

The *JesusTalk* program: developing student leaders for empowered campus evangelism

by

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Dedication

To Sam.

No father could be more proud than I am of you.

Thank you for making me the father I needed to be.

Table of Contents

Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Religion and American Higher Education.....	1
Complexity in modern Christian Higher Education	3
Institutional Profile.....	7
Purpose	11
Timeline and structure	12
Resources employed.....	12
Process	12
Figure 1. Design process for the <i>JesusTalk</i> project, including planning before and after Thesis project defense.	15
Chapter Two: Pre-Thesis Proposal work.....	16
Faith and Fear: Preliminary work.....	16
Preliminary methodological constraints and purposes	18
Research Team.....	19
Sub-Study One: Focus Groups.....	20
Focus Group Moderator’s Guide Development	21

Focus Group Participants	23
Focus Group Procedure	23
Focus Group Results	24
Sub-Study Two: Semi-Structured Interview	31
Semi-structured Interview Participants	31
Semi-structured Interview Procedure	32
Semi-structured Interview Analysis	33
Sub-Study Three: One-on-one Interview Study.....	36
Chapter Three: The <i>JesusTalk</i> Project	44
Models of Evangelism	45
<i>JesusTalk</i> Evaluation Instrument Development	50
Vignette Development.....	56
Hypotheses	60
Thesis.....	61
Antithesis	61
Method	61
Design	61
<i>JesusTalk</i> - Organization Leader Recruitment.....	62
<i>JesusTalk</i> - Organization Leader Procedure	63
<i>JesusTalk</i> - Organization Member Recruitment and Procedure	65

Data entry and analyses.....	66
Chapter Four: Results	68
Quantitative Results: Organizational Leaders	68
Quantitative Results: Organizational Members.....	73
Qualitative results	75
Chapter Five: Lessons Learned and Conclusions	83
References.....	98
Appendix One: Focus Group Moderator’s Guide	112
Appendix Two: Focus Group Consent and Demographic Survey.....	114
Appendix Three: Tabulated Results of Focus Group Discussions.....	115
Appendix Four: <i>JesusTalk</i> Consent Form.....	117
Appendix Five: Pre-Test Organization Leader Assessment.....	118
Appendix Six: Vignette descriptions.....	120
Appendix Seven: email reminder for Organization Leaders to take the post-test survey.....	123
Appendix Eight: Two-weeks-Post-Test Organization Leader Online Assessment..	124
Appendix Nine: Two-Weeks Post-Test Organization Member Online Assessment	127
Index.....	130

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Abstract

The overall purpose of the project was to develop leadership that could change the campus culture to be truer to the Christian mission of a small, rural, distressed Christian college. A total of 157 students participated in the progressive components of this study, including associate researchers (8), Focus group participants (38), Semi-structured interviewees (28), one-on-one (clinical) interviewees (25), role-play training and survey of campus leaders (24), and a validation survey of members of organizations led by those campus leaders (34). A series of vignettes allowed for role-playing investigations of themes of evangelism. Participants completed a pre-program assessment, participated in the two weeks of training, and another two weeks later completed a post-training assessment that included views on the training itself. Members of student organizations (n=34) were then assessed changes in leadership two weeks after the final leader assessment. Results indicate that the program was effective in changing leaders' views of faith and fear, and was perceived as being efficacious by both leaders and organizational members. Similar evangelical leadership programs could be developed in other collegiate and youth environments to serve the Church and reverse the current trends of youth leaving the church.

Chapter One: Introduction

The genesis of this project was my passion for teaching and student leadership development. In my context of a small, distressed, very conservative Christian College, there is great rigidity of structure. In such an environment, students often need to be given allowance to not only oppose barriers to their flourishing, but to take those parts of the system that tend to dissuade young people from developing comfortable expressions of faith, and reusing or repurposing those structures to become formidable teaching tools.

This project is an attempt at giving students at a distressed small Christian college an opportunity to empower themselves to learn from their own constraints how to open up space and allow joy to enter their lives, learning, and worship. To that end, in this introductory chapter we need to explore a snapshot of the overall religious outlook of American college students, and then profile the institution where this act of ministry occurred should be explored to accentuate the similarities and differences from other educational and youth contexts. This chapter will then conclude with the Purpose, Timeline and structure, Resources employed, and Process sections describing the overall Thesis project.

Religion and American Higher Education

Reports from surveys and polls indicate that overall, American college students are becoming increasingly secular, and that this phenomenon is creating a new religious reality. According to the several American Religious Identification Surveys (ARIS; Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001; Kosmin & Keysar, 2008, 2013), college-age Americans are divided among three distinct worldviews: Religious, Secular, and Spiritual, each attached to a distinct

outlook on theological, philosophical, scientific, public-policy, and political issues. Among college students responding to the 2013 survey 70% of those who claim to be secular profess no religion (Nones) and 11% refuse to answer, and in the spiritual group, one-third are Nones and 17% identify with Eastern religions, Judaism, and New Religious Movements. Clearly, evangelism is not currently very effective on American college campuses, or among much of the U.S. population.

The Pew Research Forum on Religion (2015) has reported that overall religious faith is declining in the American population, especially as indicated by attendance of religious services. However, although declining, religion is still pervasive. Gallup Polls from 1992 to 2012 indicate that 55–59% of Americans say that religion is “very important” in their lives and another 24 – 29% say that religion is “fairly important in their lives” (Gallup, 2012a). Forty percent of Americans report being “very religious and another 29% consider themselves “moderately religious” (Gallup, 2012b). Further, 92% of Americans believe in God (Gallup, 2011).

Religion and secular ideologies involve an identity with and a loyalty to community, and both claim the ultimate moral legitimacy of the authority invested in the leadership of that community (Raiser, 2013). If the church is to lead in the future, there is a need to develop leaders in our colleges who will become well-formed Christian leaders in and outside of the church. The church will therefore need leaders who are not afraid to spread the Gospel, and can develop leadership abilities that allow other believers to be wise and motivated, accepting, and able to understand that faith is not an on-off switch, but a developmental trajectory that will span the entire life. It should be a purpose of Christian higher education to form such leaders, but this is not always the case. In the following

sections, these issues will be explored as they contribute to the foundations and rationale for the current project.

Complexity in modern Christian Higher Education

Christian higher education is under a complex set of demands, from providing excellent academics that meets or exceeds the level of scholastic offerings from secular counterparts, to ensuring that the Christian formation of students is included in a way that glorifies God and adheres to the doctrinal views of the sponsoring or founding organization. A major confounding aspect in this set of demands on Christian colleges is the constant and pervasive change in higher education overall, and the sectarian and religious geopolitical changes the whole world is facing. Newman, Couturier, and Scurry (2004) state that change flows from a variety of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural sources, but that “the main force for change flows from a new level of competition and market-orientation among higher education institutions- a competition for students, faculty, research grants, athletic titles, revenue, rankings, and prestige” (p.1).

Because of the diversity of change sources, many schools are pulled in multiple directions and suffer from identity diffusion in trying to be all things to all people in order to maintain viability¹ and identity competition in responding to powerful but contesting

¹ Not to be confused with the positive image of being all things to all people portrayed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (ESV): ¹⁹For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

alliances that seek to sway and reshape a school's identity, culture, and purpose. Even for church-affiliated schools, the central focus is not always on God; it is typically more pragmatically based on keeping the doors open than on the central theologies of the Christian faith. Recent issues with many other schools highlight the pervasiveness of the issues.

Mount St. Mary's University in Maryland generated national attention after the president fired faculty members for disagreeing with him and analogized struggling students as bunnies that needed to be drowned or shot to put them out of their misery². Wheaton College faced national scrutiny over the firing of a political science professor after she publicly stood in solidarity with Muslims being attacked because of the activities of terrorists in the Paris bombings. Wheaton's administration was disturbed by "significant questions regarding the theological implications" of her remarks, such as that Christians and Muslims worship the same God, saying they seemed inconsistent with the college's doctrine³. While this issue is directly related to the theology of the school, it is focused on the fears and insecurities of the theology instead of secure, loving, and graceful theology. Other schools like Gordon College have been questioned on their respect for donor's intentions⁴, stance on

² <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/02/10/academics-and-academic-groups-respond-fury-over-firing-2-professors-mount-st-marys>

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/09/us/larycia-hawkins-wheaton-college.html?_r=0

⁴ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/02/26/planned-sale-rare-books-roils-gordon-college/CW1RgvT3vqsEKXfSlmQxyM/story.html>

homosexuality⁵, and healthcare for employees⁶. In all of these instances, the leadership were accused of squelching public discourse on their campuses, and promulgating cultures of fear.

In this study of students at Erskine College and Theological Seminary, there is an attempt at assessing the focus on God and seeing where the higher educational mission meets the mission of being an arm of the Church. But, the College is not the Church, and has a specific mission that is adjunctive to the mission of the Church. As Hauerwas (1974) states,

The church is not called to build culture or to supply the moral tone of civilization, old or new. The church is called to preach the Kingdom of God has come close in the person of Jesus Christ. It is only as the church becomes a community separate from the predominant culture that she has the space and rest from which to speak the truth to that culture. The church's task, the, is not to choose sides among the competing vitalities of the current culture, but to speak the word of truth amid warring spirits. For the truth it speaks is not any truth; it is the truth of the Kingdom which the bounds of the earth do not contain. (p. 244-245)

Whereas the Church is not meant to build culture (at least from Hauerwas' perspective), a Christian College *is*, at least tentatively, meant to build culture through equipping students to flourish in the cultures of earth and to be the salt, light, and leaven for the Gospel in these places. A college—particularly a college that admits students with varied faith and non-faith backgrounds—is separate enough from the rest of the culture to have

⁵ <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/11/02/evangelical-college-in-uproar-after-president-stand-on-gay-rights-and-religious.html>

⁶ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUK_Ewjr7prB39_LAhUBQyYKHULKDngQFggcMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bostonglobe.com%2Fmetr_o%2F2014%2F07%2F08%2Fgordon-college-small-christian-college-pleads-for-right-discriminate-basis-sexual-orientation%2Fg213QMmZfy6DzcnjC8dP%2Fstory.html&usq=AFQjCNFLNKEGuaiM4DMJSHHG9JcVvxDrA

potential opportunities for faith development and integration, but is still immersed in the culture, balancing and integrating the needs of the students in society and the needs of the church for well-educated, faithful people whose lives and work proclaims the Gospel to the world.

Leadership in a Christian environment is a process of influencing and developing a group of people to accomplish God's purpose (McLean & Weitzel, 1992). In John 13, Jesus gives Christians an absolute mandate of how leadership should be focused: ³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” While many schools and other Christian organizations may not always focus on this mandate as such, it is essential to contextualize other, more commonly thought of scriptures describing leadership that schools often use to describe the relationships with leaders and followers⁷. The examples set are supposed to glorify God through living the gospel, but this is not always the case as mentioned in examples above. Although a Christian school, it has long been a tradition at Erskine to admit non-Christian students, which should (in a best-case scenario) serve as an opening for evangelism in a wholesome spirit of winsome grace. Gentle, loving evangelism has not been a priority, and the gospel has not been proclaimed. Evangelism in the current context of the institution has been defined by a level of anxiety that often limits the spirit of winsome grace. Further, detailed information about the institution is necessary to articulate the project, so let us turn to that in the next section.

⁷ (*c.f.*, 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 3:17-18; 1 Timothy 4:11-16)

Institutional Profile

Erskine College and Theological Seminary is nestled in the academic village of Due West, a town of 1,200 residents located in historic Abbeville County, South Carolina, an area rich in colonial, Revolutionary War, and Civil War History. The town and the college, with a number of antebellum buildings, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Erskine Theological Seminary was founded in 1837 after a few years of planning by members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and with experience gained from an academy already founded in Due West, SC. It is important to note that the Seminary was named after Ebenezer Erskine, one of the founders of the “Seceder” movement in Scotland which eventually gave birth to the denomination. Erskine was twice excommunicated for his stance on Pulpit freedom, which in modern parlance would be called Academic Freedom. This was an integral statement, as Erskine’s form of Divine Federalism was based on the pre-temporal election of the believer, and the assumption that if God had elected (before the dawn of time) someone to receive Salvation and to be called to Ministry, that God must be moving through that person, and therefore empowered to preach and interpret scripture with purity of heart, even if it was against commonly accepted practice or popular theology (King, 2008). The ARP recognized that they needed to develop the Seminary to “increase its supply of ministers and to insure their loyalty to the Synod” (Ware, 1986, p.1)⁸. Until the mid-1980s, this was the case, until some disagreements within the denomination began to

⁸ This is a prescient image, as many of the current troubles for the College and Seminary have arisen from pastors who went to other seminaries and were ordained into other denominations. Many of these have joined the ARP out of some theological similarities, and often desires to meld the Arp to their personal theologies.

send many ARP postulants to Reformed, Westminster, and Covenant Theological Seminaries as a counter to what some saw as theological liberalism at Erskine.

The central figure of the Seminary's founding, Rev. John T. Pressley, was educated at Transylvania University in Kentucky, and the ARP Seminary that existed for a short time in New York. He was sent to Abbeville District in South Carolina, and wrote often of the difficulties of living in such a place. "The disadvantages of my situation are numerous. Society is not very intelligent, nor refined. I am almost entirely cut off from intercourse with brethren; am far from the centre of our church; and fartherest from that section to which I feel most attached" (Ware, 1986, p.1).

This feeling of detachment has persisted for many residents, with Town and Gown relations overall congenial, but not integrated. Leaving the town of Due West is still considered "going off the island" in local parlance. Since its inception, the College has grown to over 600 students, although the Seminary has declined from over 350 students in 2005 to just over 60 in 2015. The student population at the college is more than 60% Baptist, with very few ARP students. Since 2005, the college has had six presidents (Carson, Whitlock (interim), Ruble, Norman, Christie (interim), and Kooistra), and ballooned from two vice presidents (one for college, and one for seminary) to seven VPs today, including a VP of Intercollegiate Athletics and a VP of Administration, with significant turnover of several of the incumbents.

