over and over again...especially with the Word and God, you get used to it and it sort of becomes like just going through the motions.



In describing how she sometimes lacks faith, Malia said, “I’m not trusting that God has got me.” Gabby admitted, “I know God is there and I know that He’s real, but often times, I feel like I doubt His power in certain situations.” Grace confessed, “I got really doubtful and like if I was going...if I was right for this school or if God was gonna put me here.” Nichole described a time when one of her mentors was doubting her faith because of the pressure of other people and “[the mentor] ended up losing [her faith] because she wanted to go her own way.” Sarah described Christians as “just fallible beings and...there will be fluctuation and if you are saying to yourself, ‘You have the strongest faith,’ then you’re lying to yourself.” However, Anna was optimistic when she said, “You can never be completely lost.”

**Authenticity.** The fifth theme for this study is authenticity. Authenticity refers to authentic faith, authentic view of the world outside of Christian school, and authentic answers to life’s difficult spiritual questions. The adolescent years involve much searching and questioning. What can often be viewed as rebellion or disobedience, teenagers are seeking honest and truthful answers to real-life questions, answers that will influence their faith for years to come. In some cases, participants viewed Christian school as being oblivious to the real world. Eric stated, “You don’t really see like the real world...if you go to college and you don’t go to a Christian college, you’re not gonna be ready.” Gabby stated, “We’re super sheltered at this Christian school.” She went on to say how she wished that Elua CS would show her “what the quote-unquote real world is like and what people go through and it’ll help us like realize how blessed we are.” Regarding one of her non-Christian classmate’s attempts to question Jamie’s faith, Jamie stated, “Those are real questions and like trying to get me and other people to think like, ‘Why would God do this?’ ... that causes you to really dig deep and like dive into the Word and

I think for me like instead of kind of repelling me from God...it caused me to grow more.”

Many students appreciated how teachers applied biblical wisdom to real-life scenarios. Grace stated, “I love interacting and getting those questions and like growing my faith more and understanding like what to do in like these situations.” Michael stated, “[Mr. Leong’s] not just a teacher...he’s kinda like the person you can go to, to like ask questions and we can question our faith with him and he helps us...gives us the answers.” Regarding a prior school to Ekahi CS, Trish stated, “I would always be brushed off and I was kind of turned off to religion because I never had my questions answered.” Furthermore, Anna stated, “My teachers are also so passionate about God and the fact that they’re willing to answer our questions and they’re not scared to answer any question.” Furthermore, participants also recognized the importance of their real-life example in sharing God with their peers. Reese stated, “It’s kinda hard if you just like spit out Bible verses, but if you like show them a real application and if they just watch your life and if like you’re living way different than they are, I think like actions speak louder.” Gabby noted, “Being real with your faith and your walk with God is not only gonna encourage other people, but it’ll also help strengthen your own faith.”

**Church.** The sixth and final theme for this study is church. Though not related to school, many of the participants referenced church in addition to school as being a significant contributor to their faith. Though interview and focus group questions were focused on school experiences, many answers drifted to the impact that church has had. In some cases, participants appreciated their school experiences because of their church experiences. Likewise, students contrasted their school experiences with their church experiences. Furthermore, teachers often referenced their own churches when discussing faith and life. For this reason, I think there is a

need to include it. Regarding one of her classmates, Nichole stated, “We just started hanging out and going to like church together...we just like listen to all of this praise music and that really helped us to become more intimate with the Lord and to really get to know Him better.”

Regarding one of her classmates, Anna stated, “She’s constantly around in the church because she’s part of her church where we go.” Eric noted, “Every week I go church and my parents are Christians.” Gabby stated, “I’ve just always grown up with like...in a Christian church.”

Furthermore, participants noticed how their teachers attended church regularly. In reference to one of her teachers, Anna stated, “He loves the church.” Referring to one of his teachers, Robert stated, “They do all this stuff...with their church...they’re always just really encouraging...talking about like what they read in their devotions...really open about their faith.” Lastly, participants recognized that church attendance can be an outward expression of internal faith. In talking about the process of how Christian friends fall away, Sarah described it as, “separating yourself from the church or distancing yourself from people.” It is worth noting that Trish acknowledged the importance, but not exclusive nature of church contributing to faith. She stated, “It’s not because I memorize verses every day and...participate in a church every week...that didn’t bring me to faith and it’s hard to tell people that it’s something that the Holy Spirit does in you.”

### **Research Questions Answered**

In this section I will use the themes that developed as a result of the analysis to answer the four research questions.

**CQ.** The central question of this study was: What are the faith development experiences of CHSSs? According to Williamson and Hood (2013), there are a range of possible experiences. Similarly, each individual experience has a range of multiple realities by each participant (Creswell, 2013). In order of significance to the CHSS, the faith development experiences were: relationships with faculty, relationships with peers, curriculum, leadership opportunities, chapel service, service opportunities, devotions, and school trips.

The most significant faith development experience often cited by participants was their relationship with teachers and principals. Nichole said, “[Mrs. Daniels] encourages me to work hard...have big dreams...trust in the Lord with what He has in store for me.” Michael recalled:

One of my friends said, ‘Why is God real?’ and like that’s a question and this was before I started any of his Bible classes so...I went up to [Mr. Leong] and asked him and so he came up with this apologetics course that we’re taking now.

Michael’s friend’s question immediately harkens to an adolescents’ innate desire for authenticity. Her friend wanted actual, tangible proof. Thus, Mr. Leong designed the apologetics course to help students defend their faith in an environment seeking definitive answers. Also, regarding Mr. Leong, Gabby said, “[He] has definitely helped me personally and I know other people...he emailed me and asked if everything was OK and I just thought that was...an encouraging thing and it was from the Lord.” Regarding one of her teachers, Reese recalled:

[Mr. Kallen will] bring you into his office and then he’ll talk to you about what you did wrong, but then like after he’s all done being all mad, ...he’ll comfort you and then talk

to you...just dissect the problem and then he'll try and find ways to fix it and he'll pray with you.

Jamie recalled, "[Mr. Malcolm] really like showed me like the reality of the Bible in the way he lived and the way like he taught." Jamie spoke about the reality of the Bible. Whereas adolescents today spend more time in the digital universe, Jamie is seeking a physical understanding of the Bible. Lastly, because students often have close relationship with their teachers, they are aware of how teachers spend their free time.

The second most influential faith development experience for participants was their relationships with peers. Participants most often cited encouragement and accountability as being the dominant factors in their peer relationships. In discussing the possibility of attending a different school, Jaime stated, "I think it'd be harder for me to find like...friends that pour into me cause like my best friends are here." Malia stated, "Some of the times, you rely on your friends and you realize you're at the same point as them." Sarah stated, "The people in my class truly are the closest friends I've ever had." Nichole stated, "I can see how the Lord has changed [my friends'] hearts...they're not as immature...they're more forgiving...more kind to each other...they love each other more." Reese stated, "When a friend is maybe like they're going through a rough time, I just like calmly encourage them and I'll just send a private message."

The third most influential faith development experience for participants was the Christian school curriculum. Grace stated, "When God speaks to me, I feel like it is sometimes during chapel messages, but mostly during our Bible classes...practical Christianity...cause it's more

applicable.” Michael stated, “The Bible classes that we take...they help us build a better foundation because they help us prove our faith.”

The fourth most influential faith development experience for participants was the leadership opportunities provided by their respective schools. Specifically, Trish said, “Leadership is very uncomfortable and hard to do, but it’s a great way to show faith.” Regarding Ekahi CS, Anna stated, “They’ll take you as you are and they’ll help you to be a leader.” Furthermore, Malia stated, “It’s like a serve...serving leadership...like a servant leader...that’s the kinda leadership that [Ekahi CS] tries to create out of us.”

The fifth most influential faith development experience for participants was the Christian school chapel service. Though a staple in Christian school academia, the chapel service was not as influential to these participants as their respective schools may have thought. Robert stated, “Well we have chapel every week...I think once-in-awhile there’s really good messages.” Robert went on to say how he enjoys messages that are relatable to students.

The sixth most influential faith development experience for participants was the service opportunities provided by their respective schools. Regarding Ekahi CS, Trish stated, “We do service projects and stuff...just to really like be able to reach them and reach people in our community and in the school.” In one instance, Anna had to strongly encourage underclassmen to participate in a community cleanup project. As she puts it, “You’re a part of the community and you’re going to [participate] with us. Suck it up!” Gabby and Nichole both cited their opportunities for a mission’s trip to Cambodia, though Gabby chose to serve in Mexico. Malia cited her opportunity to visit a homeless camp.

The seventh most influential faith development experience for participants was school devotions and/or Bible studies. This experience was not universal among all participants. Michael stated, “Teachers sometimes push devotions and I really like that.” Nichole noted, “[My teacher and I] would read devotions to each other...like Oswald Chambers’, *My Utmost for His Highest*.” Jamie noted, “A lot of the times, I hear from God here...it’s because I’m doing my devo’s [*sic*] during a study hall or a free period.” Malia stated, “Me and my boyfriend will go down to the picnic bench and we’ll just like read our devotional before like school starts.” For the two latter ladies, it seemed as if their devotions were self-initiated and not directed by the schools themselves.

The eighth and final faith development experience conveyed by the participants was school trips, class trips, and camps. Gabby reminisced of her time at youth camp when she felt overwhelmed with school and friendships and feeling comforted by God. Robert relayed his time at senior camp when the students would divide into groups and “do devotions together.”

**SQ1.** The first sub-question of this study was: How do CHSSs describe their experiences of faith development? CHSSs experiences were often joyful, though sometimes somber. Regardless of the type of experience, participants typically described them in a lighthearted way. There were no tears, but much laughing. There was seriousness along with inside jokes. Even though participants would discuss past hurts and poor choices, they did so in a hopeful way. In general, females were much more vocal and animated in their descriptions whereas males were much more reserved. Along those same lines, male participants were much more critical of their schools in comparison to the females. In comparing the participants who came from Christian homes versus the participants who came from non-Christian homes, both groups featured

participants who spoke passionately about their faith as well as participants who were more subdued in their delivery.

All four of the Ekahi CS participants were excited to talk and provided lengthy and rich descriptions. During the focus group, their descriptions involved inside jokes and participants finishing each other's sentences. Many times, participants were talking over top of each other while also using body language and facial expressions to convey their messages. An answer by one participant often sparked an idea from another participant. This was obviously a very close-knit group of friends. Jamie from Elua CS and Nichole from Ekolu CS also provided rich descriptions of their faith development experiences whereas the remaining six participants from Elua CS and Ekolu CS were harder to gauge at first. My initial interviews with the other six participants began slow with short Sunday School-type answers. Only after some prodding on my part did the participants begin to open up.

In contrast to the focus group at Ekahi CS, during the Ekolu CS focus group, participants seemed to naturally structure their responses in such a way as each person gets a turn and participants must stay in order. Furthermore, participants did not talk over each other and rarely expanded on each other's answers. Each participant described their own faith development experiences separate from the group. Though experiences were the same, participants did not reference the experience of someone else and then add their own perception of the experience. Instead, participants often spoke of single events. The Elua CS focus group seemed to be a combination of structured and unstructured responses.



Referring to the first theme of relationships, participants described their relationship experiences as unstructured and impromptu, without an immediate agenda other than establishing a mutual friendship. According to participants, this side-effect of Christianity has become the most important aspect. Perhaps teachers and principals were instructed to form meaningful relationships with students in the same way that they have designed lesson plans and curriculum. It was more likely that this was a byproduct of Christian educators operating within a Christian society, trying to teach Christianly and instill Christian values in their students. Participants often used words like caring, nurturing, kind, loving, and mentoring to describe their relationships with teachers and staff. In their descriptions, participants regularly referenced painful moments in their lives when teachers willingly stepped into their lives to encourage them. Participants described this experience as initially being reluctant to seek help and then eventually seeing the value in heeding their teachers' wisdom. In their recall of the events, a few of the participants criticize themselves jokingly for not having sought help sooner. In a humorous way, some participants discredited themselves as being immature and emotional messes before and while being disciplined by teachers.

Participants would often describe the faith development experiences of their schools in relation to the affective component theme. Regarding chapel, history class, friendships, and her own personal prayer time, Anna stated, "I definitely do think that [God] is using every opportunity in my life to talk to me in his ways...which is awesome." Furthermore, Jamie referenced a significant change in her life from once being introverted to then extroverted as a result of her Christian high school. She stated, "I think that's the hand of God because I was totally in my own bubble and living my life by myself...God finally got a hold of my heart...I

think that's when I really started becoming extroverted." After interviewing Jamie, it is hard to imagine her as being introverted. She spoke adamantly about her faith and Elua CS. Every story involved a bigger smile.

**SQ2.** The second sub-question of this study was: What meaning do CHSSs derive from faith development opportunities provided by their school? In most cases, CHSSs were thankful for their experiences. In a few cases, CHSSs were conscious of the experiences that their schools were not providing. By acknowledging the faith development experiences that they wished they were provided with, participants backhandedly informed the researcher of how they felt about the experiences that they did have. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the hypocrisy they witnessed from their own teachers.

In regards to student-to-teacher relationships, most if not all were highly positive and beneficial for the participants' faith development. Nichole stated:

I would say that my teachers do have a more mature faith than I have, but they have helped me to...at least start to gain the mature faith that they have...they take into account God into everything...they add him in every aspect of their live...that's helped me to also do the same thing...

Likewise, Reese expressed her thankfulness for her coach in contributing to her faith. She said, "He talks about it on a daily basis and stuff so...I think he's like really helped me see it faster than on my own. Sarah described her teachers as coaches, mentors, and counselors.

Humorously, Trish exclaimed about her teachers, "They put up with my complaining and the teachers were very helpful." She went on to state, "[My teachers] have gone through their own

roller-coaster rides with God and that has really helped shape my faith.” In talking about her appreciation for her teachers, Grace stated, “I ask them for help so I look at them as more of a mentor and as a teacher.”

Although most of the teacher-to-student relationships were positive, some participants cited favoritism and hypocrisy among Christian school faculty. Reese acknowledged that occasionally teachers, “favor those people who...feel like they’re higher than others at times and...having favoritism towards them...it makes them even more...prideful.” All four focus group participants reluctantly acknowledged that one particular teacher will often get mad and upset “and then she goes straight to the Bible and reads a Scripture.” This hypocritical action did not go unnoticed by her students. In one other instance, participants provided insight into how their non-Christian peers viewed faculty-to-student relationships. Nichole did mention that some of her non-Christian peers viewed accountability as prying into their lives. She stated that in her opinion, “It’s really not because it’s helping us to be accountable.” These three blemishes were small in comparison to the vast compliments all the participants had about their teachers. However, these student-teacher interactions did leave a lasting impact on the students’ lives.

According to the participants, student-to-student relationships were both beneficial and harmful. Sarah stated, “I’ve been privileged to have an amazing class of people...people who are actively pursuing their faith.” Nichole stated, “You’ll easily gain friends that...you’ll probably keep for the rest of your life and keep in touch and...again with accountability.” Nichole went on to say:

I think the kids here, they really are invested into their faith...once you get into high school...they start taking it seriously and your friends really do want you to succeed in your relationship with God and if they see you...struggling, they'll want to know and they'll pray for you and also their parents do that too which is also helpful to the student.

Also willing to share personal things with her friends, Trish stated, “[My friends] were also going through similar things that I was going through and it helped me feel not alone.”

Ironically, Anna did state, “If...we weren’t forced into this tiny little grade, we didn’t have Jesus, we didn’t have these teachers who wanted to look out for us all the time...we might not be friends.”

On a sad note regarding Christian school peers, Reese did express a time in her life after having made some personal mistakes when she “felt so alone” and from the experience, “learned not to really care so much about what people say.” Likewise, Trish recalled a romantic relationship with a Christian boy that ended badly and the hurt and pain that followed. Similarly, Robert did express his concern and his prayer for his school. He stated:

I really wanted to find a friend who would...instead of just...being mean because it’s funny...someone...that care about...what you feel...and...want to like hang out with you and check up on you...someone you can depend on.

According to participants, curriculum was viewed as beneficial for faith development, but participants also acknowledged that some non-Christian peers viewed academic curriculum as required homework, needed for a passing grade. In relation to the positive outcome of the subject of history, Sarah confessed, “For the majority of my life, I had separated [history and

Bible] and I guess one day I was like...history and the Bible, the Bible is history. Michael stated, "Church history...I really love that class because...throughout history, you can see what the Church...survived through...perilous things and it's just miraculous and you have to say, 'There is a God'!"

Jamie did say that, "I think that a lot of people put on a show here." Furthermore, Gabby stated, "People fall away from the Lord in a Christian school because it can be so religious...it sort of becomes like just going through the motions."

