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UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEIVED EFFECT OF CHAPEL AND DISCIPLESHIP-GROUP

MODELS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Jesus' final command before ascending to Heaven, otherwise known as The Great Commission, is detailed in Matthew 28:19-20. While the overall aim of Christian education is to provide students with an education from a biblical worldview, this education must expand beyond the academics taught in classrooms. Christian education should be equally concerned with making disciples of students who will then go forward to be disciple-makers themselves. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in Christian education. The data collected analyzed the positive and negative elements of the chapel and discipleship-group models to help conclude what is a more effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. With this information, educators can increase their impact on students.

Keywords: Great Commission, disciples, disciple-makers, chapel, discipleship-groups

Dedication

To my dad, Dr. Gary Jarnagin, who made this dream seem possible by setting the example.

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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

Jesus' final command before ascending to Heaven, otherwise known as The Great Commission, is detailed in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen" (*New King James Version*, 2015). While the overall aim of Christian education is to provide students with an education from a biblical worldview, this education must expand beyond the academics taught in classrooms. Christian education should be equally concerned with making disciples of students who will then go forward to be disciple-makers themselves.

Formation is an inevitable occurrence with humankind (Rios, 2020, p. 174). People can be formed positively or negatively, largely depending on their surrounding influences. High school students often dabble with drugs or alcohol because their friends are dabbling in those vices; high school students do not often view drugs or alcohol as solitary activities. This is one reason why parents emphasize to their children the need to form the "right friendships" – because one's friendships often form them. People can be also formed with a specific end goal (Rios, 2020, p. 174). Some might pursue physical formation to become a better athlete, mental formation to become a better student, or emotional formation to become a better support system for family and friends. However, humankind is being formed every day, intentionally or not, by the surrounding culture and the consumed media (Smith, 2013). Christian educators who desire their students to achieve spiritual formation should be concerned about the influences their students face.

This chapter will provide background for the problem before concisely stating the problem and presenting research questions. This chapter will then discuss some research assumptions and delimitations of the research design, define key terms, argue the significance of the problem, and summarize the research design.

<div align="center">**Background to the Problem**</div>

Before discussing the importance of integrating spiritual discipleship into Christian education, it is first necessary to define spiritual discipleship. In *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*, author Francis Chan writes that "[d]isciples in Jesus's day would follow their rabbi (which means teacher) wherever he went, learning from the rabbi's teaching and being trained to do as the rabbi did. Basically, a disciple is a follower, but only if we take the term follower literally. Becoming a disciple of Jesus is as simple as obeying His call to follow" (p. 17). In the *New Testament,* disciples were originally considered to be those who physically followed Jesus during His earthly ministry and subjected themselves to His tutelage. There were twelve original disciples who bore witness to Jesus' proclamation that "[a] disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (*New King James* Version, 2015, Luke 6:40). After Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, those twelve disciples fully accepted Jesus' doctrine and assisted in spreading that doctrine to others, thereby creating more disciples. Chan writes, "A disciple is a disciple maker" (p. 31, 2012). Therefore, spiritual discipleship is the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples. Because Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19-20 is for His disciples to make other disciples, believers are lacking something integral to their faith if they do not actively make other disciples.

Theological Context

While the most obvious example of spiritual discipleship in Scripture is that of Jesus and His original twelve disciples, there are countless other examples in both the Old and New Testaments. One such example is Moses and Joshua, son of Nun (Woolfe, 2002). Joshua is first mentioned in Exodus 17 when Moses commands him to fight against the Amalekites. From this point forward, Moses and Joshua spend a good amount of time together. Joshua was present when Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:13), when Moses smashed the two tablets in righteous indignation (Exodus 32:17-19), and when Moses shared communion with God in the tent of meeting (Exodus 33:11). Moses was an admirable leader to the Israelites as a whole, but he had a special relationship with Joshua. The spiritual discipleship between Moses and Joshua prepared Joshua for the moment when Moses stood before him, appointed him leader over the Israelites, and said, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed" (*New King James Version*, 2015, Deuteronomy 31:7-8). While God could have prepared Joshua for leadership without Moses, the spiritual discipleship that Moses offered Joshua is significant and worthy of imitation.

Another Old Testament example of spiritual discipleship is the relationship between Eli and Samuel (Woolfe, 2002). Eli essentially raised Samuel, and he was present when God first called Samuel in First Samuel 3. Eli helped Samuel become attuned to the voice of God: 'And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you did call me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your

servant hears.'' So Samuel went and lay down in his place" (*New King James Version*, 2015, 1 Samuel 3:8-9). Samuel continued to be spiritually discipled by Eli until Eli's death, at which point Samuel assumed the role of Israel's prophet. Once again, while God could have prepared Samuel for leadership without Eli, the spiritual discipleship that Eli offered Samuel is significant and worthy of imitation.

A New Testament example of spiritual discipleship, apart from Jesus and His original twelve disciples, is the relationship between the Apostle Paul, Timothy, and Titus (Sanders, 2007; Woolfe, 2002). The Apostle Paul formed many significant relationships while on his missionary journeys, but two of the most significant relationships are that between Timothy and Titus. Timothy is first introduced in Acts 16 when the Apostle Paul enlists him to join the missionary journey, much like Jesus enlisted His disciples to follow Him:

> Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (*New King James Version*, 2015, Acts 16:1-5).

Paul noticed that Timothy had potential, prepared him for their missionary journey by circumcising him to appease the Jews in the region, then involved him in church planting and sharing the Gospel. Even when apart from Timothy, Paul continued to spiritually disciple him through epistles, such as First and Second Timothy. Paul and Titus shared a similar history. Titus heard the Gospel from Paul, Paul enlisted him into ministry, and Titus was also the recipient of epistles from Paul. This relationship persisted at least until Paul's final Roman imprisonment, which is the last time Titus is mentioned in Second Timothy. Much like Moses, Joshua, Eli, and

Samuel, the spiritual discipleship that Paul offered Timothy and Titus is significant and worthy of imitation.

Each of these examples of spiritual discipleship, and many others present throughout Scripture, show disciples making disciple-makers. They fulfilled the Great Commission. With such support for the importance of spiritual discipleship, and numerable examples of spiritual discipleship in Scripture to study and imitate, integrating spiritual discipleship in Christian education makes sense.

Theoretical Context

Spiritual discipleship has an integral role in spiritual formation. In Pettit's *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* (2008), he writes,

> The ideas and patterns involved in the process of spiritual formation involve a Christian changing or maturing from one form to another…[b]y using the term *spiritual*, we are referring to the dynamic, holistic, maturing relationship between the individual believer and God, and between the individual believer and others…[w]hen we use the term *formation*, we mean the ongoing process of the believer's actions and habits being continually transformed into the image of Christ. (pp. 18-19)

Much like making disciples, spiritual formation is an integral component of a believer's faith journey. A believer should not remain stagnant upon accepting Christ. In fact, the Apostle Paul rebukes believers who do not continuously grow in their faith. For instance, when the Apostle Paul revisits the Corinthians and he sees they have not grown in their faith, he tells them, "I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it,* and even now you are still not able" (*New King James Version*, 2015, 1 Corinthians 3:2). The importance of growing in one's faith and becoming more Christ-like through spiritual formation is echoed throughout Scripture (Romans 8:29; Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 4:19). Therefore, it is crucial to understand spiritual formation and what it entails, which includes spiritual discipleship.

Rios (2020) considers the elements of spiritual formation in his article "Spiritual (Mal)formation." Rios (2020) first addresses environment; he writes that "companionship, including various metrics in social psychology, impacts the agency of the personal will according to the character of the companionship" (pp. 181-82). In other words, as previously stated, people can be formed positively or negatively, largely depending on their surrounding influences.

A second element of spiritual formation is rituals. Rios (2020) notes that "a change is effected between the Old and New Covenants. Critically, Christians believe themselves to be released from the strictures of Old Covenant practices. But that does not mean Christians have been released from the formative power of rituals" (p. 184). While Christians no longer need to perform rituals due to Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross, rituals still hold meaning and often re-direct one's focus to Christ and His sacrifice – for example, the Lord's Supper. Partaking in the Lord's Supper is a command that allows believers to "do this in remembrance of me" (*New King James Version*, 2015, Luke 22:19). Considering the bread, representative of Christ's broken body, and the juice, representative of Christ's spilled blood, re-focuses believer's hearts and minds. Rituals are also elemental to spiritual formation because they are "universally community-based" (Rios, 2020, p. 184). Consequently, gathering together to undergo these rituals allows believers to be surrounded by other like-minded influences who can further their spiritual formation.

A third element of spiritual formation is worship (Rios, 2020). A relevant passage of Scripture is Psalms 115:2-8:

> Why should the Gentiles say, 'So where *is* their God?' But our God *is* in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols *are* silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears,

but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; S*o is* everyone who trusts in them. (*New King James Version*, 2015).

It is clear in verse eight that one becomes like that which they worship. Perhaps one is not consciously worshipping an idol, but in hyper-focusing on a person, organization, or activity, that thing can become an idol. For instance, some churches do not hold evening activities on Super Bowl Sunday because of the frustration church members have about choosing between God and football. These members would probably not say they are consciously worshipping football, but their actions speak otherwise. One adopts the values, which result in actions, of that which they worship. Therefore, if Christians are genuinely and wholeheartedly worshipping Christ, they should adopt the values that He teaches, which should result in actions that glorify Him. In other words, if Christians worship Christ, spiritual formation should follow.

Spiritual formation might look different from believer to believer, but there are some general indicators that one is being spiritually formed into the likeness of Christ. In "Missional Discipleship" (2014), Beard considers some of these indicators: mission, obedience, and community. A believer's mission is reflective of their spiritual formation when it is non-compartmentalized, incarnational, and holistic. A non-compartmentalized mission means that it seeps into every aspect of one's life, instead of merely being one aspect of their life: "When mission and discipleship are inseparable for a disciple's identity, no longer is mission just something we do, as if it were one of many duties given to us by God" (Beard, 2014). For example, a believer has a compartmentalized mission when they travel to a third world country once a year, share the Gospel with some orphans, then return home and carry on without giving a thought to people in their own city who might need Christ. A non-compartmentalized mission

exists when a believer views every person they encounter as an opportunity for ministry because they are so keenly aware of the world's need for the Gospel. If a believer on the journey towards spiritual formation has truly been impacted by Christ, a non-compartmentalized mission should follow.

An incarnational mission exists when a believer is walking among and living life with the people to whom they minister; "Just as Jesus was sent to the world for the sake of the world, and just as he lived closely with those he was sent for, we too are to engage the world in a similar fashion" (Beard, 2014). There is great significance in Jesus' incarnation. Not only is He the propitiation for the world's sins, but He also experientially understands the struggles that the world faces. Hebrews 4:15 states, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin" (*New King James Version*, 2015). Similarly, an incarnational mission is important because it allows a believer to have a more experiential understanding of the daily lives of those to whom they minister. For a believer with a non-compartmentalized mission, an incarnational mission is the next step.

A holistic mission exists when a believer is "concerned with issues of justice, the marginalized in society, stewardship of the earth's resources, for example, just as he or she is concerned with bringing salvation to those who need it" (Beard, 2014). While salvation is the most important priority as it impacts one's eternity, it should not be the only priority. Jesus was also concerned with the physical and emotional needs of those to whom He ministered. Jesus healed the sick (Luke 4:40), made the lame walk (John 5), and made the blind see (John 9). He fed those who were hungry (Matthew 14:13-21). He wept alongside his friends (John 11:33-35). None of these actions were necessary if salvation was the only objective. However, because

Jesus cared about the whole person, He ministered to the whole person. Believers should do the same, and such a ministry reflects spiritual formation.

The second aspect of Beard's spiritual formation construct is obedience. John 14:15 states, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (*New King James Version*, 2015). All commandments which believers are to obey are summarized in Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (*New King James Version*, 2015). For instance, the first five of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 reflect one's love for the Lord, while the second five of the Ten Commandments reflect one's love for others. Obedience demonstrates one's love for Christ, but it also demonstrates that one has been listening to Christ instead of doing whatever they think is best. King Saul is noted for doing what he thought was best instead of what Christ told him to do. For instance, in First Samuel 15, King Saul is instructed to ambush Amalek for taking action against Israel. King Saul was clearly commanded "Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (*New King James Version*, 2015). However, King Saul did not destroy Amalek in its entirety; instead, he spared King Agag, as well as many animals, intending to offer them up as a sacrifice. Following King Saul's failure to obey, God said, "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments" (*New King James Version*, 2015, 1 Samuel 15:11). King Saul was both devastated and confused to hear that God regretted setting him as king; he thought his sacrifice

would be welcomed, if not praised. It is then in this passage that Samuel teaches King Saul and future believers an important lesson:

> Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of [d]witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being* king. (*New King James Version*, 2015, 1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Obedience is better than sacrifice. Furthermore, an obedient believer is one who listens to God, loves God, and is being spiritually formed in the likeness of Christ.

Finally, the third aspect of Beard's spiritual formation construct is community. The need for community is innate within mankind, which is clear since the creation of Adam in Genesis 2. After God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden, he looked at Adam and said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (*New King James Version*, 2015, Genesis 2:18). This need is also present in the New Testament through the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul makes clear in First Corinthians 12 that there are many members of the body of Christ who are uniquely gifted, but each gift is endowed for the purpose of glorifying the body (*New King James Version*, 2015). Furthermore, believers are encouraged to "not [forsake] the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but [exhort] *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (*New King James Version*, 2015, Hebrews 10:25). The desire to fellowship with other believers and uplift the body of Christ is a clear sign that spiritual formation is occurring.

These indicators are relevant to spiritual discipleship because spiritual discipleship requires these three indicators. Spiritual discipleship occurs in one's place of residence, day-to-day, and oftentimes requires having priorities beyond salvation; therefore, spiritual discipleship requires having a non-compartmentalized, incarnational, holistic mission. Spiritual discipleship

is also living in obedience to Christ, as it fulfills the command in Matthew 28:19-20. Finally, spiritual discipleship is a form of community since it involves two or more people gathering together. Since spiritual discipleship requires mission, obedience, and community, all three of which are indicators of spiritual formation, then spiritual discipleship is also an indicator of spiritual formation.

Statement of the Problem

Jesus' final command before ascending to Heaven, otherwise known as The Great Commission, is detailed in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen" (*New King James Version*, 2015). While the overall aim of Christian education is to provide students with an education from a biblical worldview, this education must expand beyond the academics taught in classrooms (Wilhoit, 1991). Christian education should be equally concerned with making disciples of students who will then go forward to be disciple-makers themselves. Consequently, private Christian schools must consider the students' perceived spiritual effect of their chapel and discipleship-group models to determine the most effective way to make disciples.

Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in their schools. The participants in this study are the high school senior students of Lanier Christian Academy, Young Americans Christian School, Strong Rock Christian School, and Hebron Christian Academy. The data collected analyzed the positive and negative elements of the chapel and

discipleship-group models to help conclude what is a more effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. In this study, spiritual discipleship is defined as the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples (Chan, 2012).

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ2. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ3. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ4. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models, how effective are discipleship group models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ5. Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the 12th grade students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?

Assumptions and Delimitations

This section will briefly consider the research assumptions that impacted this study, as well as delimitations of the research design.

Research Assumptions

This study assumed the validity and relevance of two educational theories, the first being Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Teacher as Gardener theory. In summary, Rousseau's theory compares teachers to gardeners and students to plants who need tending. Just as a gardener gives the plant

what it needs to reach its full potential and thrive, so a teacher gives the student a necessary foundation from which the student can become what they wish to become. Another assumption is that for the private Christian schools participating in this study, education is not just about guiding and equipping students in their youth so that they can be successful adults in society. Education is also about guiding students to Christ, being a living example of the redemption and reconciliation made possible through Christ, and equipping students to fulfill God's plans for their lives.

This study also assumed the validity and relevance of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. In his article Transformative Learning Theory (2017), Taylor offers a concise summary of Mezirow's theory. This theory is aimed towards adults, but it is applicable for young adults as well. The key principle of this theory is that "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Taylor, 2017, p. 17). Marmon comments on the role of educators within the framework of this theory in the article "Transformative Learning Theory: Connections with Christian Adult Education" (2013). Marmon writes the following: "Unlike many educators in a formal setting, the transformative learning facilitator joins the other adults as learner…Throughout the journey of identifying and questioning long-standing 'habits of mind'… adults need an objective and invested person to walk with, ahead of, and behind them" (2013). Based on this assumption, the role of the educator and their relationship with the students is a factor in whether chapel and discipleship-group models are effective or not.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This study sought to determine the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in private Christian schools. While the data collected revealed

trends and patterns of effective and ineffective models that could aid in improving and strengthening these models, this study did not promise to offer a definitive solution for increased spiritual growth among students. This study also focused primarily on 12th grade students because most of them have participated in chapel and discipleship-groups for a longer period of time; these students are also expected to be more spiritually mature as they are the leaders of the student body. Furthermore, because this study took place during the Coronavirus pandemic, this researcher took into consideration that the chapel and discipleship-group models might be slightly different than normal to accommodate CDC suggestions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are relevant to the proposed research:

1. *Private Christian School*: a privately owned and operated institute that believes in the Gospel, the inerrancy of the Bible, and the incorporation of biblical truth into the classroom

2. *Chapel*: A mandatory or voluntary service facilitated by the private Christian school that allows students to gather for praise, worship, and studying the Bible

3. *Discipleship Group*: A mandatory or voluntary time facilitated by the private Christian school that allows students to gather in small groups of at least three to engage in fellowship and a deeper discussion of the Bible

4. *Disciple*: a follower of Jesus Christ who aims to become more Christ-like in every aspect of his or her life; a disciple-maker.