In order to understand Erskine, a few major historical events of the past six years are necessary. In March 2010, a special meeting of the ARP General Synod was convened to replace members of the College and Seminary's Board of Trustees who were thought to be theologically liberal since they had allowed the US Army MEDCOM program to contract

with the Seminary to train chaplains earning their D.Min. degrees. Some of these chaplains were not from Reformed churches⁹, thus unacceptable to the ARP Synod, hence the need for the meeting. This called meeting became known as the Snow Synod, and has been written about extensively in the popular press and media outlets that follow Reformed circles¹⁰. This action of firing Board members prompted an immediate response of a lawsuit from the Board against the Synod. These lawsuits took several years and cost a lot of money.

Compromise haltingly began with a new 34-yr old President from a “good Reformed family.” His leadership attempted to take the school to a far-right fundamentalist perspective, where we were told not to teach evolution, even as a theory. The first woman VP (Student Affairs; VPSA) was removed from office after almost two years on the job, as women are seen by some members of the ARP as being incompatible with leadership roles. The replacement VPSA began questioning students for their thoughts, and were expelled if he felt them too theologically, socially, or politically liberal¹¹. More and different lawsuits began, and all Seminary faculty and all new College faculty had to sign theological, social, and behavioral covenants in order to keep employment. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) placed the institution on warning for financial problems and lack of academic freedom. The SACS decision became probation soon after,

⁹ Specifically cited were two Roman Catholics, one Mormon, a Jew, and a Muslim, who was not allowed on campus.

¹⁰ <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2012/05/2012-arp-general-synod-faces-t-1.php>

¹¹ It is interesting to note that Goff, Farnsley, and Thuesen (2014) report that the most conservative Christians (defined as those declaring Scripture to be the literal and inerrant Word of God) read the bible less than those who are seen as more progressive/liberal. Many of these individuals feel insecure about their knowledge of the Bible, or that they are not able to interpret it without the assistance of their church leaders.

which forced the Association of Theological Schools to open an inquest into Erskine and the continuing accreditation by that body.

Since 2013, with the arrival of a new president, Erskine has some optimism financially, even with the endowment reduced from \$52 million to less than \$39 million and firing or other departure of one quarter of the faculty with 22-34% cuts in salary to the remaining faculty for a minimum three years, and 3-5% temporary reductions in salaries for some administrators for three months. Students' anxiety rose as faculty began leaving and hearing of the injustices to their faculty. Leadership increasingly prevented dialog on serious ethical and moral infractions, yet became defensive of their own authority and have become authoritarian¹².

SACS put the institution on Probation. Class sizes necessarily increased, as have team rosters. The baseball team has led the recruitment efforts to get students into the college, with 108 on the roster, soccer with over 60, and basketball with over 50 for 2015-2016. A large number of students left when the new Board, composed almost exclusively of pastors, issued a statement on homosexuality¹³, and drafted a statement banning homosexual students from attending, which many of us on faculty protested, even at the risk of our jobs.

¹² As I edited the final changes in this thesis, a colleague sent me a link to an article on this exact issue as a worst-case on leadership abuse: <http://theaquilareport.com/reformed-spotlight-10-characteristics-of-mr-controller/>

¹³ "We believe the Bible teaches that monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is God's intended design for humanity and that sexual intimacy has its proper place only within the context of marriage.

We believe the Bible teaches that all sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage is sinful and therefore ultimately destructive to the parties involved. As a Christian academic community, and in light of our institutional mission, members of the Erskine community are expected to follow the teachings of scripture concerning matters of human sexuality and institutional decisions will be made in light of this position."

While some statements are partially enforced, others are not, leading to ambiguity that is often corrosive to the certainties that students need, from the stated ethos of an institution to the value of their degrees. As with the examples given above, such as Wheaton and Gordon, a culture of fear and disempowerment of students was being promulgated by the administration. When the administration negatively influences the faculty and staff, it is a natural reality that the negative consequences will ripple downwards to the students. The student culture became tainted with anxiety and fear, both directly from threats of loss of accreditation and indirectly through the faculty and staff. Among these conditions this project was completed.

Purpose

While the overall purpose of the entire study was to develop leadership that could change the campus culture to be truer to the Christian mission of the institution, there were subordinate purposes to each section herein. The purpose of this phase of the project was the development of a thesis project while benefiting students, both directly and indirectly. Students enrolled in PY312- Experimental Methodologies volunteered to be part of a project that was of my interest¹⁴. Students in the class formed a research team, knowing that they would benefit from learning specific, marketable skillsets including focus group methodology, semi-structured interview development skills, and one-on-one interview protocol and interaction skills.

¹⁴ As of this writing, no one at Erskine is aware that I am pursuing the D.Min., just that I take classes at VTS.

Timeline and structure

During the Spring Semester of 2015, the syllabus of PY312- Experimental Methodologies had to include open projects that could flexibly allow for a diverse set of methodologies to be included in the instructional set. These various methodologies had to first and foremost serve the needs to students to increase their marketability through teaching them desirable skills, such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, surveys, one-on-one interviews, and others (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The students were already familiar with some of these tools and techniques from the Fall Semester course PY310- Psychological Statistics. Work on the preliminary components had to be developed before the summer in order for the thesis proposal to be submitted with considerable development accomplished before students departed and VTS Summer Sessions occurred.

Resources employed

Since this project was for a D.Min. thesis, resource allocation was carefully controlled. Time used for the developmental aspects of these studies was devoted to the student benefit of learning. Space usage is not charged for at Erskine. All refreshments and other incentives were personal expenses, not charged to the departmental budget.

Process

The exploratory aspects of this thesis were incorporated into the educational programming of two of my courses. This integration was for several purposes, including giving students practical experiences with research techniques and methodologies, empowering students to use their academic work to forward the mission of the institution,

and to ensure that a student perspective dominates the overall project instead of allowing for reinforcement of my biases into the work.

The process that developed was a progression of data collection and interpretation methodologies. Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale, and Bond (1995) discuss the importance of using multiple methodologies in complex circumstances. In the complexity of the social and religious circumstances of the college, a multiphasic process had to be developed. As professor, I had chosen to teach two specific methodologies: focus group and semi-structured interviews. I then empowered the students to develop these seriated research steps such that they could work with me to decide which, if any, further research protocols might be needed.

First, literature reviews yielded material used to develop a focus group moderator's guide to get general qualitative data on the issues of faith and fear (Rabiee, 2004). Focus groups were developed and conducted by the students, and analyses performed by them with general direction and instruction from me. Next, data from the focus group were used to develop semi-structured interview questions, thus narrowing the focus from the general group (consensus) perspective to the individual perspective. Again, I taught them to utilize the analytic procedures, and they completed analyses unimpeded to reduce bias.

To further refine and verify the results of the semi-structured interviews, a series of one-on-one interviews were then developed to increase the specificity and fit by assessing individual variation of the data. Most of the students had taken courses on counseling, and knew that they needed more experience in clinical interview settings, so had requested that we use a similar methodology for this portion of the study, since it was methodologically

appropriate. Results of the one-on-one interviews then informed the assessment of faith and fear might have on leadership.

Since the overall goal of an act of ministry is to minister to the chosen population, in this case the college, this iterative process needed to ensure that the ministry itself was ecologically valid and relied on indigenous knowledge of the student population. Two separate issues of assessment tool development were involved in this project. First, an instrument needed to be developed and assessed to provide an understanding of the complex issues of faith and fear (which will be discussed further below) of the organizational leaders and followers had to be developed. Since the assessment tool would inform not only the interpretation of results, but could inform the development of the vignettes that would be used as a teaching tool, it was decided to develop the assessment instrument and use data from that process to develop optimized teaching vignettes.

Once the empirical assessments were established, the teaching tool of the training vignettes that could be role-played was developed. A graphic representation of the entire project is provided in Figure 1:

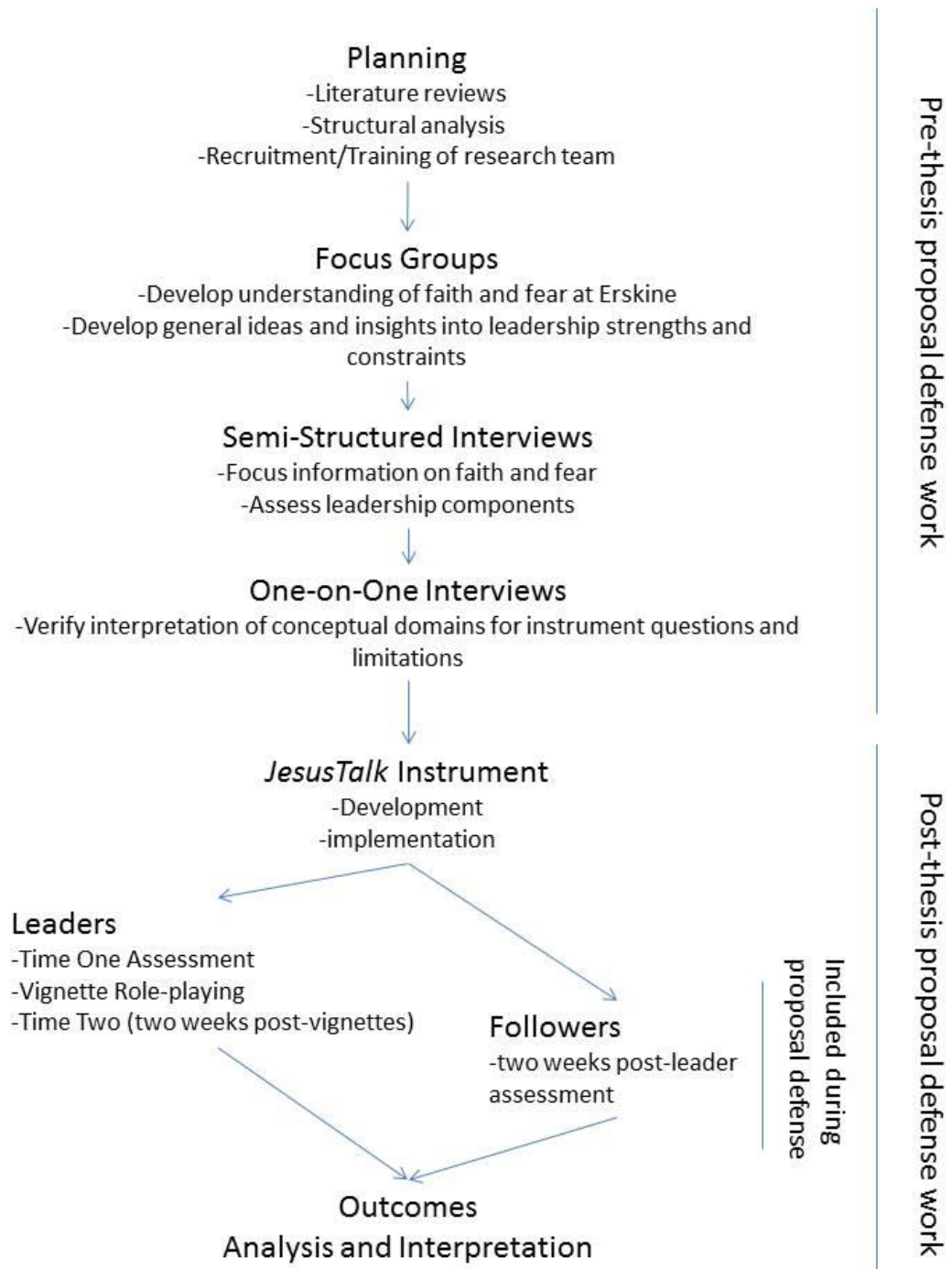


Figure 1. Design process for the *JesusTalk* project, including planning before and after Thesis project defense.

Chapter Two: Pre-Thesis Proposal work

As mentioned earlier, this project had its genesis in my passion for teaching. The best teaching requires not only training students to learn material, but to be empowered to create new knowledge through experiences. Creation of new knowledge sometimes admits to the biases we bring with us, and in work with students it is important to note that we are no longer undergraduates, even if we might once have been. Therefore, this project heavily relied on the independence of the undergraduates involved, empowering them to think and decide much of the work.

My personal philosophy is to give students experience such that they can creatively attempt new lines of inquiry with minimal risk. If my students cannot eventually surpass my abilities, I have failed as a professor.

Faith and Fear: Preliminary work

While building experiences, I have tried to enact the Christian mission of the institution by having students in Psychological Statistics and Research Methodologies courses develop a theme each year based on “Faith and...” In the 2014-2015 academic year, the students chose the topic of “Faith and Fear,” as they perceived the institutional changes were precipitating a lot of fear and anxiety among the student body. Since they developed this topic, I challenged them with the following verse:

He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”
Mark 4:40 (NIV)

As a class, we spoke about how Christ focuses on the relationship of faith and fear as oppositional forces. His teaching to his Disciples was predicated on a deep faith in the will

of the Father and an acceptance of that will. Fear in this situation on a stormy sea was not of the weather, but of the promises of God being hollow, an interpretation that firmly resonated with Erskine students. The issue of clarity of what faith meant was lacking among the disciples at that moment in the boat, and ambiguity was present in their situation. A growing body of research provides support for the claim that religion reduces fear and the ill effects of trauma and ambiguity in our lives (Laufer & Solomon, 2011). If the administration of the institution is not providing clear leadership, the ambiguities of their indecisions often lead to fear for the students, even if as a trickle-down effect from fear and insecurities of faculty and staff. As a religious institution, direction should be clear and gospel-oriented. “It may not be widely recognized that an important function of religion is prediction and the relief of ambiguity” (Jackson, 2010, p. 72), or more importantly relief from the fear elicited by ambiguity. Ambiguity and uncertainty can be scary for many people, even for the disciples as seen in Matthew 14:

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Matthew 14:25-27 (NIV)

Christ walking on water was a moment of ambiguity to the disciples, as it contradicted their common sense knowledge of physical laws, even while it demonstrated the realities of their faith in Jesus. To see someone walking on water is to be unsure whether to be afraid for the body or for the soul. This issue resonated with the students in the ambiguity of what institutional changes meant for them, from the empathy with faculty getting fired to the potential loss of value of their degree from reputation and potential loss of accreditation.