Students who were provided a leadership faith development experience, truly valued it. Anna exclaimed, "[The teachers will] take you as you are and they'll help you to be a leader." Malia stated, "It's really humbling cause you don't really understand what it means to be a leader until you're put in that position." Likewise, she stated, "You have to be pushed into like really uncomfortable situations...like being pushed out of your comfort zones." For the participants who were not provided the experience, it was a sore spot. In Robert's words, "It would help if [Elua CS] had more...student-led chapels...I think that was maybe more relatable than having [the principal] preach to us all the time."

The chapel faith development experiences were viewed both positively and negatively. Eric stated, "You always have Chapel and...it keeps me accountable and helps me to grow stronger." Accordingly, Jamie acknowledged, "A lot has caused me to grow whether it be chapel messages from teachers or pastors that come in." She did go on to say, "I hear from God during chapels, but not as much as when I take time to myself and actually dive into the Word by myself." Furthermore, Grace was adamant that Bible classes play more of a role in her faith than

chapel. Though all schools had some type of school-wide chapel service, they were not all received the same. Reluctantly, Jamie perceived the chapel experience for some of her classmates in this way:

A lot of the time, the pastors come in and they use the scare tactic rather than giving an opportunity to have a relationship with God and it...kinda bugs me...I see a lot of...people that aren't Christians saying, ... 'I'm gonna go to Hell. I don't wanna do that' ...and then they're like, ... 'Let's be it...I'm a Christian now' ...they don't actually live it out."

The service faith development experience was not universal among all schools, nor was it consistent within each school. Gabby expressed, "I think [the missions trip] made me realize how blessed we are." Referring to an experience she had serving the homeless as part of a school event, Malia stated, "We had to pray for people and that can be kinda scary if you...don't wanna say the wrong word...just letting God's Spirit like just take control and speak through you." Reese, with Ekolu CS stated, "We had some [service opportunities] before where we would go and help the homeless people, but like I feel like we should do more." Jamie's service experience was largely her own doing. Though she would come in on the weekends to work at Elua CS, she was the initiator of this activity, not the school.

Devotions were not a part of all the research sites, nor were they viewed positively by those who conducted these activities. Having the experience, Nichole stated, "Devotions really helped me to grow in my faith and not to make the same mistake again." Similarly, Reese state, "If you put in the time to...read your devotions and pray, I feel like...[God will] speak to you

more and then you'll like just get more wisdom...by reading his word...if you actually try to understand it, he'll reveal things that you might not have known." Jamie stated, "I think a lot of people treat [devotions] more like homework rather than growing in your relationship with God." In not having the experience, Michael stated, "I would like...a quiet time like just where peers and maybe like one or two teachers could be there to help ask questions, do a quick devotion, [and] say some prayer." Also not having the experience, Gabby noted, "While the academics are biblically based and there are Bible classes, I feel that [Ekolu CS should be] implementing small groups like during study hall cause no one does anything in those classes anyway." Ironically, she went on to say, "I think that [school organized Bible study] would just become too religious... [Bible study] should be led by the Spirit."

School trips and camps were often happy times. Robert stated, "Senior trip or Junior/Senior Leadership Camp, I think it really helps in helping you grow closer to like your friends." In regards to her junior/senior camp, Gabby said, "My heart was so heavy from like all the stress of like school and friendships and my home life and stuff and I just had to like give it all to God."

**SQ3.** The third sub-question of this study was: How do CHSSs describe the social aspect of faith development? In general, all CHSSs were encultured within the social environment of their respective schools. Most participants used similar responses regarding their faith. Most participants were thankful for how involved teachers were in their lives. A few times, participants did refer to themselves as being sheltered because of the Christian school culture. Other times, participants referenced Christian schools using academics and curriculum to force faith development.

When asked to define faith, the majority of participants began with a loose recitation of Hebrews 11:1. For instance, Gabby noted, “Faith [is] believing in the unseen.” Grace stated, “Faith means to me believing in something with like your whole heart without actually having proof of it.” Jamie said, “The definition [of faith] is basically like believing in something that you can’t really see.” Nichole said, “Faith would be believing in something unseen.” Reese stated, “[Faith is] believing in something you can’t see.” Sarah said, “belief in something that you cannot see.” Michael even stated that he based his faith off of Hebrews 11:1. It is obvious that the use of Hebrews 11:1 by Christian schools is foundational. Also, participants from all schools commonly used the terms encourage or encouragement and accountable or accountability when talking about how each of their respective school cultures contributed to their faith.

In describing his school culture, Michael used phrases like “incubate” and “nourish the faith.” He went on to say, “Everybody’s so friendly...they feel like family.” Similarly, Trish exclaimed, “I could form relationships with people and have a family.” Furthermore, Anna described her school this way:

If you feel that the school is supporting you in what you love, then you wanna be more involved in school, but if you feel that they don’t recognize it, it just creates division and it creates kids who don’t want to participate in anything because they feel like no one will be recognized and I think that’s a little bit of a decline, but Ekahi CS definitely would never intentionally do that...they always go above and beyond to say that we care about you and we’re a family.



Amidst the faith development experiences, participants did explain how they sometimes feel sheltered because of the Christian school culture. Trish stated that, “It can be very easy with Ekahi CS to just be in a little bubble because we’re so small.” Concerning Ekolu CS, Gabby similarly stated the importance to periodically take students “out of this bubble that we’re in cause...we’re super sheltered at this Christian school.” Furthermore, Eric said, “You don’t really see like the real world...you’re not gonna be ready.”

Regarding forced faith development, Anna used the phrase, “forced into this tiny little grade” as a contributor to her faith. When asked if students become saved at Elua CS, Jamie conveyed that of her non-Christian peers, “a lot of them are scared into it and kinda like a get outta jail free card.” Furthermore, “A lot of the time the pastors come in and they use the scare tactic rather than giving an opportunity to have a relationship with God.” In reference to his non-Christian classmates, Eric stated, “They feel like here everything is forced upon them.” Robert also noted, “I think just being [in Elua CS] doesn’t really force you to grow.” Similarly, Sarah also stated, “You can’t force or accelerate a student’s [faith].” On a lighter note, Gabby did state, “I don’t think [Ekolu CS tries] to force anything on you...they definitely want you to have your own opinion.”

### **Summary**

In looking at the data, eight faith development experiences were uncovered: (a) relationships with faculty, (b) relationships with peers, (c) curriculum, (d) leadership opportunities, (e) chapel, (f) opportunities to serve others, (g) Bible studies and devotions, and (h) school trips/camps. Along with these experiences, multiple codes were reduced to categories

and subsequently, categories were reduced to six common themes: (a) Relational Side of Christian School, (b) Epistemic Side of Christian School, (c) Affective Side of Christian School, (d) Unbecoming Side of Christian School, (e) Authenticity, and (f) Church. Furthermore, I used these themes to answer the four essential questions as they pertain to the faith development experiences of these participants. Important quotes and transcripts from the research participants are available upon request.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Overview**

In this final chapter I will present the findings, discuss these findings in relation to the existing literature on faith development of adolescents, significant implications, limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

In answering the CQ, “What are the faith development experiences of CHSSs?”, CHSSs experience a variety of faith developing activities at school. These experiences include the integration of Bible with all other subjects and activities, involvement in leadership opportunities, school-wide chapel services, opportunities to serve others, devotions and small group Bible studies, and opportunities for school trips and camps. Encompassing these experiences were the meaningful relationships that these participants formed with teachers and peers.

In answering SQ1, “How do CHSSs describe their experiences of faith development?”, most CHSSs described their experiences passionately, but in a lighthearted tone. Though the experiences may have been traumatic, the retelling of the experience was relaxed. Participants often used inside jokes and sarcasm to convey their stories. In general, females were able to expand on their answers. Males were able to think more critically about their schools.

In answering SQ2, “What meaning do CHSSs derive from faith development opportunities provided by their school?”, CHSSs enjoyed the faith development opportunities provided by their schools. Many had great things to say about the Bible integrating with

academics. Many also saw how leadership opportunities, devotions, and school trips benefited their personal faith. Chapel had mixed reviews. Some CHSSs appreciated the messages while others longed for more relatable and applicable messages. CHSSs valued the close and meaningful relationships formed with faculty and peers, however, they acknowledged hypocrisy among teachers and non-Christian friends as faith testing experiences. In general, CHSSs were pleased with their experience.

In answering SQ3, “How do CHSSs describe the social aspect of faith development?”, CHSSs describe the social aspect of faith development by using words like community and close-knit family. Students often compared their teachers to counselors, mentors, coaches, therapists, and friends. They appreciated how invested faculty were in student lives. CHSSs valued how everything from curriculum to relationships was biblically based. A few times, CHSSs did refer to their schools as being sheltered and trying to force faith development.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of transcendental phenomenological research in the context of this study was to describe the phenomenon of faith development of CHSSs. In this section I will compare my findings from this study with Fowler’s (1981) stages of faith development theory, Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, and empirical literature.

### **Theoretical Literature**

Vygotsky (1978) wrote, “As human beings we actively realize and change ourselves in the varied contexts of culture and history” (p. 131). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory was evident in the lives of these research participants though not specific to just school. While Christian

school has its own culture that students are immersed in for eight hours a day, during the remaining 16 hours, students are immersed in a variety of other cultures, some Christian and some not. Applying Vygotsky's theory to the Christian school atmosphere is limited in scope. Acculturation for every student does not end at the end of the school day. Thus, for some students, only one-third of their day involves faith developing experiences. Now for some Christian school students, the remaining two-thirds of their day contains more faith developing experiences such as prayer, church, devotions, and godly men and women pouring into their lives. However, for the other Christian school students, the remaining two-thirds of their day includes secularization, pluralism, apathy, and non-Christians pouring into their lives. These experiences, which this study revealed, can diminish faith. Elua CS dispelled the idea that enrollment in a Christian high school encapsulates the individual within a faith developing environment capable of producing Christians with mature faith. What was more common in this study was students who came from Christian families and attended Christian churches, where biblical truth and faith development were being taught constantly, were then more fully encapsulated within an all-encompassing faith development environment.

This does not mean that Christian schools should give up in their endeavor of reaching students from non-Christian homes. For research participants like Grace and Trish, Christian school provided faith developing experiences that they were not receiving at home. For Malia, Christian school provided faith developing experiences in perhaps a greater extent or varying context than what she was receiving at home. For Anna, Eric, Gabby, Jamie, Michael, Nichole, Reese, Robert, and Sarah, Christian school added to the faith development experiences they were already receiving at home. Statistically, this means that sociocultural theory is applicable on

three fronts. It can be applied to the student who attends church regularly, attends Christian school, and is raised in a Christian home. It can also be applied to the limited eight hours of faith developing experiences provided by Christian schools. In relaying their personal faith development experiences, research participants also provided a glimpse into the faith development experiences of their non-Christian peers. For this reason, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory must be discussed from two different standpoints. The first agenda is to look at the nine research participants for whom the Christian school culture adds to their already Christian faith developing experiences from home and from church. The second agenda is to look at the three research participants for whom the Christian school culture is their sole or primary Christian faith developing experience. The third agenda is to look at the many non-Christian peers of these research participants for whom the Christian school experience is their sole Christian faith developing experience. For all three of these groups, the Christian school faith development experience is the same. However, each of these groups experienced it differently.

First, if we are looking at the sociocultural theory as it encompasses the nine research participants who attend Christian school, were raised in a Christian home, and attend a Christian church, the participants internalized many of the cultural norms and traditions. Regarding Vygotsky's (1978) lines of development, these individuals learned cultural beliefs, attitudes, values, symbols, and then internalized these traditions. For these individuals, curriculum and academia turned into a personal belief.

Second, if we look at the sociocultural theory as it encompasses the three other research participants who were not raised in a Christian home and did not attend a Christian church, these

individuals had positive results. For the three research participants, they appear to be the exception to the norm. Where many of their non-Christian friends have not internalized the beliefs and attitudes of Christian school, these three young ladies learned the beliefs externally and then internalized them. Social norms became personal beliefs. Going through faith development experiences in the form of academics turned into personal beliefs.

Third, if we look at the sociocultural theory as it encompasses the numerous non-Christian peers of these participants. While the peers do attend a Christian school, they do not attend church and were not raised in Christian homes. At best, most non-Christian peers were described as being apathetic towards Christian traditions, willing to do the bare minimum in order to make the grade. Many Christian school students who are non-Christian view faith development experiences in the form of academics more like homework. Thankfully, non-Christian peers were not outwardly defiant. Their opposition was in the form of questioning Christian truth and personal life choices.

In regards to Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, all of the research participants recognized the assistance of their teachers and peers in reaching spiritual goals. Two of the most common codes throughout all data collection methods were encouragement and accountability from teachers, principals, and classmates. The surrounding encouragement was not isolated to just these individuals. All students within the school, Christian and non-Christian receive the same biblical training, godly counsel, chapel message, prayers, and encouragement. They all are encouraged by more spiritually mature classmates. They all are motivated by teachers. They all are counseled by pastors. However, these research participants, and probably more individuals not included in this study, actively pursued their faith. These individuals saw

the spiritual challenge presented before them and what was spiritually possible and they pushed themselves to reach it.

In regards to Vygotsky's (1978) use of tools, such as language and symbols, the four participating schools used few Christian symbols other than the Bible, a few Bible scriptures, and a Christian cross here and there. One site utilized the Christian flag. That same site also sang traditional Christian hymns. In this specific case, it did not appear as if these tools carried any spiritual significance to the participants. Perhaps, they understood these entities as tools alone and not sacred in and of themselves. More likely, the students were apathetic to the experience. In talking about the use of language, it is worth noting that many of the research participants initially defined faith using Hebrews 11:1. It appears as if these participants are mastering one of the key verses to Christianity.

For many of these research participants, their faith development experiences were progressions. Their faith development overlapped grades, events, years, and teachers. Faith development was always occurring regardless of elementary, middle school, or high school. Even though a few participants viewed faith as an all-or-nothing concept and once you have it, you have it, they often referenced faith with a progression of events occurring throughout their preadolescent and adolescent years. This correlates with Fowler's (1981) stages of faith theory. Faith development is a progression. Thus, to eliminate faith development experiences from the elementary and middle school years for the sake of creating a definable set of researchable data for this study inadvertently eliminated the foundational experiences that many of these participants recognize as their beginnings or earliest steps in faith development. Furthermore, because most of these participants attended the same Christian school through elementary,



middle school, and high school, they did not naturally associate events with any one level of schooling. To explain, students who attend a hypothetical K-12 Christian school, we will call `Elima Christian School (Elima CS), do not have faith development experiences at `Elima Christian Elementary that are separate from their faith development experiences at `Elima Christian Middle School that are also separate from their faith development experiences at `Elima Christian High School. Perhaps, specific to the Christian schools in this study, but more realistically to many K-12 combined Christian schools, participants experienced the progressive nature of the faith development phenomenon as they progressed through elementary grades to the middle school grades and to the high school grades.

In regards to Fowler's (1981) stages of faith theory, the majority of the research participants have been attending their respective Christian schools for longer than just their high school years and thus, have been consistently experiencing faith development experiences. For this reason, it is likely that the faith of these participants is more developed than adolescents who are not encapsulated in this environment; public school adolescents for example. According to their teachers and administrators, these participants were in the synthetic-conventional faith stage as it applies to Christianity. Synthetic-conventional faith corresponds to being engrossed within a culture. Individuals in this stage glean from their peers and authority figures. In looking at the data, it appears that the teachers and administrators had a good understanding of their students. To explain, Fowler (1981) posits:

[Synthetic-conventional faith] is a 'conformist' stage in the sense that it is acutely tuned to the expectations and judgments of significant others and as yet does not have a sure

enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective (p. 172-173).

Subsequently, these research participants have chosen to conform to the Christian school culture surrounding them even though some do not come from Christian homes. Students who do not conform to the Christian school culture may still have synthetic-conventional faith, but not in the Christian sense as they conform to secular culture. The research participants' eagerness to abide by, but also question and criticize, deeply held Christian traditions and beliefs, puts these research participants in the direction of, if not on the verge of, individuative-reflective faith. Fowler (1981) went on to state that the danger of this stage is when respected authority figures lose their significance. Thus, the danger of Christian school is when students put their faith in Christian teachers, Christian classmates, and routine practices instead of in God. Having Christian school teachers who are so invested in their students is both beneficial and dangerous. Whether Christian school students transition to individuative-reflective faith stage will be known when they are no longer contained within a Christian culture, after graduation for instance. For the three research participants who come from non-Christian homes, it seems that they are more likely to transition to the next stage because they have already experienced an unchurched atmosphere and their faith has been tested as opposed to the participants from church families who have experienced less testing of their faith. This is not to say that Christian schools should overlook the impact they have on students who come from church families. Instead, Christian schools should be aware that the faith developing experiences that they provide will be experienced differently depending on a variety of variables including whether or not the student comes from a church or unchurched home.