5. *Spiritual Formation*: the process and practices by which a person progresses in their spiritual life to become more like Christ

Significance of the Study

In Wilhoit's book, *Christian Education: The Search for Meaning* (1991), he makes the alarming claim that there is a crisis in Christian education, and that the crisis is largely the result of a lack of purpose (p. 9). The first step in addressing this crisis, then, is to identify the general purpose of Christian education. Wilhoit writes that the general purpose of Christian education is "helping people discover God's meaning for life…to enable them to gain a liberating perspective and lifestyle" (1991, p. 12). This definition not only identifies the general purpose, but also hints at the harmful repercussions of Christian education failing to fulfill its purpose. Christ intends for believers to have a full life. In John 10:10, Christ teaches, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly" (*New King James Version*). Abundant life entails knowing God's meaning for life and adopting a liberating perspective and lifestyle centered around that meaning. Christian educators must take their responsibilities seriously so that those in their care might have the abundant life of which Christ teaches; one way to contribute to this abundant life is through chapel and discipleship-group models. Since one aspect of Christian educators taking their responsibilities seriously is being cognizant of The Great Commission and fulfilling it by making disciples, they should be interested in the effectiveness of their existing chapel and discipleship-group models, as well as potential ways to improve these models.

Summary of the Design

This qualitative case study utilized a survey. This survey was digitally distributed to participants via Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). These surveys were composed of the same open-ended questions and allowed participants to express their opinions in as much detail as they liked. Once the surveys were completed and collected, data was analyzed to determine

what patterns existed in responses. Any existing patterns revealed the students' perceived

spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models at select private Christian schools, as

well as how effective the chapel and discipleship-group models are in regards to fulfilling the

biblical command to make disciples.

Conclusion

Formation is an inevitable occurrence with humankind (Rios, 2020, p. 174). People can

be formed positively or negatively, largely depending on their surrounding influences. Christian

educators who desire their students to achieve spiritual formation should be concerned about the

influences their students face. This chapter provided background for the problem before

concisely stating the problem and presenting research questions. This chapter then discussed

some research assumptions and delimitations of the research design, defined key terms, argued

the significance of the problem, and summarized the research design in preparation for the

literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the literature that comprises the theological and theoretical

framework of this study. This chapter will also consider other related literature, as well as

existing gaps in the literature. Overall, this chapter will provide a context for the study.

Theological Framework

Prior to conducting this qualitative case study, it was important to understand its

theological framework. This theological framework is based upon the assumption that

fellowshipping with other believers is a Scriptural command and is essential to becoming a fully

formed disciple of Christ. This theological framework is also based upon the assumption that

fellowship is important because the Holy Spirit works through the body of Christ, which is made

up of disciples, to reach the world with the Gospel. The first section of this literature review will

present sources that support these two assumptions, thus constructing a theological framework

for the following qualitative research study.

The Importance of Congregational Worship and Fellowship

Several sources discuss the importance of fellowshipping with other believers, not only

because it is a Scriptural command, but also because it is essential to becoming a fully formed

disciple of Christ. Wilson (2017) seeks to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the

church described in Acts so that they can apply that understanding to churches today. The book

of Acts begins with Jesus promising His relatively small group of disciples the coming of the

Holy Spirit (1:5). By the end of the book of Acts, the New Testament church has grown

considerably and is established across the Mediterranean world. Therefore, Acts is key in

understanding church growth. In Acts, there are several accounts of church growth that are the

result of preaching, teaching, and debating (Wilson, 2020, par. 21). Preaching, teaching, and

debating can occur amongst a large group of people (4:4; 13:48; 14:1; 14:21; 17:4; 17:12, 28:24), or can occur amongst a small, intimate gathering (9:1-18; 16:11-15). Regardless of the size of the crowd, there is both an opportunity and a responsibility to share the Gospel. Following one's conversion, the believer becomes a part of the family of God (Romans 8:14-17, 29; Ephesians 2:18-19). Wilson (2017) notes how Acts emphasizes that those in the family of God participate in the community life of local congregations (par. 19). Acts 2:42-47 in particular mentions that believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers…and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). Many of the conversions discussed in Acts occurred in areas where there were not yet established churches (Wilson, 2020, par.19), but the conversions then led to the establishment of a church. Acts would not place such emphasis upon it if congregational worship and fellowship were not so important.

Fellowshipping with other believers is emphasized several other places in Scripture. According to John 1:7, one benefit of walking in the light is fellowship with other believers: "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). Those who are a part of this fellowship must no longer worry about the biases, prejudices, or societal classifications that divide the world. Instead, they are one, unified in Christ: "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility…[h]is purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011, Ephesians 2:14-15). Fellowship with other believers also strengthens the connection with God: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011, Matthew 18:20). This fellowship is so

important that God urges believers to protect it: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011, 2 Corinthians 6:14). These are some, but not all, of the references that emphasize the importance of fellowshipping with other believers in Scripture. If congregational worship and fellowship with other believers were not so important, then it would not be so consistently mentioned throughout Scripture.

Van Aarde (2017) also considers the importance of fellowship with believers by examining "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of All Believers." Church growth is not solely the responsibility of pastors and church leaders; instead, all believers are part of the priesthood of Christ (1 Peter 2:5-9) and have the responsibility to share the Gospel and facilitate church growth (van Aarde, 2017, par. 16). While some believers argue that they are neither prepared nor equipped to be missionaries, van Aarde (2017) responds that "[t]he calling to be missional does not mean that every Christian is to understand himself or herself as a missionary, but that every Christian has a missional calling and task" (par. 16). If fellowship with other believers were not so important, then all believers would not be tasked with sharing the Gospel and facilitating church growth.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Yet more sources discuss fellowshipping with other believers because the Holy Spirit works through the body of Christ to reach the world with the Gospel. Graham (1988) provides a comprehensive study of the Holy Spirit and the ways He works in believers and through the church. Graham (1988) emphasizes that the Holy Spirit was present and working before the establishment of the church (Genesis 1:2; John 1:32; John 3:5), but believers became more aware of and involved with Him following Jesus' ascension into Heaven (Acts 2:1-4).

First, according to First Corinthians 12:13-14: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body…and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). The Holy Spirit does not just work through the church, but He is also what brought the church into being (Graham, 1988, p. 35). Secondly, according to Ephesians 2:22: "In Him you are also being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). The Holy Spirit does not just work through the church, but God also lives in the church by His Spirit (Graham, 1988, p. 35). Thirdly, the Holy Spirit gifts believers. DeVries (2016) discusses spiritual gifts at length. Not only are these spiritual gifts used in aiding church growth, but spiritual gifts are also used for strengthening and encouraging those already within the church body. DeVries (2016) writes, "These gifts of grace from God are to be understood as the equipping and empowerment of the believing followers of Christ by the Holy Spirit, so that they can participate in building up the body of Christ" (par. 10). Several passages reveal what gifts the Spirit apportions. Romans 12:6-8 mentions prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy; First Corinthians 12:8-10 mentions faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues; First Peter 4:11 mentions speaking and service. Spiritual gifts are not an esoteric concept intended only for a small group of believers; instead, all believers receive Spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit works mightily through a church that recognizes His presence and utilizes the gifts which He gives.

Walvoord (1991) also provides a comprehensive study of the Holy Spirit and the ways He works in believers and through the church. Walvoord (1991) mentions six results of being filled by the Holy Spirit: progressive sanctification, teaching, guidance, worship, prayer, and service. First, the Holy Spirit enables progressive sanctification by working within the believer to

change his character and make him more Christ-like (Walvoord, 1991; Adewuya, 2001; Story, 2009). Between the Holy Sprit's empowerment and conviction, and the church's accountability (James 5:16), a believer is progressively sanctified.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit acts as teacher to the believer who is eager to learn more about God and His Word (Scott, 1838; Denio, 1896). When Christ reassures His disciples that His ascension into Heaven is good because then the Spirit can be among them, He also states, "But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you" (*English Standard Version*, John 14:26, 2001/2011). Jesus reiterates this truth later in John 16:13: "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). Brown (2002) supports this point in his article by discussing how an understanding of Christian truth comes from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only acts as a teacher within an individual believer, but He also empowers believers to teach others. Brown writes that in Acts 1:8 when Jesus says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011), the word "power" includes the ability to interpret Scripture and, in turn, teach Scripture. As previously mentioned, certain believers within the body of Christ are apportioned the Spiritual gift of teaching (Romans 12:6-8). Therefore, the Holy Spirit teaches all believers within the body of Christ both directly and indirectly.

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit provides guidance (Scott, 1838; Denio, 1896). Walvoord notes that the difference between teaching and guidance is that teaching involves relating truths to believers, whereas guidance involves applying those truths into real-life scenarios (1991, p. 221). Scripture references the guidance of the Holy Spirit in both the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 24:27; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18). The Holy Spirit provides guidance to believers on

an individual basis, but at times those individuals may have to seek godly counsel from others within the body of believers (Proverbs 19:20-21; Proverbs 24:6). When individuals seek godly counsel from believers who have been apportioned the Spiritual gift of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8), the Holy Spirit is at work more widely within the church.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is the well-spring for worship. Walvoord (1991) writes that worship is "praise and thanksgiving which is the fruit of a life lived in fellowship with God, and which is at the same time a result of the Spirit producing in the heart the joy, peace, and assurance, of which He is the source" (p. 222). People can pretend to worship when their hearts are not aligned with God, but true worship only comes from a believer whose heart is aligned with God and who is living according to God's will. A believer can worship God anywhere and everywhere, alone or in a crowd. However, there is a special call to worship as a body of believers to "not [neglect] to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (*English Standard Version*, Hebrews 10:25, 2001/2011). Worship through the Holy Spirit is powerful, but it is especially powerful when the church body worship together (Matthew 18:20).

Fifth, the Holy Spirit is a vital participant in prayer, both to communicate with God and to understand God's revealed will (Walvoord, 1991; Beck, 2014). The Holy Spirit intercedes on behalf of the believer when he does not have the words to pray (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit provides understanding when one tries to discern God's reply (John 14:26). If the Holy Spirit is a vital participant in prayer, then He is also a vital participant in the body of believers, since the body of believers is instructed to pray for and with one another (Matthew 5:44; Romans 15:30; James 5:16). Through the Holy Spirit, the body of believers becomes an army of prayer warriors.

Sixth and finally, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to serve God and serve others (Jones, 2001). Walvoord (1991) writes, "the natural man cannot serve God, and even the believer in Christ who possesses Spiritual gifts can exercise them fully only in the power of the Spirit" (p. 223). While service is a Spiritual gift apportioned to some (Roman 12:6-8), all believers are called to serve God and serve others. 'Servant' language is used throughout the New Testament. For instance, Paul, James, and Peter refer to themselves as servants of God at the beginning of several of their letters (Romans 1:1; Philemon 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1). Furthermore, it becomes clear that believers are servants of Christ by serving others when Jesus states, "even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (*English Standard Version*, Matthew 20:28, 2001/2011). One way to serve is to utilize the Spiritual gifts apportioned by the Holy Spirit. When each member of the church body utilizes his or her Spiritual gifts, their service is a true testament to the love of Christ.

Pinnock (2006) considers how the Holy Spirit empowers the church to be missional, which is perhaps the most applicable work of the Holy Spirit to discipleship and disciple-making. Pinnock (2006) notes that the church is missional because of the universality of the Gospel (255). First Timothy 2:4 makes very clear that God "desires all men to be saved to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2011). Because God desires all men to be saved, He commissioned His followers to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (*English Standard Version*, Matthew 28:19, 2001/2011). The Holy Spirit equips believers for God's commission by teaching them, guiding them, and bestowing upon them Spiritual gifts, as previously mentioned. The Holy Spirit instills God's power in believers who are otherwise weak (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Theoretical Framework

To best understand this qualitative case study, it is also important to understand its

theoretical framework. This theoretical framework is based upon the assumption that there is a

correlation between learning to worship and spiritual formation and discipleship, as well as the

assumption that Christian education has the potential to impact young adults' continued church

attendance and, consequently, their spiritual growth. The second section of this literature review

will present sources that support these two assumptions, thus constructing a theoretical

framework for the following qualitative research study.

Worship and Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

James K.A. Smith presents compelling arguments about learning to worship and spiritual

formation and discipleship. Smith (2013) first claims that "we are, primarily and at root, *affective*

animals whose worlds are made more by the imagination than by the intellect" (p. xii). In other

words, Christians might *know* the Great Commission, but they are galvanized to fulfill the Great

Commission when they can *imagine* their God-given role and its effect on a lost and dying

world. Participating in congregational worship should not merely be an event at which believers

are exposed to intellectual thoughts about theology. Instead, "the end of Christian worship

[should] bring us back to the beginning of creation, to our commissioning in the Garden and our

deputizing as God's image bearers, those responsible for tending and tilling God's good - but

now broken – creation" (Smith, 2013, p. 2). Unfortunately, many Christians today do not assume

this view of congregational worship. Instead, church is merely an item on the daily checklist.

Poti (2009) recalls the 1950's and 1960's when children received "points" in their Sunday school

class for completing certain tasks, one of which was attending the church service. Such a system

impresses the wrong idea into children's minds, as "[m]ere attendance does not equal authentic

worship" (Poti, 2009, p. 236). Authentic worship is important because, as previously mentioned, it should remind believers of their responsibilities as image bearers. This reminder then shapes their fundamental orientation to the world (Smith, 2013) and teaches them how to be in an active relationship with God every day (Pito, 2009).

Smith (2013) correlates orientating oneself to the world with determining which "story" humans will participate in. As humans are affective, imaginative creatures, fundamental orientations to the world are built by choosing and participating in a "story." Smith (2013) writes, "stories 'mean' on a register that is visceral and bodily, more aesthetic than analytic, 'made sense of' more by the imagination than the intellect. Stories are something we learn 'by heart' in the sense that they *mean* on a register that eludes articulation and analysis. A whole world(view) can be compressed in even the most minimal narrative because the 'story' is working" (p. 109). In other words, participating in the "story" that is true worship should impact believers on such a deep level that what they learn through worship changes their interactions with the world around them. Participating in the "story" that is true worship also connects them with other believers who are invested in the same "story," which is beneficial for multiple reasons.

Participating in the "story" of true worship is beneficial because doing so builds the body of Christ as God intended. Lourens (2012) discusses the body metaphor that Scripture uses to describe the members of the church. Each member of the body is gifted differently (Romans 12:38; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31), and when the members are united and use their gifts, the church is uplifted, and Christ is glorified. The members should be so united that "[i]f one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with them, and if one part is praised, all the other parts share in its happiness" (Lourens, 2012, sec. 3). The members of the body also work towards a common

goal – fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) - encouraging those who are weak, and loving not only other members, but everyone with whom they come in contact (Lourens, 2012, sec. 3.2).

Participating in the "story" that is true worship builds the body of Christ as God intended, but it also benefits individual believers by giving them a purpose, which encourages positive health behaviors. Several studies prove there are benefits of having a purpose in life. McKnight and Kashdan (2009) defines purpose in these words:

> Purpose is a central, self-organizing life aim that organizes and stimulates goals, manages behaviors, and provides a sense of meaning. Purpose directs life goals and daily decisions by guiding the use of finite personal resources. Instead of governing behavior, purpose offers direction just as a compass offers direction to a navigator; following that compass (i.e., purpose) is optional. Living in accord with one's purpose, however, offers that person a self-sustaining source of meaning through goal pursuit and goal attainment. Furthermore, purpose is woven into a person's identity and behavior as a central, predominant theme—central to personality as well. (par. 2)

This definition claims that a purpose not only impacts what people do daily, but it also impacts who they are, or at least how they view who they are. While people can experience an identity crisis at any point in their lives, an identity crisis is especially prevalent in adolescents (Almo'fadda, 1992; Zbornkik, 2010; Klimstra, et al., 2010). Therefore, it is critical for adolescents to find their purpose to help establish their identities.

Another benefit of having a purpose in life is the possibility of an extended lifetime. Hill and Turiano (2014) found through their studies that there is a correlation between having a purpose in life, healthy aging, and reduced mortality. Tomioka, Kurumatani, and Hosoi (2016) came to the same conclusion, but also clarify that one's purpose is not necessarily a career; one's purpose could also be found in hobbies or "extracurricular" activities. McKnight and Kashdan (2009) continue to argue that purpose might not only extend one's lifetime, but purpose could also make one's lifetime more enjoyable. Having a purpose could benefit one's emotional health,

and though purpose will not eliminate stressful times in one's life, it does motivate one to

overcome those stressful times (McKnight and Kashdan, 2009, sec. 5).

Having a purpose encourages positive health behaviors, but so does simply being a part

of a group. Hansong, et al. (2019) explore social belonging and meaning in religious groups.

Statistically, people feel more social belonging when a group's ideology is consistent with their

own. Therefore, the ideological homogeneity of most churches provides their members with a

stronger sense of social belonging (Hansong, et al., 2019, par. 6). Casidy and Tsarenko (2014)

cite numerous studies that support this notion:

> Past studies have found that the ability to make friends within a church is an attractive
> feature of church services (Olson, 1989) and that recruitment of new church members are
> based on the friendship networks of the church current members (Stark and Bainbridge,
> 1987). Ploch and Hastings (1998) found that friendship network is a stronger predictor of
> church participation than parental church attendance and current family status. (par. 9)

People may begin attending a church because their friendship network does so, but people

continue participating in a church because of the sense of spiritual connectedness with others that

grows amongst like-minded believers (Casidy and Tsarenko, 2014, par. 8). This spiritual

connectedness is beneficial in positive times, as it allows those within the church to encourage

others to continually grow; it is especially beneficial in difficult times because it provides the

support and refreshment needed for one to move forward through life (Lee, 2019).