Scripture enjoins us to be in a faithful relationship with God, such that fear is unnecessary: “In Christ we come before God with freedom and without fear. We can do this because of our faith in Christ” (Ephesians 3:12; ERV). Whether the fear stems from a physical or a spiritual source, faith should be able to overcome most fear. At points in scripture, there is a healthy fear of ambiguity, whether the assurances are for the obvious physical symbolism being presented, or if they are metaphorical for the spiritual tempests we might experience. In the face of poor or missing leadership, the ambiguities faced by students become major issues. Simple definitions can be confused; is it possible for Erskine to be a liberal arts college without a modern language department? Can we be a Christian college with no Bible department or regular worship allowed? The multitude of issues that had to be explored in these circumstances demanded a variety of methodological responses under a variety of constraints.

Preliminary methodological constraints and purposes

Experimental psychologists, such as de Visser, Graber, Hart, Abraham, Scanlon, Watten, & Memon (2015), remind readers that a single experimental structure can rarely deliver a pragmatic answer to a complex set of questions. To this end of attempting to answer a small part of a very complex set of questions, a multiple test approach was needed in the larger study presented in this overall study. This is a part of the pedagogical approach as well, teaching students that research is a process, not a single study to answer a large question. Issues of how to improve the campus ethos and allow for real discussion, perhaps even evangelism, are truly complex questions to be tested.

Test development is inherently an arduous, carefully considered process whereby iterative explorations of topics must occur. The first step in the process was a timeline to

include the foundational elements from the Fall Semester course on Psychological Statistics (PY310- 4 semester hours) into the required Spring Semester course on Research Methodologies (PY312- 4 semester hours) that would enhance the education of students without being exploitative of them and their work. Therefore, a distinct purpose of this developmental phase had to be articulated. Three of the various methodologies that are needed for student success in the field of psychology due to their market desirability include focus group research, semi-structured interviews, and one-on-one interviews.

Focus groups begin to select areas of informational need where researcher bias might otherwise lose the indigenous knowledge, especially in religious thought (Swatos, 2010; Willig, 2008). Semi-structured interviews help differentiate the ideas focused upon by groups. One-on-one interviews can then allow data to be verified that interpretation had been correct and unbiased.

Research Team

In the pre-thesis work, eight college students enrolled in an Experimental Methodology class volunteered to collect data for the developmental stages of this project in exchange for course credit and experience with qualitative methodologies. These four males and four females were mostly Juniors (7) with one Senior in the group, and included a variety of ethnicities (1 Latino, 2 African American), national origins (US, UK, Peru), and denominations (Presbyterian, Pentecostal Holiness, Southern Baptist, non-denominational, Free-Will Baptist, and Anglican). Since the methodologies were already included in the syllabus, the team volunteered to do the basic logistics of organizing the focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and one-on-one interviews. Roles of the students on this research team within each of the sub-studies included moderating the focus groups operating the

cameras that recorded sessions, interviewing participants, taking notes in research sessions, entering data, and many other duties.

Sub-Study One: Focus Groups

Focus group methodology has been used for many different topics as a way of delving into topics that are strongly perspectival as a way of finding similarities of components of those perspectives (*c.f.*, Fern, 1982; Heinz, 2010; Tingey, 2012). Holm, Fåln, Gjengedal, and Norekvål (2012) found focus groups most efficacious when moderators allowed dynamic shifts of topic that tended towards areas of participant interest, as opposed to simply staying on the moderator's guide, and the research team thought this to be an essential consideration when investigating as broad and sensitive an issue as faith. This is why it seemed most appropriate to pursue the use of focus groups in this project.

Krueger and Casey (2000) reported that participants in focus groups vary with comfort of self-disclosure, requiring trust and time for many, often depending on perceived homogeneity of the group. Heterogeneous and homogenous focus groups (age, gender, etc.) are typically selected to change group interaction and group dynamics along specific paths, and were chosen for such purposes in this study. Several previous studies (e.g., Bergin, Talley, & Hamer, 2003; Hurt, Beach, Stokes, Bush, Sheats, & Robinson, 2012; Kruger, 1994; Owen, 2001; van Teijlingen *et al.*, 2007), suggested that using homogenous groups were often supportive throughout the research process; in addition, friendship groups were a factor that determined group participation, especially for sensitive topics. However, similar groups have a tendency to increase bias, but can be worth the trade off to create a more comfortable environment for group discussion (Hyde *et al.*, 2005). One of the focus groups

was recruited to give a special voice to African-American women, so one focus group was designated to be that special, protected space for their valued voices.

Sherriff, Gugglberger, Hall, and Scholes (2014) devised three characteristics essential for focus groups with young adults: first, a comfortable environment, where everyone would feel safe to engage in conversation; second, individual co-construction in collaboration with other participants; and third, allowing participants' comments to become more dominant. Several other studies (e.g., Hyde *et al.*, 2005; van Teijlingen *et al.*, 2007; Warr, 2005) support these conclusions during group interaction, where responses would trigger ideas between group members. All focus groups were therefore located in comfortable, secure surroundings in which assurances were made by the research team as to the confidentiality of the data and value of all contributions to the discussion.

Focus Group Moderator's Guide Development

The moderator's guide and its component questions were developed by the research team through a series of seven short experiments and projects across seven months of active work on the topic. Each of the six questions (see Appendix One: Focus Group Moderator's Guide) and up to three prompts per question was based on the previous studies. The questions were designed to include specific information on evangelism, security of personal faith and fear of others, and explicit insecurity.

Even at a small, church-affiliated college like Erskine, students come from a variety of backgrounds, demographics, and denominations, so it is natural that there would be variance among answers when posed with the question about the integration of faith. The focus group moderator's guide included questions on different topics like athletics,

academics, and general on and off campus activities, all revolving around the main issue of integrated faith, to ensure that every person could have input, no matter what they were involved in. The overall aim of the focus group was to gain insight on the faith expressed on the Erskine College campus and in the student's lives. Since focus groups are qualitative in their nature, data gained can range far beyond expectations and yield unexpected results. The moderator introduced the topic to the group and gave broad definitions that had been decided upon by the students in the research team¹⁵ for both faith and fear such that they could be discussed in depth. The research team decided upon the definitions so that students would find them more meaningful and contextually appropriate. The Mission statements of the institution were also provided for discussion¹⁶. Six questions were presented to each group followed by one to three probes:

1. "Faith ends in sight" What are your thoughts on this statement?
 - a. What does sight change
 - b. Is this statement always correct
2. Some people have said that faith is the opposite of fear. Do you agree with this?
 - a. What kinds of fear might not be helped by faith
3. "Do you have the same beliefs as your parents did?"
 - a. Similarities and differences
 - b. Were you forced to go to a place of worship
4. "Are you intimidated by others prayer?"
 - a. What is it that intimidates you
 - b. What does this mean for our education system
 - c. What does this mean for our culture
5. Do you think that people with a lot of faith should be fearless?
 - a. Why should they or shouldn't they

¹⁵ **Faith** = "Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof" **Fear** = "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous"

¹⁶ **Institutional Mission Statement:** Erskine College exists to glorify God as a Christian academic community where students are equipped to flourish as whole persons for lives of service through the pursuit of undergraduate liberal arts and graduate theological education. **College Mission** (Undergraduate Programs): The mission of Erskine College is to equip students to flourish by providing an excellent liberal arts education in a Christ-centered environment where learning and biblical truth are integrated to develop the whole person.

- b. How does faith contribute to fear?
- 6. If you found out information that made you question some of the core values of your faith, perhaps in how we understand scripture, or how original manuscripts were translated, how would you feel? Describe what besides fear that you might feel.
 - a. Does it depend on how faithful you are
 - b. Does it depend on the source of criticism

(For full information, please see Appendix One: Focus Group Moderator's Guide).

Focus Group Participants

A total of 38 undergraduate students (ages: 18-25) at Erskine College, a rural, church-affiliated, Liberal Arts college in the Southeastern US were recruited to participate. The groups were comprised of 21 women who identified as White (12), African-American (7) and Hispanic (2), and 17 men, identifying themselves as White (12), African American (3), and Hispanic (2). All participants signed a consent form that included permission to record audio and/or video (see Appendix Two: Focus Group Consent and Demographic Survey). The only incentives offered were snacks and soft drinks following the sessions.

Focus Group Procedure

All focus groups were held in a first-floor conference room in the Student Center or in the Science building, ensuring adherence to Sherriff *et al.*'s (2014) recommendations. Each focus group consisted of six sets of groups with six participants in five and eight participants in one. The participants were informed that they were going to be recorded by a video camera and a voice recorder for playback at a later time if needed. While the moderator asked the participants questions, the two or more note takers wrote down the participant's responses. Once all questions were asked and answered, the moderator thanked the group for participating.

Focus Group Results

Since all sessions were recorded, assurances were made that the sessions were held as assigned, data were able to be verified and validated, and procedural and ethical constraints adhered to. Although the videotapes made are housed in the campus HIPAA storage room, only the students had access to them after showing me: 1) that they occurred, and 2) that each of the topical discussions took place, at least at the beginning. Through this procedure, their assurances of confidentiality of discussion and my assurances of data integrity were both maintained.

The research team, having been trained previously, used their notes and the recordings of the sessions to tabulate the answers/discussions according to each question using a system that they devised (See Appendix Three: Tabulated Results of Focus Group Discussions). For the first question a common point of discussion was how our perception of “Faith ends in sight” alters, and dependent on this, our understanding of faith itself occurs. Participants often quoted “seeing is believing” meaning that they have to see to believe. “You have faith in something that is not there. You don’t see God, but he is there,” stated one woman. As one young man put it, “there is no physical evidence of God, but everything that is physical is evidence of God, unless you don’t believe in him.” Others commented that you may or may not see an influence of God in the world, and that this might be faith in God ending when seeing events that are against what God says to do.

In one of the focus group sessions composed of all African American women, there were several comments about how people who call themselves evangelicals on Erskine’s campus devalue people of color, no matter the depth of theological similarities between the individuals. This is in keeping with an overall trend found in Southern political interactions

as noted by Calfano and Paolino (2010): theology and the love of God seem to take a back seat to prejudice. Some members of this campus minority group noted that fear of racism was combatted by their faith in God, and their faith led them to strive for academic success. Similar expressions of religion serving to combat racial prejudice in higher education and career aspirations have been reported in the literature (*c.f.*, Constantine, Miville, Warren, Gainor, & Lewis-Coles, 2006). These students' comments reiterated the position of deeply internalized faith as oppositional to fear arising from the negative encounters in the school environment.

In other groups, the concept of faith as oppositional to fear elicited a lot of discussion, agreements, disagreements, and confusion that required further discussion. Many points came from this question such as: faith masks fear and can't overcome it, faith is why we have fear, and fear the wrath of God. Quite a few people mentioned a respect for fear, and a respect for God himself, and deemed these two issues as inseparable. Many had been taught to fear God above all. One female student said, "Even if you have faith, you might feel fear all the time. You might have faith through fear, but fear eliminates it [faith]." A male student added: "God is my prayer, and God is my salvation, so to whom am I afraid?" "I think that fear can overcome faith. If you think that God teaches love and everybody, but if you are fearing for your life, fear is going to overcome faith."

Another female participant stated that an element of fear was that she had been forced to go to church by her parents, and they threatened her with eternal damnation if she did not "feel god around me or in me when I was in church. Maybe it was because of the church I was in or the people I surrounded myself with." While her parents said that she had to be respectful, it was because of God's wrath that they treated God with respect.

Another female participant shared a story of how she was always intimidated by people praying, both that her prayers were not as good and as long and as forceful as hers. Her fear also came from the imprecatory aspects of that man's prayers, where he prayed for people to die and be in pain for not believing what he did. This created in her an image of an angry, spiteful god, which was terrifying to her.

The question of beliefs being the same as their parents' was evenly split between the same beliefs as parents, and different beliefs bordering on oppositional to those of their parents'. Some stated that they were forced to go to church during their childhoods, while others voluntarily went and felt connected to the church in bonds of love. An interesting point was that a few participants admitted to not carrying on participation in public worship due to not being around their parents, or just because they are at college. "Parents made you go, and it depends on what it is, and it is 1000% a fact. Parents are why you go." When probed if it depends on how faithful you are, one woman said that there are various reasons why you go if your parents are not around and why you have faith

For the question of being intimidated by others' prayers, the general conclusion was that in public places or in groups, prayer can intimidate people, especially when they are the ones called upon to pray or if the prayer includes ideas offensive to the individual. There was a general consensus that people who want vocalized prayer should be allowed to pray, although there was less consensus if the idea of prayer was vocalized instead of silent. There were significant levels of fear expressed of specific prayers forms or accoutrements (crucifixes or Muslim prayer rugs, were given as examples). "I don't understand when they took prayer out of school. It is like personal. It isn't like people pray crazy prayers. If they were crazy prayers, I can understand, but who does that?" asked a woman. "I ain't getting on

a rug to pray, and I see someone doing that, I would get real afraid. That is what I think crazy prayer is: praying to kill people.”