Fowler (1981) wrote:

The point is, faith affects the shaping of our initiatives and responses, our relationships and aspirations in everyday life, by enabling us to see them against the backdrop of a more comprehensive image of what constitutes true power, true value and the meaning of life (p. 28).

This correlates with how many of the research participants viewed faith. Anna stated, “Faith for me is a larger force that provides a hope and identity and trust and its part of my personhood.” Trish stated, “Faith is the basis of my life...cause nothing in this world is concrete and permanent...you do everything out of faith.”

Both Fowler (1981) and Vygotsky (1978) stated that development builds on social interactions and relationships. This was the case for the research participants and in some part, for their non-Christian peers. Research participants assimilated through relationships to grow their faith.

### **Empirical Literature**

In regards to the previous literature, participants often used the terms believe, spiritual, and trust to explain their faith, as expected. Interestingly enough, Malia used the word trust 18 times to talk about her faith, more than any other participant.

What was new was how participants often used the term hope to describe their faith. God’s omniscient power provides them with an assurance that as bad as things may get, God will still take care of them regardless. With a positive and anticipatory outlook on life, the

participants were able to forge through difficult experiences. Also unexpected was how the participants frequently used the terms grow, growing, grown when talking about the progression of their faith. Furthermore, when participants talked about the level of their faith, they often used terms like deep or strong. Participants did not use the term religion as much as expected though they participated in religious activities.

Social enculturation occurred, but it was not entirely Christian faith development. Even though not all of the research participants referenced Christian friends, all of them did reference teachers, or principals, or coaches that contributed to their faith development. This is similar to Rambo and Bauman's (2012) idea that forming bonds with members of a group can determine the level of commitment. For Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS, the dominant culture for students, teachers, and administrators was Christian. This is in contrast to Elua CS where the culture for the teachers and administrators is Christian, but according to the research participants, the culture of the student body is a mix of Christian and non-Christian. Furthermore, the research participants from Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS adapted to the Christian culture dominant in their schools while the research participants from Elua CS adapted to the Christian culture of the authority figures and not the classmates in their school. Thus, Elua CS participants also distanced themselves from the non-Christian culture of their peers. Many Elua CS participants confessed to watching peers just going through the motions without any true conversion. This coincides with Westerhoff's (2000) understanding that only religious actions can be acquired socially and that conversion must occur personally, apart from the community. While Vygotsky (1978) viewed humans as actively changing to match their culture, this was not entirely the case for Elua CS. Even though non-Christian students outwardly resembled the Christian culture of

the school, they were inwardly matching the non-Christian culture of the world. For the non-Christian peers, instead of Christianity being internalized, non-Christian culture was internalized. The 12 research participants were socially encultured with their Christian schools, but it was not so for all of the student bodies involved.

Participants recognized the spiritual maturity of their teachers and affirmed that seeing their godly example contributed to their own faith development. Likewise, participants also noticed the inconsistencies in teachers' faith. Hypocrisy can often be a detriment to Christianity. Schultz (2012) acknowledged that the extent that a teacher lives and exemplifies their Christian faith will make a lasting influence on the student. Mature enough to discern the discrepancy, participants did not allow the faults of their teachers to deter them in their faith development. However, without a more thorough examination of the other students not involved in the study, it is impossible to determine whether or not hypocritical teachers influenced those students for the better or for the worse. This cause-and-effect relationship compares to numerous literature regarding the level of faith for spiritual leaders and how it impacts followers (Bryant, 2011; Hardie et al., 2013; McMartin et al., 2013; Pennings et al., 2011; Powell et al., 2012; Ripley et al., 2013; Rockenbach et al., 2012; Tighe, 2015; Tisdale et al., 2013; Vaidyanathan, 2011; Yocum et al., 2012).

Furthermore, participants recognized the spiritual maturity or lack thereof for their peers and appreciated the opportunity to grow their faith collectively. The perceptions of both Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS seem to be that both schools have a majority of students that are actively pursuing their faith. Participants often cited that the opportunity to grow with their peers significantly contributed to their faith. For instance, Jamie noted how her and her friend "read

the [Bible] together...grow together.” Malia and her boyfriend did the same thing. Regarding her classmates, Trish stated, “These girls keep me accountable.” Regarding her classmates Sarah stated, “We’ve been able to see each other grow in spiritual maturity...talk about our struggles and we’re able to keep each other accountable.” The concepts of accountability and encouragement were prevalent throughout all of the data. Participants appreciated the accountability and encouragement from both teachers and Christian classmates. While Hill and Den Dulk (2013) did discuss adolescents providing encouragement and motivation for each other, the concepts of accountability and encouragement were largely absent from the empirical literature on adolescent faith development. Also absent from the data was the concept of student leadership. As expected from the literature, biblical integration, chapel services, service opportunities like mission’s trips, and school trips all contributed to faith development.

Common in group-type settings is a “regression toward the mean” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 439). In looking at all three schools, the spiritual means of Ekahi CS and Ekelu CS, referring to the administration, teachers, and student body as a whole, appeared to be spiritually mature and actively pursuing faith development. However, the perception of Elua CS is that the students actively pursuing their faith are in the minority of the student population. Elua CS administrators and teachers and a few students are spiritually mature however; the rest of the study body is still spiritually immature. In Jamie’s words, “I think a very small percentage of our grade is solid...I think that a lot of people put on a show here.” Jaimie noted that while her non-Christian friends have all the biblical knowledge and tools and are outwardly showing behaviors that are Christianly acceptable, the students have not made an internal change within their hearts. These three concepts of knowledge, behavior, and heart coincide with Schultz and

Swezey's (2013) three-dimensional concept of worldview. Sarah likewise stated, "That's kind of the struggle for most kids who've grown up in a Christian family that go to a Christian school is just being able to say the Bible or spew John 3:16 at the top of their head, but not always relating to the heart." Hill & Den Dulk (2013) noted that while being in a faith community increases the chance of faith development, it does not guarantee it. In regards to the data, there are two types of faith communities present. Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS have faith communities where the majority of the community, including faculty and students, are actively pursuing their faith and encouraging others to do so. Elua CS's faith community includes faculty pursuing faith, a small minority of students pursuing their faith, and a majority of students going through the motions without true conversion. This resembles Vygotsky's (2011) explanation that disjointed groups will often revert to the mean of the group. Elua CS's spiritual mean is different than the spiritual means of Ekahi CS and Ekolu CS. Eric admitted to being pulled down spiritually due to the influence of his non-Christian peers. Furthermore, Jamie recalled students "come in that test your faith." Robert stated that having non-Christian classmates actually helped to test and increase his faith. Robert went on to say, "When you go out [after graduation], you're gonna be tested by all the different...beliefs and stuff." In the perception of Elua CS participants, the spiritual atmosphere that they deal with actually helps to test their faith, making it stronger. Before graduating, Elua CS participants experience their classmates' secular worldviews in a way that mimics life outside of Christian school, allowing them to more fully correlate what they believe with what the world believes. Four times, research participants expressed their concern of being encapsulated within a small Christian environment, shut off from the rest of the world. They used terms like in a bubble and sheltered. This echoes Bryant's (2011) study where

participants felt they did not have the opportunity to choose their own religion. Accordingly, the research states the Christian school graduates are more likely to continue their faith in comparison to graduates from public schools, Catholic schools, and non-religious private schools (Pennings et al., 2011; Vaidyanathan, 2011). Whether the sheltering effect will have any effect on the future of these individuals is yet to be determined.

Similar to the prior literature, research participants referred to having a relationship with God (Dyess, 2011; Hall, 2007a; Powell et al., 2012) and intimacy and friendship with God (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013). Unrelated to the prior literature, research participants did not reference having any physical encounters with God (Williamson & Hood, 2011, 2013). Though participants did not use the phrase baptisms of the Holy Spirit (Williamson & Hood, 2011), many participants did reference the Holy Spirit. Specifically, Anna referenced enacting her faith through “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, [and] goodness.” This abbreviated version of Galatians 5:22-23 referenced the Fruit of the Spirit. In discussing John Wesley’s Moral Pneumatology, Cunningham wrote that, “The [Holy] Spirit, in unison with our movement towards faith, fills the mind and soul with righteousness, peace, joy and love” (2011, p. 278). Anna knew that to honestly express her faith, she needed to grow in the areas of “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

In their responses, participants would occasionally give details of God talking to them. It did not seem that the participants were hearing an audible voice, but that they were restating biblical principles that they have been taught and/or feeling a strong conviction to act upon something. These convictions seemed to stem from a close relationship with God (Dyess, 2011;



Hall, 2007a; Powell et al., 2012) and spiritual intimacy (Fowler, 2000; Liu et al., 2014). Anna said, “I definitely do think that He’s using every opportunity in my life to talk to me in His ways.” Gabby noted, “I felt God telling me to go there.” Jamie stated, “God says, ‘You have to give it to me’.” Malia said, “The funny thing is I always want God to tell me like what am I supposed to do with my life after high school and that’s kinda been like the question of this year really.”

Faith development opportunities like school sponsored mission trips, camps, (Tighe, 2015) and prayer (Pennings et al., 2014; Tighe, 2015) all received favorable reviews for developing faith. This coincides with the literature. Research participants had great things to say about all three and did not mention their classmates as having bad opinions. However, according to the literature, chapel services provide opportunities for students to both be served spiritually and participate in faith practices (Baldwin et al., 2015; McMartin et al., Ripley et al., 2013). This contradicts the data. Participants noted that if chapel messages were relatable and applicable to their lives, then the message was received. However, too often chapel speakers were unaware of where the students were spiritually. Speakers who shared about their Christian upbringing and ideal lives further distanced themselves from students who did not grow up in Christian homes and have made many personal mistakes.

Of the three research sites, Elua CS seemed to use a greater variety of religious symbols around campus and formal religious traditions during chapel. This is in contrast to Fowler’s (2001) suggestion that religious symbols and practices will influence “habit, mind, and action” (p. 164). While the religious symbols may be influencing the synthetic-conventional faith students, much of the symbolism is lost on their non-Christian peers.

All three research sites incorporated the Bible into all subjects and research participants were appreciative. Trish said, “I think what makes Ekahi CS so much different than other schools...especially other religious schools is that they incorporate the Bible and Jesus in everything that they do.” Michael noted, “I really like how [teachers are] integrating Bible into everything. It’s not just one Bible class and that’s it. It’s a lifestyle.” Gabby also noted that “the academics are biblically based.” According to the empirical literature, biblical integration will increase faith development (Bailey, 2012; McMartin et al., 2013; Ripley et al., 2013; Tisdale et al., 2013; Yocum, 2014). However, the literature did not account for non-Christian students who view religious traditions and practices as required homework instead of faithful devotion. Regarding her classmates, Jamie confessed, “It’s supposed to cause us to grow in our faith and actually take what we learn in messages and apply them to life, but many people see, ‘Oh, this is homework’.”

Many of the participants recalled some type of crisis in their lives as having impacted their faith, in some cases serving as the catalyst. Studies by Williamson and Hood (2011, 2013) found the same thing. Grace stated, “I felt like I had to rely upon God when my parents were going through the divorce.” Reese said, “There was this one family incident where I just felt so alone and it’s like in the times when I feel so alone that I call out to God and He’s just waiting for me to call out.” Trish noted, “I had to surrender a lot with my mother because...it was no longer that she could take care of me after...because of her condition.” Gabby recalled, “I was going through a hard time where I was like struggling with anxiety and depression.” For these four students, experiencing and overcoming a crisis significantly contributed to their faith. Jamie

did note that, “A lot of people are broken and hurting, but they don’t let God heal them. They run to other things.”

### **Implications**

In analyzing the data, it is apparent that Christian schools can and do make a spiritual impact on the lives of their students even if the students do not attend church or are from non-Christian homes. Being immersed within a Christian school culture with its faith development experiences has more benefits than it does disadvantages. For this reason, Christian schools need to examine the faith development opportunities that they are providing to students and strengthen those that are beneficial. This study uncovered four faith development experiences that all students viewed as beneficial: relationships with faculty, relationships with peers, curriculum, and leadership opportunities. This study also uncovered four more faith development experiences that had mixed reviews by students: chapel, opportunities to serve others, Bible studies and devotions, and school trips/camps. Of these eight experiences, it is apparent that adolescents desire relationships, biblical integration, and authenticity.

Christian school students are real Christians with real issues, real hurts, and real concerns for their peers and families, struggling to find themselves as they develop their faith and grow closer to God. Given the results of this study, I recommend that Christian schools enhance or at the least, establish the following areas: a relational atmosphere between faculty and students, biblically integrated curriculum, leadership opportunities, a chapel time, opportunities to serve others, Bible studies, and school trips. Thus, I encourage faculty to seek out and form meaningful relationships with their students. To go along with these relationships, faculty need

to live and teach with integrity and care while directing their students to Christ. These relationships provide venues for godly discipleship and mentorship.

Though it should already be a given with Christian schools, I also recommend integrating the Bible with all other subjects. This involves educators consistently tying together academics with biblical principles and/or biblical history. Furthermore, mathematics and science should be discussed in relation to God's grand design and his order in creation (Colossians 1:16-17). History, social studies, and foreign language classes should always be correlated back to biblical history and how God dispersed the people of the world after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). Language arts should incorporate both reading and writing biblical scripture and works with biblical themes. Health and physical education classes need to address God's desire for people to be healthy (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Timothy 4:8; 3 John 1:2). In regards to the fine arts, teachers must address God's creativity in creation and his desire for us to use our talents to glorify him (Colossians 3:23; Genesis 1; Exodus 35:35). In addition to biblical integration, teachers should have an openness and willingness to discuss faith based topics as they arise even though they might not directly relate to the subject matter. Likewise, teachers must be allowed the freedom to stop class and deal with spiritual matters as they pertain to students' lives.

I also recommend that Christian schools provide leadership opportunities for their students. Unexpectedly, research participants raised the idea of student leadership as a key contributor to their faith. Bella noted, "[Ekahi CS will] take you as you are and they'll help you to be a leader." Eric noted, "I feel like [God] taught me how to be a hard worker and to never give up...to always try your best even when you fail and to just keep pushing...just to be a leader." Grace noted, "That amazes me...when I see student leadership." Malia stated, "It's

really humbling cause you don't really understand what it means to be a leader until you're put in that position...servant leader...that's the kinda leadership that Ekahi CS tries to create out of us." In Robert's efforts to guide his school, he questioned, "What does it mean to be like...a leader and like how can you be a spiritual...thermostat on our campus...like setting the spiritual temperature...to be an example to the younger students. Potential leadership opportunities can entail leading chapel, leading service related activities, and/or school trips. The students in this study showed that opportunities to lead caused them to rely on God through their reluctance and inexperience in leading.

Lastly, I recommend that Christian schools provide small group devotions or Bible studies. This can involve one or two teachers and a small number of students. While Christian school and public school students all experience the same thoughts, emotions, desires, passions, and temptations, there is often a stigma in Christian schools to talk openly about sex, homosexuality, drug use, alcohol use, what we wear, what we watch, what we listen to, etc. Christian schools and Christian families are not exempt from hurt, pain, or temptation. For this reason, I recommend small group devotions.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Delimitations are the areas of this particular study that I specifically set either for research purposes, generalizability, and/or manageability. I chose to use a transcendental phenomenological design to study faith development. Faith development, as a phenomenon, is best understood as a contextual description of the lived experiences of all participants.

Delimitations also include the researcher's decision to limit this study to only CHSSs. Each of

the 12 participants was chosen by an administrator or teacher who had witnessed the student's faith development as representative of Fowler's (1981) synthetic-conventional faith stage. I chose to delimit this study to high school seniors with 4 years of Christian high school experience because they have been encapsulated within the Christian school culture for the longest time. Lastly, I chose to delimit the study to the state of Hawai'i due to time and budget constraints for myself. I chose not to delimit the study based on participant ethnicity due to the fact that Hawai'i's schools are ethnically diverse and this study is not designed to study the faith development experiences of any one particular ethnic group.

Limitations to this study were out of the researcher's control, but still may weaken the generalizability of the study. Limitations to this study include each participant's ability or inability to verbalize his or her faith development truthfully and authentically. Also, the study is limited by each administrator's ability to subjectively choose qualified participants. On two accounts, I had to reject a participant because they did not meet criteria. Likewise, the study is limited by the authenticity of each observation, whether or not what is observed is actual or contrived. Specifically, during the interviews and focus groups, it became obvious that female participants were more open about their faith, their feelings, and romantic relationships. This could be a gender specific thing or it could be specific to these students. In one particular research site, interview responses seemed rehearsed. Exact scriptural references were provided. Furthermore, there was minimal rambling and more exact short answers. Not being sure if the participants were prepped on the study by teachers and/or administrators, I asked the participants follow up questions to gain their perspective.