Finally, participating in the "story" of true worship benefits individual believers by aiding

in their spiritual formation and discipleship. Several sources discuss the role that worship plays

in spiritual formation. Richardson (1999) examines Romans 12:1-18. He notes that believers

offering their bodies as a living sacrifice is a form of worship (*English Standard Version,* 2001,

Romans 12:1), and that this form of worship transforms believers (*English Standard Version,*

2001, Romans 12:2). Consequently, "the goal is not to make our worship a more effective

transaction, but to make ourselves more vulnerable to being transformed" (Richardson, 1999, p. 532). Abernathy, et al. (2015) conducted a study that further confirmed the claim that worship impacts one's spiritual formation; furthermore, participating in corporate worship has the potential to impact other's spiritual formation as well (sec. 13). Aniol (2017) takes this claim one step further and discusses how worship not only impacts one's spiritual formation, but the discipleship process as well. Aniol (2017) writes that "making disciples is more than data transmission because the reality is that most actions are not the result of deliberate, rational reflection upon beliefs. Some are, but more of how people act on a daily basis is due to ingrained habits" (pp. 94-95). If disciple making is based on one's habits, and participating in true worship is habit forming because it shapes one's fundamental orientation to the world, then disciple making is directly impacted by true worship.

The Impact of Christian Education

Many agree that that Christian education has the potential to impact young adults' continued church attendance and, consequently, their spiritual growth. O'Connor (2002) mentions Social Learning Theory, which "views religious behavior as a learned behavior arising out of a particular life context" (p. 724). In other words, behaviors that one learns during a particular time in life influences how he or she views religion, and how involved he or she is with religious activities. When this article was written in 2002, 79% of young adults stopped attending church at some time (p. 731), which would indicate that their learned behaviors while growing up did not make religion an important or desired part of their lives. O'Connor (2002) found that significant factors that young adults cited as the reason they stopped attending church included "the culture of the denomination in which the person was raised, including its teachings and habits, and the amount of involvement in church youth programs" (p. 731). Therefore,

experiences young adults have with the body of Christ are a determining factor in whether they choose to be an active member of the body of Christ later in life.

Uecker, et al. (2007) study the theory that young adults stop attending church once they begin attending college because of the higher education. Interestingly enough, young adults who do not attend college are equally, if not more likely, to stop attending church (Uecker, et al., 2007). Consequently, higher education is not the primary reason that young adults stop attending church. Uecker, et al. (2007) offer an alternative explanation: "If education, family formation and behavioral explanations do not explain much of the religious decline we see in early adulthood, the phenomenon could also be attributable to processes set in motion during adolescence – namely weak religious socialization" (sec. 29). Therefore, a lack of experiences, or a lack of positive experiences, with the body of Christ is a determining factor in whether young adults choose to be an active member of the body of Christ later in life.

LeBlanc and Slaughter (2012) conducted a study that sought to determine if students who graduated from Christian high schools were spiritually prepared for higher education, and how their preparation compared to students who graduated from public high schools. A group of students was interviewed face-to-face, and those who attended private Christian school believed their high school experience strengthened their faith and prepared them to defend their faith when they entered a secular world, which is similar to the beliefs of this study's population. However, students who attended public school felt equally prepared to enter a secular world with their faith because of spiritual influences they had outside of school, such as their families, churches, and youth groups. While it is good that students from public school felt prepared and had positive spiritual influences in their lives, should private Christian schools not prove advantageous because they are an additional spiritual influence in a young adult's life? Clearly

spiritual influences impact a young adult's Christian education, but private Christian schools could do better.

Cox and Peck (2018) make the bold claim that "Christian education institutions, the third of what has been called the three-legged stool of Christian education, carry their responsibilities as part of the Church even if in non-ecclesiastical settings" (sec. 1). Arguably, it is more important to reach young adults with the Gospel and train them to be disciples of Christ for three reasons. First, young adults are more impressionable than they are later in life (Cox and Peck, 2018, sec. 2). Secondly, teaching young adults is appropriate from a biblical and Jewish historical perspective, since young adults were trained before adulthood with what they needed to know of the Torah (Cox and Peck, 2018, sec. 2). Thirdly, young adults are statistically more likely to accept Christ than adults (Cox and Peck, 2018, sec. 2).While many private Christian schools claim to teach subjects from a biblical perspective, discipleship in Christian education is more than that. Discipleship in Christian education involves sacrificial love that demonstrates the love of Christ both in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, relational love involves explicitly addressing how to become a disciple instead of assuming students will gain such an understanding in other areas of their lives (Cox and Peck, 2018, sec. 7). Christian educators have the privilege not only to impact young adults, but also to explicitly discuss Christ and other biblical matters. They should take that privilege seriously.

Related Literature, Rationale, and Gaps in the Literature

Prior to conducting this qualitative case study, it was important to examine the literature related to this study, as well as the rationale for this study and any existing gaps in the literature. First, this section will consider different philosophies of education and different areas of adolescent development that are beneficial to this study. Second, this section will consider how

through active engagement, practical application, holistic emphasis, and community dynamics, Christian school students can be shaped to crave the Christian community that church provides. Finally, this section will briefly discuss existing gaps in the literature.

Related Literature

This section will discuss the literature related to this study, which include different philosophies of education.

Philosophies of Education

There are several different philosophies of education that are beneficial to this study. Knight (2006) contributes to the discussion of philosophies of education from a Christian perspective. While many think of education in terms of something that takes place inside the four walls of a classroom, Knight (2006) has a different perspective:

> Education, like learning, is a lifelong process that can take place in an infinite variety of circumstances and contexts. On the other hand, education is distinct from the broader concept of learning, since education embodies the idea of deliberate control by the learner or someone else toward a desire goal. Education might be thought of as directed learning as opposed to non-directed or inadvertent learning. (p. 10)

Based on this definition of education, Christian schools should consider everything they do with their students a form of education, especially chapel and discipleship-group models, as they are a form of deliberate control towards a desired goal – a strengthened relationship with Jesus Christ. Furthermore, since school is only one of society's agents for educating young adults (Knight, 2006, p. 11), Christian schools should take the responsibility seriously and be even more intentional about how they display worship and fellowship with other believers. To accomplish this goal, Knight (2006) calls Christian educators to conduct a "thorough and ongoing examination, evaluation, and correction of their educational practices in the light of their basic philosophic beliefs" (p. 164).

In continuation, Knight (2006) presents his thoughts on a Christian approach to education that beautifully mimic how Jesus teaches His followers. First, all students are created in the image of God since all mankind is created in the image of God (Knight, 2006, pp. 204-206). Being created in the image of God is an important biblical theme that emerges throughout Scripture (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 5:1-2; Genesis 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). Kilner (2017) defines being made in God's image as "having a special connection with God and being a substantial reflection of God" (p. 263). Biblically, there is no distinction between which race, ethnicity, size, physicality, or mentality is most conducive to having a special connection with God and being a substantial reflection of God. All people are created in the image of God and have the same potential for connection and reflection. Tragically, sin entered the world, and mankind now possesses a sin nature. Kilner (2017) notes that though mankind was damaged by sin, the image of God was not. Therefore, mankind must be restored so that the image of God can be renewed in humanity (p. 265). Restoration allows mankind to strive for spiritual maturity. Chambers (1950) defines spiritual maturity as "the stage where the whole life has been brought under the control of God" (p. 82). If the whole life has been brought under the control of God, then mankind will reflect the attributes of God that are the natural result of complete surrender. Tozer (1993) echoes this sentiment when he writes, "The pursuit of God will embrace the labor of bringing our total personality into conformity of His" (p. 96). Ultimately, the special connection with God and reflection of God is possible for all human beings, despite the presence of sin, because sin did not damage the image of God itself. Therefore, human beings can be restored, and the image of God can be renewed in them as they strive towards spiritual maturity. To be effective in Christian education, educators must recognize that all students are made in the image of God and interact with them accordingly (Knight, 2006).

After acknowledging that all students are created in the image of God, Christian educators must then acknowledge their role in the acts of redemption and reconciliation: "The primary function of the teacher is to relate to the Master Teacher in such a way that he or she becomes God's agent in the plan of redemption" (Knight, 2006, p. 213). If redemption and reconciliation involve bringing the total person into conformity with God (Tozer, 1993), then Christian educators must focus not only on the academics, but also on the spiritual (Knight, 2006). Therefore, the effectiveness of chapel and discipleship group models directly relates to the effectiveness of Christian educators.

MacCullough (2013) also contributes to the discussion of philosophies of education from a Christian perspective. MacCullough (2013) writes that "[s]tudents absorb their worldview answers through various means…the words and attitudes of the teacher and other students, the curriculum, and the general culture of the school" (p. 41). Therefore, it is important that the teacher's attitude be one of continued growth for the student even outside of the classroom, and it is important that the entire culture of the school reflects the goal of spiritual growth for the student. MacCullough (2013) then lists three seemingly simple steps for teachers to help their students learn: "(1) know the subject matter and how it should be learned, (2) know the student and how they learn, (3) be able to bring the two together to create and deliver lessons that promote learning" (p. 99). A part of the subject matter that Christian schools should teach is how to be in a fully formed relationship with God, which includes congregational worship and fellowshipping with other believers. Christian schools should examine their chapel and discipleship group models to determine if they are constructed in a way that best help the students to learn. Christian schools should then alter their chapel and discipleship group models as needed to promote student learning.

Pazmino (2008) considers certain foundational issues in Christian education. One particularly relevant metaphor for learning that Pazmino (2008) addresses is the metaphor of growth: "In this metaphor, the curriculum is like routine care provided in a greenhouse situation where students will grow and develop to their full potential under the wise and patient attention of the teacher. The plants that grow in the greenhouse are of every variety, but the gardener cares for each plant in unique ways so that each comes to flower" (p. 241). This metaphor for learning was originally popularized by the Swiss philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. In Jean Jacque Rousseau's *Emile*, he makes the comparison between teacher and gardener in the first paragraph. Rousseau writes,

> COMING from the hand of the Author of all things, everything is good; in the hands of man, everything degenerates. Man obliges one soil to nourish the productions of another, one tree to'bear the fruits of another; he mingles and confounds climates, elements, seasons; he mutilates his dog, his horse, his slave. He overturns everything, disfigures everything; he loves deformity, monsters; he desires that nothing should be as nature made it, not even man himself. To please him, man must be broken in like a horse; man must be adapted to man's own fashion, like a tree in his garden. (1762, p. 11)

The first line is reminiscent of James 1:17, which states, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (*New King James Version*). Unfortunately, because of the effects of sin and sin nature, man has a tendency not to be good. Not all is lost, however. Proverbs 22:6 teaches, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (*New King James Version*). As the last line of Rousseau's introductory paragraph indicates, if a child is trained up in the way he should go, similar to a tree being pruned in a garden, then he will not depart from that good and will "please him…the Author of all things" (1762, p. 11).

Rousseau continues the comparison between teacher and gardener in the following paragraphs. He also writes,

Plants are improved by cultivation, and men by education. If man were born large and strong, his size and strength would be useless to him until he had learned to use them. They would be prejudicial to him, by preventing others from thinking of assisting him; and left to himself he would die of wretchedness before he had known his own necessities. We pity the state of infancy; we can not perceive that the human race would have perished if man had not begun by being a child. We are born weak, we need strength; we are born destitute of all things, we need assistance; we are born stupid, we need judgment. All that we have not at our birth, and that we need when grown up, is given us by education. (1762, p. 12).

While the first paragraph simply likened the roles of teacher and gardener with a simile, this paragraph more directly compares the two roles. Plants and men must both improve from their natural state; the one requires cultivation to improve, whereas the other requires education to improve. Rousseau then notes that there are three ways men receive education: nature, their own circumstances, and other men – their teachers (1762, p. 13). Nature and circumstances often cannot be controlled, but other men – the teachers – can be observed, corrected, and improved upon.

The crux of *Emile* is divided into three books, which are dedicated to different stages of a child's life. Rousseau first addresses the child from birth to six years of age, then from six to twelve years of age, and finally from twelve to fifteen years of age. At fifteen years of age, Rousseau deems the child knowledgeable enough to continue down his own path of education. In the conclusion, Rousseau reveals to readers why he has noted so many subjects, both academic and moral, as being necessary for a child to learn in his developmental years. Rousseau writes, "I am showing him a path to knowledge not indeed difficult, but without limit, slowly measured, long, or rather endless, and tedious to follow. I am showing him how to take the first steps, so that he may know its beginning, but allow him to go no farther" (1762, p. 155). In other words, Rousseau believes his theory of education equips the child to know who he wants to be and what he wants to accomplish, as well as how to be that person and how to accomplish that goal. He

believes his theory of education cultivates the plant so that it can grow and branch out in whichever direction it chooses. If Christian educators teach their students how to be in a right relationship with God, which includes participating in congregational worship and fellowship with other believers, then those students will, ideally, want to "branch out" in a direction that is pleasing to God.

Finally, Wilhoit and Dettoni (1995) offer a developmental perspective on Christian education. First, Wilhoit and Dettoni (1995) make it clear that "environment influences every level of development" (p. 161). Second, the authors emphasize the importance of faith development in young adults because their faith overlaps with and influences other developmental struggles they are facing. During their young adult years, students are beginning to make their faith their own, which can often lead them to explore beyond what they were taught in earlier years. As they develop physically, their emotions are often in opposition to what they have "known" to be true, and they seek to reconcile their emotions with their understanding (Wilhoit and Dettoni, 1995, p. 169). For these reasons, Christian educators need to use this time when young adults are so impressionable to teach them how to be in a right relationship with God, which is a precursor to discipleship and disciple-making.

Philosophies of Adolescent Development

There are several different philosophies of adolescent development that are beneficial to this study. Damon (1999) contributed thoughts on the moral development of children. He notes that for the first few years of a child's life, many of their moral decisions are influenced by the prospect of punishment. However, at a certain point, those decisions are influenced less by the prospect of punishment, and more by the presence of ingrained beliefs (p. 74). These beliefs become a part of one's personal identity, so each moral decision one makes stems from who he

or she is becoming (p. 75). While parents are generally the primary source of ingraining beliefs in their children, as the children grow older, they are exposed to other influences, such as teachers (pp. 77-78). Therefore, Christian educators must be prepared to influence their students to live for Christ as best they can.

Wilhoit and Dettoni (1995) summarize developmental theories from some of the most renowned theorists, including Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson. First, Piaget theorized that a child's mind has various schemata for organizing information. As a child is exposed to information, they categorize that information according to the different schemata. As they grow, however, new schemata are developed to make sense of new and sometimes challenging information (p. 52). By elementary school, children can use mental logic, but only in "situations that are real and observable" (p. 53). By middle and high school, young adults have developed the ability to think abstractedly, but this ability is built on the foundations of mental logic that were developed in elementary school (p. 54). If the abstract thinking in the middle and high school years are built upon the foundations of earlier years, then Christian educators should expose students to chapel and discipleship groups as early as possible to impact the students' development.

Secondly, Kohlberg theorized that while children develop at varying rates, there are three basic levels of development: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional (p. 65). The preconventional stage is the stage where, as Damon stated, children's moral decisions are influenced by the prospect of punishment (p. 66). The conventional stage is when children's moral decisions are based upon the influences in their lives and those whom they revere (p. 66). Finally, the postconventional stage is when young adults are "motivated to right action through their commitment to moral principles" (p. 68).

Kohlberg's theory correlates with Egan's (2010) consideration of how the Holy Spirit and spiritual exercises form the moral conscience. The Latin root for conscience, *conscientia,* "means both consciousness in general and an inner consciousness that something is morally wrong" (p. 58). Arguably, God instilled in each of His creation a moral compass to determine right from wrong. Moreover, one's conscience is "most properly formed and informed" when one is in a right relationship with God (p. 59). Egan (2010) affirms what was previously stated – that the Holy Spirit provides guidance to believers. This guidance, in addition to the innate moral compass, also helps one determine right from wrong. This learnable skill is spiritual discernment, which is "not so much a matter of persuading the Lord to provide answers as asking the Holy Spirit to sharpen and unblock our vision so as to see more clearly where or how he's working in our lives and, as a consequence, where he intends leading us" (p. 66). While the Holy Spirit may guide believers with an inner feeling, one common way that the Holy Spirit guides believers is through other believers, or the body of Christ. As previously noted, the Holy Spirit apportions gifts to the body of Christ, such as preaching and teaching (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-30). To hear the Holy Spirit through other believers, however, one must be around other believers through congregational worship and fellowship. Since children's moral beliefs are influenced by those in their early lives whom they revere in the conventional stage, Christian educators should teach their students through example. Doing so would include emphasizing the importance of congregational worship and fellowship with other believers, as it is sometimes through other believers that the Holy Spirit disseminates guidance.

Finally, Erikson theorized several stages of development: trust versus basic mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity

versus despair (pp. 96-98). The most relevant stages begin with identity versus role confusion, when "in adolescence, individuals are attempting to discover their sense of self or identity" (p. 97). It is important for young adults in this stage to find their identity in Christ, as this is the time when young adults are questioning who they are and who they want to become. The intimacy versus isolation stage is also relevant, when "young adults emerge from adolescence with a sense of identity, [and] they now face the issue of giving that self away in loving, caring, intimate relationships" (p. 98). It is important for young adults to witness the need for and benefit of the body of Christ, as this is the time when young adults discover how they are to interact with those around them. The generativity versus stagnation and ego integrity versus despair stages are not relevant until middle to late adulthood, but these stages are based upon previous ones (p. 98). As education impacts a young adult's search for identity and meaning in relationships, it is important that Christian education guides young adults to find their identity in Christ and engage in meaningful relationships with other believers. Failure to do so could affect young adults well into their elder years of life.

Rationale

Christian schools must modify their chapel and discipleship group models to make them more effective because faith-integrated learning needs to take place outside of the classroom just as much as inside of the classroom. Studies show the benefit of faith-integrated learning. For instance, Lawrence, et al. (2005) conducted a study where thirty-one students were given an open-ended questionnaire at the end of a course that required them to articulate how well the course integrated faith and learning. All students provided examples of integrative moments based on the teachers' actions throughout the course, indicating that the teacher made an impact with faith integration even if the students were not overtly aware of it at the time. Lawrence, et

al. (2005) then stated that this study should show the importance of faith integration in all areas where the students learn.