Many expressed a fear of individual prayer when they were asked to pray in public. “I don’t want to sound like I don’t know God, and I don’t pray really good and pretty. At an RUF meeting, I had to pray and people still make fun of me. I mean I tried, but it didn’t come out right.” When probed further about praying in public and if this evoked fear, that man said “No, I won’t do it. I will not be that guy who prays in front of others. That is scarier than almost anything”

The reiteration of a question on faith and fear elicited responses that diverged from the first asking (Q2), perhaps due to the priming of the earlier discussion. Some expounded on themes including the view that fear is why we have faith, and fear is always present in life. Some even decided that fear is an aspect of faith as they know it. This was not unexpected, given both the self-selection of students to the environment of Erskine College and the occasional penalties for divergent views expressed on campus, including in campus organizations. “You aren’t human if you don’t have fear. You can’t always share your faith here, since most of the time you will get labeled. You are a Jesus Freak and You are an ‘Erskinite¹⁷,’ and you are a heathen and you... You know what I mean? Unless you go to DWARP¹⁸ or First Baptist or New Spring¹⁹, people question you, and here, *[if you go to]* New Spring, people say you are in a cult.” Even the term “Erskinite” was explored further, as

¹⁷ A pejorative term for a student who is a non-athlete, and probably a devout Christian

¹⁸ Short for the Due West Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

¹⁹ A local Mega-church of nearly 20,000+ people in many different locations with live video feeds every Sunday.

different student organizations tend to use the term, and leaders of those organizations were thought to have an influence on the organization and ripple throughout the campus.

The final question, if new evidence questioned a portion of scripture would change their faith, brought up large discussions. Common viewpoints were that the source of critique or refuting evidence matters, and so does the strength of faith. Quite a number of participants said that their true faith in God would not be affected by others challenging their beliefs, although they could see believers having problems worldwide, but that the source of the new information would matter tremendously, as would its acceptance by the various denominational leaders. An interesting point made by one person was that it would actually add to their faith if there was conclusive evidence about the scriptures, even if key items were refuted to varying degrees. Another person pointed out that a key is to have faith, not blind faith.

“I mean, if they found that Jesus really didn’t exist, that might mean something. Otherwise, no. Most of the stories are still cool and mean a lot.” “I’d still follow Jesus, no matter what. Evidence can be faked. How do you know what to believe? You have to believe in something.” One young lady stated that she would follow her pastor and “those other people in my life who lead me. They are the ones I have a real relationship with and I trust. The rest is what we are based on, but this is what we have.” These findings reinforced the basic assumptions about the impact of leaders and their influence on the faith development during college, more specificity was needed to hone down the ideas of how leadership on a college campus could fit into questions about faith and fear. Specifically, the focus on student leaders began to take root, as there is constant change in student leaders, and the college only exists to serve students. Since there was often animosity directed at the

administration²⁰, the focus on student leaders was also reinforced from the data and subsequent comments from participants.

There was more discussion about prayer than had been anticipated, and it is worth noting that many of the students referred to the “need” to pray. Some even used the term of the “god-shaped hole in our hearts.” Blaise Pascal (1670/1995) is attributed with the concept of the “God-shaped hole in all of our hearts.” The actual quote is even more salient here:

What is it then that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present? But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself. (Chapter VII; p. 75)

Pascal recognized that since Creation and the Fall, the fullness of our humanity is lacking, and that only God restores the fullness of our own humanity back to us. Pascal asserted that there is a deep-seated psychological need for the divine, for something *more*. Because we need to fill this hole, we pray as an answer to the need for filling the hole. We know that there is something more out there: some thing or someone who make life itself more special and more fulfilling. We pray to ensure that we communicate, out of love, respect, and fear. Prayer itself becomes an answer to prayer in some forms. The difficulty for many arises when we ask for specific needs. Afshar (2013) provides examples of being the “other” in similar circumstances, and the tension of being both inside and outside of the group at the

²⁰ The most salient example was the quoting of a popular “Yik Yak” (anonymous local messaging app) posting, paraphrased as “The REAL mission of Erskine College and Theological Seminary is the personal enrichment of the administration through the exploitation of students, faculty, and Christ crucified.” Personally, this was one of the most heartbreaking things I had ever heard as a professor.

same time, just like many Erskine students victimized and victimizing with *Schadenfreude* and *Glückschmerz*²¹. They are Erskine students and integral to the life of the institution, but often made to feel like they are less valuable and cared for than those who are the prevailing group. At this point, it was considered that while the College thought that the job of evangelism was a role for its Chaplain to fill, and students did not always feel that active, welcoming embrace of Christ on campus, ideas of leadership began to circulate. According to this focus group data, the college and students have vastly different views of faith and Christian activity, from feeding the hungry to just being part of the “in” crowd. If the fear expressed is from disempowerment due to perceived student and campus expectations around discourse about faith, then the focus needs to be on empowering students to help build and develop each other’s faith in some way.

Since the team of student researchers who had assisted with the focus group development and data collection was established and invested in the project, it was decided to conduct a small series of semi-structured interviews to further develop the constellation of concepts being developed and evaluated. The research group developed a set of open-ended questions to delve into understanding concepts of interest.

²¹ *Schadenfreude* describes a malicious pleasure instead of sympathy when seeing others suffer or fail. The sense of pleasure is a discordant reaction to another’s misfortune, although it does not always evoke guilt (Gilmour, 2006). Unlike the “concordant” reaction of sympathy, *schadenfreude* establishes an antagonistic relationship to the unfortunate other, thus harmful to social relations (Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003). *Glückschmerz*, on the other hand, is displeasure at the successes of rivals (Cikara *et al*, 2014; Hoogland, 2015).

Sub-Study Two: Semi-Structured Interview

There are a variety of answers one can get when asking someone what it means to be Christian. Is it just a question of believing in God, or is being Christian a bit more than that, truly something more? Is “Christian” a process of salvation (1 time event/event), or is being a “Christian” a way of life/lifestyle? How are definitions developed and implemented? The questions could continue.

If we are to take the idea of Christianity and incorporate this into an institutional structure, such as a college, we find that there are further dimensions of perception that must be accounted for. To allow for a wide variety of answers, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were developed by the students on the research team to best allow generous space for variations in theme to be expressed. But, as indicated from the focus group data, campus discussions about faith are fraught with complexities of perceived purpose, and carry their own freight of trust and anxiety regarding repercussions of open, honest discussion. To allow for students to speak more honestly about the issues of faith, the research team decided to make use of a distractor topic—the hot topic of alcohol use by students that had arisen on campus—as the entry topic for recruitment of students to be interviewed.

Semi-structured Interview Participants

A total of 22 Seniors (13 female, 9 male) and six Seminary students (all male) were recruited in dormitories and study areas of the campus to participate. Exclusion criteria included any individuals who were not Seniors intending on graduating at the end of the semester or graduate students at the seminary. In order to maintain confidentiality in such a

closed environment, no record of major, age, ethnicity, denomination, or other features were recorded, and only standing as a college senior or seminary student was used as an inclusion criterion. All participants were asked verbal consent to participate and be recorded for data accuracy.

Semi-structured Interview Procedure

Pairs of student researchers wearing Psychology Department lab coats and holding clipboards and voice recorders went out to collect data from specific locations. The team decided that the naturalistic positions of where participants would normally be on campus would allow for more honesty than the formal setting of the research labs. The question posed of what exactly is a Christian College, thus allowing for the examination of application of the Christian principles integrated into a complex human system. While the answers to the questions posed allow for the development of common narratives, they do not allow for the best integration of life stories in any real depth. Researchers were asked to carefully and quietly seek out moments to find who people thought might be the leaders of faith movements on campus in real terms, who lessens fear and provides steady help, and who builds people up the most. It is in depth that the greatest possibilities of leadership development, amelioration of fear, and building of faith could occur; anything less would be limited in scope and application.

Using the overall topic of alcohol use on campus as a recruitment statement, researchers sought out information. All participants were asked “What does it mean to be a Christian?” No further direction or explanation was given until after the participants’ responses were given. Once an initial answer was given, further prompts of how Christianity fit into their lives were explored. This is where researchers were invited to seek out

information on faith leadership. Subsequent questions and occasional probes then followed, picking up on specific aspects or nuances of the answer given.

Semi-structured Interview Analysis

The research team members individually recorded salient aspects of the answers manually using pen and paper during the interview. The analysts' primary objective was to create themes that accurately represented people's responses while promoting parsimony among the categories. All team members had been trained in this technique as part of their coursework. The analysts then developed a comprehensive set of coding instructions for the next phase of the coding process. Four independent raters, individuals from the research team who were not involved in collecting the data or creating the themes, were trained to code the statements. Independent raters were selected to minimize coding bias. The raters independently coded the statements into one of the rubric themes or into a no-theme category. For statements for which there was disagreement among raters, a consensus meeting was held to determine which theme was most appropriate. Each statement was retained using this approach. By following this process, the students on the research team learned the research methodology through practice.

As the common features of the data were explored, it became clear that the common set of core values of Christianity among Erskine students is relational, but along a multifaceted spectrum of ideals. Relation with God is seen as a personal one, although by definition grounded through the person of Christ. Almost all participants agreed that to be a Christian is to have some understanding of the relationship as described in scripture, and that the relationship emphasizes a personal set of responsibilities on the Christian person. The idea of the Christian person translates to the idea of the Christian college as a place of

actuation of Christian relationship within a community of both believers and non-believers where God is glorified through excellence in educational delivery. Those who were not devout believers expressed views indicating that evangelism needs to be done naturally and honestly as a day-to-day relationship, and hypocrisy needs to be avoided.

Of the responses, only one person described considering Christianity as a “once-and-done” proposition, and that the various issues of behavior and adherence to any rules or structures other than *sola fides* (salvation by faith alone) were unnecessary.

“At its most simplistic level, to be a Christian means that one must believe & confess that they are sinfully depraved & that only by Christ’s sacrifice can their sins be covered to God’s satisfaction” (*participant quote*)

There is very little usage of terms relating to a winsome grace that should pervade Christian thought from the Anglican perspective. The concentration, from orientation of freshmen onwards, is on the Fallen-Condition-Focus²² of humanity that should come through in all discussions about human nature and the centrality of the cross in all matters of soteriology and Christology. Probe questions of the participants indicated the view that even the most heinous criminals are destined for heaven if they are elect and profess faith before death. This individual expressed the Calvinistic²³/Knox-ist view that only those already among the elect bother to ask the questions of salvation, so therefore the purpose of missionary work was only to prompt the elect into bringing themselves into knowledge of

²² One of our new adjuncts gives lectures on our campus about the false ideas of joy and love in sermons, and that homiletics should focus only on the fallen condition of humanity rather than God’s love.

²³ *c.f.*, Calvin (1536/1960)

their salvation. When asked if this person thought that might be cruel, the only response was “I didn’t make up the rules: it is in the Bible that way.”

All of the other respondents described more of a procedural element to Christianity, including these exemplars:

“To have a personal relationship with the Lord. To believe that he came to earth and died on the cross for your sins & that we should admit to doing wrong, believe in the one true King, & commit to Him as the one you look to for everything that happens in your life. To trust the Lord with all your heart.” (*participant quote*)

While this person advocated (under further questions) a strict *sola fides*, it was relational and required more than simply an expression of faith on the deathbed for salvation. Other respondents had initial statements that seemed at first to be state-of-being, but upon further questions demonstrated relational foci.

“One who follows Christ first and foremost, model speech, actions, deeds, true follow/believer based on inherent word of God, the Bible.” (*participant quote*)

“To believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, but if you truly believe it you will long to know God and read His word.” (*participant quote*)

The most articulate of the expressions was clearly a process-oriented person:

“Being a Christian is a never ending process. It’s when an individual tries over their whole life course to align their life with what’s morally right. It doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to perform being a Christian, but it’s a lifestyle. To know what’s morally right, you use the Bible. It’s sort of your Instructions Manual. The principles of faith, giving, trusting, believing is all replicated in the Bible. These are important because it’s some of the building blocks of the Christian faith. Lastly, being a Christian doesn’t mean you’ll be perfect and you won’t make mistakes. A true Christian realizes when a mistake has been made and humbly acknowledges that and tries to correct it. Christians will always fall short, but will continuously try to keep themselves aligned with what’s right.” (*participant quote*)

Of these 25 participants' responses, 24 responses addressing relationship with God as being requisite for the definition of Christian was unexpected at a this school where the language of election and acceptance of Christ as personal Lord and Savior is described and treated more as an "on-off" switch or checklist item than a deep, life-long and changing relationship. The life stories and integration of the definition of Christianity into their lives was anticipated to be quite high at a Christian school. However, during the interview process it was discovered that several of the participants stated that they do not read the Bible at all in their personal lives, and only one clearly stated that she had read the Bible in its entirety. It is quite possible that, in spite of attending a Christian college, many of these students may fall into the groups that Smith and Snell (2009) describe as at-risk of switching religious affiliations, including to non-religious and indeterminate religious focus (*c.f.*, pp. 108-111). Combined with the results of the Focus groups, ideas of working with student leaders on some form of development of evangelism training to alleviate fear began to take hold.

Sub-Study Three: One-on-one Interview Study

The essential question of what the implicit definition of a Christian College at Erskine College is still needed to be settled after the initial questions, but the students of the research team felt that this was too delicate a question to ask directly given recent court cases on tenure^{24,25}, Board makeup²⁶, and public statements against homosexuality²⁷. Since there

²⁴https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/05/18/erskine_president_rejects_seminary_faculty_s_tenure_application_raises_questions_about_church_s_role_in_governance

²⁵https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/09/08/english_professor_at_erskine_known_for_defending_science_is_fired

²⁶ <http://www.goupstate.com/article/20100311/ARTICLES/100319891>

had recently been several expulsions of students for violating campus rules regarding religious orthodoxy²⁸, sensitivity had to be extended to protect students. The team determined that the definition had to be part of a larger agenda or program in order to decrease the focus on the theological divisions and instead concentrate on the applied elements. The research team decided to take on the question of alcohol use on campus as part of an annual rape-crisis prevention program called “These hands won’t hurt.” As a part of this, participants were recruited to give feedback for the executive committee heading up the taskforce on alcohol policies. The team felt that, although there was some cunning involved in the line and order of questioning, there was no deception in the use of these questions in order to get the data needed on the topic of interest.