Upon completion of the study, I uncovered another unforeseen limitation. Ten to 20-page interview transcript checks for participants are ideal for trustworthiness and great in theory, but in reality, most of the participants probably did not review their entire transcript. Only one participant had follow-up recommendations after reviewing the interview transcript. While I was as accurate as I could be in transcribing interviews and focus groups, realistically, participants did not check my transcripts for accuracy. This potential for inaccuracy threatens this study's trustworthiness.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

After completing the study, I uncovered areas where future research is needed. These include a study similar to the one presented here, but comparing the faith development of females to males. Second, I recommend a study similar to this one, yet open to all Christian schools in the state of Hawai'i, those who began as Christian and have since dropped the Christian worldview and those who still hold to the Christian faith. Third, I also recommend a comparison study involving Christian school students whose families do not attend church versus Christian school students whose families do attend church. Fourth, I would also recommend an experimental study examining the affect that different Christian school faith development experiences have on developing student faith, for instance looking at how student leadership impacts faith development. Fifth, I recommend a comparative faith study involving four students from the same youth group, but who each attend different schools, a public school, a Christian school, a homeschool, and private non-Christian school. Sixth, I recommend a school-wide study aimed at discovering the faith stage of each student. Lastly, I suggest a longitudinal

quantitative study that will survey the participants from this study five years and even 10 years from now to see if and how their faith has changed.

### **Summary**

I have discussed the results of this study and how it relates to the previous literature. I have presented the implications and the limitations. I also presented ideas for further researchers. The process of this dissertation study on faith development of Christian high school students has been one of the most significant faith development experiences in my life. The implications, though significant to Christian schools and their students, have impacted my role as an administrator and my faith development. Listening to these participants reflect upon their faith and their schools, I am hopeful for what the future holds. While participants shared with me their concerns regarding the faith of some of their classmates, the participants also spoke with a spiritual maturity beyond their years. In conclusion, when I asked Grace to explain how an individual can work on his/her faith, she stated, “You ask the questions that you don’t know...you go and you find your answers that you’re looking for and you grow and have that relationship with not only God, but like with fellow Christians.”



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: IRB Approval Letters

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 2, 2016

Lindon Kananui  
IRB Approval 2466.050216: Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Dear Lindon,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**The Graduate School**

**LIBERTY**  
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# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 2, 2016

Lindon Kanakanui

IRB Approval 2467.050216: Pilot Study for Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Dear Lindon,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**The Graduate School**

**LIBERTY**  
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## **Appendix B: Administrator Letter**

Dear (*Principal/Headmaster*),

I am a doctoral student at Liberty University working on my dissertation, Faith Development Experiences of Christian High School Seniors. This particular topic is essential to both my role as an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and as a parent of two Christian school students. I am often perplexed by the actions and thought processes exhibited by Christian school students. I cannot understand how a student who has attended a Christian school for most of his or her life, who has memorized numerous scriptures, who has participated in countless prayers, and has been immersed in this culture can in any way not choose to be like Christ. As your school is one of the largest and most valued here in Hawai'i, I would like to talk with you personally about possibly observing and interviewing some of your students for my study.

I would like to conduct an observation of one of your chapel services, an observation of a senior level biblical studies class, one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four of your seniors, and one focus group with all four of the seniors. Observations, interviews, and the focus group will be audio and video recorded for accuracy. My primary goal is to better understand the Christian school experiences that affect faith development. If you are familiar with James Fowler, I will be relying heavily upon his theory of faith development. Furthermore, all audio and video recordings, transcriptions, and notes will remain confidential and locked within a safe in my home. All participants and any named person/s or institution/s will be given a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. Lastly, I am happy to share with you and your school the findings of this research as it pertains to faith development within Christian schools.

I would only need about an hour of your time to discuss my research. I am available after three o'clock most days and am willing to meet with you wherever and whenever is convenient for you. If Saturdays are more convenient, I can also meet you then. If I do not hear anything from you by next week, I will respectively try to get in touch with you through your administrative assistant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or myself, please do not hesitate to call me at (808) 295-0238 or email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindon P. Kananui



## **Appendix C: Parental Consent Form**

### **Parental Consent Form for Participation in Research Study**

Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Lindon Kanakanui

Liberty University

School of Education

Your child is invited to participate in a research study on faith development. Your child has been selected as a possible participant because he or she has attended (*name of high school*) all 4 years of high school and he or she exhibits the characteristics of Christian faith. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in this study. Lindon Kanakanui, an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and a student at Liberty University's School of Education, is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to better understand how seniors at a Christian high school experience developing their faith.

#### **Procedures**

If you allow your child to participate in this study, I will request the following things of him or her:

1. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview at school that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
2. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face focus group at school with three other students that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.

3. The ability to send and receive email so that I can follow up with him or her afterwards to ensure that I have accurately documented his or her responses.

**Risks and Benefits**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. If I become aware of any abuse or negligence on the part of an individual or institution, I am required to report it. In regards to conducting a focus group, there is the risk that a participant may inadvertently share confidential information about other participants. As the researcher, I can encourage the other three focus group participants to maintain confidentiality, but I cannot guarantee it. The benefits from this research will not directly affect your child's faith development as a product of Christian education. However, this research may help Christian high schools better understand the phenomenon of faith development and how better to serve their students and society.

**Compensation**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All interview and focus group audio and video recordings and transcriptions will be kept under lock and key throughout this study and for three years following this study, at which time they will be destroyed. I will be the only one who will have access to these items. Your child's identity, any named person/s, or any institution/s will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study, but instead, pseudonyms will be used.

**Voluntary**

Allowing your child to participate in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect current or future relations with Liberty

University or (*name of high school*). Your child is free to not answer any question he or she wishes. Also, your child may withdraw from the pilot study at any time if he or she chooses to without fear of repercussion.

### **Withdraw from the Study**

If your child wishes to withdraw from the study, he or she may do so by notifying me by email ([mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com)). At which point, any data I have gathered from your child up to that point will be deleted and not used in the study.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact me (Lindon Kanakanui) at my office at (808) 295-0238 or you may email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). If you are unable to contact me, you may also contact my research advisor: Dr. James Swezey at (434) 592-4903 or [jaswezey@liberty.edu](mailto:jaswezey@liberty.edu). If you would like to talk with someone other than the research advisor or myself, you are encouraged to contact Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

### **Statement of Consent**

My child and I have read and understood the above information. Any questions I/we may have asked have been answered. I give my consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant/Minor:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix D: Evidence of Synthetic-Conventional Faith**

School administrators and teachers will assist the researcher in identifying participants who meet the necessary qualifications. Examples of these criteria may be evident through chapel participation, student writings, presentations, interactions with peers, interactions with teachers, etc. In addition to being a Christian high school senior, attending their Christian high school for all 4 years of high school, and able to send and receive email, each applicant should exhibit most if not all of the following synthetic-conventional (Fowler, 1981) faith characteristics as they relate to Christianity:

- Attends church two or more times a month (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Reads the Bible three to four times a week (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Prays to God three to four times a week (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).
- Has been baptized (Matthew 28:18-20).

Applicant may or may not also exhibit these characteristics.

- Deals with how the self is viewed and/or accepted by others (Fowler, 1981, 2000).
- Synthesizes the beliefs about God from others without critical reflection (Fowler, 2000).
- Synthesizes the values of others without critical reflection (Fowler, 2000).
- Has questions about Christian faith, but unable to criticize or reflect upon their personal Christian faith (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2004).
- Views Christian symbols as sacred (Fowler, 1981).

- God is viewed as anthropomorphic and a significantly personal other (Fowler, 1981,2000).

### Appendix E: Observation Protocol for Chapel Service

School: *Ekahi CS*

Date of observation: *12/10/2015*

Start time of observation: *8:30 A.M.*

End time of observation: *9:15 A.M.*

Observer: *Lindon Kananui*

Location: *Sanctuary*

Participant/s: *Students in Grades 9-12, faculty, administration, staff, some parents and family*

What are the experiences of CHSSs as they participate in a weekly chapel service?	
Descriptive Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Classes filter in one-by-one through one main door in the back of the sanctuary...</i></li> </ul>	Reflective Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students appear very familiar with the structure and flow of how chapel is organized...</i></li> </ul>
What religious symbols are present during this chapel service at this Christian high school?	
Descriptive Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The most prominent feature in the sanctuary is a stained-glass cross behind the platform. It features varieties of turquoise, sea green, blue green, lavender, violet, and hints of dark red...</i></li> </ul>	Reflective Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The colors of the cross seem to convey a combination of peace and turmoil. The few touches of dark red remind the parishioner of Jesus' suffering...</i></li> </ul>
What interactions are taking place during this chapel service at this Christian high school?	
Descriptive Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The main interaction involves the worship leader eliciting the students to worship God and the preacher conveying to the students biblical truths...</i></li> </ul>	Reflective Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The students seem to be interacting during worship, but not as much during the message...</i></li> </ul>

## Appendix F: Observation Protocol for Classroom

School: *Ekahi CS*

Date of observation: *12/14/2015*

Start time of observation: *8:00 A.M.*

End time of observation: *8:55 A.M.*

Observer: *Lindon Kanakanui*

Location: *Homeroom classroom*

Participant/s: *Seventeen Grade 12 students, homeroom/biblical studies teacher*

What are the experiences of CHSSs as they participate in their biblical studies class?	
<p>Descriptive Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The class begins with prayers as one student trickles in after the bell. Prayer is followed by a review of yesterday's assigned reading, Psalm 150...</i></li> </ul>	<p>Reflective Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>For most of the students, the prayer time seems tangible for them. One student seems to be searching for a prayer request only to echo the prayer request of the student before him...</i></li> </ul>
What religious symbols are present during the biblical studies class at this Christian high school?	
<p>Descriptive Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The classroom appears to be missing any overtly religious symbols. Most of the posters are academic, specifically language arts. This classroom would look very similar to a secular classroom...</i></li> </ul>	<p>Reflective Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It seems that this room is used for multiple subjects, biblical studies being one of them. The décor does not immediately draw one's attention towards God...</i></li> </ul>
What interactions are taking place during this biblical studies class at this Christian high school?	

<p>Descriptive Notes:</p> <p><i>Class begins with prayer as students voice their prayer requests and the teacher writes them on the board. Students take turns praying for one another's needs...</i></p>	<p>Reflective Notes:</p> <p><i>Student one voices their concern for a sick sibling. Student two asks for prayer for the upcoming calculus test in second period. Student one then interrupts student two and also asks for prayer for the test...</i></p>
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### Appendix G: Interview Protocol

School: *Ekahi CS*

Date of interview: *1/13/2016*

Start time of interview: *1:05 P.M.*

End time of interview: *2:10 P.M.*

Interviewer: *Lindon Kanakanui*

Location: *Library study room*

Participant/s: *Chad*

Warm-up Interview Questions:
1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you attended this school?
4. What is your email address?
5. What pseudonym or fake name would you like me to use when I write up the results of this study?
6. What are your favorite subjects or activities at school?
7. What things do you enjoy doing when you are not at school?

Main Interview Questions:
1. What does the word faith mean to you?
2. What would be the opposite of faith?

3. How does someone gain more faith or lose faith?
4. Throughout your high school career, what types of faith experiences have you had here at school and how have they affected you?
5. Without these faith development experiences, how would your life be different?
6. In what ways have you had encounters with God?
7. How have you relied upon or surrendered to God?
8. How would you describe your faith in comparison to the faith of your classmates and teachers?
9. In what ways do you express your faith?

Toning Down Interview Questions:
1. Now that you know that this study is about faith development, is there anything you can think of that I did not ask, but I should have?
2. Are there any questions you have for me about this study or about faith development?

### Appendix H: Focus Group Protocol

School: *Ekahi CS*

Date of focus group: *2/14/2016*

Start time of focus group: *9:00 A.M.*

End time of focus group: *10:00 A.M.*

Facilitator: *Lindon Kanakanui*

Location: *Library study room*

Participant/s: *Justin, Kylie, Nichole, and Sam*

Warm-up Focus Group Questions:
1. If I were a parent thinking about sending my child to this high school, what would you say?
2. What have been some of your most memorable experiences at this school?
3. What relationships with people at this school have had the greatest impact on your life?
4. What are some things that this school does really well and what are some areas that it could improve upon?

Main Focus Group Questions:
1. Each of you shared with me your definition of the word faith and your experiences here at school developing your faith. How does someone go about developing his or her faith?

2. If you could change anything about your faith development experiences here at school, what would it be?

3. I am assuming that the majority of students at this school are Christian, but not every student. How is that possible when you attend the same classes, the same chapel services, and listen to the same teachers?

4. Would your faith be any different if you had attended a different high school, and if so, how?

Toning Down Focus Group Questions:

1. Are there any questions you have about this study or about faith development?

### **Appendix I: Administrator Letter-Pilot Study**

Dear (*Principal/Headmaster*),

I am a doctoral student at Liberty University working on my dissertation, *The Faith Development Experiences of Christian High School Seniors*. This particular topic is essential to both my role as an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and as a parent of two Christian school students. I am often perplexed by the actions and thought processes exhibited by Christian school students. I cannot understand how a student who has attended a Christian school for most of his or her life, who has memorized numerous scriptures, who has participated in countless prayers, and has been immersed in this culture can in any way not choose to be like Christ. I would like to talk with you personally about possibly interviewing some of your students for a pilot study in preparation for a larger research study that I will be conducting.

In this pilot study, I would like to conduct one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four of your seniors, and one focus group with all four of them. The interviews and focus group will be audio and video recorded for accuracy. My primary goal for this pilot study is to ensure that my interview and focus group questions are clear and concise while able to provide rich and thorough responses from students regarding the Christian school experiences that affect faith development. Their responses will not be used in the actual study. Furthermore, any data that I receive during the pilot study will remain confidential and locked within a safe in my home. All participants and any named person/s or institution/s will be given a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. Lastly, I am happy to share with you and your school the findings of the full research study as it pertains to faith development within Christian schools.

I would only need about an hour of your time to discuss the pilot study. I am available after three o'clock most days and am willing to meet with you whenever and wherever is convenient for you. If I do not hear anything from you by next week, I will respectively try to get in touch with you through your administrative assistant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or myself, please do not hesitate to call me at (808) 295-0238 or email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindon P. Kananui

## **Appendix J: Parental Consent Form-Pilot Study**

### **Parental Consent Form for Participation in a Pilot Study for a Research Study**

Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Lindon Kanakanui

Liberty University

School of Education

Your child is invited to participate in a small pilot study in support of a larger research study on faith development. The purpose of this smaller pilot study is to test the accuracy and clarity of interview and focus group questions before the researcher, myself, engages in the actual study. Your child was selected as a possible participant because he or she has attended (*name of high school*) all 4 years of high school and he or she exhibits the characteristics of a Christian faith. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in this pilot study. Lindon Kanakanui, an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and a student at Liberty University's School of Education, is conducting this pilot study.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of the full research study is to better understand how seniors at a Christian high school experience developing their faith. Consequently, this pilot study is an indispensable tool to ensure that interview procedures accurately collect the desired information, faith development as experienced by Christian high school seniors.

#### **Procedures**

If you allow your child to participate in this pilot study, I will request the following things of him or her:

1. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview at school that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
2. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face focus group at school with three other students that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
3. Have the ability to send and receive email so that I can follow up with him or her afterwards to ensure that I have accurately documented his or her responses.

### **Risks and Benefits**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. If I become aware of any abuse or negligence on the part of an individual or institution, I am required to report it.

In regards to conducting a focus group, there is the risk that a participant may inadvertently share confidential information about other participants. As the researcher, I can encourage the other three focus group participants to maintain confidentiality, but I cannot guarantee it. The benefits from this research will not directly affect your child's faith development as a product of Christian education. However, this research may help Christian high schools better understand the phenomenon of faith development and how better to serve their students and society.

### **Compensation**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

### **Confidentiality**

All interview and focus group audio and video recordings and transcriptions will be kept under lock and key throughout this study and for three years following this study, at which time they



will be destroyed. I will be the only one who will have access to these items. Your child's identity, any named person/s, or any institution/s will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study, but instead pseudonyms will be used.

**Voluntary**

Allowing your child to participate in this pilot study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect current or future relations with Liberty University or (*name of high school*). Your child is free to not answer any question he or she wishes. Also, he or she may withdraw from the pilot study at any time if he or she chooses to without fear of repercussion.

**Withdraw from the Study**

If your child wishes to withdraw from the study, he or she may do so by notifying me by email ([mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com)). At which point, any data I have gathered from your child up to that point will be deleted and not used in the study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact me (Lindon Kanakanui) at my office at (808) 295-0238 or you may email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). If you are unable to contact me, you may also contact my research advisor: Dr. James Swezey at (434) 592-4903 or [jaswezey@liberty.edu](mailto:jaswezey@liberty.edu). If you would like to talk with someone other than the research advisor or myself, you are encouraged to contact Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

**Statement of Consent**

My child and I have read and understood the above information. Any questions I/we may have asked have been answered. I give my consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant/Minor:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix K: Adult Participant Consent Form**

### **Adult Participant Consent Form for Participation in Research Study**

Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Lindon Kanakanui

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to participate in a research study on faith development. You were selected as a possible participant because you have attended (*name of high school*) all 4 years of high school and you exhibit the characteristics of Christian faith. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study. Lindon Kanakanui, an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and a student at Liberty University's School of Education, is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to better understand how seniors at a Christian high school experience developing their faith.