Through faith-integrative learning, students can be shaped to crave the Christian community that church provides. Maitanmi (2019) defines education based on Scripture, or training and instructing a child in such a way that they will not deviate from it as they grow and develop. De Beer and Jarsma (2000) claim education is Christian when it directs a child to do the right thing, that is, honor the Creator. Furthermore, Vieth (1947) defines Christian education as follows:

> Christian education is the process by which persons are confronted with and controlled by the Christian gospel. It involves the efforts of the Christian community to guide both young and adult persons toward an ever-richer possession of the Christian fellowship. It is both individual and social in nature. It is concerned with the past, because it seeks to introduce persons to their religious heritage, with the present because it aims to make religious a vital force in every response to life, with the future because it cultivates creative experience leading to growth in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. (p. 52)

The heritage of which Vieth (1947) speaks "includes the most valued and relevant knowledge of a group" (Maitanmi, 2019, p. 91). If educators teach heritage effectively, then students will not only grow personally through their knowledge, but they will also use their knowledge to make an impact in their community (Gilbert, 1963). Arguably, a vital element of Christian heritage is the church. Therefore, for Christian educators to teach heritage effectively, students will not only grow personally throughout their connection to the church, but they will also use their knowledge and impact their church and the surrounding community.

Maitanmi (2019) lists three perceived benefits of Christian education:

> "(1) Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and to foster a sense of personal relationship to Him. (2) Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Jesus to lead them to better personal

experience. (3) Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christian character" (pp. 91-92).

These three benefits of Christian education can only be aided by effective chapel and discipleship group models. Such models would raise students' consciousness of God and encourage their personal relationship with Him. Such models would teach them more about the life of Jesus, specifically the importance that Jesus placed on gathering together for fellowship. Finally, such models would produce a progressive and continuous development of Christian character by encouraging students to seek congregational worship and fellowship in the church.

Gaps in the Literature

This section will briefly consider the gaps in the existing literature to show how this study will contribute to the existing literature. Nel (2015) offered his thoughts on the matter of discipling youth: "Discipling youth may be one of the 'missing links' in developing missional thinking and missional local churches. This is even more so where churches suffer from a very obvious estrangement among generations" (p. 1). Nel (2015) reached this conclusion with the recognition that only disciples can make disciples. Consequently, if Generation Z, or those born between 1997-2012, is not making disciples, then it is because they are not disciples. If they are not disciples, then it is because previous generations did not disciple them. The previous generations with the most influence during Generation Z's young adult years are, of course, parents and church leaders – but also educators. To bridge the generational gap in churches today, Generation Z must learn to disciple others, but first, they must become disciples.

Wilhoit and Dettoni (1991), made the alarming claim years ago that there was a crisis in Christian education, and that the crisis was largely the result of a lack of purpose (p. 9). The first step in addressing this crisis was to identify the general purpose of Christian education. Wilhoit

and Dettoni noted that the general purpose of Christian education is "helping people discover God's meaning for life…to enable them to gain a liberating perspective and lifestyle" (1991, p. 12). In the years following the publication of their book, *Nurture that is Christian*, steps toward resolving this crisis were taken as more literature was published about the purpose of Christian education. Christian educators have a clear opportunity to disciple Generation Z during the eight hours, give or take, that those students are in school. Many Christian schools have chapel and discipleship groups with the alleged purpose of making disciples for Christ. Therefore, Christian educators must make those chapels and discipleship groups as effective as possible so that they can make the most of the opportunities they have with Generation Z. Otherwise, the downward trend of younger generations leaving the church and the Christian faith might very well continue.

Conclusion

The first section of this literature review offered strong support for the assumption that participating in congregational worship and fellowshipping with other believers is a Scriptural command and is essential to becoming a fully formed disciple of Christ. This first section also offered support for the assumption that participating in congregational worship and fellowshipping with other believers is important because the Holy Spirit works through the church to reach the world with the Gospel, thus constructing a theological foundation for this study. The second section of the literature review offered strong support for the assumption that there is a correlation between learning to worship and spiritual formation and discipleship, as well as the assumption that Christian education has the potential to impact young adults' continued church attendance and, consequently, their spiritual growth, thus constructing a theoretical foundation for this study. The third and final section of this literature review considered different philosophies of education and different areas of adolescent development that

are beneficial to this study. This third section also considered the rationale for this study. Finally, this third section briefly discussed existing gaps in the literature. After reviewing this literature, this researcher was prepared to conduct the qualitative research study to understand the relationship between chapel and discipleship group models in private Christian high schools and church involvement in graduates.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Prior to gathering qualitative research to understand the 12th grade students'
perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in their schools, it was
important to identify the intended research design, a qualitative case study, specifically a
survey. This chapter will provide a brief synopsis of the research design, as well as identify
the setting, participants, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection
methods and instruments, and plan for data analysis.

Research Design Synopsis

This section contains an overview of the research design to better prepare the reader for
viewing the results of this study.

The Problem

Jesus' final command before ascending to Heaven, otherwise known as The Great
Commission, is detailed in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching
them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the
end of the age. Amen" (*New King James Version*, 2015). While the overall aim of Christian
education is to provide students with an education from a biblical worldview, this education must
expand beyond the academics taught in classrooms (Wilhoit, 1991). Christian education should
be equally concerned with making disciples of students who will then go forward to be disciple-
makers themselves. Consequently, private Christian schools must consider the students'
perceived spiritual effect of their chapel and discipleship-group models to determine the most
effective way to make disciples.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in Christian education. The data collected analyzed the positive and negative elements of the chapel and discipleship-group models to help conclude what is a more effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. In this study, spiritual discipleship is defined as the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples (Chan, 2012).

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ2. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ3. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ4. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models, how effective are discipleship group models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ5. Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the 12th grade students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?

Research Design and Methodology

The qualitative case study was appropriate for this study because open-ended survey questions allowed students to fully convey their perceived benefits and detriments of the

chapel and discipleship-group models. Qualitative research is considered a soft science that is holistic, subjective, and dependent on words for analysis (Creswell, 2014). This research methodology focuses on a process, event, or phenomenon in an attempt to understand the process, event, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the process was making disciples through chapel and discipleship-group models. Qualitative research is not limited to statistical formula; instead, it lends itself to explanation – the explanation of students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research requires a natural setting where researchers collect their data, participants who can help the researcher answer the problem and research questions, and multiple sources of data such as documents, interviews, and personal observations (Straus and Corbin, 1994; Turner, 2010). Data analysis will then detect themes, patterns, and categories from the research (Straus and Corbin, 1994; Turner, 2010). The natural setting of this study was the select private Christian schools. The students were fully capable of helping this researcher answer the problem and research questions because, as seniors, they could articulate their thoughts regarding the perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models. Data analysis revealed the patterns of perceived spiritual growth among the students.

This qualitative case study utilized a survey. This survey was digitally distributed to participants via Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). These surveys were composed of the same open-ended questions and allowed participants to express their opinions in as much detail as they liked. Once the surveys were completed and collected, the data was analyzed to determine what patterns existed in responses. Existing patterns revealed the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models at select private Christian schools, as

well as how effective the students perceive the chapel and discipleship-group models to be at fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples.

This type of survey was carefully structured, as participants were asked the same open-ended questions but could respond freely with their views (University of Missouri – St. Louis). This type of survey was beneficial because of the consistency and opportunity for participants to respond in detail (University of Missouri – St. Louis). This type of survey can be challenging because the data can be time-consuming to analyze, and the approach lacks some flexibility (University of Missouri – St. Louis). However, despite the challenges, the survey was the most appropriate for this case study.

<div align="center">

Setting

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The setting for this qualitative case study was Lanier Christian Academy, Young Americans Christian School, Strong Rock Christian School, Eagles Landing Christian School, and Hebron Christian Academy. These schools will be described in the following section to make clear why they are appropriate choices for this qualitative case study.

Lanier Christian Academy

In the fall of 2016, two schools – North Georgia Christian School and Heritage Academy – merged to become Lanier Christian Academy (LCA) in Flowery Branch, Georgia. The school presents two distinct models – the University Model and the Traditional Model. The University Model allows students to come to school three days a week for instruction, then work from home two days a week. The Traditional Model allows students to come to school five days a week. LCA is also distinct because it allows homeschool students in the area to participate in extracurricular activities. In the four years since LCA was created, it has served over 500

families with over 800 students and has sent 121 graduates into the world (Lanier Christian Academy [https://lanierchristianacademy.org/about-us/history/]).

LCA has dual accreditation through both the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Cognia (formerly AdvancedED). The school's goal with this dual accreditation is to "to validate their quality and verify that they are striving for excellence based on a solid Christian philosophy of education foundation" (Lanier Christian Academy [https://lanierchristianacademy.org/about-us/accreditation/]). Their emphasis on a Christian philosophy of educational foundation is present in each classroom, grades kindergarten through 12th, and is also reflected through their extracurricular activities, as well as their chapel and discipleship-group models.

LCA was chosen as the setting of this qualitative case study because of its dedication to offering a Christian education. Furthermore, the mission statement for LCA is as follows: "Partnering with parents to transform students to be tomorrow's Christ-centered, servant leaders; equipping students spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ" (Lanier Christian Academy [https://lanierchristianacademy.org/about-us/vision-and-mission/]). LCA desires to create fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. In other words, they desire to create disciples. Consequently, this private Christian school was the ideal setting for this qualitative research study because their goal aligns with the goal this researcher had in conducting the study – understanding the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models to identify a more effective way to make disciples.

Young Americans Christian School

Young Americans Christian School (YACS) was founded in Conyers, Georgia with the goal of providing comprehensive quality Christian education for students. The school became a

member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in 1991. The school facilitates K4 through 12th grade and has grown from twenty-four students to over 500 students, making YACS the largest private school in Rockdale County, Georgia and Newton County, Georgia. YACS still remains a non-denominational, non-profit, independent Christian school providing educational excellence within a Christian worldview (Young Americans Christian School [https://www.youngamericanschristian.org/history]).

YACS was chosen as the setting of this qualitative case study because of its dedication to offering a Christian education. Furthermore, the mission statement for YACS is as follows: "Young Americans Christian School desires for all students to come to a saving relationship with Christ and for that relationship to be genuine and vibrant. The school seeks to teach students to serve God with a whole heart and to be a light to an unsaved world" (Young Americans Christian School [https://www.youngamericanschristian.org/mission-statement]). YACS desires to create students who can be a light to an unsaved world. In other words, they desire to create disciples. Consequently, this private Christian school was the ideal setting for this qualitative research study because their goal aligns with the goal this research had in conducting the study – understanding the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models to identify the most effective way to make disciples.

Strong Rock Christian School

Strong Rock Christian School (SRCS) was founded in 2007 in Locust Grove, Georgia and is accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), as well as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AdvancedEd. SRCS seeks to glorify God and partner with families in educating and inspiring their children to impact the world for Christ. Consequently, faculty and staff partner with the home, church, and school to raise up a

child to be a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ. SRCS was chosen as the setting of this

qualitative case study because of its dedication to offering a Christian education and create

disciples of Christ (Strong Rock Christian School

[https://www.strongrockchristianschool.com/statement-of-faith/]). Consequently, this private

Christian school was the ideal setting for this qualitative research study because their goal aligns

with the goal this research had in conducting the study – understanding the students' perceived

spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models to identify the most effective way to

make disciples.

Eagles Landing Christian Academy

Eagles Landing Christian Academy was founded in 1970 in McDonough, Georgia and is

accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), AdvancedEd, and the

Georgia Independent School Association (GISA). ELCA desires its students to choose Christian

character before career, wisdom beyond scholarship, and service before self; the school is

committed to excellence in all areas, spiritually, academically, aesthetically, athletically, and

socially. ELCA has established a Council of Diversity to any issues pertaining to gender, race,

age and ability, culture, and economic ability due to their belief that all people are created in the

image of God. ELCA was chosen as the setting for this qualitative case study because of its

dedication to offering a Christian education. Because of the desire to embrace diversity, ELCA,

on principle, would acknowledge that all students, regardless of gender, race, age and ability,

culture, or economic ability, can be disciples of Christ (Eagles Landing Christian Academy

[https://www.elcaonline.org/apps/pages/diversity]). Consequently, this private Christian school

was the ideal setting for this qualitative research study because their goal aligns with the goal this

research had in conducting the study – understanding the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models to identify the most effective way to make disciples.

Hebron Christian Academy

Hebron Christian Academy (HCA) was founded in 1999 in Dacula, Georgia and consisted of only nine students. In 2000 HCA received accreditation from the Georgia Association of Christian Schools. In 2006, HCA was fully accredited from SACS and Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). According to the Atlanta Business Chronicle in 2006, Hebron Christian Academy ranked 16th in largest private Christian schools in the Atlanta Metro area. HCA is a ministry of Hebron Church, and they work together to serve with a spirit of unity and vision to connect people to life-changing faith in Jesus Christ (Hebron Christian Academy [https://www.hebronlions.org/about/history]).

HCA was chosen as the setting for this qualitative case study because of its dedication to offering a Christian education. Furthermore, the mission statement for HCA is as follows: "Equipping future leaders to be a transforming influence on their culture for Christ" (Hebron Christian Academy [https://www.hebronlions.org/about/history]). HCA desires to create students who are a transforming influence on the culture. In other words, they desire to create disciples. Consequently, this private Christian school was the ideal setting for this qualitative research study because their goal aligns with the goal this research had in conducting the study – understanding the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models to identify the most effective way to make disciples.

Participants

The participants in this study were the high school senior students of Lanier Christian Academy, Young Americans Christian School, Eagles Landing Christian School, Strong Rock

Christian School, and Hebron Christian Academy. The participants were chosen due to their

enrollment in LCA, YACS, ELCA, SRCS, and HCA and subsequent involvement in weekly

chapel and/or discipleship-group models. These participants underwent quota sampling. Quota

sampling is described as "[i]nstead of requiring fixed numbers of cases in particular categories,

quota sampling sets out a series of categories and a *minimum number* of cases required for each

one" (Robinson, 2013). The series of categories for this project are as follows:

1. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for five or
   more years, extending beyond their high school careers.

2. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for four years,
   or the entirety of their high-school career.

3. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for at least
   two years, or for half of their high-school career.

4. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for at least
   one year, or a fraction of their high-school career.

These surveys provided insight into the effectiveness of chapel and discipleship-group models in

Christian education.

Role of the Researcher

This researcher was the "human instrument" who gathered and analyzed the standardized

open-ended qualitative interview data (Turner, 2010). This researcher administered surveys to

students at the beginning of the 2021 academic year. There are eight principles for interview

preparation which were heeded (Turner, 2010). A setting with little distraction was chosen in

which to administer survey. Prior to administering surveys, the researcher thoroughly explained

the purpose of the surveys, as well as assured the participants that their responses would remain

anonymous. The researcher then explained the format of the survey and provided contact information so that participants could get in touch with the researcher later if necessary.

This researcher does have a relationship with some of the participants, as she is a faculty member at Lanier Christian Academy. While she does not have a relationship with all of them, she did teach and is currently teaching several of the high school students in their English classes. Furthermore, she has a more intimate relationship with some of the school (9th-12th) students who participate in cheerleading, as this researcher is also the cheerleading coach. This researcher also has a relationship with some of the faculty members at Young Americans Christian School, as she graduated from YACS in 2013; however, she does not have a relationship with any of the prospective participants from YACS. Furthermore, this researcher does not have a relationship with any of the prospective participants from Eagles Landing Christian School, Strong Rock Christian School, or Hebron Christian Academy. As the surveys contained the same questions for each school, and the data collected was anonymous, the potential bias that was the result of this researcher's relationship with some of the participants was not an issue.

<center>**Ethical Considerations**</center>

There were ethical considerations with this study, as some of the participants were minors. This researcher also considered the Institutional Review Board process and received approval. The IRB recognizes the necessity of informed consent for participants, and participants of this study were made aware of the study overview, any foreseeable risks or discomforts, and the anonymity of the surveys. Parent consent was obtained for participants under the age of 18. Participants were also provided this researcher's contact information if there were any questions

related to the study or the subject's rights. Finally, this researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), as required by the IRB for approval.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The data collection method for this study was a survey. These surveys were digitally distributed via Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com) to all participants. These surveys had the same open-ended questions and allowed participants to express their opinions in as much detail as they liked. This data collection method was appropriate for this case study because it allowed students to fully convey their perceived benefits and detriments of the chapel and discipleship-group models at select private Christian schools.

Collection Methods

Prior to collecting data, a researcher must select the case or cases that will be the focus of the study. Seawright and Gerring (2018) offer some insight into this first challenge. They claim that "[c]ase selection is the primordial task of the case study researcher, for in choosing cases, one also sets out an agenda for studying those cases. This means that case selection and case analysis are intertwined to a much greater extent in case study research" (2018, p. 294). While some might suggest a random selection of cases, randomization might result in an underrepresentation of the population (2018, p. 298). Consequently, researchers should ask themselves the following questions during the case selection process: Is this case representative of the population? Is it diverse enough to achieve maximum variance over relative dimensions? Does it have extreme value? Does it have surprising value? Could its findings prove influential to the overall population? And finally, what complications might arise? While these questions are important in selecting a case, the authors reiterate the most important question that needs to be answered: "the case should stand for a population. If this is not true, or if there is reason to

doubt this assumption, then the utility of the case study is brought severely into question" (2018, p. 308). LCA, YACS, SRCS, ELCA, and HCA were an appropriate focus for this case study because they stand for a population, specifically a population of students in Christian education.

For a case study to be successful, the researcher must collect extensive data on the individual, program, or event that is the focus of the study. Leedy (2016) notes that "[t]hese data often include observations, interviews, documents (e.g., newspaper articles), past records (e.g., previous test scores), and audiovisual materials (e.g., photographs, videotapes, audiotapes)" (p. 253). Researchers determine what data to collect by determining which data will best answer the question "how do" instead of "how should" (Rashid, et al., 2019, p. 5). For instance, "how do" the treatments for this illness affect those who are ill? "How do" these instructional strategies affect the success of students in the classroom? "How do" the politician's campaign efforts impact his or her success with voters? Certain data collection methods will answer this "how do" question better than others. For this study, a survey was the data collection method that best answered this study's "how do" questions, specifically, "how do" chapel and discipleship-group models impact the spiritual development of students at select private Christian schools.