Participants consisted of 16 women and 9 men (aged 19-22), all undergraduates at a small, rural, church affiliated liberal arts college recruited through a student listserv. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in a counseling lab to limit distractions/bias and assurance of not incriminating themselves. Each was asked a set of four questions: 1) What is a Christian College?; 2) What do you think should be required at a Christian College?²⁹; 3) What should the alcohol policy be at a Christian College?; and 4) What is the difference between a Christian College and a secular one?. The question of alcohol was included to serve as a distractor, both from the actual reason for the study and for the fourth question, a

²⁷ <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/erskine-college-calls-homosexuality-sinful-new-policy-article-1.2131615>

²⁸ not just co-ed fraternization in the dorms, but publicly stating views contrary to the ARP Book of Worship and the Westminster Confession

²⁹ This question was intentionally ambiguous in order to allow for unintended responses that the research team might have otherwise overlooked due to bias.

reiteration of the first. This secondary question (Q4) allowed for an assessment of internal consistency of response through asking both what a Christian college is and through comparison with a secular institution. Selected responses that are most representative appear below:

Question 1) What is a Christian College?

- It's a morally lifted institution and should be held to a higher standard than other colleges. A Christian college is based around a religion that encourages followers to serve others and be more like Jesus. It helps students strive to be the best that they can be.
- It is a place where you can grow your relationship with God. This can happen through a classroom setting where the college provides the means to grow that relationship. A Christian college can help you grow your relationship by helping you find your calling or figuring out your purpose in life.
- It is a college that has Christian values. It is one that makes you go to chapel or has stricter rules about drinking.
- A Christian college is an academic institute that has a Christian influence on its academics and its overall perspective. It influences the way classes are handled and day-to-day things, and the overall attitude in how they approach certain subjects. In relation to Erskine, it is Christian on paper. The mission statement is all about a Christian environment, but in my experience I have only had two professors that relate to faith in class. Also the convocations at Erskine do not really relate back to Christianity either.
- Annoying. It is annoying to some ways to other students who don't have that religious view. Some of the views are kind of forced. Even though we know what we are coming in to, a Christian college is supposed to be a college but we are still stuck going to convocation or Chapel. Also if you are not Christian, and then people find out sometimes you won't get looked at the same, and there is always that fear of grades suffering because of this. It is sometimes hard for them to be subjective. If I take Erskine out of the equation, I see Christian colleges as old time, very structured institutions, like a very strict Catholic type deal.

In these responses, there is a distinct range of answers, from the most idealistic to the pessimistic (or realistic) of opinions. All of the participants had answers that were represented herein, although 13 of the answers were categorized with the first two listed

above. The overall consensus is that a Christian College is a place that glorifies God through good academics and wholesome living. This perception was not unanimous, obviously.

Question 2) What do you think should be required at a Christian college?

- A Christian college should require visitation hours, so no one can just come in whenever they want.
- Because students should be held to a higher standard I believe that more strict [sic] social and dorm rules should be instituted, and church services should be held but students shouldn't be forced to go and education should encompass the full spectrum of a liberal arts education.
- The option of chapel services should be required every week. However, Christian colleges cannot really force or require people to attend. Some Christian colleges require a statement of faith but this could lead to discrimination. These chapels could include more scripture and actually allow students to hear the Word more.
- A sense of morality in general that way if Agnostic or Atheist followers might think it is a great campus because of the kindness. I like the idea of choosing certain types of people like Erskine does to ensure this basic morality. A Christian college should be up front about things like the mandatory convocation, because I don't like the idea of being forced, it makes me not want to be a part of this religion even more. I do think it is a good idea to enforce the Bible classes, but I also think some other cultures should be taught as well. A cultured study of different religions would be nice. As far as social aspects, the school shouldn't be able to tell me what to do. I also think that they should require the enforcement of promoting the Christian organizations like FCA, RUF, or BCM. Overall, nothing should really be required because we are now in college and are finding our own and if things are enforced, we won't have room to grow up really.
- I don't think anything should be required. College should provide an environment, such as one with lessons and seminars and have examples through faculty and staff where the students have a choice to grow relationships. Christian colleges should strongly encourage Chapels but have them more focused on a younger crowd like possibly having contemporary services. Convocations should cause students to think about different things and to be open minded.

In these responses, the students demonstrated a broad range of opinions, and were not afraid of criticizing the institution, even to a professor. All of the answers focused on either administrative and student life policies (seven responses) or institutional activities of different types (22 responses), with several including both in their commentary. The issues

addressed the underlying tension of purpose: Is a Christian college supposed to be a place where Christians are nurtured, or where they are created? Some want the college to be an enclave of like-minded individuals who intentionally withdraw from the world. Most want the college to be a place of enquiry and allow for mutual differences, forming and promoting growth of faith and spirituality. In many cases, there was a strong indication that there was a lack of student leadership as well as institutional leadership directing the discussions of defining Christian colleges.

Question 3) What should the alcohol policy at a Christian college be?

- This is a tricky question because with a wet campus there are no barriers but really it will happen either way. There are situations where people are more easy going about it so students don't rebel then they have other situations where people are strict about it and then students feel the need to rebel. The Bible doesn't say that drinking is not allowed but that one should not get drunk. I think that Erskine College's population would agree about allowing alcohol in the dorms. Personally, I wouldn't mind having alcohol or even just a spot to hang out and enjoy a drink. It would also be nice to allow alcohol at off campus events.
- Personally believe it should be ok, if you're 21 and older. It should be allowed in the confines of their own dorms but maybe not at big social events.
- I think that Jesus drank alcohol so the alcohol policy shouldn't be a problem for Christians to do it. If a student is of legal age, you should be able to drink on campus. Christian colleges should allow for venues used for parties to serve alcohol. It is ok for Christians to drink just as long as they do it in moderation.
- As long as you're 21, it should be allowed. As far as other rules, you should be able to drink anywhere, like in the dorm room or other locations.
- There should be parameters set up and really the only reason for this is for safety measures and for those who might not be totally comfortable with the whole activity. It should not really be that the school decides if alcohol should be allowed or not, I realize that it is a safety issue but it is also a learning experience and a student should be able to choose for themselves. There should be rules, laws and such in a manner that allows for students to learn about using alcohol in a somewhat controlled environment. For specific rules I would suggest only having so much in own possession. If a person is underage, then alcohol needs to up and out of sight and it should not be allowed in dorms because of the people who are not comfortable with it. Christian colleges should allow for places to be set up where you can have

it. Also if it is allowed on campus, then the police should have more leeway to do what they want for safety purposes.

Surprisingly (for a conservative Christian College), all students responded that drinking alcohol is an individual choice within legal parameters. None of the 25 participants was adamantly opposed to alcohol on campus, provided that no laws were being broken. Irrespective of denomination, alcohol was seen as a scripturally-accepted element of human life, although drunkenness was not uniformly condemned nor accepted. A few did interject anecdotes of hilarity over past infractions of the current policies. Similar to previous studies, such as Warner (2009), there was some discussion and acknowledgement of the failures of knowledge of scripture leading to misinformation on alcohol use, which came from social, not biblical forces.

Question 4) What is the difference between a Christian college and a secular one?

- Christian colleges should have the moral standards lifted higher than a secular college and classes could contain more religious aspects.
- A Christian college teaches things and students can learn things from a different perspective. Christian colleges allow you to take Bible classes and offer a better sense of community.
- Christian colleges should almost be like a mission organization where people who attend who aren't Christian can become Christians because of the environment they're in. It should be more of a Christian influenced area. Basically a Christian college should provide a Christian environment but not force it.
- This is difficult because I have grown up around Christian school environment all my life, and never had a chance to experience a secular school. I chose a Christian school because of moral standards and better overall nature, there is a higher morality around certain types of people. Christian schools tend to be smaller. Other differences would be that Christian schools provide much more intimate levels of the educational aspect. There are some hints of the Christian religion that you won't find in secular schools. However, they are kind of limited with knowledge of other cultures and in a secular college, one would be able to meet a bigger variety of different people.
- Based off of Erskine, it is a Christian College on paper but it doesn't stop anything. There is no difference really except saying that it has a "Christ-like

environment” but not too much effort is used to promote that claim. The educational aspects of difference between Christian colleges and secular colleges should have differences but they are not too different.

Nineteen of the responses were similar to the first four presented here: The difference was in higher morality and adherence to the mission. Unfortunately, six of the participants thought that Christianity was used as more of a marketing device than a true aspect of the mission. A few of those responses stood out:

- When I came here, people started freaking out because I am French, then started really freaking because I am Muslim. I had no idea that this was a Christian college when I was recruited to play soccer here. I could be cool with that if people would ask me about my faith instead of starting off with “you are going to hell.” That is a big part of why I am transferring.
- In Moffatt (the dining hall) one day, I dropped something and said “Oh, F*@#!” this old dude got really mad at me and started going off about this is a Christian school and all. Until then, I don’t think anyone on the basketball team had any idea this was a Christian school.
- My parents were so excited that I was coming to a Christian college. I wasn’t sure what to expect, really. I did not expect my roommate to have his girlfriend over all the time sneaking in and out at night. Way too tacky, and I don’t see how that fits the mission. The dorm people turn a blind eye all the time.
- At Erskine, Christianity is more like a club than a faith. It matters what church you go to and what friends you have more than what is in your heart. They use these terms, and we use them too, but I don’t think they are very honest. It is their way to feel special at everyone else’s expense.

For those who did not see Christianity as a pure and natural part of the Erskine College Experience (another marketing tagline), serious questions must be asked, including what is the purpose of having a Christian college if you can’t find Christ-like behaviors on campus. Many students are at Erskine for participation in sports, to have fun, to find a mate, all in a socially acceptable place that earns them respect in the close-knit circles of evangelicals and fundamentalists. As Smith and Snell (2009) put it, “An articulation of an understanding of the enduring worth of a broad liberal arts education for the development

of persons and the sustaining of humanistic societies is not often heard from this age group” (p. 54).

The results of the one-on-one interviews were poignant in showing that there is a lack of consensus as to what a Christian college is, what it should be, and how it should be differentiated from secular institutions of higher learning. Considering the results of the previous two sub-studies, especially of the sectarian fear of and need to pray (from focus groups), the central results indicated that something had to be done on the student level to help focus issues of faith and learning in a supportive, non-confrontational manner. One of the participants made a comment that “all I see is hypocrisy from the college, especially about being evangelical, but all I hear around here is a bunch of Jesus talk.” This terminology led me to conceive of a project integrating all of these preceding studies to inform a training program whereby student leaders could be trained to find their own way of doing the work of evangelism, and through that, force the issue of what it means to be a Christian college from the grassroots perspective of the students. At this point, the thesis proposal defense had not yet taken place, and I was still formulating ideas of the exact nature and structure of the thesis project, but the direction was obvious. The needs of the students and institution centered on the need for empowering students, particularly student leaders, to be able to develop their own way of talking about naturally and lovingly Christ at this Christian school. Thus was the *JesusTalk* program born.

Chapter Three: The *JesusTalk* Project

Students typically come to college to learn, although there are also aspects of credentialing and partying that are realistic considerations that we on faculty tend to discount or ignore. Although many come to Christian colleges in order to have their existing views strengthened, especially in their faith system, opportunities for growth and development still can be made through concerted efforts and training. There is a specific opportunity to work with student leaders to teach them how to speak and lead using gospel terms and principles that demonstrate love and inclusion, expressly by decreasing fear of alternate theological views that might be expressed by others on campus. This will help not only the organizations they lead, but open dialog on campus for real evangelism that is based on love, not on fear.

From the groundwork of the three sub-studies described above, particularly the issues of natural communication and inclusiveness of theology, the *JesusTalk* program was developed to work with student leaders of organizations using a series of role-playing scenarios and vignettes to demonstrate best practices of communication. This program was intended as a train-the-trainer situation to spread a new ethos of warm, loving, and inclusive evangelical communication throughout the institution. In order to restore the verbal dynamic among students and employees of the institution to an orthodox theological position of love and acceptance, the vignette training, with its role-playing for each vignette, allows for direct confrontation of the problems that face the college and allow for healing and behavioral change. This training was intended to show forth outcomes of increased satisfaction of the Christian mission of the institution. The *JesusTalk* program as student leaders training should strengthen leaders and their organizations' understanding of

appropriate communication regarding theological questions. It was hoped that the program would not diminish such discussions of faith, but rather increase true sharing and discourse that would allow for students to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-13) and not be ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8). Since, according to the preceding sub-studies, many of the current student leaders lead their organizations with theologically harsh, exclusive language, these types of interactions were an initial focus, within a reiterative set of themes. There were specific concerns that I had about being defensible in any theological work at an ARP school, being an Episcopalian. I decided that the underpinning of scholarly excellence was needed for the focus on evangelism, so began with the work of H. Richard Niebuhr (1951) that is used at Erskine Theological seminary so very often. This work became a basis for my thoughts exploring models of evangelism.

Models of Evangelism

It is occasionally difficult to think of common terms in ways other than our experience has provided. Evangelism often seems to be what individuals have experienced or been told of in their churches and faith traditions. At Erskine, it is common to hear warnings of the Social Gospel, as if it is a contaminant in the theological waters. Wallace (2012) discusses the differences in terminologies that often tear churches from communion with one another, including evangelism:

The evangelical gospel and the social gospel cannot be separated. They are two sides of the same coin. The social gospel focuses on sharing the love of Jesus Christ with needy people everywhere through concrete acts of kindness and through striving for justice. Evangelism is distinguished from the social gospel by the ever present element of intentionality in its witness to the gospel. In evangelism, the story of Jesus is shared in the hope and expectation that there will be receptive persons who will respond in faith and so come to experience new life in Christ for themselves. Through evangelism the church shares the story of Christ with persons of other faiths and no faith, inviting them to a life of discipleship, believing that the gospel is

good news for all and that all have both the right and the need to hear. Evangelism differs, therefore, from proselytism, which is not the sharing of the gospel with those who have not yet had the opportunity to hear and respond, but rather the misguided attempt to encourage or entice those who are already Christians to transfer their allegiance from one church to another (p. 377)

For work with students, it seems essential to empower them to take chances and learn free from the sectarian retribution arising from nuanced interpretation. Even when we might miss nuances or vital differences of definition, evangelism is acknowledged by almost all Christian churches as an essential activity for Christians, mandated by scripture:

The witnessing vocation of the church and Christians constitutes a non-negotiable mandate that was given by the resurrected Christ to his disciples: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV)” (Hewitt, 2014, p. 201).