#### **Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this study, I will request the following things of you:

1. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview at school that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
2. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face focus group at school with three other students that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.

3. Have the ability to send and receive email so that I can follow up with you afterwards to ensure that I have accurately documented your responses.

**Risks and Benefits**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. If I become aware of any abuse or negligence on the part of an individual or institution, I am required to report it. In regards to conducting a focus group, there is the risk that a participant may inadvertently share confidential information about other participants. As the researcher, I can encourage the other three focus group participants to maintain confidentiality, but I cannot guarantee it. The benefits from this research will not directly affect your faith development as a product of Christian education. However, this research may help Christian high schools better understand the phenomenon of faith development and how better to serve their students and society.

**Compensation**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All interview and focus group audio and video recordings and transcriptions will be kept under lock and key throughout this study and for three years following this study, at which time they will be destroyed. I will be the only one who will have access to these items. Your identity, any named person/s, or any institution/s will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study, but instead pseudonyms will be used.

**Voluntary**

Participating in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or (*name of high school*). You

are free to not answer any question you wish. Also, you may withdraw yourself from the study at any time if you choose to without fear of repercussion.

### **Withdraw from the Study**

If you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so by notifying me by email ([mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com)). At which point, any data I have gathered from you up to that point will be deleted and not used in the study.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact me (Lindon Kananui) at my office at (808) 295-0238 or you may email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). If you are unable to contact me, you may also contact my research advisor: Dr. James Swezey at (434) 592-4903 or [jaswezey@liberty.edu](mailto:jaswezey@liberty.edu). If you would like to talk with someone other than the research advisor or myself, you are encouraged to contact Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

### **Statement of Assent**

I have read and understood the above information. Any questions I may have asked have been answered. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix L: Adult Participant Consent Form-Pilot Study**

### **Adult Participant Consent Form for Participation in a Pilot Study for a Research Study**

Faith Development as Experienced by Christian High School Seniors

Lindon Kanakanui

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to participate in a small pilot study in support of a larger research study on faith development. The purpose of this smaller pilot study is to test the accuracy and clarity of interview and focus group questions before the researcher, myself, engages in the actual study. You were selected as a possible participant because you have attended (*name of high school*) all 4 years of high school and you exhibit the characteristics of a Christian faith. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this pilot study.

Lindon Kanakanui, an educator at Kaimuki Christian School and a student at Liberty University's School of Education, is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of the full research study is to better understand how seniors at a Christian high school experience developing their faith. Consequently, this pilot study is an indispensable tool to ensure that interview procedures accurately collect the desired information, faith development as experienced by Christian high school seniors.

#### **Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this pilot study, I will request the following things of you:

1. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face interview at school that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
2. Participation in a 60-90 minute face-to-face focus group at school with three other students that will be audio and video recorded for documentation purposes.
3. Have the ability to send and receive email so that I can follow up with you afterwards to ensure that I have accurately documented your responses.

**Risks and Benefits**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. If I become aware of any abuse or negligence on the part of an individual or institution, I am required to report it.

In regards to conducting a focus group, there is the risk that a participant may inadvertently share confidential information about other participants. As the researcher, I can encourage the other three focus group participants to maintain confidentiality, but I cannot guarantee it. The benefits from this research will not directly affect your faith development as a product of Christian education. However, this research may help Christian high schools better understand the phenomenon of faith development and how better to serve their students and society.

**Compensation**

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All interview and focus group audio and video recordings and transcriptions will be kept under lock and key throughout this study and for three years following this study, at which time they will be destroyed. I will be the only one who will have access to these items. Your identity, any

named person/s, or any institution/s will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study, but instead pseudonyms will be used.

**Voluntary**

Participating in this pilot study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or (*name of high school*). You are free to not answer any question you wish. Also, you may withdraw yourself from the pilot study at any time if you choose to without fear of repercussion.

**Withdraw from the Study**

If you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so by notifying me by email ([mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com)). At which point, any data I have gathered from you up to that point will be deleted and not used in the study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact me (Lindon Kananui) at my office at (808) 295-0238 or you may email me at [mr.kanakanui@gmail.com](mailto:mr.kanakanui@gmail.com). If you are unable to contact me, you may also contact my research advisor: Dr. James Swezey at (434) 592-4903 or [jaswezey@liberty.edu](mailto:jaswezey@liberty.edu). If you would like to talk with someone other than the research advisor or myself, you are encouraged to contact Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

**Statement of Assent**



I have read and understood the above information. Any questions I may have asked have been answered. I give my consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix M: Chapel Observation-Value Coding

Table 3

#### *Chapel Observation-Value Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Romantic Relationship	-	-	-	0	0.00
2	Real-Life Application	1	1	-	2	0.67
3	Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone	-	-	-	0	0.00
4	Evangelism	-	-	1	1	0.33
5	Relate to People	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Surface Christianity	-	-	-	0	0.00
7	Uncertainty of the future	-	1	-	1	0.33
8	Pursue a personal faith with God	-	-	1	1	0.33
9	Worship/Singing/ Music	1	1	-	2	0.67
10	Church	-	-	-	0	0.00
11	Bible Verses	1	-	1	2	0.67
12	Say all the right things	-	1	-	1	0.33
13	Change of Heart	-	-	-	0	0.00
14	Knowledge and Faith	1	-	3	4	1.33
15	Belief in Something	-	-	1	1	0.33
16	Trusting in God	-	-	1	1	0.33
17	God's Grand Design	1	-	-	1	0.33

18	Opposite of Faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
19	Searching	-	-	-	0	0.00
20	Truth	-	-	1	1	0.33
21	References to faith stages	-	-	-	0	0.00
22	We're Fallible Beings	1	-	-	1	0.33
23	Community of Faith	1	1	1	3	1.00
24	Encouragement	-	3	1	4	1.33
25	Accountability	-	3	1	4	1.33
26	Life altering experience hinders faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Life altering experience deepens faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
28	Faith in God	1	-	-	1	0.33
29	Bible Integrated Curriculum	1	1	1	3	1.00
30	Active Faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
31	Talk About God Outside of the Classroom	-	-	-	0	0.00
32	Christian friends	-	-	-	0	0.00
33	Talking with Teachers About Struggles	-	-	-	0	0.00
34	Teachers are more than just teachers	-	-	-	0	0.00
35	Life in a bubble	-	-	-	0	0.00
36	Christianity is All I've Ever Known	-	-	1	1	0.33
37	Leadership Opportunities	-	-	-	0	0.00
38	God working in you	-	-	-	0	0.00
39	Pressure to be successful at a Christian school	-	-	-	0	0.00
40	Same struggles as others	-	-	-	0	0.00

41	God is Talking	1	-	-	1	0.33
42	Teacher Faith	1	1	1	3	1.00
43	Expressions of faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
44	Relationship with God	-	-	-	0	0.00
45	Faith is Hope	-	-	-	0	0.00
46	Faith is The Foundation	1	-	-	1	0.33
47	Non-Christian Home	-	-	-	0	0.00
48	Talking with God	-	-	-	0	0.00
49	God is Over Everything	1	-	-	1	0.33
50	Integrity	-	-	-	0	0.00
51	Bad experience w/ school	2	2	-	4	1.33
52	Questions about faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
53	Fruit of the Spirit	-	-	-	0	0.00
54	Bible Class	-	-	-	0	0.00
55	God's love for us	1	-	-	1	0.33
56	Service to Others	-	-	-	0	0.00
57	Reference to Holy Spirit	-	-	1	1	0.33
58	Benefits of Christian schools	-	-	-	0	0.00
59	Pray for Others	1	1	1	3	1.00
60	Caring Teachers/Principals	1	1	1	3	1.00
61	Reading and understanding the Bible	2	-	3	5	1.67
62	Rely on God	-	-	-	0	0.00
63	Role Model for Friends	-	-	-	0	0.00

64	Love God	-	-	-	0	0.00
65	Treating Others with Love	-	-	-	0	0.00
66	Daily Devotion	-	-	2	2	0.67
67	Reference to Jesus	1	-	1	2	0.67
68	Predestined by God to Have Faith	-	-	-	0	0.00
69	Evidence of God	-	-	-	0	0.00
70	Reference Chapel	1	1	1	3	1.00
71	Individual Prayer	1	1	1	3	1.00
72	Christians experience trials	-	1	-	1	0.33
73	Faith is an all or nothing concept	-	-	-	0	0.00
74	Missions/Camps/Trips/Spiritual Emphasis Week	-	-	-	0	0.00
75	Public school	-	-	-	0	0.00
76	For God's glory	1	-	-	1	0.33
Total Codes		24	20	26		

### Appendix N: Classroom Observation-Value Coding

Table 4

#### *Classroom Observation-Value Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Romantic Relationship	-	-	-	0	0
2	Real-Life Application	1	3	1	5	1.67
3	Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone	1	-	-	1	0.33
4	Evangelism	-	-	-	0	0
5	Relate to People	1	1	1	3	1
6	Surface Christianity	-	-	-	0	0
7	Uncertainty of the Future	1	1	1	3	1
8	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	-	-	-	0	0
9	Worship/Singing/ Music	-	-	-	0	0
10	Church	-	-	-	0	0
11	Bible Verses	-	1	-	1	0.33
12	Say all the Right Things	-	-	-	0	0
13	Change of Heart	-	-	-	0	0
14	Knowledge and Faith	-	1	1	2	0.67
15	Belief in Something	-	-	-	0	0
16	Trusting in God	1	-	1	2	0.67
17	God's Grand Design	-	-	-	0	0
18	Opposite of Faith	-	-	-	0	0
19	Searching	-	1	1	2	0.67

20	Truth	-	1	1	2	0.67
21	Reference to Faith Stages	-	-	-	0	0
22	We're Fallible Beings	-	1	1	2	0.67
23	Community of Faith	1	1	1	3	1
24	Encouragement	1	-	-	1	0.33
25	Accountability	-	-	-	0	0
26	Life Altering Experience Hinders Faith	-	-	-	0	0
27	Life Altering Experience Deepens Faith	-	-	-	0	0
28	Faith in God	-	-	1	1	0.33
29	Bible Integrated Curriculum	1	1	1	3	1
30	Active Faith	-	-	-	0	0
31	Talk About God Outside of the Classroom	-	-	-	0	0
32	Christian Friends	-	-	-	0	0
33	Talking with Teachers About Struggles	-	1	-	1	0.33
34	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	1	-	1	2	0.67
35	Life in a Bubble	-	-	-	0	0
36	Christianity is All I've Ever Known	-	-	-	0	0
37	Leadership Opportunities	-	-	-	0	0
38	God Working in You	-	-	-	0	0
39	Pressure to be Successful at a Christian School	-	-	-	0	0
40	Same Struggles as Others	-	1	1	2	0.67
41	God is Talking	-	-	-	0	0

42	Teacher Faith	1	1	1	3	1
43	Expressions of faith	-	-	-	0	0
44	Relationship with God	-	-	-	0	0
45	Faith is Hope	-	-	-	0	0
46	Faith is The Foundation	-	-	-	0	0
47	Non-Christian Home	-	-	-	0	0
48	Talking with God	-	-	-	0	0
49	God is Over Everything	-	-	-	0	0
50	Integrity	-	-	-	0	0
51	Bad Experience with School	-	-	-	0	0
52	Questions About Faith	1	2	2	5	1.67
53	Fruit of the Spirit	-	-	-	0	0
54	Bible Class	-	1	1	2	0.67
55	God's Love for Us	1	1	1	3	1
56	Service to Others	-	-	-	0	0
57	Reference to Holy Spirit	-	-	1	1	0.33
58	Benefits of Christian Schools	-	-	-	0	0
59	Pray for Others	1	1	1	3	1
60	Caring Teachers/Principals	1	1	1	3	1
61	Reading and Understanding the Bible	-	1	1	2	0.67
62	Rely on God	-	-	-	0	0
63	Role Model for Friends	-	-	-	0	0
64	Love God	-	-	-	0	0



65	Treating Others with Love	-	-	-	0	0
66	Daily Devotion	-	-	-	0	0
67	Reference to Jesus	-	1	-	1	0.33
68	Predestined by God to Have Faith	-	-	-	0	0
69	Evidence of God	-	-	-	0	0
70	Reference Chapel	-	-	-	0	0
71	Individual Prayer	1	1	1	3	1
72	Christians Experience Trials	1	1	1	3	1
73	Faith is an All or Nothing Concept	-	-	-	0	0
74	Missions/Camps/Trips/Spiritual Emphasis Week	-	-	-	0	0
75	Public School	-	-	-	0	0
76	For God's Glory	-	-	-	0	0
Total Codes		16	25	24		

### Appendix O: Interview-Value Coding-1<sup>st</sup> Cycle

Table 5

#### *Interview-Value Coding-1st Cycle*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Things That I'm Not Good At	2	1	-	3	1
2	Romantic Relationship	4	-	2	6	2
3	Real-Life Application	6	7	2	15	5
4	Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone	12	1	-	13	4.33
5	Evangelism	7	-	-	7	2.33
6	Be a Friend	3	-	-	3	1
7	Relate to People	5	2	-	7	2.33
8	Surface Christian	1	-	-	1	0.33
9	Preparation to Leave High School	2	2	-	4	1.33
10	Go Deeper/Pursue Faith	12	4	3	19	6.33
11	Worship	4	2	2	8	2.67
12	Church	9	6	3	18	6
13	Youth Group	1	-	1	2	0.67
14	Singing	1	-	1	2	0.67
15	Bible Verses	2	1	2	5	1.67
16	Bible Stories	3	-	-	3	1
17	Say the Appropriate Things	3	4	2	9	3
18	Attribute Faith To...	1	-	-	1	0.33
19	What I Thought I Knew	2	-	-	2	0.67

20	Fancy Sounding Prayer	1	-	-	1	0.33
21	Revelation	5	1	-	6	2
22	Everything Kind of Clicked	-	1	-	1	0.33
23	Knowledge and Faith	1	3	2	6	2
24	Belief in Something	3	7	7	17	5.67
25	Head Knowledge	4	-	1	5	1.67
26	Trusting	16	3	2	21	7
27	Higher Power	5	-	-	5	1.67
28	God's Grand Design	6	3	3	12	4
29	Uncertain Future	4	-	3	7	2.33
30	Opposite of Faith=Doubt	2	-	8	10	3.33
31	Searching	2	-	-	2	0.67
32	Truth	4	1	-	5	1.67
33	Dipping into Different Things	1	-	-	1	0.33
34	Confidence	2	-	-	2	0.67
35	Wandering	2	-	-	2	0.67
36	We Can't Have the Strongest Faith All the Time	1	-	-	1	0.33
37	We're Fallible Beings	1	1	-	2	0.67
38	Foundation for Your Faith	2	1	2	5	1.67
39	Surrender	2	1	1	4	1.33
40	Pushing Yourself Further	1	-	-	1	0.33
41	Community of Faith	10	5	4	19	6.33
42	Encouragement	7	7	16	30	10

43	Accountability	10	3	8	21	7
44	Separating Yourself from Church	1	-	-	1	0.33
45	Life Altering Experience	3	3	5	11	3.67
46	Faith in God	12	4	2	18	6
47	Strong Faith	3	2	1	6	2
48	Bible Integrated Curriculum	6	-	4	10	3.33
49	School Prayer	2	-	-	2	0.67
50	Blind Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33
51	How Small I Am	1	-	1	2	0.67
52	Active Faith	6	7	2	15	5
53	Talk About God Outside of the Classroom	5	1	2	8	2.67
54	Talk About Church in the Classroom	1	-	-	1	0.33
55	Friends Grow Spiritually	6	5	4	15	5
56	Talking with Friends About Struggles	4	1	1	6	2
57	Talking with Teachers About Struggles	5	-	-	5	1.67
59	Asking Teachers for Help	4	2	4	10	3.33
60	Teacher as Coach	2	1	-	3	1
61	Teacher as Mentor	2	7	6	15	5
62	Teacher as Counselor	2	1	1	4	1.33
63	Privileged Community of Faith	2	1	1	4	1.33
64	In a Bubble	2	2	1	5	1.67
65	Complacent Christianity	1	-	1	2	0.67
66	Skimming-By Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33