Instruments and Protocols

This study utilized a survey, distributed via Survey Monkey, which required participants be asked the same open-ended questions, to which they could respond freely with their own views. This survey was beneficial because of the consistency and opportunity for participants to respond in detail (Turner, 2010). The survey contained a pre-determined set of questions, which are included in the appendices of this study, that each high school senior participant answered. These surveys took into consideration how long each student has attended their respective school, whether they identify as a Christian, and what their experience is attending church and

youth group. These surveys then asked the students to describe the chapel and discipleship-group models that exist within their school, consider what their definition of a disciple of Christ is, how well they perceive the chapel and discipleship-group models have shaped them to be disciples of Christ, and how they perceive the impact that chapel and discipleship-group models have on their spiritual growth. The data collected from these surveys, which was preserved and protected through a digital server, helped answer the research questions that are listed above.

Procedures

This survey was be based on a pre-existing one utilized by LCA at the end of each academic year to gather feedback from students regarding their chapel and discipleship-group models. However, the survey was modified to go further than merely collecting feedback; the questions encouraged the students to describe the chapel and discipleship-group models that exist within their school, consider what their definition of a disciple of Christ is, how well they perceive the chapel and discipleship-group models have shaped them to be disciples of Christ, and how whether they perceive the chapel and discipleship-group models have positively impacted, negatively impacted, or failed to impact their spiritual growth. Once this survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board, it was sent to the administrators at participating schools for their approval. Administrators sent an email to the parents or guardians of high-school students explaining the purpose of the study and the data collection methods, as well as its anonymity. This email allowed parents to voice any concerns or request their child opt out of the survey. Once these steps were completed, data collection commenced.

The procedures for conducting the data collection for this study were relatively simple. High school senior students enrolled at LCA, YACS, SRCS, ELCA, and HCA were participants in this survey. Each student was administered the survey via Survey Monkey in their Bible class,

which is mandatory for all students enrolled at these private Christian schools. However,

students read the purpose of the study and had the opportunity to opt out of the survey. The

surveys, since they were completed digitally, allowed for easier data collection and organization,

as well as better ensured the anonymity of the participants.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher has three responsibilities: describe, analyze, and

interpret (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). First, a researcher must describe the data, which involves

recounting it and providing thorough enough details that readers who were not present for the

study may have a complete understanding of the study. Secondly, a researcher must analyze the

data, which is the process of examining relationships, factors, and linkages across data points.

Finally, a researcher must interpret the data, which involves building an understanding of the

data beyond the analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). To properly describe, analyze, and interpret

the data in this study, the researcher utilized a content analysis.

Analysis Methods

The type of data being collected was described, analyzed, and interpreted through a

content analysis. Columbia University defines a content analysis as follows:

> Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words,
> themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis,
> researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such
> certain words, themes, or concepts. Researchers can then make inferences about the
> messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of
> surrounding the text. (2019)

This research tool was appropriate for this study because this study sought to determine the

presence of a concept; specifically, that concept was the perceived spiritual effect of chapel and

discipleship group models on students in Christian education. Through content analysis, this researcher was able to quantify and analyze the presence and meaning of this concept.

There are eight basic steps involved in a content analysis (Columbia University, 2019). First the researcher must decide what specifically is being analyzed, then the researcher must decide how many concepts to code for. In this study, there were three concepts to code for: 1) chapel and discipleship-group models have a perceived negative spiritual effect, 2) chapel and discipleship group models have no perceived spiritual effect, and 3) chapel and discipleship group models have a perceived positive spiritual effect. Thirdly, the researcher must decide whether to code for the existence or frequency of a concept. Based on the three concepts being coded for, there is an assumed existence of the concept. Therefore, this researcher coded for the frequency of each concept. The next two steps require deciding how to distinguish among concepts, as well as developing rules for coding texts. The researcher must also decide what to do with irrelevant data; in this case, irrelevant data was merely discarded. The seventh step is to decide whether the text will be coded by hand or via computer software; this researcher coded the text by hand. Finally, the results must be analyzed: "Draw conclusions and generalizations where possible…Interpret results carefully as conceptual content analysis can only quantify the information. Typically, general trends and patterns can be identified: (Columbia University, 2019). Trends or patterns found were displayed via graphs and charts for easier readability.

There are benefits and detriments regarding the chosen data analysis method. Content analysis allowed the researcher to directly examine communication using text, be closely involved with the data, and provided insight into complex models of human thought. Furthermore, content analysis was easily understood and relatively inexpensive. However, content analysis was time consuming, subject to increased error, and difficult to automate.

Despite these potential detriments, this researcher believed that content analysis offered more benefits and, therefore, was the most appropriate data analysis method for this study. Since the content analysis sought to determine the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship group models on students in Christian education, it helped answer the research questions, which are listed above.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the standard used to determine whether research is good or bad is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is comprised of four elements: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Each of these elements will be briefly defined, and this researcher will explain how this study maintained each of these elements from data collection to data analysis.

Credibility

Credibility is defined as "the quality of being believable or worthy of trust." In qualitative research, credibility refers to the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality. The data that was collected for this study is credible because it was collected from those specifically being studied - high school senior students enrolled at select private Christian schools, each of whom is involved in chapel and discipleship group models. The data was also credible because the data collection process and analysis method were described in detail, eliciting trust regarding the process from the readers. Finally, the data was credible because of triangulation. Triangulation is "an analytical technique that incorporates and compares different methods with the intent of providing a deeper and more holistic understanding of a phenomenon" (Turner, 2010). Triangulation is a way for researchers to ensure methodological rigor and quality. Though there are four basic types of triangulation, this researcher utilized data triangulation, which

"involves the use of different sources of data to examine a phenomenon across settings at different points in time" (Turner, 2010). Since there were five different sources of data being examined, the data was more credible.

Dependability

Dependability is defined as "the quality of being able to be relied on; trustworthiness or constancy." In qualitative research, dependability refers to the detail of both the research context and the processes and procedures, as well as the stability of the data over time and over conditions (Kemparaj and Chavan, 2013). The document presenting this study's findings demonstrated the dependability of the research conclusions by clearly and concisely outlining how the study was conducted, including the data collection and analysis methods, and how the study can be replicated by any readers with further interest. The data is stable over time and conditions as it reflected the students' perceptions of the spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models over a one to four year period.

Confirmability

Confirmability is defined as "establish[ing] the truth, accuracy, validity, or genuineness of; corroborate; verify." In qualitative research, confirmability refers to whether one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data (Kemparaj and Chavan, 2013). Although it was not possible to include all the details of the study's data in the findings chapter, this researcher included enough data to make a convincing argument for the confirmability of the study. Furthermore, this researcher clearly stated that the entirety of the data collected will be made available for review by other researchers upon request.

Transferability

Transferability is defined as "to convey or remove from one place, person, etc., to another; to cause to pass from one person to another, as thought, qualities, or power; transmit." In qualitative research, generalizability is not always possible; however, transferability is possible. Transferability refers to the possibility that results found in one context apply to other contexts (Kemparaj and Chavan, 2013). This study might be applied to other settings by showing the benefit of integrating chapel and discipleship group models into Christian education, or modifying pre-existing chapel and discipleship group models in Christian education with a biblical understanding of and belief in discipleship. Hopefully, educators will learn the importance of investing in the spiritual lives of their students through these models, not only to positively impact the students' spiritual lives, but also to fulfill the biblical command of The Great Commission.

Chapter Summary

Private Christian schools must consider the perceived spiritual effect of their chapel and discipleship-group models to determine the most effective way to make disciples. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in their schools. This study was a qualitative case study that utilized a survey, which involved the collection of open-ended data that allowed participants to express their opinions freely, accompanied by focus groups. The participants in this study were the high school senior students of Lanier Christian Academy, Young Americans Christian School, Strong Rock Christian School, Eagles Landing Christian Academy, and Hebron Christian Academy. To properly describe, analyze, and interpret the data in this study, the researcher utilized a content analysis. This research tool was appropriate for this study because

this study sought to determine the presence of a concept; specifically, that concept was the perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship group models on students in Christian education. Through content analysis, this researcher was able to quantify and analyze the presence and meaning of this concept. The standard used to determine whether research is good or bad is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is comprised of four elements: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Each of these elements was present in this study. Hopefully, educators will learn the importance of investing in the spiritual lives of their students through these models, not only to positively impact the students' spiritual lives, but also to fulfill the biblical command of The Great Commission.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the 12th grade students'

perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in their schools. The data

captured analyzed the positive and negative elements of the chapel and discipleship-group

models to conclude what is a more effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. This

chapter will present the compilation protocol and measures, provide an overview of the

demographic and data, discuss the data analysis and findings, and offer an evaluation of the

research design.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

This study utilized a survey, distributed via Survey Monkey, which required participants

be asked the same open-ended questions, to which they could respond freely with their own

views. This survey was beneficial because of the consistency and opportunity for participants to

respond in detail (Turner, 2010). The survey contained a pre-determined set of questions that

each high school senior participant answered. These surveys took into consideration how long

each student has attended their respective school, whether they identify as a Christian, and what

their experience is attending church and youth group. These surveys then asked the students to

describe the chapel and discipleship-group models that exist within their school, consider what

their definition of a disciple of Christ is, how well they perceive the chapel and discipleship-

group models have shaped them to be disciples of Christ, and how they perceive the impact that

chapel and discipleship-group models have on their spiritual growth.

After the project was approved by the Institutional Review Board, it was sent to the

administrators at participating schools for their approval. Administrators sent an email to the

parents or guardians of high-school students explaining the purpose of the study and the data collection methods, as well as its anonymity. This email allowed parents to voice any concerns or request their child opt out of the survey.

Once parents gave their students signed permission to participate in the survey, the survey link was sent to Bible teachers within each school who were selected to administer the survey. The Bible teachers then forwarded this link to participating students. The students had a designated period to read and respond to the survey. These responses were automatically saved on the Survey Monkey website where the researcher was then able to review them for analysis.

Demographic and Sample Data

All high school senior students who participated were enrolled at either Lanier Christian Academy, Young Americans Christian School, Strong Rock Christian School, Eagles Landing Christian Academy, or Hebron Christian Academy. Each student was administered the survey via Survey Monkey in their Bible class, which is mandatory for all students enrolled at these private Christian schools. However, students had the opportunity to read the purpose of the study and opt out of the survey if they wished. The surveys, since they were completed digitally, allowed for easier data collection and organization, as well as better ensured the anonymity of the participants.

These surveys utilized quota sampling. Quota sampling is described as "[i]nstead of requiring fixed numbers of cases in particular categories, quota sampling sets out a series of categories and a *minimum number* of cases required for each one" (Robinson, 2013). The series of categories for this project were as follows:

1. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship group models for five or more years, surpassing their high-school career.

2. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for four years, or the entirety of their high-school career.

3. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for at least two years, or for half of their high-school career.

4. Students who have been involved in chapel and discipleship-group models for at least one year, or a fraction of their high-school career.

In total there were 122 responses to the survey. Some respondents skipped certain questions of the survey. Regardless, six of the 122 respondents, or 4%, have been involved in chapel and discipleship group models for at least one year, or a fraction of their high-school career. Thirteen of the 122 respondents, or 10%, have been involved in chapel and discipleship group models for two to three years, or for half of their high-school career. Nineteen of the 122 respondents, or 15%, have been involved in chapel and discipleship group models for four years, or the entirety of their high-school career. Eighty of the 122 respondents, or 65% have been involved in chapel and discipleship group models for five or more years, surpassing their high-school career (see figure 1).

In addition to how many years the students have been involved in chapel or discipleship groups, the participants were asked about their attendance and small-group involvement in a local church. Seventy-six of the 122 participants, or 62%, said that yes, they do attend a local church. Forty-two of the 122 participants, or 34%, said that no, they do not attend a local church. Three of the 122 participants, or 2%, said they sometimes attend a local church. Of the seventy-six participants who attend a local church, seventy-three of them, or 96%, attend a service, and

fifty-one of them, or 67%, attend a small-group. Figures 2 and 3 below illustrate the numbers concerning local church and small-group involvement of the students who participate in the research:
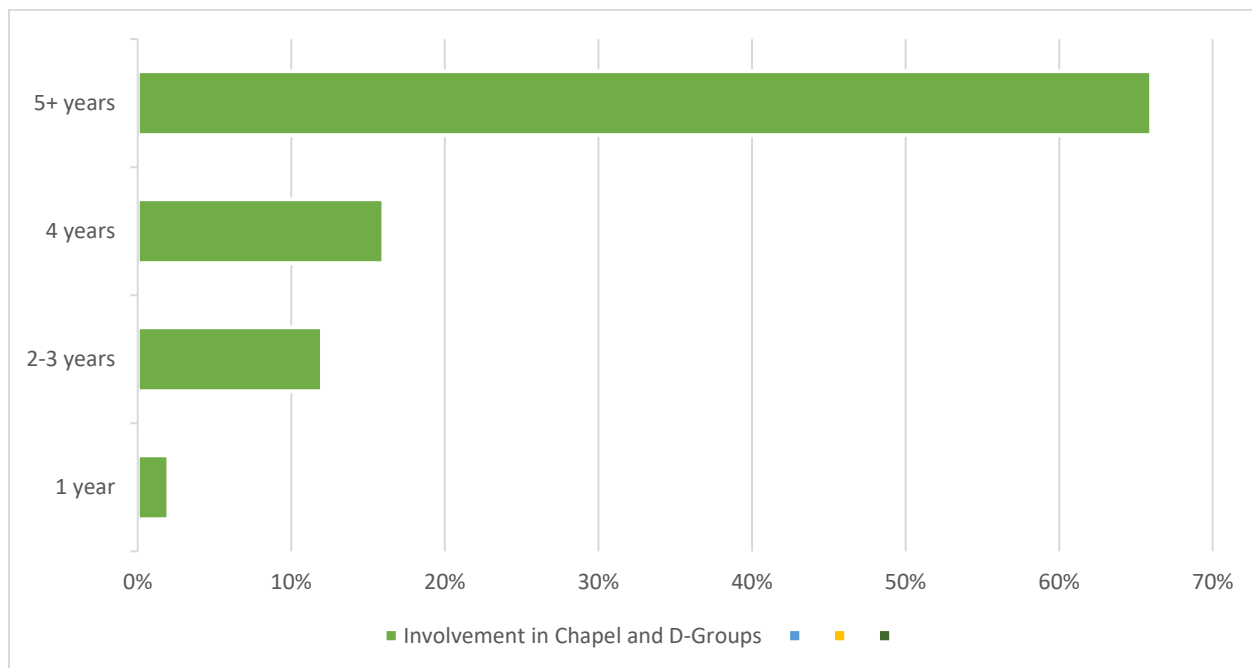

Figure 1 is a chart that displays how many of the participants have been involved in chapel and discipleship groups for 1 year, 2-3 years, 4 years, and 5+.
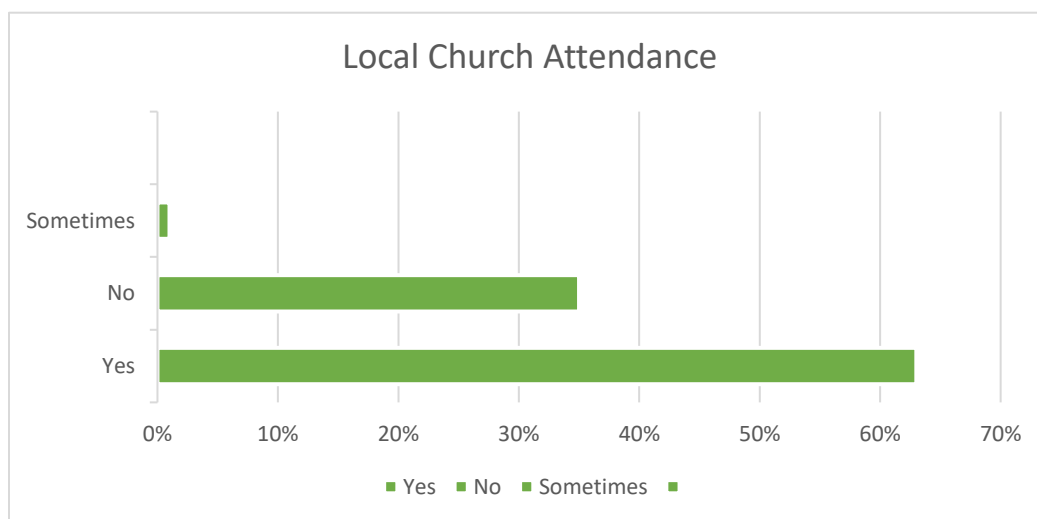

Figure 2 is a chart that displays how many of the participants attend a local church, do not attend a local church, and sometimes attend a local church.
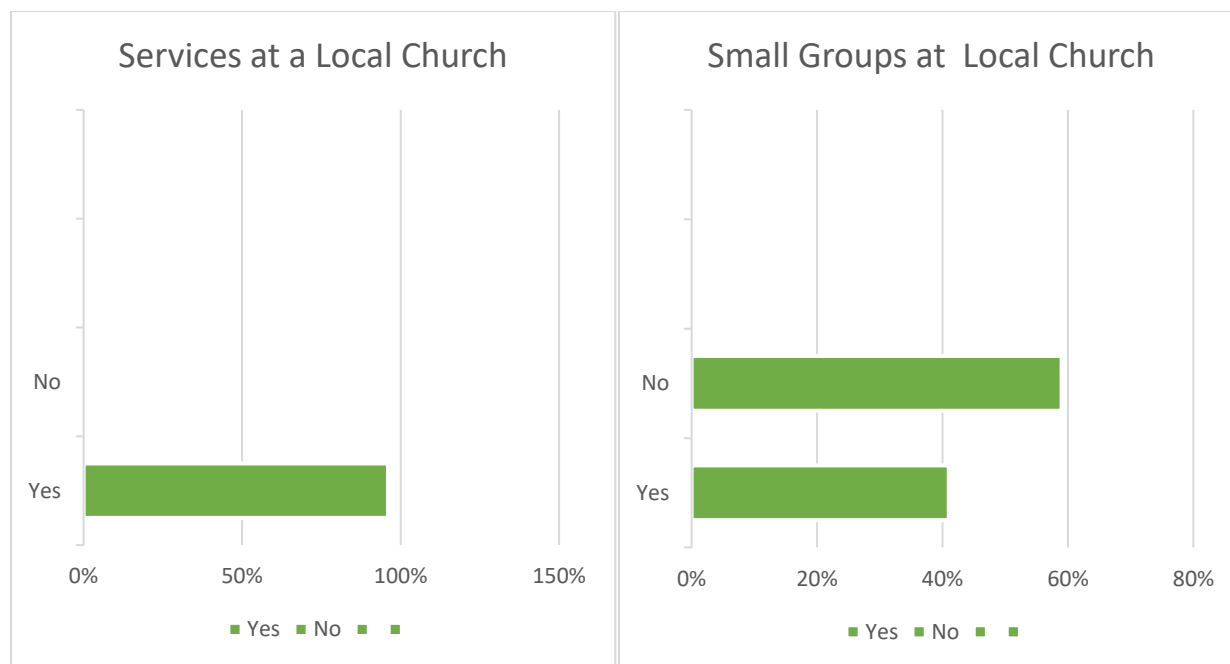
Figure 3 displays how many of the 76 who attend a local church do or do not attend a service, and do or do not attend a small group.