And even with an understanding of evangelism as a non-negotiable, we often do not exercise our abilities to bring the good news of Christ to all peoples.

What we have to learn is not that the church has a mission, but the very reverse: That the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood. To grasp the missionary church theologically in a world-wide context means understanding it in the context of the *missio dei*. Mission comprehends the whole of the church, not only parts of it, let alone the members it has sent out. Modern Catholic and Protestant missionary theology is therefore right when it talks about the *missio dei*, a movement from God in which the church has its origins and arrives at its own movement, but which goes beyond the church, finding its goal in the consummation of all creation in God. The missionary concept of the church leads to a church that is open to the world in the divine mission, because it leads to a trinitarian interpretation of the church in the history of God's dealing with the world. (Moltmann, 1975, pp. 10-11.)

From the literature reviews on the topic of evangelism, it was determined that there were two substantive differences of theologically evangelical thought once we get past the

weaponization of the gospel for sectarian political thoughts. The issues of evangelism in the literature seem to be dichotomized between theoretical and pragmatic/action models. While it is an obvious truth that theory should inform praxis, it is often not the case in evangelism, where experience and powerful homiletics can overpower even scripture in many minds. Evangelism needs to be honest and in context. Artificial evangelism is not evangelism, and necessary first steps must be taken before attempts are made at bringing Good News to other people:

It seems to me that the necessary first step is that we evangelize ourselves and not evangelize others. We need to rekindle our enthusiasm and believe in it as we proclaim the good news of Jesus. Evangelizing ourselves means being in close dialogue, in close solidarity – looking into the eyes of others as Jesus did when speaking with the Samaritan woman and with his followers. (Castillo Nanjari, 2014, p. 36).

Evangelism must start with the beginning of our own relationships with the risen Christ. Thiessen (2013) focuses on the importance of ethical considerations in evangelism that abide by several distinct criteria:

Dignity criterion: Ethical proselytizing is always done in such a way as to protect the dignity and worth of the person or persons being proselytized. Proselytizing becomes unethical when it reduces the proselytizee to the status of an object or a pawn in the proselytizing program of any religious institution or religious organization.

Care criterion: Ethical proselytizing must always be an expression of concern for the whole person and all of his or her needs— physical, social, economic, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.

Psychological coercion Criterion: Ethical proselytizing avoids excessive psychological manipulation. There are various way in which proselytizing can be (excessively) psychologically manipulative. (a) Proselytizers should avoid intense, repeated and extremely programmatic approaches to bringing about conversions. (b) Care must be taken to avoid exploiting vulnerability. This becomes especially important when dealing with children, young people, vulnerable adults, and individuals facing personal crises. (c) Excessive appeals to emotion and fear must also be avoided.

Social coercion Criterion: While acknowledging that some degree of power and control is inescapable in proselytizing, excessive expressions of power, or the exploiting of power-imbalances when proselytizing is unethical.

Rationality Criterion: Proselytizing involves persuasion to convert. Ethical persuasion includes the providing of information in order to make such a decision. It also includes giving reasons for the proposed change of heart and mind.

Proselytizing that attempts to sidestep human reason entirely is unethical.

Truthfulness Criterion: Ethical proselytizing is truthful. It seeks to tell the truth about the religion being advocated. It is truthful also with regard to what it says about other religions. Integrity characterizes the ethical proselytizer. Proselytizing accompanied by hidden agendas, hidden identities, lying, deception, and failure to speak the truth should be condemned as immoral.

Humility Criterion: Ethical proselytizing is characterized by humility. Proselytizing becomes unethical when it becomes arrogant, condescending, and dogmatic in the claims being made.

Tolerance Criterion: Ethical proselytizing treats persons holding beliefs differing from those of the proselytizer with love and respect. While it does not preclude fair criticism of other religious or irreligious beliefs, it treats the same with respect, and avoids hostile attitudes or the use of insulting and abusive language against other religions and worldviews.

Identity Criterion: Ethical proselytizing will take into account and show some respect for the communal identity of the proselytizee. Proselytizing which completely disregards the dignity of the individual as rooted in his or her social attachments is immoral. (Thiessen, 2013)

Thiessen's perspectives are focused on the ethics that we in the church should be considering for the glory of God, even if we may not have denominational standards of evangelistic ethics. Alling (1979) shares that in an Anglican perspective, evangelism should contain aspects of distinctive presence, proclamation, persuasion, incorporation, nurture, and becoming a responsible church. In order to include these elements, evangelism must be developed as an individual system of interactions, even if along guidelines. Evangelists must be able to talk about God, and thus need practice in order to find their own voice and relationship with God so that their evangelism is natural and nurturing.

Evangelism cannot be coercive, as Thiessen (2013) noted above, or it is not bringing Good News to humanity, but bad news for the church. Even for the most influential of theories, there must be consideration of evangelism as a relationship of Christ with the world in which a tension exists that either facilitates or combats evangelistic expression of

individuals. A model of this type of expression is found in Niebuhr (1951), although he likely did not contemplate his model being used as a model for best-practices in evangelism training. His is a theoretical model that might help explain some of the praxis of how an individual forms a relationship with Christ and focuses on key elements of what they want or need out of that relationship. Niebuhr describes five separate views or aspects of evangelism that can be viewed as an ascending set of paradigms of evangelistic tension:

1. **Christ Against Culture** – an oppositional and foreign relationship calling for complete resistance or withdrawal, and with unending strife until the Second Coming and final victory of Christ
2. **Christ Of Culture** – a harmonizing relationship in which Christ becomes the fulfillment of all that is good in culture and the universal redeemer and “firstborn of all creation” – and, Christ is read through the lens of culture
3. **Christ Above Culture** – a sovereign but somewhat remote relationship of universal Lordship of Christ over all of nature, including the two human domains of culture/society and church – human corruption is through individual or local choice, not systemic – Christ orders culture through divine law
4. **Christ In Paradox With Culture** – an odd relationship of unresolved coexistence of two worlds: spiritual/material, or redeemed/sinful – Christ opens a path of grace and redemption, but does not change or alter the existing realities of law and flesh in the world
5. **Christ Transforming Culture** – a redemptive relationship in which Christ changes human life not just at individual levels but at larger levels of society and world, and in which the story of human life (including the Fall) is infused with grace and transformation from the very beginning – through Christ’s ongoing life in the world the world is changed

In another popular and much more modern approach to the practice and study of evangelism, Gortner (2008) set forth a series of eight defining components of evangelism. In these definitions, evangelism is seen less as a hierarchical categorizations, and more as a constellation of influences that tend towards efficacy. The eight points of Gortner’s evangelistic model are:

1. Evangelism is a spiritual practice of expressing gratitude for God’s goodness and graces

2. Both primary and continuing evangelism are the work of every generation with its surrounding culture and its own younger kindred and offspring
3. Primary evangelism is the “new” challenge of twenty-first century North America that calls for a deinstitutionalized approach
4. Evangelism is and always has been first and foremost the work of individuals, not institutions or programs
5. Evangelism begins with radical spiritual listening proceeding from a respect of God’s grace already present and active, rather than from a focus on God’s absence and human deficit.
6. Evangelism necessarily involves both verbal exchange and action, has little place for privatism, and brings us into contact with people who aren’t like us.
7. Evangelism is born of deep delight, often found in community, and feeding a community vitality.
8. Evangelism transforms us in our communities and personal lives, as we recognize how wide and diverse are God’s gifts and our understanding of these gifts.

These two views on relationship with Christ and evangelism, one theoretical/relational and not intended for practical application (Niebuhr), and one focused on evangelism application (Gortner) serve as bases for the construction of a practical tool for training student leaders to become comfortable with and able to promote appropriate communication skills that allow for effective theological evangelism. The overall hypothesis of the work presented here is that providing leadership and evangelism training, in the form of role-playing and discussion, will promote more effective and sensitive leadership that brings followers closer to God.

***JesusTalk* Evaluation Instrument Development**

The basic idea of the JesusTalk project is to help people develop their own voice in evangelism. From earlier work, this means addressing issues of faith and fears, and then developing a way of evaluating the effectiveness of how those fears and faith issues are addressed. If, in a place that has a history of fear and weaponized Christianity, students can

be empowered to find their own voice and their own way of sharing the gospel, evangelism can succeed. Overcoming the socially-derived obstacles to natural, loving³⁰, Kingdom-building by eliminating fear of becoming an instrument of darkness that had been the example to these students was an essential first step, and the central focus of the act of ministry.

In order to empirically assess the realities and faith changes within the participant pool, instruments were established, standardized, and evaluated. From the data provided in the qualitative dataset of the focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and one-on-one interviews, questions addressing the various aspects of evangelism, leadership, and fear were developed (Strauss & Corbin, 2007).

Railsback (2006) states that college students do not always respond as anticipated to questions of their faith, especially on a Christian college campus, and direct questions are often far less effective than agreement with outcome statements of the faith of respondents. Hart, Linke, and Budd (2010) found that faith development of students to be characterized by attachments to parents and romantic partners, as well as some student leaders, as secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. Statements therefore had to express basic ideas along these lines. At this point, it was necessary to use the data from the preceding studies to focus discussion onto the pragmatic.

For this part of the project, a list of nearly a hundred statements that fit into specific domains of faith and fear, including evangelical, soteriological, social, and theological literacy

³⁰ John 13: ³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

was developed from the preceding sub-studies and assessed for the potential cognitive and theological domains into which each delved. Some questions were designed to assess specific elements of faith, fear, evangelism, and four consensus-derived cognitive domains informed by the focus group, semi-structured interview, and one-on-one interview data: Faith Security, Faith Insecurity, Christian Approval, and Egocentrism. Names for these domains and questions themselves were consensus-derived from the research team. Since the Fear Questionnaire (Marks & Matthews, 1979) was included as a separate instrument, Fear was not assessed using these questions.

The first issue identified was theological fluency, which the research team called Faith Security, and so many students stated they have little of. The rationale was that very few students in the previous sub-studies had expressed comfort and confidence with their theological knowledge, including the distinctive beliefs that define denominations. If there is less theological fluency, there would be less security in their faith. The statements for this metric included: “I am fluent in the theology of my denomination;” “I have studied other religions or denominations pretty well;” “I am totally secure in my faith;” “I enjoy learning about other people’s relationships with God;” “My denomination encourages me to question my faith;” “I believe it is my job as a Christian to respect other people’s views on religion and not argue with them;” and “I am glad that I have friends with different beliefs than mine.”

The second issue identified was Faith Insecurity, which was considered not necessarily oppositional to Faith Security, but a reaction to the fear and doubts of orthodoxy, cultural relevance, and/or connection with God that might manifest itself in a guarded, offensive, aggressive, or repelling way. In the focus groups, for example, participants

sometimes said that they can have great faith in God, and great relationships with Christ, but still be insecure in their interactions with people in the church. Often there was fear that they were not closely aligned with their denominations, such as a Southern Baptist who was Pro-Choice or PCA who thought that God might let Gandhi into heaven³¹. In this category were also those questions of exclusivity and ownership of orthodoxy. Examples of statements for this domain included: “I am not comfortable around people of different faiths;” “I believe that all non-Christians must go to Hell;” “I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly;” “Religion and politics are inseparable for me;” “A Christian college should only be for Christians;” “When I meet someone of another denomination, I feel obligated to correct their Christianity;”, and “Atheists cannot have morals.”

Although highly debated by the research team, there were sufficient data from the preceding sub-studies to support a three-item domain of Christian Approval. While several articles influenced the inclusion of this metric (*c.f.*, Johnson, 2015), none provided clear guidance on how statements for such should be structured, although all spoke of the importance of dynamic tension³². The basic issue was if the participant were to assess themselves reflectively in the outward expressions of their faith as seen by others and interpreted by self. The statements included in this were: “People tell me that I am a good Christian;” “I am a better Christian than most people;” and “I sometimes worry that people think I am not a good enough Christian.” These three were included to create a dynamic

³¹ While we were working on this project, a former Moderator of the ARP Synod visited campus and talked extensively on how Christ is the only way to heaven, so it was impossible for Gandhi to go to heaven. To our surprise many of the students and faculty agreed with him, and almost all of these individuals were PCA.

³² My term, not theirs

tension for participants, more for consideration of other issues within the instrument than for the data themselves, as the campus on which the project was done is often full of self-promotion of Christian credentials.

The fourth of the cognitive/theological domains was that of egocentrism (*c.f.*, Cox, 1984; Wu, 1989). If the leadership capacities described by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Keohane (2010) are to be developed, levels of egocentrism must be accounted for, as leadership is not about the leader, but about the effectiveness of the followers.

From the results of the preceding instruments, there was one statement that had been developed which the research team felt should be included, even though it did not fall into the domains described above. So many participants in the studies exclusively quoted the Apostle Paul, never Jesus, that the team developed a statement: “Jesus might be important, but Paul tells me what I really need to know” as an indicator of diminished Christology and centrality of Pauline praxis in their faith systems that is sometimes known as biblical reductionism.

The research team thought this question about Paul was very important. They knew that I had done a study several years ago on the titles and themes of sermons, and found that nearly 95% of all sermons preached in the Upstate of South Carolina are based on Romans, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians. Since I talk to them about this unfortunate reality of the paucity of preaching the gospel from the gospel, we decided that this was an essential question to include.