67	Compartmentalized Faith	2	-	-	2	0.67
68	Bible & History	2	-	2	4	1.33
69	Christianity is All I've Ever Known	2	1	1	4	1.33
70	Leadership Opportunities	7	11	-	18	6
71	Change of Heart	2	2	3	7	2.33
72	Patience	2	2	-	4	1.33
73	God is Working on Us	5	2	2	9	3
74	Pressure to Perform Academically	5	-	1	6	2
75	Feeling of Having It All Together	1	-	-	1	0.33
76	Same Struggles as Others	5	1	-	6	2
77	Parent Expectations	1	-	-	1	0.33
78	It's OK to Not Be Perfect	2	-	-	2	0.67
79	God Given Ability	1	-	-	1	0.33
80	Hone My Skills	1	-	-	1	0.33
81	Levels of Faith	1	3	3	7	2.33
82	Education and Experience	2	1	-	3	1
83	Discernment	1	-	-	1	0.33
84	God is Talking	7	3	5	15	5
85	Christian Friends	5	5	-	10	3.33
86	Teacher Denominations	1	-	-	1	0.33
87	Teacher Faith Manifested Differently	1	-	-	1	0.33
88	Teachers Have an Older Mature Faith	5	-	2	7	2.33
89	Apologetics Teacher	2	-	-	2	0.67

90	Faith Expressed Through Worship	2	-	-	2	0.67
91	Faith Expressed Through Leadership	2	-	-	2	0.67
92	Faith Discussions	3	-	-	3	1
93	Forced Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33
94	Learn on Their Own	1	-	-	1	0.33
95	Heart Knowledge	3	2	-	5	1.67
96	Passion of Faith	1	1	-	2	0.67
97	Relationship with God	4	7	2	13	4.33
98	Cultivating Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33
99	Peers Growing Together	6	-	-	6	2
100	Discipleship	2	-	-	2	0.67
101	Faith is Hope	4	-	2	6	2
102	Faith is The Foundation	5	1	-	6	2
103	Faith Guides Everything	2	1	-	3	1
104	Giving Up Control	1	-	-	1	0.33
105	Non-Christian Home	2	-	3	5	1.67
106	Rough Home Life	2	-	-	2	0.67
107	Talking with God	4	1	2	7	2.33
108	Opposite of Faith=Perfectionism	1	-	-	1	0.33
109	Obedience	2	-	-	2	0.67
110	God is Over Everything	4	1	1	6	2
111	Integrity	2	-	1	3	1
112	Hypocrite	1	-	4	5	1.67

113	Separating Yourself from God	1	1	2	4	1.33
114	Didn't Want to Go to Christian School	1	1	-	2	0.67
115	Bad Experience in the Past	4	-	-	4	1.33
116	Faith Questions Answered	6	2	4	12	4
117	Faith Questions Were Not Answered	2	2	-	4	1.33
118	Joy	1	-	-	1	0.33
119	Christian College	2	-	2	4	1.33
120	Bible Class	4	5	4	13	4.33
121	Arguing with God	2	-	-	2	0.67
122	God Accepts Us as We Are	2	-	-	2	0.67
123	I Would Have Made More Mistakes	4	2	2	8	2.67
124	I Would Have Abandoned My Faith	1	-	1	2	0.67
124	Problems with Self-Image	1	-	-	1	0.33
125	God Loves Us	2	3	-	5	1.67
126	Disagreements with Parents	1	-	-	1	0.33
127	Feelings of Responsibility for the Faith of Others	1	-	-	1	0.33
128	Undeserved Blessings	1	2	2	5	1.67
129	Service to Others	7	3	3	13	4.33
130	Reciprocating Love	1	-	-	1	0.33
131	Pressure to Follow the World's Ways	2	5	5	12	4
132	Quoting Scripture	1	1	2	4	1.33
133	Reference to Holy Spirit	5	-	1	6	2
134	Benefits of Studying Other Religions	1	-	2	3	1

135	Friends Who Have Fallen Away	2	-	-	2	0.67
136	Sports	2	-	1	3	1
137	Listen to Music	2	-	2	4	1.33
138	Strengthened My Faith	1	-	3	4	1.33
139	Pray for Others	2	1	9	12	4
140	Letting Go of Yourself	1	-	-	1	0.33
141	Allowing God to Work/Speak Through You	1	-	3	4	1.33
142	Opposite of Faith=Not Trusting	2	3	3	8	2.67
143	Feelings of Inadequacy	1	-	-	1	0.33
144	Opposite of Faith=Not Trusting Self	1	-	-	1	0.33
145	Humble	2	2	1	5	1.67
146	Humor	1	-	-	1	0.33
147	Sense of Senior Urgency	1	-	1	2	0.67
148	Caring Teachers/Principals	9	8	9	26	8.67
149	Given Time to Develop Spiritually	1	-	-	1	0.33
150	Sharing God with Non-Christians	1	3	3	7	2.33
151	Reading the Bible	4	9	7	20	6.67
152	Step of Faith	1	-	1	2	0.67
153	Rely on God	1	3	5	9	3
154	God's There for You	1	1	2	4	1.33
155	Role Model for Friends	3	6	1	10	3.33
156	Know What We Believe	1	2	2	5	1.67
157	Love God	2	-	1	3	1



158	Pursue God	2	1	3	6	2
159	Treating Others with Love	5	3	3	11	3.67
160	Attend Christian School only for Academics	1	-	-	1	0.33
161	Return to God	1	-	-	1	0.33
162	Daily Devotion	3	4	5	12	4
163	Immersed in a Jesus Culture	1	1	-	2	0.67
164	Reference to Jesus	2	4	-	6	2
165	Reference to Savior	1	1	-	2	0.67
166	Reference to Redeemer	1	-	-	1	0.33
167	Opposite of Faith-Depression	1	-	-	1	0.33
168	Opposite of Faith-Futility	2	-	-	2	0.67
169	Opposite of Faith-No Hope	1	-	-	1	0.33
170	Opposite of Faith-Directionless	1	-	-	1	0.33
171	Opposite of Faith-Emptiness	3	-	-	3	1
172	Predestined by God to Have Faith	1	-	2	3	1
173	Recognizing God	1	-	-	1	0.33
174	To Commit One's Life to God	1	2	-	3	1
175	Refusal to Follow God	1	1	-	2	0.67
176	Opportunity to Participate in Everything at a Small School	3	-	-	3	1
177	Reference Chapel	1	10	-	11	3.67
178	Individual Prayer	1	2	7	10	3.33
179	Stress	2	-	3	5	1.67
180	Sunday School	1	-	-	1	0.33

181	God and Science	1	-	-	1	0.33
182	God and Math	1	-	-	1	0.33
183	Faith Expressed Through Writing	1	-	-	1	0.33
184	Faith Expressed Through Art	1	-	-	1	0.33
185	Teachers as Friends	2	-	-	2	0.67
186	School Pride	1	-	-	1	0.33
187	Values and Morals	1	1	-	2	0.67
188	It's OK to Make Mistakes	1	2	-	3	1
189	Problems with Christian schools	1	3	-	4	1.33
190	Shared Resources with Churches	1	-	-	1	0.33
191	Faith is Something You Do or Don't Have	-	3	2	5	1.67
192	Christian Home	-	3	2	5	1.67
193	Faith Expressed Through Hard Work	-	2	-	2	0.67
194	Trials Hinder Faith	-	1	-	1	0.33
195	Miracle	-	2	-	2	0.67
196	Testimony	-	3	1	4	1.33
197	Missions/Camps/Trips/Spiritual Emphasis Week	-	4	3	7	2.33
198	Less Friends at Public School	-	2	-	2	0.67
199	Actions of Non-Believer	-	2	1	3	1
200	He Washes Away Our Sins	-	1	-	1	0.33
201	For God's Glory	-	1	-	1	0.33
202	Opposite of Faith – Ignorance	-	1	-	1	0.33
203	Opposite of Faith – Disbelief	-	1	5	6	2

204	Experience God	-	3	-	3	1
205	Christians Experience Sorrow	-	2	1	3	1
206	School Does Not Provide as Many Opportunities to Grow Spiritually	-	3	-	3	1
207	Christian Elementary School is a Good Foundation	-	1	2	3	1
208	Christian High School; You Better Know What You Believe Before High School	-	2	-	2	0.67
209	Legalistic	-	1	-	1	0.33
210	Bad Experience with Teachers	-	2	1	3	1
211	Christian School is Expensive	-	1	-	1	0.33
212	Forced to Mature at a Public School	-	1	-	1	0.33
213	Schools Should Offer Small Groups	-	-	2	2	0.67
214	Ask for Forgiveness	-	-	1	1	0.33
215	Social Media	-	-	1	1	0.33
216	Misinformed Teachers	-	-	1	1	0.33
Total Codes		507	291	275		

### Appendix P: Interview-Value Coding-2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle

Table 6

#### *Interview-Value Coding-2nd Cycle*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Romantic Relationship	3	-	2	5	1.67
2	Real-Life Application	4	5	1	10	3.33
3	Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone	12	1	-	13	4.33
4	Evangelism	9	3	3	15	5
5	Relate to People	8	5	-	13	4.33
6	Surface Christianity	11	-	4	15	5
7	Uncertainty of the Future	9	1	4	14	4.67
8	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	15	6	1	22	7.33
9	Worship/Singing/ Music	5	1	3	9	3
10	Church	12	5	3	20	6.67
11	Bible Verses	1	1	4	6	2
12	Say all the Right Things	7	2	-	9	3
13	Change of Heart	12	7	3	22	7.33
14	Knowledge and Faith	12	3	4	19	6.33
15	Belief in Something	4	9	9	22	7.33
16	Trusting in God	2	4	2	8	2.67
17	God's Grand Design	4	3	1	8	2.67
18	Opposite of Faith	16	5	8	29	9.67
19	Searching	8	5	3	16	5.33

20	Truth	5	1	-	6	2
21	Reference to Faith Stages	8	4	-	12	4
22	We're Fallible Beings	8	1	1	10	3.33
23	Community of Faith	10	4	2	16	5.33
24	Encouragement	14	8	10	32	10.67
25	Accountability	11	2	4	17	5.67
26	Life Altering Experience Hinders Faith	2	1	-	3	1
27	Life Altering Experience Deepens Faith	4	4	2	10	3.33
28	Faith in God	12	4	2	18	6
29	Bible Integrated Curriculum	12	-	4	16	5.33
30	Active Faith	5	7	2	14	4.67
31	Talk About God Outside of the Classroom	3	1	2	6	2
32	Christian Friends	7	4	4	15	5
33	Talking with Teachers About Struggles	6	2	3	11	3.67
34	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	7	6	6	19	6.33
35	Life in a Bubble	1	1	-	2	0.67
36	Christianity is All I've Ever Known	2	2	2	6	2
37	Leadership Opportunities	7	6	-	13	4.33
38	God Working in You	14	3	5	22	7.33
39	Pressure to be Successful at a Christian School	5	-	1	6	2
40	Same Struggles as Others	6	1	-	7	2.33
41	God is Talking	7	3	5	15	5

42	Teacher Faith	7	-	2	9	3
43	Expressions of faith	6	2	1	9	3
44	Relationship with God	3	6	2	11	3.67
45	Faith is Hope	4	-	2	6	2
46	Faith is The Foundation	7	1	-	8	2.67
47	Non-Christian Home	4	-	-	4	1.33
48	Talking with God	4	1	2	7	2.33
49	God is Over Everything	4	1	1	6	2
50	Integrity	1	-	-	1	0.33
51	Bad Experience with School	7	1	4	12	4
52	Questions About Faith	5	2	2	9	3
53	Fruit of the Spirit	2	4	1	7	2.33
54	Bible Class	5	4	4	13	4.33
55	God's Love for Us	5	5	1	11	3.67
56	Service to Others	6	3	-	9	3
57	Reference to Holy Spirit	4	-	1	5	1.67
58	Benefits of Christian Schools	1	-	3	4	1.33
59	Pray for Others	1	1	7	9	3
60	Caring Teachers/Principals	4	4	7	15	5
61	Reading and Understanding the Bible	4	9	7	20	6.67
62	Rely on God	2	4	6	12	4
63	Role Model for Friends	2	5	1	8	2.67
64	Love God	3	1	4	8	2.67

65	Treating Others with Love	5	3	3	11	3.67
66	Daily Devotion	3	4	3	10	3.33
67	Reference to Jesus	1	5	-	6	2
68	Predestined by God to Have Faith	1	-	2	3	1
69	Evidence of God	1	9	1	11	3.67
70	Reference Chapel	1	9	-	10	3.33
71	Individual Prayer	3	2	7	12	4
72	Christians Experience Trials	2	2	1	5	1.67
73	Faith is an All or Nothing Concept	-	3	1	4	1.33
74	Missions/Camps/Trips/Spiritual Emphasis Week	-	3	2	5	1.67
75	Public School	-	2	-	2	0.67
76	For God's Glory	-	1	-	1	0.33
<hr/> Total Codes		418	228	188	<hr/>	

### Appendix Q: Focus Group-Value Coding

Table 7

#### *Focus Group-Value Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Romantic Relationship	-	1	-	1	0.33
2	Real-Life Application	2	2	1	5	1.67
3	Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone	-	-	-	0	0
4	Evangelism	-	-	-	0	0
5	Relate to People	3	2	-	5	1.67
6	Surface Christianity	-	-	1	1	0.33
7	Uncertainty of the Future	-	1	1	2	0.67
8	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	2	1	2	5	1.67
9	Worship/Singing/ Music	-	1	2	3	1
10	Church	-	1	1	2	0.67
11	Bible Verses	-	1	-	1	0.33
12	Say all the Right Things	-	2	2	4	1.33
13	Change of Heart	-	-	1	1	0.33
14	Knowledge and Faith	-	1	1	2	0.67
15	Belief in Something	-	-	-	0	0
16	Trusting in God	-	-	2	2	0.67
17	God's Grand Design	2	-	2	4	1.33
18	Opposite of Faith	-	-	8	8	2.67
19	Searching	1	2	4	7	2.33



20	Truth	1	-	-	1	0.33
21	Reference to Faith Stages	-	-	3	3	1
22	We're Fallible Beings	-	2	1	3	1
23	Community of Faith	3	3	3	9	3
24	Encouragement	3	-	6	9	3
25	Accountability	3	1	5	9	3
26	Life Altering Experience Hinders Faith	-	-	-	0	0
27	Life Altering Experience Deepens Faith	-	-	3	3	1
28	Faith in God	-	-	-	0	0
29	Bible Integrated Curriculum	1	-	3	4	1.33
30	Active Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33
31	Talk About God Outside of the Classroom	2	-	-	2	0.67
32	Christian Friends	2	1	-	3	1
33	Talking with Teachers About Struggles	2	-	1	3	1
34	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	3	3	1	7	2.33
35	Life in a Bubble	1	1	1	3	1
36	Christianity is All I've Ever Known	-	2	1	3	1
37	Leadership Opportunities	-	5	-	5	1.67
38	God Working in You	-	-	-	0	0
39	Pressure to be Successful at a Christian School	1	-	-	1	0.33
40	Same Struggles as Others	-	-	-	0	0
41	God is Talking	-	-	-	0	0

42	Teacher Faith	1	-	-	1	0.33
43	Expressions of faith	-	-	-	0	0
44	Relationship with God	1	1	-	2	0.67
45	Faith is Hope	-	-	-	0	0
46	Faith is The Foundation	-	-	-	0	0
47	Non-Christian Home	1	-	3	4	1.33
48	Talking with God	-	-	-	0	0
49	God is Over Everything	-	-	-	0	0
50	Integrity	-	-	-	0	0
51	Bad Experience with School	2	16	1	19	6.33
52	Questions About Faith	1	-	2	3	1
53	Fruit of the Spirit	2	-	-	2	0.67
54	Bible Class	-	1	-	1	0.33
55	God's Love for Us	-	-	1	1	0.33
56	Service to Others	1	-	3	4	1.33
57	Reference to Holy Spirit	1	-	-	1	0.33
58	Benefits of Christian Schools	4	1	1	6	2
59	Pray for Others	1	-	2	3	1
60	Caring Teachers/Principals	5	5	2	12	4
61	Reading and Understanding the Bible	1	-	-	1	0.33
62	Rely on God	-	-	1	1	0.33
63	Role Model for Friends	1	1	-	2	0.67
64	Love God	1	-	-	1	0.33

65	Treating Others with Love	1	-	-	1	0.33
66	Daily Devotion	-	-	2	2	0.67
67	Reference to Jesus	3	-	-	3	1
68	Predestined by God to Have Faith	-	-	-	0	0
69	Evidence of God	-	-	-	0	0
70	Reference Chapel	-	1	-	1	0.33
71	Individual Prayer	-	-	-	0	0
72	Christians Experience Trials	-	-	-	0	0
73	Faith is an All or Nothing Concept	-	-	1	1	0.33
74	Missions/Camps/Trips/Spiritual Emphasis Week	-	1	1	2	0.67
75	Public School	-	1	-	1	0.33
76	For God's Glory	-	-	-	0	0
Total Codes		60	61	76		