The 122 students who participated in this survey constituted a sufficient sample size to determine the perceived effectiveness of chapel and discipleship group models in private Christian schools.

Data Analysis and Findings

In this section, the results of the data are presented and analyzed. The information is organized around the four research questions. The data captured will reveal that more students perceive discipleship groups as beneficial to their spiritual growth than chapel. Research questions one asks, **"What is the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools?"** In general, the data shows that the students surveyed in this research believed that the chapel services at their schools have improved their relationship with God. Moreover, the data analysis will show that the level of acknowledged spiritual effectiveness of chapel is strengthened in time. The four and five or more year students gave the strongest

positive scores to the question. In these groups, 64%, indicated that school chapel services have improved their relationship with God, compared to 52% of the one to three year students.

RQ1. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools?

Each participant was asked the following question: Overall, do you believe that the chapel services at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not? The responses to these questions are presented and discussed below.

1 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, six students, or 4%, have attended their respective schools for one year. Four of these six students, or 66%, believe that chapel services have improved their relationships with God. Their reasons include "It has helped me to trust Him more and put things into His hands," "It's given me more opportunities to see him," and "Being encouraged to listen to the message of the speaker has improved my relationship with God." Two of these six students, or 33%, do not believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God because they believe the chapel messages have become too repetitive.

2-3 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, thirteen students, or 10%, have attended their respective schools for two to three years. Six of these thirteen students, or 46%, believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include "It was what helped bring me to God. Because you hear his word and you praise him," and "Because I'm being informed about Christ and all things great that he has done." Seven of these thirteen students, or 53%, do not believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God due to the speakers and the feeling of being in a "space of judgement."

4 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, Nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective schools for four years. Fifteen of these Nine-teen students, or 78%, believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include "Because the message just really hits me hard sometimes and it strengthens my relationship with him," "Because it shows us that He has a plan for us ," "They show us how much he cares about us," and " Because the different speakers give a lot of different perspectives on viewing and living out what the Bible says." Four of these nine-teen students, or 21%, do not believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include the repetitiveness of the messages, and how "they don't feel personal."

5+ Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, eighty students, or 65%, have attended their respective schools for five or more years. Forty-nine of these eighty students believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include the following:

- "because hearing different people speak and different messages spoken helps me to see different perspectives"
- "because they bring in outside sources to speak to us about our faith and share the Gospel with us. I could feel God speaking directly to me at times on topics pertaining to what I was going through"
- "because the relationships with the teachers encourages us to pursue God fully"

Thirty-one of these Eighty students, or 38%, do not believe that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include the following:

- "it has improved my knowledge about God and what He wants me to do, but specifically they don't really address things that will actually strengthen my relationship and address my own problems"
- "it gets repetitive after a while"
- "I feel like it's being forced on us 24/7"

- "The services are nice and fulfilling but often times I have questions that are still left unanswered"
- "the tedious nature of the services makes me feel like God is another box to check off the list rather than a merciful creator who wants a relationship with me"

Summary of RQ1 Data

In summary, each participant was asked the following question: Overall, do you believe that the chapel services at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not? The answers to this question were discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this project. As a whole, seventy-four respondents, or 61%, believed that the chapel services at their schools have improved their relationship with God. Forty-four respondents, or 36%, did not believe that the chapel services at their school have improved their relationship with God.

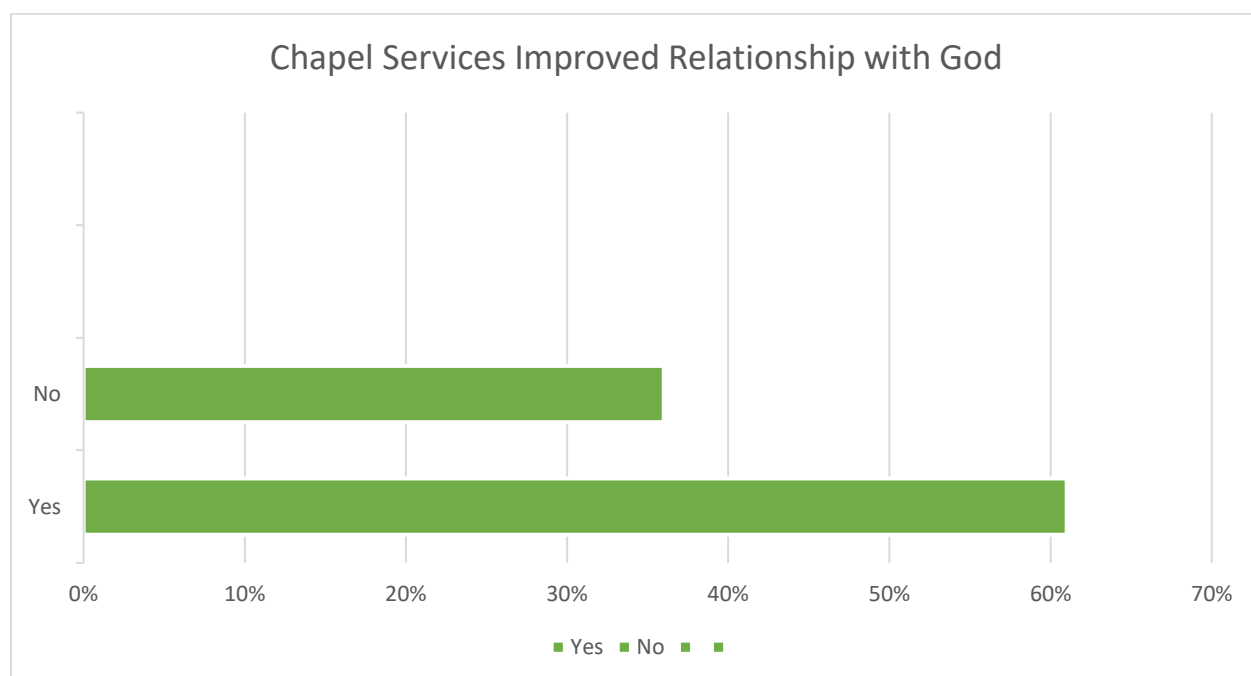*Figure 4 displays how many of the participants believe chapel services have improved their relationship with God versus those who do not.*

Research questions two asks, "What is the students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models at the selected private Christian schools?" In general, the data shows that the students surveyed in this research believed that the discipleship-groups at their schools

have improved their relationship with God. Moreover, the data analysis will show that the level

of acknowledged spiritual effectiveness of discipleship-groups is strengthened in time. The four

and five or more year students gave the strongest positive scores to the question. In these groups,

81%, indicated that school discipleship-groups have improved their relationship with God,

compared to 68% of the one to three year students.

RQ2. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group

models at the selected private Christian schools?

Each participant was asked the following question: Overall, do you believe that the

discipleship groups at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not?

The responses to these questions are presented and discussed below.

1 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, six students, or 4%, have attended their respective schools

for one year. Four of these six students, or 66%, believe that discipleship groups have improved

their relationships with God. Their reasons include "Sharing my testimonies with others

improved my relationship with God," and "It has helped me to trust him more." Two of these six

students, or 33%, do not believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with

God, but they did not provide a specific reason.

2-3 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, thirteen students, or 10%, have attended their respective

schools for two to three years. Nine of these thirteen students, or 69%, believe that discipleship

groups have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include "Because I can hear

people's points of view which give me hope in changing my behavior." Four of these thirteen

students, or 30%, do not believe that discipleship groups have not improved their relationship with God, but they did not provide a specific reason.

4 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective schools for four years. Seventeen of these nine-teen students, or 89%, believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include "Because the smaller groups make it easier to relate and get to know yourself, God, and each other better," "Because hearing the testimonies of other people close to me make me believe that maybe I could experience something similar," and "They have shown me that being personal with God is very important." Two of these nine-teen students, or 10%, do not believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God, but they did not provide a specific reason.

5+ Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, eighty students, or 65%, have attended their respective schools for five or more years. Fifty-nine of these eighty students, or 73%, believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include the following:

- "they help me to relate with God on a more specific and personal level, instead of being lectured about topics that may not advance me"
- "because I am able to openly talk about the Bible, and the questions that I have with it, in a small group setting"
- "without them I wouldn't have someone to talk about my problems to"
- "because hearing people discuss how they feel allows me to consider the passage in a new way and I am able to be around sisters in Christ who understand the struggles that Christians can go through and how to overcome them which can overall improve my relationship with God"
- "because they are more intimate and hold you accountable"

Twenty-one of these eighty students, or 26%, do not believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God. Their reasons include not feeling comfortable enough with the people in their groups to be vulnerable.

Summary of RQ2 Data

In summary, each participant was asked the following question: Overall, do you believe that the discipleship groups at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not? The answers to this question were discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this project. As a whole, eighty-nine respondents, or 73%, believed that the discipleship groups at their schools have improved their relationship with God. Twenty-nine respondents, or 24%, did not believe that the discipleship at their school have improved their relationship with God.
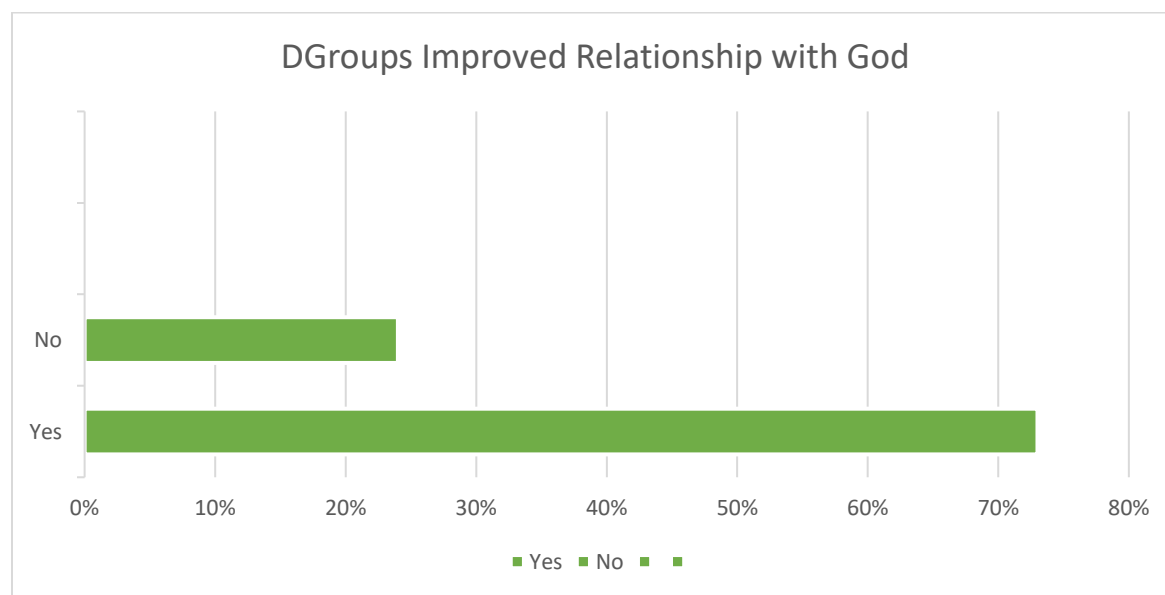

Figure 5 displays how many of the participants believe discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God versus those who do not.

Research questions three asks, **"Based on the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?"**

As a whole, forty-nine respondents, or 40%, perceived their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. two respondents, or .1%, perceived them as ineffective, and sixty-two respondents, or 51%, perceived them as somewhat effective.

RQ3. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

Each participant was asked several questions to help determine how effective chapel models are in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These questions made students consider whether the chapel services encouraged them to consider Jesus in their daily lives, consider every person they encounter as someone to share Jesus with, consider the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others, listen to God, develop an awareness for God's commandments and His love, and engage in community with other believers. The answers to these questions will be discussed below and are divided into three categories: effective, somewhat effective, and ineffective.

1 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, six students, or 4%, have attended their respective schools for one year. Of these six students, four of them, or 66%, perceive their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, and two of them, or 33%, perceive their chapel services as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These two students do not believe that chapel services focus on biblical commands or encourage engaging in community with other believers enough; additionally, they find the messages repetitive.

2-3 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, thirteen students, or 10%, have attended their respective schools for two to three. Of these thirteen students, two of them, or 15%, perceive their chapel

services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, and eight of them, or 61%, perceive their chapel services as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These eight students are dissatisfied with chapel services at times because of the focus of the messages and the speakers. 0% of students perceived their chapel services as ineffective.

4 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective schools for four years. Of these nine-teen students, nine of them, or 47%, perceive their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. Some notable reasons include one participant who said that chapel services do encourage them to view everyone they encounter as someone to share Jesus with "because even though some people look like the perfect Christian with no doubts or struggles, they still might struggle with their faith." Another participant responded to the same question with the following answer: "You never know whether someone is saved or not, and speaking to them could be the one chance they get to hear the gospel." This same participant also says that chapel services "remind us that we can't prosper or reach our full potential without God's help… they teach us that we are God's prized creation….[and] we are constantly surrounded by people that believe the same as us which strengthens our faith."

Eight of these nine-teen respondents, or 42%, perceive their chapel services as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. One student responded, "I play both sides on this topic because sometimes yes because they are encouraging, but sometimes no because it seems forced and the non-believers just despise it." When asked if chapel services make students aware of God's commands and encourage them to obey these commands, one

student responded, "Yes, but mostly on topics the school is concerned about. I mean the school is very concerned about things such as vapes, uniforms, and stuff like modesty and sex, but does not seem to be so concerned about what I'm doing when I'm not at school, like what temptations and fears I have that are not related to school rules." In the same vein, another student responded, "We should at least consider how to combat the questions that those who are being converted will ask… I personally feel that some of the chapel sessions will not really dig into the bigger issues like how our regular Bible classes do." 0% of students perceived their chapel services as ineffective.

5+ *Years Involvement*

Out of the 122 respondents, eighty students, or 65%, have attended their respective schools for five or more years. Of these eighty students, thirty-four of them, or 42%, perceive their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. One student believes they are effective because "student testimonies allow for us to see what our peers have walked through and are a reminder that God desires to have a relationship with us all." Forty-four of these respondents, or 55%, perceive their chapel services as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, while two perceive their chapel services as ineffective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These students do not feel like they are encouraged to consider the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. Some notable responses include the following:

- "that [topic is] kind of a strange thing for a teenager to worry about, especially at a private school when you assume everyone already has everything they need"
- "I think it focuses on how we need to work on ourselves more and have ourselves portray Jesus rather than going and learning how to spread the Gospel. they mostly tell us to let our actions do the work and we don't really know how to go out and make disciples"
- "spiritual needs are definitely prioritized over physical needs, but for someone to be willing to accept Jesus, they are more receptive if they are comfortable"

- "I don't really remember hearing any messages about the spiritual needs of others. It's usually about your individual walk. I do think they want to encourage discipleship, but I don't really see discipleship happening."
- "I don't really think they really teach us how to take into account how others needs might be different from ours at all."
- "the speakers only ever talk about Christians individually, we are not challenged or given many opportunities to help our classmates spiritually, emotionally, or physically because all the teachers believe that their class is more important than the mental stability and health of their students."

0% of students perceived their chapel services as ineffective.