Thirty three questions were selected from this larger grouping developed by the research team. The questions were pilot tested by the research team, first among themselves,

then using Senior class students who would not be participating in the *JesusTalk* study due to graduation, and several seminary students at the institution. Several small modifications were made, including increasing specificity of specific aspects of questions. In a few instances, it was decided that there was a need to allow for ambiguity where some items might be thought to be leading or too tightly focused.

Earlier in the year, the research team had learned several fear assessment instruments, and decided on the Fear Questionnaire of Marks and Matthews (1979), a 24-item listing of fears of varying specificity scored on an avoidance 1-8 Likert scale. The decision was predicated on the ease of use, ease of scoring, and flexibility in identifying and modifying specific items within the scale without diminishing the validity of the overall index. Since the original Fear Questionnaire (Marks & Matthews, 1979) contained several items related to clinical phobias that were well beyond the scope of this study, five statements were modified to assess faith-related fear with statements that did not fit well into the *JesusTalk* instrument. The resulting 20-item instrument (See Appendix Five: Pre-Test Organization Leader Assessment) was pilot tested on several of the Seniors who had been research allies throughout this project in order to assess its appropriateness and ensure clarity of the questions. Questions were developed to focus on the positive and negative aspects of evangelism and winsome invitation to share. “I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly,” which was to consider the egocentrism of their faith. “I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented” shows a security of faith that may or may not include a questioning and willingness to learn and share, which is central to evangelism. “I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do” was a validation question for the preceding question, allowing

differentiation of meaning thereof. “Religion and politics are inseparable for me” indicated faith insecurity.

All of the questions were rated using a Likert scale of one to five using the following descriptors: (1) Agree a lot, (2) Agree a little, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree a little, and (5) Disagree a lot. Three of the questions were recoded because they were on an inverted scale, including “I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented,” “I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do,” and “My denomination encourages me to question my faith.”

Placement of the items on the instrument was balanced so that at times specific topics were assessed repeatedly, while other evaluative components were spread across the spacing of the 20 items. Once the evaluation instrument was finalized, it was then time to develop the vignettes that would be role-played and assessed pre- and post-vignette experiences.

Vignette Development

Role play has been demonstrated to be an effective method of teaching topics that are exceptionally sensitive, such as ethics (Rosnow, 1990; Brummel, Gunsalus, Anderson, & Loui, 2010), medical interview techniques (Joyner, & Young, 2006; Simpson, 1985), counseling (Rabinowitz, 1997), and other sensitive issues where trust must not be violated. Vignettes can be useful in exploring and role-playing potentially sensitive topics that participants might otherwise find difficult to discuss (*c.f.*, Finch, 1987; Hughes, 1998). As commenting on a story is less personal than talking about direct experience, it is often viewed by participants as being less threatening. Vignettes also provide the opportunity for

participants to have greater control over the interaction by enabling them to determine at what stage, if at all, they introduce their own experiences to illuminate their abstract responses. It was also important to allow for, and even promote, a humorous access to *Schadenfreude* and *Glückschmerz* through the vignettes, speaking the unspeakable. It was considered essential to the vignette development that they abide by the constraints of ethical appropriateness as outlined by Thiessen (2013).

After basic development by the continuing research team (one of whom had graduated by this point), several of the Senior students who had been assisting with development in the piloting phases agreed to continue to help with the development of the vignettes. Verbal consent was obtained to answer the set of questions and a promise obtained to not discuss the study with any other students. At least three of the points of Niebuhr or Gortner paradigms were read to each participant, either in person or over the phone. Participants were then asked to envision and describe a “real-world collegiate” situation where they could see one of the points of evangelism from the two models being exemplified, either positively or negatively. Neither of these two models were intended to be used in this manner, so a lot of latitude had to be given to the students to be creative and see past the simple views to application at Erskine. After the first vignettes were proposed, the team quickly adopted standards that the vignettes should allow for situations where the worst-case scenarios of misinterpretation could be elicited. These worst-case scenarios were to both increase the fun for participants and allow for richer discussions. The team agreed to provide worst-case scenarios when they could, and creativity was greatly encouraged.

Some of the original vignettes faced opposition from team members, mostly for reasons of being too “watered down.” For example if there is not a willingness to use real

situations that fit the models, then there would not be an authentic sense to the vignettes. For example, for the vignette composed for Niebuhr's Christ Against Culture, contemporary issues of hip-hop or rock music were thought to be necessary. The team also decided that the opportunity for humor had to be included, so the instruction set included directions to plan a role-play that went "over-the-top" at times, being at times intentionally offensive to the modern politically-sensitive ideals. As Cormier (1977) reminds us, "Jesus had a sense of humor, and still has one" (p.4). Humor allows us to deal with anxiety and insecurity when we could not otherwise even consider talking about the topics. The idea of over-the-top vignettes were thought to help avoidance of the "surefire strategies to turn people off" (p. 123) that Gortner (2008) describes. By being faced with worst-case scenarios, the leaders were able to give a little more personal leeway in their thoughts and considerations. This leeway then allowed them to develop the possibilities of at least seeing, if not fully embracing, the self-love, self-knowledge, compassion, courage, integrity, and humility that are necessary to be an effective modern evangelist (Gortner, 2008, 124-129). The team thought it best to set the student leaders free with asking them to perform worst-case scenarios in order to discuss best practices. It was decided that all vignettes should include an organizational leader in dialog with a freshman (generic term for first-year student).

At a virtual team meeting in Google+, all responses to the designated models were consolidated to comprise the vignette forms through a consensus format. Basic outlines of scenarios were decided upon with further input from the team members. In instances where competing scenarios were put forth by different groups within the team, votes were taken to decide which is most appropriate to the expertise and understanding developed by all members.

One example of a near-miss vignette was that considered for Gortner’s seventh point, that “Evangelism is born of deep delight, often found in community, and feeding a community’s vitality” (p. 29), appears below.

Table 1. Comparison of discarded and retained vignettes proposed for a single vignette.	
Proposed but discarded	Used in study
Vignette 7B: Freshman shares that the sense of community at her home church is built on families, and the longer that you have been at the church, the more accepted into the community you are. Org leader assures freshman that she will find community here in college.	Vignette 7B: Freshman talks about having a deep community back home at church, with many outreach groups that made her/him feel happy. Org Leader says not to worry, that her/his church here has the best fried chicken ever, and that there are lots of great benefits of attending this church, like not having to do lots of work or even talk to other people.

In this proposed vignette, while it discussed the issues of community, it did not allow for the discussion of the real point by developing an interaction wherein the organizational leader could easily misinterpret the situation and negate both the issues of delighting in community and what community vitality really is. There was actual leadership in the proposed vignette, wherein the organizational leader provides comfort to the freshman. The vignette that was decided upon and used allowed for the literal misinterpretation of the term “feeding,” yet addressed a situation that almost all of the actual participants later had some experience with. All of the proposed vignettes were debated and revised multiple times.

Each of the members was transformed by this process, albeit to differing degrees. For some, confidence allowed them to explore their own denominational distinctives, as in the child of two preachers who did not know what differentiated her church’s theological perspectives previous to the study. She reported being able to talk to them and ask questions that were never before important. For others, there was less personal fear of not looking

cool if he spoke about having a personal relationship with Christ. These changes were not recorded, although by the anecdotal evidence indicated that God's grace was imparted on most, if not all, on this research team.

Once outlined scenarios were agreed upon, specific vignettes were written out. These were then read aloud by the professor in order to not only arrive at consensus that the vignettes addressed the most salient points of the evangelical models or aspects, but ensure that they would be intelligible by future undergraduate students. For each vignette there was an essential consideration that the students who role-play them get experience with discussing faith with other people, both to bolster their own faith and that of others while alleviating fear of discussing such topics. Further, student leaders participating should be able to consider best-practices of speaking about faith from a position of authority that comes with their leadership positions. Finally, the comfort that should come from practice should allow for the student leaders to not only lead with more love of the followers, but to be better followers of the Jesus movement themselves.

Hypotheses

With the complexity of the various sub-structures of this project, hypothesis testing must be focused precisely on those issues not previously assessed. There were three hypotheses being tested in this project:

H₁: student leaders will show a decrease in fear of differing theology after the training

H₂: faith-associated communication skills will be greater in a post-test assessment of student leader's knowledge base

H₃: members of student organizations whose leaders have been trained will be more satisfied with those leaders a few weeks after the training.

Thesis

A lack of clear, loving, Christian leadership resulting in decreased communication skills has increased theological fear and decreased acceptance of alternative views. An interactive training session, based on role-playing vignettes will allow student leaders to develop better communication skills and increase leadership of their organizations. The organizations can then provide a naturalistic expansion of loving, accepting, Christian change in the campus atmosphere.

Antithesis

It is possible that the far-right swing of the theological pendulum is not complete, and the environment will continue to become more toxic and exclusive. Some students may have seen this program as a trick, or a way to ferret out liberals and atheists, as is a popular idea among the student population.

Method

Design

The *JesusTalk* program was designed as a two-part experiment and act of ministry. In the first experiment, organizational leaders participated in a two-session training program, empowering these leaders to communicate more effectively, inclusively, and lovingly through role-playing vignettes. Hewitt (2014) warns people designing evangelism programs:

Too often, evangelism and discipleship are presented as programmes that are designed like easy-fit custom furniture that can be assembled by dummies. I beg to differ, because my personal experiences and theological reflections seem to suggest that it is a messy affair fraught with challenges because there is no one-size-fits-all plan for evangelism and discipleship. At their core, evangelism and discipleship are about building genuine relationships with people who are seeking fullness of life that is mirrored in the life of Jesus. Jesus' calling and making of disciples confirms how challenging is the task, because adults, especially, are difficult learners. (pp. 201-202)

To avoid the artificiality of the constructs, care was given to making vignettes appropriate to college students, including leaving open-ended aspects so that no one-size-fits-all approach could pervade the experience. This first experiment was a repeated measures design using a baseline assessment and a second assessment two weeks post-completion. Primary indicators of efficacy were a series of reflective statements on the changes the leaders experienced after participation in the *JesusTalk* program.

In the second experiment, organizational members assessed the efficacy of the *JesusTalk* program by evaluating changes they have seen in the organizational leaders' ability to communicate more effectively about matters of evangelism. This second experiment was a confirmatory design to indicate agreement with statements of programmatic efficacy and insurance of population similarity.

***JesusTalk* - Organization Leader Recruitment**

Participants were recruited from among the college population of a small, church-affiliated liberal arts college in the southeastern United States. Before students arrive on campus in August 2015, recruitment emails were sent to the student leaders of all recognized organizations listed with the office of Student Services. Student leaders who responded were asked to schedule one of nine possible times through a Doodle survey (www.doodle.com) to

build the most convenient times for maximum student leader participation. During the first week of data collection, four separate meetings were scheduled on separate evenings.

Recruitment and treatment of all participants adhered to APA and Helsinki ethical guidelines. Consent forms were signed by the researcher and participants before the focus groups began, and included provisions for audio and video recording of all sessions. Snacks and beverages were provided as compensation.

***JesusTalk* - Organization Leader Procedure**

JesusTalk began the second week of the Fall semester, 2015-2016 School year. Groups of student leaders met in the Psychology Department conference room for the first two parts of the study.

Twenty-four organizational leaders participated. They ranged in age from 17 to 24 (mean= 20.6±1.49), and included 17 females and 7 males. They identified themselves as African American (2), Caucasian (19), Korean-American (1), Latino (1), and Other (1). Denominations represented included Associate Reformed Presbyterian (2), Baptist (10³³), Catholic (3), Christian (1), Church of Christ (1), Church of God of Prophecy (1), Episcopalian (2), Non-denominational (1), Presbyterian (1), United Methodist (1), and one agnostic. Most had been members of their denominations for their whole lives, but some had changed since attending college or high school (mean=14.6±7.2 years). There was a great variation in public (2-60 per month, mean=9.54±11.45) and private (0-150,

³³ One student did not realize that her church was affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, and thought it was non-denominational until discussion with her peers in this session. She struck her answer and changed it to Baptist during that session.

mean= 29.88 ± 31.63) worship habits of the participants (overall mean= 39.4 ± 33.8 events). One participant reported 154 monthly worship events due to adherence to the Catholic lay breviary. The agnostic student still attended public worship services, partly due to the nature of the school.

Light refreshments were served while participants entered and filled out consent forms. Recruitment and treatment of all participants adhered to APA and Helsinki ethical guidelines. Consent forms were signed by the researcher and all participants before the training sessions began, and included provisions for audio and video recording of all sessions. A short demographic questionnaire was administered to all participants, asking age, gender, ethnicity, denomination, time in denomination, and the frequency of public and private worship. A pre-test instrument was administered, containing several short questions on participants' security of knowledge of defining theology of their denomination, and if they have ever questioned their faith theological views of tolerance, love, fear, and communication skills related to leadership, with specific aspects of fear derived from the Fear Questionnaire (Marks & Matthews, 1979) described above.

Each session began with an icebreaker exercise (referred to on our campus as a "fat penguin") to focus the students' minds on their organizations. All of these leaders knew one another, at least peripherally, so no in-depth introductions were needed.

Pairs of student leaders sitting next to each other at each session role-played a semi-scripted scenario/vignette. In a few instances where there were an odd number of participants, the third person joined the vignette playing another follower part, not another leader part. In each instance, the paragraph explaining the scenario was given to the active participants to read over and discuss for a few minutes. When they felt prepared, they acted

out what they thought was a worst-case, over-the-top situation as described, but within the constraints of what they had seen on campus before. Once the role-play was completed, and applause and laughter died down, discussion of the vignette and how it was acted out began. Each debriefing began with the role-players describing their thought processes and experiences that informed their role play. Each person was able to comment and add to the discussion so that consensus was built of best practices of how to handle similar situations, and how to avoid being the bad leaders represented in each vignette.