### Appendix R: Chapel Observation-Emotion Coding

Table 8

#### *Chapel Observation-Emotion Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Personal Love for God	-	-	-	0	0.00
2	Personal Hope in God	-	-	-	0	0.00
3	Personal Love for Others	-	-	-	0	0.00
4	Others Showing Love	1	1	1	3	1.00
5	Others Showing Courage	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Personal Fear	-	-	-	0	0.00
7	Reference to Being Emotional	-	-	-	0	0.00
8	Others excited for spiritual things	1	1	1	3	1.00
9	Others Showing Confidence	1	1	1	3	1.00
10	Personal self-conscious	-	-	-	0	0.00
11	Personal Pride for Others	-	-	-	0	0.00
12	Personal Happiness	-	-	-	0	0.00
13	Personal Disgust	-	-	-	0	0.00
14	Others are Upset	-	-	-	0	0.00
15	Personal Confidence	-	-	-	0	0.00
16	Personal Sadness	-	-	-	0	0.00
17	Personal Humility	-	-	-	0	0.00

18	God Loves Us	-	-	-	0	0.00
19	Others Loving God	1	1	1	3	1.00
20	Others Showing Apathy	1	1	1	3	1.00
21	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	-	-	-	0	0.00
22	Personal Anger	-	-	-	0	0.00
23	Personal Empathy	-	-	-	0	0.00
24	Others Showing Sadness	-	-	-	0	0.00
25	Personal Apathy	1	1	1	3	1.00
26	Personal Peace	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Personal Lack of Emotion	-	-	-	0	0.00
28	Personal Penitence	-	-	-	0	0.00
29	Laughter	1	1	1	3	1.00
30	Personal Feeling of Gratitude	-	-	-	0	0.00
31	Others Showing Fear	-	-	-	0	0.00
Total Codes		7	7	7		

### Appendix S: Classroom Observation-Emotion Coding

Table 9

#### *Classroom Observation-Emotion Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Personal Love for God	-	-	-	0	0.00
2	Personal Hope in God	-	-	-	0	0.00
3	Personal Love for Others	1	-	-	1	0.33
4	Others Showing Love	1	1	1	3	1.00
5	Others Showing Courage	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Personal Fear	-	-	-	0	0.00
7	Reference to Being Emotional	1	-	-	1	0.33
8	Others excited for spiritual things	1	1	1	3	1.00
9	Others Showing Confidence	1	1	1	3	1.00
10	Personal self-conscious	-	-	-	0	0.00
11	Personal Pride for Others	-	-	-	0	0.00
12	Personal Happiness	1	1	1	3	1.00
13	Personal Disgust	-	-	-	0	0.00
14	Others are Upset	-	-	-	0	0.00
15	Personal Confidence	1	1	1	3	1.00
16	Personal Sadness	1	-	-	1	0.33
17	Personal Humility	-	-	-	0	0.00

18	God Loves Us	-	-	-	0	0.00
19	Others Loving God	1	1	1	3	1.00
20	Others Showing Apathy	-	1	1	2	0.67
21	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	-	-	-	0	0.00
22	Personal Anger	-	-	-	0	0.00
23	Personal Empathy	-	-	-	0	0.00
24	Others Showing Sadness	1	-	-	1	0.33
25	Personal Apathy	-	-	-	0	0.00
26	Personal Peace	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Personal Lack of Emotion	-	-	-	0	0.00
28	Personal Penitence	-	-	-	0	0.00
29	Laughter	1	1	1	3	1.00
30	Personal Feeling of Gratitude	-	-	-	0	0.00
31	Others Showing Fear	-	-	-	0	0.00
Total Codes		11	8	8		

### Appendix T: Interview-Emotion Coding

Table 10

#### *Interview-Emotion Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Personal Love for God	4	-	1	5	1.67
2	Personal Hope in God	5	3	5	13	4.33
3	Personal Love for Others	10	7	6	23	7.67
4	Others Showing Love	8	2	7	17	5.67
5	Others Showing Courage	1	-	-	1	0.33
6	Personal Fear	16	1	3	20	6.67
7	Reference to Being Emotional	2	-	-	2	0.67
8	Others excited for spiritual things	7	-	-	7	2.33
9	Others Showing Confidence	5	-	1	6	2.00
10	Personal self-conscious	-	2	1	3	1.00
11	Personal Pride for Others	1	2	-	3	1.00
12	Personal Happiness	3	8	2	13	4.33
13	Personal Disgust	3	1	2	6	2.00
14	Others are Upset	1	-	2	3	1.00
15	Personal Confidence	3	-	3	6	2.00
16	Personal Sadness	5	7	5	17	5.67
17	Personal Humility	5	3	3	11	3.67



18	God Loves Us	7	4	1	12	4.00
19	Others Loving God	1	-	2	3	1.00
20	Others Showing Apathy	1	1	-	2	0.67
21	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	6	4	7	17	5.67
22	Personal Anger	2	2	1	5	1.67
23	Personal Empathy	2	1	-	3	1.00
24	Others Showing Sadness	1	3	1	5	1.67
25	Personal Apathy	2	-	2	4	1.33
26	Personal Peace	-	1	4	5	1.67
27	Personal Lack of Emotion	-	1	-	1	0.33
28	Personal Penitence	-	-	1	1	0.33
29	Laughter	59	46	24	129	43.00
30	Personal Feeling of Gratitude	-	-	-	0	0.00
31	Others Showing Fear	-	-	-	0	0.00
Total Codes		160	99	84		

### Appendix U: Focus Group-Emotion Coding

Table 11

#### *Focus Group-Emotion Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Personal Love for God	1	-	-	1	0.33
2	Personal Hope in God	1	-	1	2	0.67
3	Personal Love for Others	6	-	-	6	2.00
4	Others Showing Love	5	1	1	7	2.33
5	Others Showing Courage	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Personal Fear	1	-	-	1	0.33
7	Reference to Being Emotional	3	-	-	3	1.00
8	Others excited for spiritual things	-	1	3	4	1.33
9	Others Showing Confidence	1	-	-	1	0.33
10	Personal self-conscious	-	1	-	1	0.33
11	Personal Pride for Others	-	-	-	0	0.00
12	Personal Happiness	7	2	4	13	4.33
13	Personal Disgust	2	11	3	16	5.33
14	Others are Upset	2	2	-	4	1.33
15	Personal Confidence	1	1	-	2	0.67
16	Personal Sadness	3	1	-	4	1.33
17	Personal Humility	4	-	2	6	2.00

18	God Loves Us	1	1	-	2	0.67
19	Others Loving God	-	-	-	0	0.00
20	Others Showing Apathy	3	3	1	7	2.33
21	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	2	2	1	5	1.67
22	Personal Anger	1	-	-	1	0.33
23	Personal Empathy	-	-	-	0	0.00
24	Others Showing Sadness	-	-	-	0	0.00
25	Personal Apathy	1	-	-	1	0.33
26	Personal Peace	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Personal Lack of Emotion	-	-	-	0	0.00
28	Personal Penitence	-	-	-	0	0.00
29	Laughter	40	23	13	76	25.33
30	Personal Feeling of Gratitude	1	-	-	1	0.33
31	Others Showing Fear	-	1	-	1	0.33
Total Codes		86	50	29		

### Appendix V: Chapel Observation-In Vivo Coding

Table 12

#### *Chapel Observation-In Vivo Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Accountable/Accountability	-	11	-	11	3.67
2	Belief/Believe/Believing/Believer/ Unbeliever/Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	1	1	9	11	3.67
3	Bible	2	1	54	57	19.00
4	Bless/Blessed/Blessing	-	-	-	0	0.00
5	Bubble	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Care/Cared/Caring	-	-	-	0	0.00
7	Challenge/Challenged/Challenging	-	-	-	0	0.00
8	Chapel	-	-	-	0	0.00
9	Christ	6	-	10	16	5.33

10	Church	-	-	7	7	2.33
11	Comfort/Comforted/Comfortable/ Comfortably/Comforting/ Uncomfortable	-	-	-	0	0.00
12	Community	-	-	1	1	0.33
13	Deep/Deeper	-	-	2	2	0.67
14	Devotion/Devo's	-	-	-	0	0.00
15	Encourage/Encouraging/ Encouragement/Encourager	-	5	4	9	3.00
16	Example/Examples	-	-	-	0	0.00
17	Experience/Experienced/ Experiences	-	-	-	0	0.00
18	Foundation	-	-	1	1	0.33
19	Friend/Friends/Friendly/Friendship	-	4	1	5	1.67
20	God	25	6	25	56	18.67
21	Grow/Grown/Grows/Growth/ Growing	-	-	1	1	0.33
22	Heart/Wholeheartedly	-	2	9	11	3.67

23	Help/Helped/Helping/Helper/Helpful	2	-	-	2	0.67
24	Hope/Hoped/Hoping/Hopefully	-	-	1	1	0.33
25	Jesus	10	3	14	27	9.00
26	Lead/Leadership/Leading/Leader	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Learn/Learned/Learning	-	-	6	6	2.00
28	Love/Loved/Loving/Lovely	2	4	7	13	4.33
29	Message/Messages	-	-	-	0	0.00
30	Model/Modeled/Modeling	-	-	1	1	0.33
31	Not Scared	-	-	-	0	0.00
32	Pastor	-	-	3	3	1.00
33	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	4	3	14	21	7.00
34	Power	3	1	-	4	1.33
35	Question/Questioned/Questioning	1	-	2	3	1.00

36	Real	-	11	2	13	4.33
37	Relate/Relation/Relationship/ Relatable	-	-	1	1	0.33
38	Religion/Religious	-	-	-	0	0.00
39	Saved/Unsaved/Salvation	1	-	-	1	0.33
40	Scary/Scared	-	-	-	0	0.00
41	Serve/Served/Serving/Service/ Servant	-	-	1	1	0.33
42	Shelter	-	-	-	0	0.00
43	Spirit	1	-	4	5	1.67
44	Spiritual/Spiritually	-	1	3	4	1.33
45	Strong/Stronger/Strongest	-	1	-	1	0.33
46	Teach/Taught/Teaching/Teacher	1	-	13	14	4.67
47	Trial/Trials	-	3	-	3	1.00
48	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/Entrust/ Distrust	-	-	4	4	1.33





### Appendix W: Classroom Observation-In Vivo Coding

Table 13

#### *Classroom Observation-In Vivo Coding*

---

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Accountable/Accountability	-	-	-	0	0.00
2	Belief/Believe/Believing/Believer/ Unbeliever/Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	4	-	1	5	1.67
3	Bible	-	7	3	10	3.33
4	Bless/Blessed/Blessing	-	-	-	0	0.00
5	Bubble	-	-	-	0	0.00
6	Care/Cared/Caring	-	-	-	0	0.00
7	Challenge/Challenged/Challenging	-	-	1	1	0.33
8	Chapel	-	-	-	0	0.00
9	Christ	-	-	-	0	0.00

10	Church	-	-	-	0	0.00
11	Comfort/Comforted/Comfortable/ Comfortably/Comforting/ Uncomfortable	-	-	-	0	0.00
12	Community	5	-	-	5	1.67
13	Deep/Deeper	-	-	-	0	0.00
14	Devotion/Devo's	-	-	-	0	0.00
15	Encourage/Encouraging/ Encouragement/Encourager	-	-	-	0	0.00
16	Example/Examples	-	-	-	0	0.00
17	Experience/Experienced/ Experiences	2	-	-	2	0.67
18	Foundation	2	-	1	3	1.00
19	Friend/Friends/Friendly/Friendship	7	-	-	7	2.33
20	God	8	11	-	19	6.33
21	Grow/Grown/Grows/Growth/ Growing	-	1	-	1	0.33
22	Heart/Wholeheartedly	-	-	-	0	0.00

23	Help/Helped/Helping/Helper/Helpful	-	1	-	1	0.33
24	Hope/Hoped/Hoping/Hopefully	-	-	-	0	0.00
25	Jesus	-	11	-	11	3.67
26	Lead/Leadership/Leading/Leader	-	-	-	0	0.00
27	Learn/Learned/Learning	-	-	-	0	0.00
28	Love/Loved/Loving/Lovely	-	-	-	0	0.00
29	Message/Messages	-	-	-	0	0.00
30	Model/Modeled/Modeling	-	-	-	0	0.00
31	Not Scared	-	-	-	0	0.00
32	Pastor	-	-	1	1	0.33
33	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	-	2	1	3	1.00
34	Power	-	1	1	2	0.67
35	Question/Questioned/Questioning	-	1	1	2	0.67

36	Real	5	-	5	10	3.33
37	Relate/Relation/Relationship/ Relatable	-	-	-	0	0.00
38	Religion/Religious	-	-	-	0	0.00
39	Saved/Unsaved/Salvation	-	2	-	2	0.67
40	Scary/Scared	-	-	-	0	0.00
41	Serve/Served/Serving/Service/ Servant	-	-	-	0	0.00
42	Shelter	-	-	-	0	0.00
43	Spirit	-	12	-	12	4.00
44	Spiritual/Spiritually	-	-	-	0	0.00
45	Strong/Stronger/Strongest	-	4	-	4	1.33
46	Teach/Taught/Teaching/Teacher	-	-	-	0	0.00
47	Trial/Trials	3	-	-	3	1.00
48	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/Entrust/ Distrust	-	-	-	0	0.00

49	Work/Worked/Working/ Worker/Homework	-	3	-	3	1.00
50	World	3	-	-	3	1.00
Total Codes		39	56	15		

### Appendix X: Interview-In Vivo Coding

Table 14

#### *Interview-In Vivo Coding*

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<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Accountable/Accountability	6	1	3	10	3.33
2	Belief/Believe/Believing/Believer/ Unbeliever/Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	16	31	30	77	25.67
3	Bible	20	13	25	58	19.33
4	Bless/Blessed/Blessing	4	4	1	9	3.00
5	Bubble	1	1	-	2	0.67
6	Care/Cared/Caring	7	13	6	26	8.67
7	Challenge/Challenged/Challenging	6	7	-	13	4.33
8	Chapel	4	10	-	14	4.67
9	Christ	5	3	-	8	2.67

10	Church	24	10	10	44	14.67
11	Comfort/Comforted/Comfortable/ Comfortably/Comforting/ Uncomfortable	15	-	4	19	6.33
12	Community	12	1	-	13	4.33
13	Deep/Deeper	17	1	1	19	6.33
14	Devotion/Devo's	2	5	11	18	6.00
15	Encourage/Encouraging/ Encouragement/Encourager	5	9	10	24	8.00
16	Example/Examples	3	8	1	12	4.00
17	Experience/Experienced/ Experiences	15	12	4	31	10.33
18	Foundation	4	-	2	6	2.00
19	Friend/Friends/Friendly/Friendship	25	23	15	63	21.00
20	God	99	61	59	219	73.00
21	Grow/Grown/Grows/Growth/ Growing	19	17	4	40	13.33
22	Heart/Wholeheartedly	14	9	4	27	9.00

23	Help/Helped/Helping/Helper/Helpful	30	18	55	103	34.33
24	Hope/Hoped/Hoping/Hopefully	13	2	8	23	7.67
25	Jesus	17	5	1	23	7.67
26	Lead/Leadership/Leading/Leader	30	12	-	42	14.00
27	Learn/Learned/Learning	29	1	10	40	13.33
28	Love/Loved/Loving/Lovely	40	23	10	73	24.33
29	Message/Messages	3	8	1	12	4.00
30	Model/Modeled/Modeling	7	2	-	9	3.00
31	Not Scared	6	-	-	6	2.00
32	Pastor	4	3	7	14	4.67
33	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	8	10	20	38	12.67
34	Power	2	-	1	3	1.00
35	Question/Questioned/Questioning	8	7	6	21	7.00



36	Real	3	4	3	10	3.33
37	Relate/Relation/Relationship/ Relatable	25	12	8	45	15.00
38	Religion/Religious	4	-	2	6	2.00
39	Saved/Unsaved/Salvation	-	10	1	11	3.67
40	Scary/Scared	4	1	2	7	2.33
41	Serve/Served/Serving/Service/ Servant	9	3	3	15	5.00
42	Shelter	-	1	-	1	0.33
43	Spirit	4	-	1	5	1.67
44	Spiritual/Spiritually	7	5	2	14	4.67
45	Strong/Stronger/Strongest	18	13	4	35	11.67
46	Teach/Taught/Teaching/Teacher	40	25	28	93	31.00
47	Trial/Trials	-	1	-	1	0.33
48	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/Entrust/ Distrust	28	12	2	42	14.00

49	Work/Worked/Working/ Worker/Homework	24	23	12	59	19.67
50	World	8	2	2	12	4.00
Total Codes		694	442	379		

### Appendix Y: Focus Group-In Vivo Coding

Table 15

#### *Focus Group-In Vivo Coding*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ekahi</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Elua</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Ekolu</u> <u>CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Accountable/Accountability	5	1	4	10	3.33
2	Belief/Believe/Believing/Believer/ Unbeliever/Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	6	4	2	12	4.00
3	Bible	3	9	1	13	4.33
4	Bless/Blessed/Blessing	4	1	1	6	2.00
5	Bubble	1	-	1	2	0.67
6	Care/Cared/Caring	5	-	2	7	2.33
7	Challenge/Challenged/Challenging	-	1	-	1	0.33
8	Chapel	2	3	1	6	2.00
9	Christ	2	-	-	2	0.67