In summary, each participant was asked questions that made students consider whether the chapel services encouraged them to consider Jesus in their daily lives, consider every person they encounter as someone to share Jesus with, consider the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others, listen to God, develop an awareness for God's commandments and His love, and engage in community with other believers. The answers to these questions were discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this project. As a whole, forty-nine respondents, or 40%, perceived their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. two respondents, or .1%, perceived them as ineffective, and sixty-two respondents, or 51%, perceived them as somewhat effective.
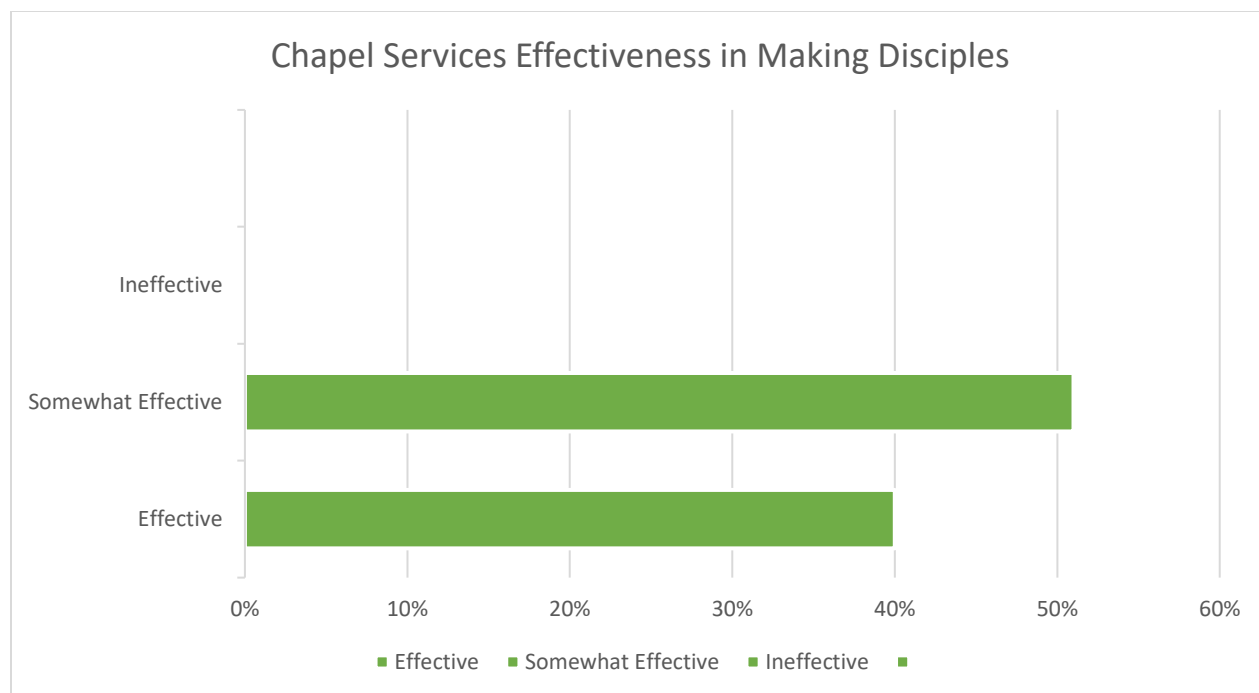
Figure 6 displays how many of the participants perceived their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples.

Research question four asks, "Based on the students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models, how effective are discipleship group models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?" As a whole, forty-three respondents, or 54%, perceived their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. ten respondents, or 12%, perceived them as ineffective, and twenty-eight respondents, or 35%, perceived them as somewhat effective.

RQ4. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models, how effective are discipleship group models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

Each participant was asked several questions to help determine how effective discipleship groups are in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These questions made students consider whether the discipleship groups encouraged them to consider Jesus in their

daily lives, consider every person they encounter as someone to share Jesus with, consider the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others, listen to God, develop an awareness for God's commandments and His love, and engage in community with other believers. The answers to these questions will be discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this project and are divided into three categories: effective, somewhat effective, and ineffective.

1 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, six students, or 4%, have attended their respective schools for one year. Of these six students, four of them, or 66%, perceive their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. Two of them, or 33%, perceive their discipleship groups as ineffective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, but they did not provide a reason.

2-3 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, thirteen students, or 10%, have attended their respective schools for two to three years. Of these thirteen students, five of them, or 38%, perceive their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, and six of them, or 46%, perceive their discipleship groups as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These six students do not believe that their discipleship groups encourage them enough to consider the physical and emotional needs of people in addition to their spiritual needs. 0% of students perceived their discipleship-groups as ineffective.

4 Years Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective schools for four years. Of these nine-teen students, sixteen of them, or 84%, perceive their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. One student

appreciates discipleship groups because "we get one-on-one time with leaders to help us follow Jesus in all aspects of life." Another student believes discipleship groups make them more aware of God's love and more encouraged to love God because "through the love shown in the groups you could see the love of God so it brings you closer to Him and want to give others that feeling." In the same vein, another student responded, "I feel loved during d-groups. I'm blessed to have good peers in mine, which I think is more uncommon than a good teacher, so others who may not have a good group may not think so. But I do…instead of just saying love your neighbor as yourself, we talk about practical ways we can do that, small and large, and areas we may need to focus on." Two of these respondents, or 10%, perceive their discipleship groups as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, but they did not provide a specific reason. 0% of students perceived their discipleship-groups as ineffective.

5+ *Years Involvement*

Out of the 122 respondents, eighty students, or 65%, have attended their respective schools for five or more years. Of these eighty students, forty-three of them, or 53%, perceive their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. Their reasons include the following:

- "reaching out to others is a big thing groups talk about and I think it is really good because it can lead to mentorship with other classmates. I think in every group prayer requests for everyone is very important and at least in my group it is a big part of being connected"
- "I've seen through these groups how God can use anyone to live out according to His purpose and I've seen Him change the lives of people who have done the complete opposite of what is right"
- "you get to know the hearts of believers and you get to hear what people are going through which allows you to connect and relate. because the leaders I have had in D-groups have challenged me to listen to God in different ways and it is cool to see the different ways people hear God's voice."

Twenty-eight of these respondents, or 35%, perceive their discipleship groups as somewhat effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples, while ten, or 12%, perceive their discipleship groups as ineffective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These students do not feel like they can trust the people in their groups enough to be vulnerable.

In summary, each participant was asked questions that made students consider whether the discipleship groups encouraged them to consider Jesus in their daily lives, consider every person they encounter as someone to share Jesus with, consider the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others, listen to God, develop an awareness for God's commandments and His love, and engage in community with other believers. The answers to these questions were discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this project. As a whole, forty-three respondents, or 54%, perceived their discipleship groups as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. ten respondents, or 12%, perceived them as ineffective, and twenty-eight respondents, or 35%, perceived them as somewhat effective.
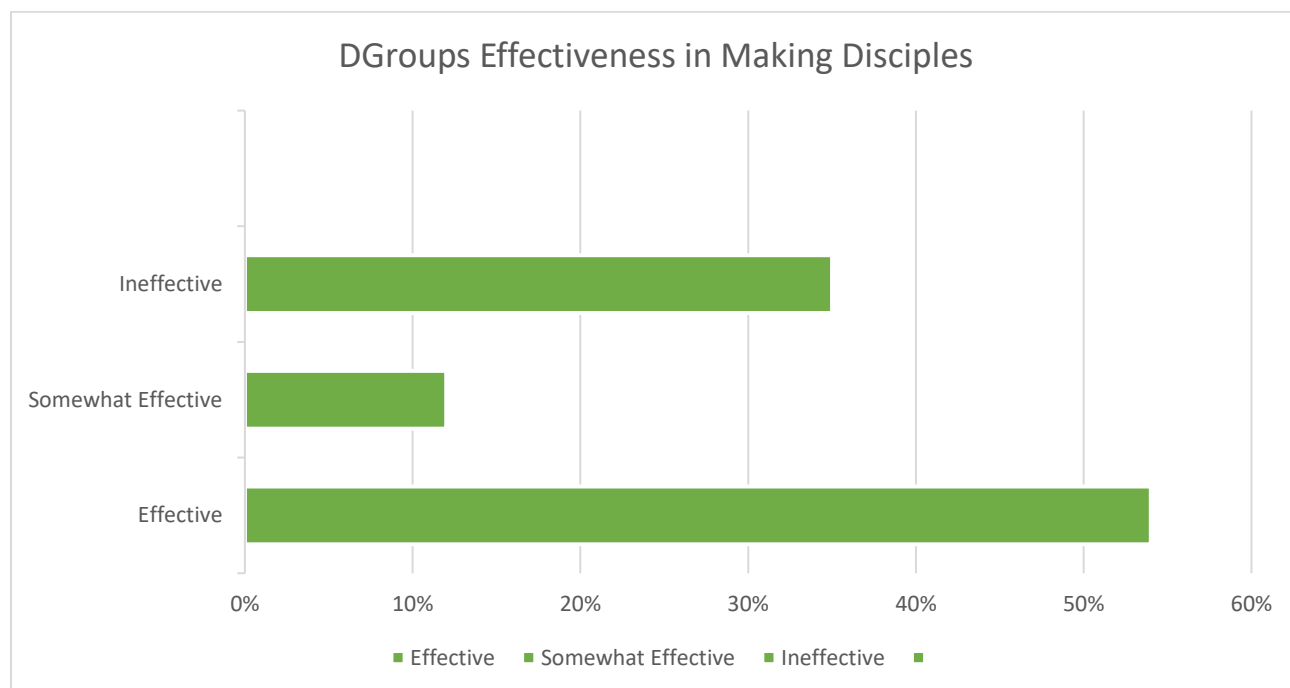

DGroups Effectiveness in Making Disciples

Figure 7 displays how many of the participants perceived their chapel services as effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples.

Research question five asks, "Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?" Fifty-three students, or 43%, perceived both as equally impactful because of the opportunities to read Scripture and engage with other believers. Twelve students, or 9%, perceived neither as being impactful because of the unchallenging messages in chapel and the lack of trust in discipleship groups.

RQ5. Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the 12th grade students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?

Each participant was asked the following question: Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God? The answers to this question are discussed below and are divided into four categories: equally impactful, chapel services are more impactful, discipleship-group are more impactful, and equally un-impactful.

1 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, six students, or 4%, have attended their respective schools for one year. Of these six students, two of them, or 33%, perceive chapel services as more impactful on their relationship with God, two of them perceive discipleship groups as more impactful on their relationship with God, and two consider both equally as impactful.

2-3 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, thirteen students, or 10%, have attended their respective schools for two to three years. Of these thirteen students, three of them, or 23%, perceive chapel

services as more impactful on their relationship with God, two of them, or 15%, perceive

discipleship groups as more impactful on their relationship with God, and five, or 38%, consider

both equally as impactful, and three considers neither of them impactful.

4 Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective

schools for four years. Of these nine-teen students, one of them, or 5%, perceives chapel services

as more impactful on their relationship with God, six of them, or 31%, perceive discipleship

groups as more impactful on their relationship with God, and twelve, or 63%, consider both

equally as impactful.

5+ Year Involvement

Out of the 122 respondents, eighty students, or 65%, have attended their respective

schools for five or more years. Of these eighty students, twenty-four of them, or 30%, perceives

chapel services as more impactful on their relationship with God, fourteen of them, or 17%,

perceive discipleship groups as more impactful on their relationship with God, thirty-four, or

42%, consider both equally as impactful, and nine, or 11%, do not consider either impactful.

In summary, each participant was asked between chapel and discipleship-group models,

which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God? The

answers to these questions were discussed based on the aforementioned categories for this

project. As a whole, thirty students, or 24%, perceived chapel services as having more of an

impact on their relationship with God. Their reasons include the following:

- "The chapel services have the greatest impact because we are all gathered in one group and attention is directed onto the presenter rather than each students' personal accounts."
- "I feel that the chapel services have a greater impact on my relationship with God only because I feel that the chapel services are what make me more aware of what I should be doing as a believer of Christ"

- "Chapel services because they are more consistent in their message and provide me with a greater body of Christians to worship with"

Twenty-four students, or 19%, perceived discipleship groups as having more of an impact on their relationship with God. Their reasons include the following:

- "Discipleship-groups have a bigger impact on my relationship with God because I am allowed to be more communicative versus sitting and listening to a speaker. While chapel is beneficial in sense, D-groups have allowed me to deepen my faith with Christ and spread the gospel in more ways than one."
- "I believe the groups have a greater impact on my relationship with God because they are more personal since I can actually talk about my life and others can help me with my problems and encourage me to trust God whereas chapel is just a general message for everyone"
- "I believe the discipleship-groups have a greater impact on my relationship with God because I get the opportunity to have a conversation with a leader about my life and specific ways I can be closer to Jesus, rather than a general meeting like chapel."
- "I've been doing disciple groups for only 3 years and chapel for 10 and there's only been a select few chapels that make me not want to take a nap; however, I've never felt that way about disciple groups"
- "Discipleship groups 100%, not chapel at all. Chapel feels very disconnected and repetitive for me while in groups we can grow our spiritual relationship with God and our friends. Also I like being able to talk about things rather than sitting in silence because it helps us grow."
- "Discipleship groups help me greater with my relationship with God. It helps me see where people are in their relationships and how I can better improve myself while seeing these relationships"
- "discipleship groups because they tend to be more engaging and you form a personal relationship with the leader, so their message is more influential than the message of a stranger."

Fifty-three students, or 43%, perceived both as equally impactful because of the opportunities to read Scripture and engage with other believers. Twelve students, or 9%, perceived neither as being impactful because of the unchallenging messages in chapel and the lack of trust in discipleship groups.
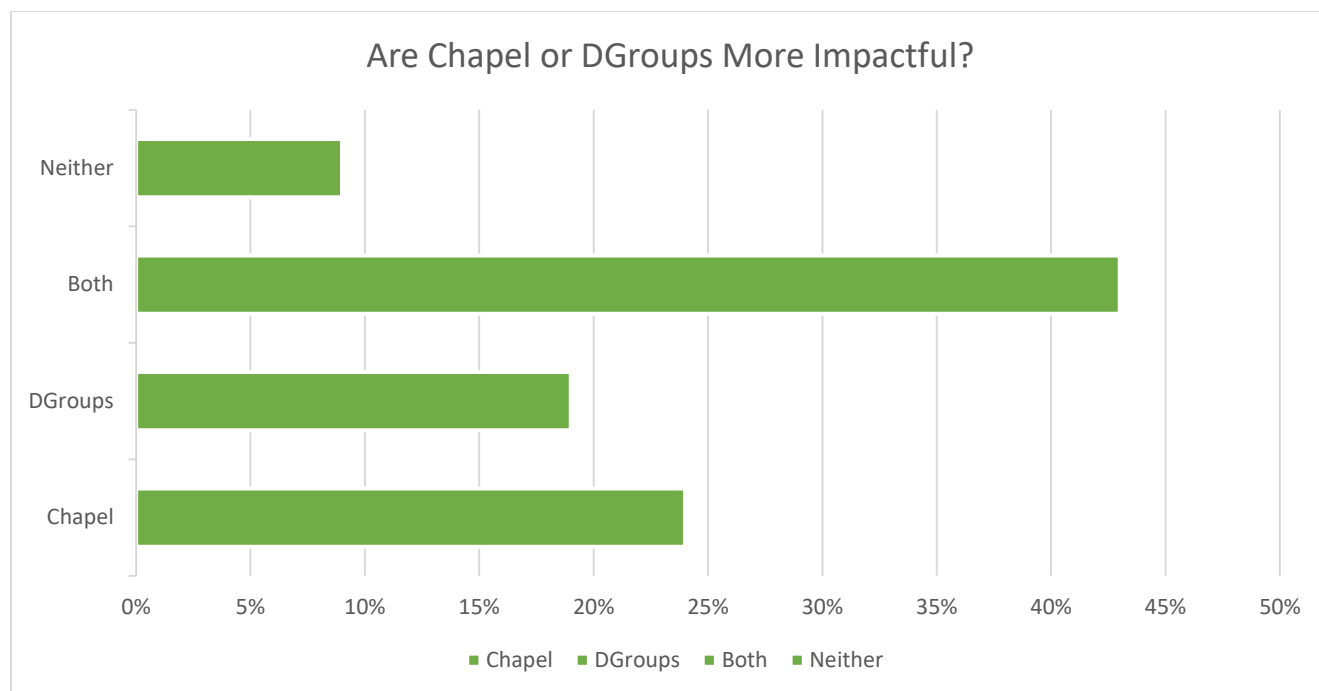
Are Chapel or DGroups More Impactful?

Figure 8 displays how many of the participants perceived their chapel services as being more impactful on their relationship with God, how many perceived discipleship groups as being more impactful on their relationship with God, how many perceived both as equally impactful, and how many perceived neither as impactful.

In summary, each participant was asked the following question: "Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?" Fifty-three students, or 43%, perceived both as equally impactful because of the opportunities to read Scripture and engage with other believers. Twelve students, or 9%, perceived neither as being impactful because of the unchallenging messages in chapel and the lack of trust in discipleship groups.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The qualitative case study was appropriate for this study because open-ended survey questions allowed students to fully convey their perceived benefits and detriments of the chapel and discipleship-group models. Qualitative research is considered a soft science that is holistic, subjective, and dependent on words for analysis (Creswell, 2014). This research

methodology focuses on a process, event, or phenomenon in an attempt to understand the process, event, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the process was making disciples through chapel and discipleship-group models.

Qualitative research requires a natural setting where researchers collect their data, participants who can help the researcher answer the problem and research questions, and multiple sources of data such as documents, interviews, and personal observations (Straus and Corbin, 1994; Turner, 2010). Data analysis then detects themes, patterns, and categories from the research (Straus and Corbin, 1994; Turner, 2010). The natural setting of this study was the select private Christian schools. The students were fully capable of helping this researcher answer the problem and research questions because, as seniors, they could articulate their thoughts regarding the perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models. Data analysis successfully revealed the patterns of perceived spiritual growth among the students.

This qualitative utilized a survey. This survey was digitally distributed to participants via Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). These surveys were composed of the same open-ended questions and allowed participants to express their opinions in as much detail as they liked. Once the surveys were completed and collected, data was analyzed to determine what patterns existed in responses. Existing patterns successfully revealed the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models at select private Christian schools, as well as how effective the chapel and discipleship-group models are in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples.

This type of survey was carefully structured, as participants were asked the same open-ended questions but could respond freely with their views (University of Missouri – St. Louis). This type of survey was beneficial because of the consistency and opportunity for participants to

respond in detail (University of Missouri – St. Louis). This type of survey can be challenging

because the data can be time-consuming to analyze, and the approach lacks some flexibility

(University of Missouri – St. Louis). However, despite the challenges, the survey was the most

appropriate for this case study and allowed the researcher to successfully answer the research

questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will first reiterate what the research purpose and research questions for this study were. This chapter will then discuss the research conclusions and applications. Finally, this chapter will offer ideas for further, related areas of study.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in their schools. The data collected analyzed the positive and negative elements of the chapel and discipleship-group models to eventually conclude what is a more effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. In this study, spiritual discipleship was defined as the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples (Chan, 2012).

Research Questions

RQ1. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ2. What is the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models at the selected private Christian schools?

RQ3. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ4. Based on the 12th grade students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship-group models, how effective are discipleship group models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples?

RQ5. Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the 12th grade students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?

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Research Conclusions and Applications

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After collecting and analyzing the data for this study, there are several conclusions that can be made. Both chapel and discipleship-group models have strong elements and weaker elements, and it is the school's responsibility to consider these elements and make the necessary changes in order to offer students the best possible chapels and discipleship-groups.

Research Conclusions

This researcher drew some interesting and valuable conclusions from the data collected. As a reminder, six of the 122 respondents, or 4%, have attended their respective schools for one year, or a quarter of their high school career. Thirteen respondents, or 10%, have attended their respective schools for two to three years, or half of their high school career. Nine-teen students, or 15%, have attended their respective schools four years, or the entirety of their high school career. Eighty respondents, or 65%, have attended their respective schools for five or more years, or for a portion of their middle school and elementary school careers as well. These numbers mean that a majority of the respondents have been involved in chapel services and discipleship groups for the majority of their adolescence, which is an incredibly impressionable time for students. There has been adequate time for chapel services and discipleship groups to either help cement these students' identities in Christ, or stand by idly as their identities in Christ crumble.

Furthermore, seventy-six of the 122 respondents, or 62%, currently attend a local church, while forty-two respondents, or 34%, do not. Of these seventy-six who do attend a local church, seventy-three, or 96%, say they attend a weekly service, while fifty-one, or 67%, say they are

involved in a small group within the church. These numbers mean that for forty-five students, or 36%, chapel services are the only time they have to engage in corporate worship with fellow believers. For sixty-seven students, or 54%, discipleship groups are possibly the only time they have to discuss their life and their faith with an intimate group of fellow believers and receive prayer and support.

What responsibility do these numbers place on the students' schools? As previously discussed, Jesus' final command before ascending into Heaven in the *New Testament* is Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen" (*New King James Version*, 2015). Disciples were originally considered to be those who physically followed Jesus during His earthly ministry and subjected themselves to His tutelage. There were twelve original disciples who bore witness to Jesus' proclamation that "[a] disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (*New King James Version*, 2015, Luke 6:40). After Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, those twelve disciples fully accepted Jesus' doctrine and assisted in spreading that doctrine to others, thereby creating more disciples. Chan writes, "A disciple is a disciple maker" (p. 31, 2012). Therefore, spiritual discipleship is the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples. Since seventy-six of the 122 respondents do not have the opportunity to learn about, come to believe, and practice applying Jesus' teachings to their lives through the local church, the schools' chapel services and discipleship groups are more responsible for making disciples of these students.

Not only should Christian schools be a place wherein students become disciples through the chapel services and discipleship groups, but Christian schools are also the perfect place to gauge whether or not a student lives as a disciple of Christ. As previously discussed, spiritual formation might look different from believer to believer, but there are some general indicators that one is being spiritually formed into the likeness of Christ. In "Missional Discipleship" (2014), Beard considers some of these indicators: mission, obedience, and community. Spiritual discipleship occurs in the day-to-day, which, for students, is school. Spiritual discipleship is also living in obedience to Christ, as it fulfills the command in Matthew 28:19-20. Teachers can see and hear whether students are living in obedience to Christ, both in school and outside of school, to help hold them accountable for their actions. Teachers can also encourage their peers to live in obedience to Christ by sharing the Gospel and making other disciples. Finally, spiritual discipleship is a form of community since it involves two or more people gathering together, which is seen at schools in class, in the halls, at lunch, in chapel services, and in discipleship groups. Therefore, educators need to take advantage of their opportunities to make disciples of students because school might be the only place students have where people try to help them be formed in the likeness of Christ, but also because school is the perfect place to witness and support that formation.

Students believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God more than chapel services. To answer the first research question, "What is the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel at the selected private Christian schools," each participant was asked the following question: "Overall, do you believe that the chapel services at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not? " Seventy-four of the 122 respondents, or 61%, answered "yes," while forty-four respondents, or 36%, answered "no." To answer the

second research question, "What is the students' perceived spiritual effect of discipleship groups at the selected private Christian schools," each participant was asked the following question: "Overall, do you believe that the discipleship groups at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not?" Eighty-nine respondents, or 73%, answered "yes," while twenty-nine respondents, or 24%, answered "no." These numbers mean that 12% more students believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God than that chapel services have improved their relationship with God. Additionally, 12% fewer students said that discipleship groups did not improve their relationship with God than did they say that chapel services did not improve their relationship with God. In summary, students believe that discipleship groups have improved their relationship with God more than chapel services.

Fourteen percent more students believe that discipleship groups are effective in making disciples than chapel services, and 16% fewer students believe that discipleship groups are only somewhat effective in comparison to chapel services. However, 11% more students believed that discipleship groups were ineffective in making disciples in comparison to chapel services. To answer the third research question, "Based on the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are chapel models in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples," each participant was asked several questions to help determine how effective chapel models are when it comes to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples. These questions made students consider whether the chapel services encouraged them to consider Jesus in their daily lives, consider every person they encounter as someone to share Jesus with, consider the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others, listen to God, develop an awareness for God's commandments and His love, and engage in community with other believers. Forty-nine of the 122 respondents, or 40%, believed that chapel services were effective in fulfilling the biblical

command to make disciples; two respondents, or .1%, believed that chapel services were ineffective; and sixty-two respondents, or 51%, believed that chapel services were somewhat effective. To answer the fourth research question, "Based on the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel, how effective are discipleship groups in regards to fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples," students were asked the same questions but in relation to discipleship groups. Forty-three of the 122 respondents, or 54%, believed that discipleship groups were effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples; ten respondents, or 12%, believed that discipleship groups were ineffective; and twenty-eight respondents, or 35%, believed that discipleship groups were somewhat effective. These numbers mean that 14% more students believe that discipleship groups are effective in making disciples than chapel services, and 16% fewer students believe that discipleship groups are only somewhat effective in comparison to chapel services. However, 11% more students believed that discipleship groups were ineffective in making disciples in comparison to chapel services.

The numbers collected from this question are interesting because the collective data from the previous four research questions indicate that discipleship groups are more impactful on students' relationship with God. To answer the fifth and final research question, "Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God," each participant was asked the following question: "Between chapel and discipleship-group models, which do the students perceive as having more of an impact on their relationship with God?" Thirty of the 122 respondents, or 24%, believe that chapel has more of an impact on their relationship with God; twenty-four respondents, or 19%, believe that discipleship groups have more of an impact; fifty-three respondents, or 43%, believe that both have an equal impact; and twelve respondents, or 9%, do not believe that either of them

have an impact. These numbers mean that nearly half of the students believe both chapel services and discipleship groups are equally impactful on their relationship with God, and that marginally more students believe chapel services are more impactful on their relationship with God than discipleship groups. The numbers collected from this question are interesting because the collective data from the previous four research questions indicate that discipleship groups are more impactful on students' relationships with God.

Research Applications

In "Missional Discipleship" (2014), Beard considers some of the indicators of spiritual formation: mission, obedience, and community. A believer's mission is reflective of their spiritual formation when it is non-compartmentalized, incarnational, and holistic. Chapel and discipleship-groups must be non-compartmentalized in that they encourage students to live out their faith every moment of every day instead of just one or two days a week; they must be incarnational in that result in the students growing in their relationship with Christ; they must be holistic in that they address the complete needs of the study body, whether those needs be physical or spiritual. Chapel and discipleship-groups must also encourage students to be obedient to God, and in so doing, those who facilitate chapel and discipleship-groups will be living in obedience to God. Finally, chapel and discipleship-groups must offer students genuine community, not only with other students, but also with faculty or staff members who can help and guide them. If chapel and discipleship-groups do these things, they will foster spiritual formation.

After considering the collected data, Christian schools can modify their chapel and discipleship group models to make them more effective. Christian schools must modify their chapel and discipleship group models to make them more effective because faith-integrated

learning needs to take place outside of the classroom just as much as inside of the classroom. Through faith-integrative learning, students can be shaped to crave the Christian community that church provides. Maitanmi (2019) defines education based on Scripture, or training and instructing a child in such a way that they will not deviate from that way they grow. Furthermore, Maitanmi (2019) lists three perceived benefits of Christian education:

> (1) Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and to foster a sense of personal relationship to Him. (2) Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Jesus to lead them to better personal experience. (3) Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christian character (pp. 91-92).

These three benefits of Christian education can only be aided by effective chapel and discipleship group models. Such models would raise students' consciousness of God and encourage their personal relationship with Him. Such models would teach them more about the life of Jesus, specifically the importance that Jesus placed on gathering together for fellowship. Finally, such models would produce a progressive and continuous development of Christian character by encouraging students to seek congregational worship and fellowship in the church.

But how can Christian schools modify their chapel and discipleship group models to make them more effective? Based on the responses from the 122 participants, educators can garner some ideas. The students who did not believe chapel services have impacted their relationship with God or did not believe that chapel services were effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples listed two main reasons: the speakers and the messages. One student requested, "Change up the topics every week so it doesn't seem as repetitive." Another student suggested having more "sermons focused more on things tailored to teens and applying the Bible to life as a teen." Yet another student shared the following:

> If there was something I had to change about chapel it would be the speakers. I believe that a variety of speakers from outside the school would bring new perspectives and ways of teaching onto students versus people within the school. Also, even students speakers would be a good idea. Sometimes it [chapel] feels like it repeats, which makes students not grasp as much connection with God.

If schools brought in good speakers who discussed practically how to live for God as a teenager, perhaps students would find chapel services more impactful.

The students who did not believe that discipleship groups have impacted their relationship with God or did not believe that discipleship groups were effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples listed two main reasons: the people in their groups and the topics of discussion. Unfortunately, some respondents do not feel comfortable in their discipleship groups because they do not trust the other students. Resolving this issue looks different depending on the group. If there is a specific reason that there is distrust among the group, the educator could lead the group through some conflict resolution strategies. If there is not a specific reason that there is distrust among the group, then there might not be much educators could do beyond encouraging them to treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, which might help them become more trusting of one another over time.

Regarding the topics of discussion, there are some specific things educators can do. One student suggested "allowing groups to branch off into what is on the group's heart." Another student echoed this thought and requested, "[being] able to decide as a group what we want to discuss throughout the year so it is more personal and beneficial to each person and what they need the most to grow their relationship with God." Yet another student shared the following:

> I think it would be cool if we were able to pick a book of the Bible or a certain part of it that we can focus on versus all together as a school doing the same thing. This will make DGroups more diverse and start-up more conversations. Each group doing their own thing could allow for stronger conversations versus the repetitiveness of the questions that are provided.

If each group became more trusting of one another and was able to choose what to study based on their individual needs, perhaps students would find discipleship groups more impactful.

<div align="center">**Research Assumptions and Limitations**</div>

This section will reiterate the research assumptions that informed this study, as well as the delimitations of the research design. Finally, this section will present opportunities for further research.

Research Assumptions

This study assumed the validity and relevance of two educational theories, the first being Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Teacher as Gardener theory. In summary, Rousseau's theory compares teachers to gardeners and students to plants who need tending. Just as a gardener gives the plant what it needs to reach its full potential and thrive, so a teacher gives the student a necessary foundation from which the student can become what he or she wishes to become. Another assumption is that for the private Christian schools participating in this study, education is not just about guiding and equipping students in their youth so that they can be successful adults in society. Education is also about guiding students to Christ, being a living example of the redemption and reconciliation that is possible through Christ, and equipping students to fulfill God's plans for their lives.

This study also assumed the validity and relevance of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. In his article Transformative Learning Theory (2017), Taylor offers a concise summary of Mezirow's theory. This theory is aimed towards adults, but it is applicable for young adults as well. The key principle of this theory is that "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Taylor, 2017, p. 17). Marmon comments on the role

of educators within the framework of this theory in the article "Transformative Learning Theory: Connections with Christian Adult Education" (2013). Marmon writes the following: "Unlike many educators in a formal setting, the transformative learning facilitator joins the other adults as learner…Throughout the journey of identifying and questioning long-standing 'habits of mind'… adults need an objective and invested person to walk with, ahead of, and behind them" (2013). Based on this assumption, the role of the educator and their relationship with the students is a factor in whether chapel and discipleship-group models are effective or not.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This study sought to determine the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in private Christian schools. While the data collected might have revealed trends and patterns of effective and ineffective models that could aid in improving and strengthening these models, this study does not promise to offer a definitive solution for increased spiritual growth among students. Furthermore, because this study took place during the Coronavirus pandemic, this researcher took into consideration that the chapel and discipleship-group models might be slightly different than normal to accommodate CDC suggestions and guidelines.

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Further Research

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This researcher recommends that private Christian schools with chapel services and discipleship groups administer this survey to their high school students. The results of the survey would reveal how impactful the students perceive their school's chapel services and discipleship group models. The results would also reveal if they believed their relationship with God has been improved by the chapel services and discipleship group models, and if they believe them effective in fulfilling the biblical command to make disciples.

This researcher also recommends that schools who have participated in this survey or who will take the survey in the future make adjustments based on the student feedback. For instance, if the five schools who participated in this survey brought in good speakers who discussed practically how to live for God as a teenager, perhaps students would find chapel services more impactful. Furthermore, if each discipleship group became more trusting of one another and was able to choose what to study based on their individual needs, perhaps students would find discipleship groups more impactful. Hopefully, this collected data and suggestions for further research will improve chapel services and discipleship group models and, consequently, make more disciple-makers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Permission Request

April 21, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership degree. The title of my research project is Understanding the Perceived Spiritual Effect of Chapel and Discipleship-Group Models in Private Christian Education, and the purpose of my research is to understand the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in Christian education. I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [school name].

Participants will be asked to Survey Monkey and complete a digital survey. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to ----------. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Bailey Humphrey

Appendix B

Parental Consent

Title of the Project: Understanding the Perceived Spiritual Effect of Chapel and Discipleship-Group Models in Private Christian Education

Principal Investigator: Bailey Humphrey, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your student is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be high school seniors. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your student to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of this qualitative case study will be to understand the students' perceived spiritual effect of chapel and discipleship-group models in Christian education. The data collected will analyze the positive and negative elements of the chapel and discipleship-group models to eventually conclude what is the most effective way for Christian educators to make disciples. In this study, spiritual discipleship will be defined as the act of creating disciples who know, believe, and apply Jesus' teachings to their lives, including the teaching to make other disciples.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your student be in this study, I would ask him or her to do the following things:

1. Complete a digital survey in his or her Bible class.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

While the students will not directly benefit from participating in this study, their school might

benefit in having qualitative evidence of the perceived spiritual effect of their chapel and

discipleship-group models, thus allowing them to alter these models to achieve the most positive

results.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

Your student does not face any risk in participating in this study.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept both private and anonymous. Research records will be

stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected as part of

this study may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data

collected from the participants is shared, any information that could identify them, if applicable,

will be removed before the data is shared.

Participant responses will be kept anonymous, as the surveys are digital, and students will not be

asked to give their names at any point in the survey.

Data will be collected through Survey Monkey. Data will be stored on a password-locked

computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will

be deleted.

What conflicts of interest exist in this study?

The researcher serves as a teacher at Lanier Christian Academy. To limit potential or perceived

conflicts the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This

disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to allow

your student to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on her or his decision to allow his or her [child/student] participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your student to participate will not affect his or her current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to allow your student to participate, he or she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your student from the study/your student chooses to withdraw from the study, please have him or her exit the survey and close his or her internet browser. Your student's responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Bailey Humphrey. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ----------.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of this research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your student to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my student to participate in the study.

_____

Printed Child's/Student's Name

_____

Parent's Signature   Date

_____

Minor's Signature   Date

Appendix C

Spiritual Formation Survey

Directions: Please honestly answer the following questions.

1. How many years have you attended this school?

2. Do you regularly attend (three or more times a month) a local church?

3. If you responded yes to question 2, do you attend a service at a local church?

4. If yes, how many years have you attended a service at a local church?

5. If you responded yes to question 2, do you attend a small group gathering at a local church?

6. If yes, how many years have you attended a small group gathering at a local church?

Chapel

7. Do you believe the chapel services at your school encourage you to consider Jesus in your daily life? Why or why not?

8. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school encourage you to consider every person you encounter as someone to share Jesus with? Why or why not?

9. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school encourage you to consider the spiritual needs of others? Why or why not?

10. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school encourage you to consider the physical and emotional needs of others in addition to their spiritual needs? Why or why not?

11. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school encourage you to listen to God? Why or why not?

12. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school make you aware of God's commandments and encourage you to obey them? Why or why not?

13. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school make you more aware of God's love for you and encourage you to love God more? Why or why not?

14. Do you believe that the chapel services at your school encourage you to engage in community with other believes? Why or why not?

15. Overall, do you believe that the chapel services at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not?

Discipleship-Groups

16. Do you believe the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to consider Jesus in your daily life? Why or why not?

17. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to consider every person you encounter as someone to share Jesus with? Why or why not?

18. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to consider the spiritual needs of others? Why or why not?

19. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to consider the physical and emotional needs of others in addition to their spiritual needs? Why or why not?

20. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to listen to God? Why or why not?

21. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school make you aware of God's commandments and encourage you to obey them? Why or why not?

22. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school make you more aware of God's love for you and encourage you to love God more? Why or why not?

23. Do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school encourage you to engage in community with other believes? Why or why not?

24. Overall, do you believe that the discipleship-groups at your school have improved your relationship with God? Why or why not?

25. Overall, do you believe that the chapel services OR discipleship-groups have a greater impact on your relationship with God? Explain your answer.