10	Church	2	6	2	10	3.33
11	Comfort/Comforted/Comfortable/ Comfortably/Comforting/ Uncomfortable	1	-	2	3	1.00
12	Community	4	1	2	7	2.33
13	Deep/Deeper	2	-	-	2	0.67
14	Devotion/Devo's	-	-	2	2	0.67
15	Encourage/Encouraging/ Encouragement/Encourager	2	-	7	9	3.00
16	Example/Examples	-	7	3	10	3.33
17	Experience/Experienced/ Experiences	4	2	10	16	5.33
18	Foundation	-	2	1	3	1.00
19	Friend/Friends/Friendly/Friendship	9	7	8	24	8.00
20	God	26	7	19	52	17.33
21	Grow/Grown/Grows/Growth/ Growing	10	16	9	35	11.67
22	Heart/Wholeheartedly	-	-	3	3	1.00

23	Help/Helped/Helping/Helper/Helpful	3	3	18	24	8.00
24	Hope/Hoped/Hoping/Hopefully	-	-	1	1	0.33
25	Jesus	11	-	-	11	3.67
26	Lead/Leadership/Leading/Leader	3	10	3	16	5.33
27	Learn/Learned/Learning	17	4	3	24	8.00
28	Love/Loved/Loving/Lovely	17	3	-	20	6.67
29	Message/Messages	-	-	-	0	0.00
30	Model/Modeled/Modeling	-	2	-	2	0.67
31	Not Scared	-	-	-	0	0.00
32	Pastor	-	1	1	2	0.67
33	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	2	1	5	8	2.67
34	Power	-	-	4	4	1.33
35	Question/Questioned/Questioning	4	1	2	7	2.33

36	Real	-	1	1	2	0.67
37	Relate/Relation/Relationship/ Relatable	12	12	4	28	9.33
38	Religion/Religious	1	-	1	2	0.67
39	Saved/Unsaved/Salvation	-	5	3	8	2.67
40	Scary/Scared	-	2	1	3	1.00
41	Serve/Served/Serving/Service/ Servant	-	1	2	3	1.00
42	Shelter	-	1	1	2	0.67
43	Spirit	2	-	-	2	0.67
44	Spiritual/Spiritually	3	5	-	8	2.67
45	Strong/Stronger/Strongest	1	-	1	2	0.67
46	Teach/Taught/Teaching/Teacher	33	33	24	90	30.00
47	Trial/Trials	-	-	5	5	1.67
48	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/Entrust/ Distrust	-	-	6	6	2.00

49	Work/Worked/Working/ Worker/Homework	11	2	5	18	6.00
50	World	6	1	3	10	3.33
Total Codes		214	155	174		

### Appendix Z: Final Codes

Table 16

#### *Final Codes*

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Data Collection Method/ Coding Method</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>
1	Accountability	Focus Group/ Value	3	1	5	9	3.00
2	Bad Experience with School	Focus Group/ Value	2	16	1	19	6.33
3	Belief in Something	Interview/ Value	4	9	9	22	7.33
4	Belief/Believe/ Believing/Believer/ Unbeliever/ Believer-ish [sic]	Interview/ In Vivo	16	31	30	77	25.67
5	Bible	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	1	54	57	19.00
6	Bible	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	-	7	3	10	3.33
7	Bible	Interview/ In Vivo	20	13	25	58	19.33
8	Bible Integrated Curriculum	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1	3	1.00
9	Bible Integrated Curriculum	Interview/ Value	12	-	4	16	5.33
10	Caring Teachers/ Principals	Focus Group/ Value	5	5	2	12	4.00
11	Change of Heart	Interview/ Value	12	7	3	22	7.33



12	Christ	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	6	-	10	16	5.33
13	Church	Interview/ Value	12	5	3	20	6.67
14	Church	Interview/ In Vivo	24	10	10	44	14.67
15	Community of Faith	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	3	9	3.00
16	Community of Faith	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1	3	1.00
17	Community of Faith	Interview/ Value	10	4	2	16	5.33
18	Encouragement	Interview/ Value	14	8	10	32	10.67
19	Encouragement	Focus Group/ Value	3	-	6	9	3.00
20	Faith in God	Interview/ Value	12	4	2	18	6.00
21	Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Interview/ In Vivo	25	23	15	63	21.00
22	Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Focus Group/ In Vivo	9	7	8	24	8.00
23	God	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	25	6	25	56	18.67
24	God	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	8	11	-	19	6.33
25	God	Interview/ In Vivo	99	61	59	219	73.00
26	God	Focus Group/ In Vivo	26	7	19	52	17.33
27	God Working in You	Interview/ Value	14	3	5	22	7.33
28	Grow/Grown/Grows/ Growth/Growing	Focus Group/ In Vivo	10	16	9	35	11.67

29	Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Interview/ In Vivo	30	18	55	103	34.33
30	Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Focus Group/ In Vivo	3	3	18	24	8.00
31	Jesus	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	10	3	14	27	9.00
32	Knowledge and Faith	Interview/ Value	12	3	4	19	6.33
33	Laughter	Interview/ Emotion	59	46	24	129	43.00
34	Laughter	Focus Group/ Emotion	40	23	13	76	25.33
35	Lead/Leadership/ Leading/Leader	Interview/ In Vivo	30	12	-	42	14.00
36	Learn/Learned/ Learning	Focus Group/ In Vivo	17	4	3	24	8.00
37	Love/Loved/ Loving/Lovely	Interview/ In Vivo	40	23	10	73	24.33
38	Love/Loved/ Loving/Lovely	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	4	7	13	4.33
39	Opposite of Faith	Interview/ Value	16	5	8	29	9.67
40	Others Showing Love	Interview/ Emotion	8	2	7	17	5.67
41	Others Showing Love	Focus Group/ Emotion	5	1	1	7	2.33
42	Others Showing Apathy	Focus Group/ Emotion	3	3	1	7	2.33
43	Personal Disgust	Focus Group/ Value	2	11	3	16	5.33
44	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	Interview/ Emotion	6	4	7	17	5.67
45	Personal Fear	Interview/ Emotion	16	1	3	20	6.67

46	Personal Happiness	Focus Group/ Value	7	2	4	13	4.33
47	Personal Happiness	Interview/ Emotion	3	8	2	13	4.33
48	Personal Hope in God	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	5	13	4.33
49	Personal Humility	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	3	11	3.67
50	Personal Love for Others	Interview/ Emotion	10	7	6	23	7.67
51	Personal Sadness	Interview/ Emotion	5	7	5	17	5.67
52	Pray/Prayer/ Prayers	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	4	3	14	21	7.00
53	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	Interview/ Value	15	6	1	22	7.33
54	Questions About Faith	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	2	2	5	1.67
55	Reading and Understanding the Bible	Interview/ Value	4	9	7	20	6.67
56	Real	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	-	11	2	13	4.33
57	Real	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	5	-	5	10	3.33
58	Real-Life Application	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	3	1	5	1.67
59	Relate/Relation/ Relationship/ Relatable	Focus Group/ In Vivo	12	12	4	28	9.33

60	Relate/Relation/ Relationship/ Relatable	Interview/ In Vivo	25	12	8	45	15.00
61	Searching	Focus Group/ Value	1	2	4	7	2.33
62	Searching	Interview/ Value	8	5	3	16	5.33
63	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Interview/ In Vivo	40	25	28	93	31.00
64	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Focus Group/ In Vivo	33	33	24	90	30.00
65	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	1	-	13	14	4.67
66	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	1	7	2.33
67	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Interview/ Value	7	6	6	19	6.33
68	Trust/Trusted/ Trusting/Entrust/ Distrust	Interview/ In Vivo	28	12	2	42	14.00
69	Uncertainty of the Future	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	1	1	3	1.00
70	Work/Worked/ Working/Worker	Interview/ In Vivo	24	23	12	59	19.67
Total Codes			872	588	650		

### Appendix AA: Categories

Table 17

#### Categories

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Data Collection Method/ Coding Method</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>
Authenticity	Real	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo		11	2
	Real	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	5		5
	Real-Life Application	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	3	1
Curriculum	Bible Integrated Curriculum	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1
	Bible Integrated Curriculum	Interview/ Value	12		4
	Lead/Leadership/ Leading/Leader	Interview/ In Vivo	30	12	
	Learn/Learned/Learning	Focus Group/ In Vivo	17	4	3
	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Interview/ In Vivo	40	25	28
	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Focus Group/ In Vivo	33	33	24
	Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	1		13
	Work/Worked/ Working/Worker	Interview/ In Vivo	24	23	12
Deity	Christ	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	6		10

	God	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	25	6	25
	God	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	8	11	
	God	Interview/ In Vivo	99	61	59
	God	Focus Group/ In Vivo	26	7	19
	Jesus	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	10	3	14
Faith	Belief in Something	Interview/ Value	4	9	9
	Belief/Believe/Believing/ Believer/Unbeliever/ Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	Interview/ In Vivo	16	31	30
	Change of Heart	Interview/ Value	12	7	3
	Faith in God	Interview/ Value	12	4	2
	God Working in You	Interview/ Value	14	3	5
	Grow/Grown/Grows/ Growth/Growing	Focus Group/ In Vivo	10	16	9
	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	Interview/ Emotion	6	4	7
	Personal Hope in God	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	5
	Personal Humility	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	3
	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	4	3	14
	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	Interview/ Value	15	6	1
	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/ Entrust/Distrust	Interview/ In Vivo	28	12	2
Joy	Laughter	Interview/ Emotion	59	46	24
	Laughter	Focus Group/ Emotion	40	23	13
	Personal Happiness	Focus Group/ Value	7	2	4
	Personal Happiness	Interview/ Emotion	3	8	2

Knowledge	Bible	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	1	54
	Bible	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo		7	3
	Bible	Interview/ In Vivo	20	13	25
	Knowledge and Faith	Interview/ Value	12	3	4
	Reading and Understanding the Bible	Interview/ Value	4	9	7
Lack of Faith	Opposite of Faith	Interview/ Value	16	5	8
	Others Showing Apathy	Focus Group/ Emotion	3	3	1
Negative Motivators	Bad Experience with School	Focus Group/ Value	2	16	1
	Personal Disgust	Focus Group/ Value	2	11	3
	Personal Fear	Interview/ Emotion	16	1	3
	Personal Sadness	Interview/ Emotion	5	7	5
	Uncertainty of the Future	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	1	1
Non-School Related	Church	Interview/ Value	12	5	3
	Church	Interview/ In Vivo	24	10	10
Questions	Questions About Faith	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	2	2
	Searching	Focus Group/ Value	1	2	4
	Searching	Interview/ Value	8	5	3

Relationships	Accountability	Focus Group/ Value	3	1	5
	Caring Teachers/ Principals	Focus Group/ Value	5	5	2
	Community of Faith	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	3
	Community of Faith	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1
	Community of Faith	Interview/ Value	10	4	2
	Encouragement	Interview/ Value	14	8	10
	Encouragement	Focus Group/ Value	3		6
	Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Interview/ In Vivo	25	23	15
	Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Focus Group/ In Vivo	9	7	8
	Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Interview/ In Vivo	30	18	55
	Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Focus Group/ In Vivo	3	3	18
	Love/Loved/Loving/ Lovely	Interview/ In Vivo	40	23	10
	Love/Loved/Loving/ Lovely	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	4	7
	Others Showing Love	Interview/ Emotion	8	2	7
	Others Showing Love	Focus Group/ Emotion	5	1	1
	Personal Love for Others	Interview/ Emotion	10	7	6
	Relate/Relation/ Relationship/Relatable	Focus Group/ In Vivo	12	12	4
	Relate/Relation/ Relationship/Relatable	Interview/ In Vivo	25	12	8
	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	1
	Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Interview/ Value	7	6	6
	Total Codes		925	624	665



### Appendix BB: Themes

Table 18

#### Themes

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Categories</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Data Collection Method/ Coding Method</u>	<u>Ekahi CS</u>	<u>Elua CS</u>	<u>Ekolu CS</u>
Theme 1: Relational Side of Christian School	Relationships	Accountability	Focus Group/ Value	3	1	5
		Caring Teachers/ Principals	Focus Group/ Value	5	5	2
		Community of Faith	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	3
		Community of Faith	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1
		Community of Faith	Interview/ Value	10	4	2
		Encouragement	Interview/ Value	14	8	10
		Encouragement	Focus Group/ Value	3		6
		Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Interview/ In Vivo	25	23	15
		Friend/Friends/ Friendly/Friendship	Focus Group/ In Vivo	9	7	8
		Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Interview/ In Vivo	30	18	55
		Help/Helped/Helping/ Helper/Helpful	Focus Group/ In Vivo	3	3	18
		Love/Loved/Loving/ Lovely	Interview/ In Vivo	40	23	10
		Love/Loved/Loving/ Lovely	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	4	7
		Others Showing Love	Interview/ Emotion	8	2	7
		Others Showing Love	Focus Group/ Emotion	5	1	1
		Personal Love for Others	Interview/ Emotion	10	7	6
		Relate/Relation/ Relationship/Relatable	Focus Group/ In Vivo	12	12	4

Theme 2: Epistemic Side of Christian School		Relate/Relation/ Relationship/Relatable	Interview/ In Vivo	25	12	8
		Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Focus Group/ Value	3	3	1
		Teachers are More Than Just Teachers	Interview/ Value	7	6	6
	Curriculum	Bible Integrated Curriculum	Chapel Observation/ Value	1	1	1
		Bible Integrated Curriculum	Interview/ Value	12		4
		Lead/Leadership/ Leading/Leader	Interview/ In Vivo	30	12	
		Learn/Learned/Learning	Focus Group/ In Vivo	17	4	3
		Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Interview/ In Vivo	40	25	28
		Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Focus Group/ In Vivo	33	33	24
		Teach/Taught/ Teaching/Teacher	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	1		13
		Work/Worked/ Working/Worker	Interview/ In Vivo	24	23	12
	Knowledge	Bible	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	2	1	54
		Bible	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo		7	3
		Bible	Interview/ In Vivo	20	13	25
		Knowledge and Faith	Interview/ Value	12	3	4
		Reading and Understanding the Bible	Interview/ Value	4	9	7

## Theme 3: Affective Side of Christian School

Deity	Christ	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	6		10
	God	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	25	6	25
	God	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	8	11	
	God	Interview/ In Vivo	99	61	59
	God	Focus Group/ In Vivo	26	7	19
	Jesus	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	10	3	14
Joy	Laughter	Interview/ Emotion	59	46	24
	Laughter	Focus Group/ Emotion	40	23	13
	Personal Happiness	Focus Group/ Value	7	2	4
	Personal Happiness	Interview/ Emotion	3	8	2
Faith	Belief in Something	Interview/ Value	4	9	9
	Belief/Believe/Believing/ Believer/Unbeliever/ Believer-ish [ <i>sic</i> ]	Interview/ In Vivo	16	31	30
	Change of Heart	Interview/ Value	12	7	3
	Faith in God	Interview/ Value	12	4	2
	God Working in You	Interview/ Value	14	3	5
	Grow/Grown/Grows/ Growth/Growing	Focus Group/ In Vivo	10	16	9
	Personal Excitement for Spiritual Things	Interview/ Emotion	6	4	7
	Personal Hope in God	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	5
	Personal Humility	Interview/ Emotion	5	3	3
	Pray/Prayer/Prayers	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo	4	3	14
	Pursue a Personal Faith with God	Interview/ Value	15	6	1

Theme 4: Unbecoming Side of Christian School	Lack of Faith	Trust/Trusted/Trusting/ Entrust/Distrust	Interview/ In Vivo	28	12	2
		Opposite of Faith	Interview/ Value	16	5	8
		Others Showing Apathy	Focus Group/ Emotion	3	3	1
	Negative Motivators	Bad Experience with School	Focus Group/ Value	2	16	1
		Personal Disgust	Focus Group/ Value	2	11	3
		Personal Fear	Interview/ Emotion	16	1	3
		Personal Sadness	Interview/ Emotion	5	7	5
		Uncertainty of the Future	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	1	1
	Authenticity	Real	Chapel Observation/ In Vivo		11	2
		Real	Classroom Observation/ In Vivo	5		5
		Real-Life Application	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	3	1
Theme 5: Authenticity	Questions	Questions About Faith	Classroom Observation/ Value	1	2	2
		Searching	Focus Group/ Value	1	2	4
		Searching	Interview/ Value	8	5	3
Theme 6: Church	Non-School Related	Church	Interview/ Value	12	5	3
		Church	Interview/ In Vivo	24	10	10

Total Codes	925	624	665
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