Two weeks after the completion of the second sessions of training, a web-based assessment was sent to all participants to complete in the SurveyMonkey system so that data could be collected and downloaded as an Excel file. This post-test instrument contained several short questions on theological views of tolerance, love, fear, and communication skills related to leadership. Students were then asked to evaluate the program for both its efficacy and execution.

***JesusTalk* - Organization Member Recruitment and Procedure**

In a second experiment, organizational members were recruited through root-emails of the entire student populace asking students who have been members of organizations for at least one year to complete a SurveyMonkey assessment of the efficacy of the *JesusTalk* program by asking about the changes they have seen in the organizational leaders ability to communicate more effectively about matters of evangelism. Two weeks after the training sessions, members of the organizations whose leaders attended those sessions received emails inviting them to complete the online assessment. A total of 34 individuals gave complete responses which were able to be used for analyses.

These surveys assessed communication changes seen in the training sessions, not in any other areas of leadership. Participants in the sessions were surveyed for their perceptions of implementation of the program goals. Survey results were used as comparative final assessments of the overall efficacy of the *JesusTalk* program through implementation.

Data entry and analyses

For the initial dataset of organizational leaders, data were entered into Microsoft Excel in order to speed entry and validation. Three volunteers independently verified accuracy of data entry through a 1:10 random-sample validation process using the original data collection forms from organizational leaders. Data from the post-test organizational leaders and organizational members were downloaded from SurveyMonkey in Excel format.

Analyses were performed using the SPSS (v.23, IBM Corp., Armonk, NY) statistical packages. For hypotheses H₁ (student leaders will show a decrease in fear of differing theology after the training) and H₂ (faith-associated communication skills will be greater in a post-test assessment of student leader's knowledge base), the primary analyses were repeated-measures ANOVA assessing changes from pre-test to post-test assessment. Survey results were tabulated, and comparisons were made for H₃ (Members of student organizations whose leaders have been trained will be more satisfied with those leaders a few weeks after the training) between organizational membership in those attending and not attending training sessions using *t*-tests, controlling for unequal sample sizes.

Qualitative data were obtained from video and audio recordings. Not all of the sessions were fully transcribed, but thematic analyses performed from ethnographic

perspective. Specific component analyses were not deemed necessary for the purposes of this study.

Chapter Four: Results

Quantitative Results: Organizational Leaders

Upon completion of the pre-test assessment at the first meeting, data from all organizational leaders indicated that this was a very theologically diverse group. Results of the survey appear in Table 2 below.

H₁: student leaders will show a decrease in fear of differing theology after the training

The first specific hypothesis, that the training would decrease fear of talking about evangelism among organizational leaders, was not fully supported. The specific Faith components of the Modified Fear Questionnaire showed a slight decrease, from 8.92 ± 7.06 to 8.13 ± 8.14 , not a significant difference. The primary question of fear of talking to others of faith changed from Time One (1.17 ± 1.01) to Time Two (0.95 ± 0.99), showed almost no change. No difference was found in the modified Fear Questionnaire using repeated measures ANOVA, $F(1,20)=3.179$, $p < 0.090$, and overall mean for the leaders actually grew a tiny bit from a mean of $40.00 (\pm 18.5)$ to $43.67 (\pm 22.725)$. These changes were accounted for by three specific questions that had increases, the questions of “Injections or minor surgery,” “Being watched or stared at,” and “Thought of injury or illness.” These all showed mean increase of over two points each, possibly due to sensitivity from the questions or from flu shots being advertised on campus, as well as other recent news events of such issues on college campuses. Informal questions posed to those individuals with elevated scores indicated that they had never really thought about such issues before, and were likely displaying a priming effect that increased sensitivity to these fear-provoking ideas.

Table 2. Responses, differences, and 95% Confidence intervals of *JesusTalk* Questionnaire results for organization leaders. (1=*Strongly Agree*, 5=*Strongly Disagree*)

	Range T1	Mean 1 SD1	Range T2	Mean 2 SD2	Diff	95% CI
I am fluent in the theology of my denomination	1-5	2.46±1.10	1-5	2.76±1.13	.24±.89	-.643, .166
People tell me that I am a good Christian	1-3	2.04±.75	1-3	2.24±.70	.24±.62	-.522, .046
I have studied other religions or denominations pretty well	1-5	2.79±1.17	1-5	2.71±1.38	.00±0.71	-.322, .322
I get nervous when people ask me about my faith	2-5	3.71±1.19	2-5	3.57±1.36	-.14±1.11	-.362, .647
I am not comfortable around people of different faiths	3-5	4.54±.72	1-5	3.91±1.26	-.71±1.45*	.052, 1.376
I am totally secure in my faith	1-5	1.83±1.16	1-5	1.76±1.22	-.05±.74	-.289, .384
I believe that all non-Christians must go to Hell	1-5	3.04±1.58	1-5	3.60±1.50	.38±1.12	-.934, .135
I think I could be a professional evangelist	1-5	3.75±1.11	2-5	3.91±1.04	.19±.60	-.464, .083
I am a better Christian than most people	3-5	4.04±.99	2-5	4.15±1.04	-.05±1.43	-.705, .505
I enjoy learning about other people's relationships with God	1-3	1.39±.58	1-2	1.33±.48	.00±.63	-.109, .309
I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly	2-5	4.62±.76	3-5	4.57±.74	.00±.45	-.203, .203
I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented	1-5	2.62±1.17	1-4	2.28±1.10	-.24±1.09	-.258, .735
I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do	1-4	2.45±.88	1-5	2.28±1.01	-.10±1.04	-.380, .571
Religion and politics are inseparable for me	1-5	3.54±1.44	1-5	3.71±1.23	-.10±1.04	-.380, .571
A Christian college should only be for Christians	5-5	5.0±.00	4-5	4.81±.40	-.19±.40*	.007, .373
I have never questioned my faith	1-5	4.37±1.13	1-5	4.33±.91	.05±.74	-.384, .289
I truly believe that only people with beliefs similar to mine will go to heaven	1-5	3.82±1.23	2-5	3.90±1.25	-.05±1.02	-.441, .541
When I meet someone of another religion, I feel obligated to help them learn about Christianity	2-5	3.29±1.08	1-5	3.38±1.11	.00±.63	-.288, .287
My denomination encourages me to question my faith	5-5	2.79±1.50	1-5	2.47±1.25	-.24±1.51	-.233, 1.03
When I meet someone of another denomination, I feel obligated to correct their Christianity	2-5	4.29±.95	3-5	4.38±.74	.14±.57	-.404, .118
Atheists cannot have morals	2-5	4.58±.82	3-5	4.52±.75	.00±.77	-.353, .352
Since Erskine is an ARP school everyone who comes here should go to an ARP church	5-5	5.00±.00	5-5	5.00±.00	.00±.00	-.360, .075
People who do not go to a church like mine need to be pitied	3-5	4.83±.48	5-5	5.00±.00	.14±.48	-.403, .703
I believe it is my job as a Christian to respect other people's views on religion and not argue with them	1-4	2.39±.99	1-4	2.14±1.01	-.05±1.24	-.473, .283
I am glad that I have friends with different beliefs than mine	1-4	1.71±.91	1-4	1.71±.90	.10±.83	-.309, .499
It is only the fear of hell that keeps people from doing just whatever they like	2-5	4.21±.97	2-5	4.00±1.05	-.10±.89	-.371, .467
God really does hate some people	2-5	4.67±.81	3-5	4.61±.80	-.05±.92	-.215, .691
I know my church is right because my parents go there	2-5	4.37±.92	2-5	4.04±.92	-.24±.99	-.045, 1.093
People who go to certain churches are just weird	2-5	4.00±1.02	2-5	3.47±1.12	-.52±1.25	-.256, .827
I find it important to let people know what church I go to	1-5	3.75±1.29	1-5	3.28±1.01	-.29±1.19	-.616, .140
Jesus might be more important, but Paul tells me what I really need to know	2-5	4.25±1.15	2-5	4.42±.92	.24±.83	-.773, .106
I would be angry to find out that there are non-Christians in heaven	1-5	3.33±1.31	1-5	3.81±1.29	.33±.96	-.129, .796
I sometimes worry that people think I am not a good enough Christian	1-5	3.08±1.35	1-5	2.61±1.02	-.33±1.02	-.353, .353

The Modified Fear Questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .862, showing very good internal reliability in line with the original reports of Marks and Matthews (1979). The four subscales of the *JesusTalk* assessment were run through the Reliability function in SPSS, and models optimized where appropriate. The Christian Reflective construct only yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .232 with the full 3-item model, but this rose to .570 when the question on worries was removed. While being adequately reliable, the alpha demonstrated that this 2-item composite is not sufficiently reliable to pursue further.

The internal validity of the Insecurity composite had a Cronbach's alpha of .861 with all 15 items, and removing the item "nervous" increased the alpha to .868. For the Security composite index, the full seven-item model yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .608. Removing the factors "nofriends" and "respect" increased the Alpha to .686 for the remaining five items.

A goal had been to reduce fear by facing scenarios of greatest personal threat theologically, in part by developing "failure-tolerant leader" (Farson & Keyes, 2002), and vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love (Poon, 2006). Participants consistently demonstrated tolerance of failure in post-vignette discussion, and shared visions of hope and altruism. Discussions tended towards seeking others' points of view, closely aligned to the ideas of both Heifetz (1994) and Argyris (1990).

The action strategies are to (1) advocate your position and encourage inquiry or confirmation of it, and (2) minimize face saving. The first strategy is accomplished by being forthright in expressing your views, while at the same time providing illustrations of relatively directly observable data, such as what the person said, so that the other person can see how you arrived at your premises. The idea is stating your conclusion explicitly so that you or others can examine it.

A second action strategy is to minimize taking unilateral face-saving actions. Deciding that someone else's face should be saved is an act of mistrust of the other person's capacities. (Argyris, 1990, p. 104)

While there were many subtle changes in the dataset, the discussion of students shed light on the realities of their thoughts. Several students describe themselves as being more thoughtful and considerate of other people's faith, and arrogance has been lost for some. Hewitt's (2014) statement (*above*) of "evangelism and discipleship are about building genuine relationships with people who are seeking fullness of life that is mirrored in the life of Jesus" was reiterated by the whole group in various forms, and as I explored the data, found this to be a central theme in groups discussions. Relationship with each other while acting in Christ-like ways seems to be the consensus view of how evangelism should be done. One student perfectly summed up this aspect by quoting John 13:34-35³⁴.

A statement made at the last session condensed the results for this hypothesis: "evangelism is not only about bringing people to the church, but strengthening them to stay by reducing fear." That a student can articulate such perceptive depth is encouraging, not only for the project, but for the world.

H₂: faith-associated communication skills will be greater in a post-test assessment of student leader's knowledge base

The second hypothesis had been that faith-associated communication skills were greater in a post-test assessment of student leader's knowledge base. The first query in the

³⁴ "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

post-project assessment was “I have thought about the vignettes from the *JesusTalk* program when talking to people about faith in the past few weeks.” On the scale of 1- “Agree a lot” to 5= “Disagree a lot,” the mean response was 2.09 ± 0.83 , indicating overall agreement. The second query was “The *JesusTalk* program helped me to develop a better personal communication style for evangelism,” which had a mean of 2.00 ± 0.77 , also indicating overall agreement. The third query asked “I have been more comfortable in talking with others about their faith since participating in the *JesusTalk* program” yielded modest agreement (2.24 ± 0.89).

The fourth query for agreement on the topic of participation. “I would encourage other people to participate in programs like *JesusTalk* to help them talk about faith” showed a strong agreement (1.24 ± 0.54). Similarly, the statement “I am glad I participated in the *JesusTalk* program” evidences strong support (1.14 ± 0.48). Importantly, there was a fairly strong agreement that the program was valuable to those leaders participating (1.52 ± 0.81).

H₃: members of student organizations whose leaders have been trained will be more satisfied with those leaders a few weeks after the training.

The Third hypothesis had been that members of student organizations whose leaders have been trained were more satisfied with those leaders a few weeks after the training. In many ways this hypothesis was supported by the statements of organizational members. The first query to members was “I have seen an increase in confidence of some of my organization’s leaders when talking to people about faith in the past few weeks” (2.25 ± 0.77), indicating some agreement, albeit not strong. The second query, “My organization has some leaders who have begun to talk lovingly and well about Christianity, making me want to learn more” (1.92 ± 0.80) was more positive and above the level of “Agree” (2).

The third query, “Leaders in my organization seem to be more comfortable in talking with others about their faith over the past few weeks” (2.08 ± 0.69) indicated only some agreement. In a very encouraging response, respondents strongly agree with the statement that “I would encourage other leaders of organizations to participate in programs to help them talk about faith” (1.36 ± 0.68). The strongest response of all was given to the statement that “At a Christian College, leaders should be trained how to talk about faith in welcoming, encouraging ways, so that faith is used to include people, not exclude them” (1.25 ± 0.50). The final query along these lines was: “I feel that my faith is encouraged at Erskine overall” (1.64 ± 0.96), indicating a moderately strong agreement. Finally, “I feel that student leaders encourage me to develop my faith, even if they don’t agree with me on what that faith should look like” (1.86 ± 0.83) demonstrated at least some agreement.

While leadership knowledge or ability was not directly addressed, it is the implicit assumption as demonstrated in the review of literature above that faith and fear are matters for leaders to consider. At times when direct leadership is discussed, whether in terms of ecclesiastical, academic, familial, or other forms, special notes were made to capture the salient information in the precise context in which it appeared. Differential ideation of leadership topics would be singularly important for the proposed investigation. Any major disparities in response between the student groups and the faculty or pastoral groups would have been indicative of a loss of communication and focus that indicates an area necessitating concentrated leadership growth and development.

Quantitative Results: Organizational Members

H₃: Members of student organizations whose leaders have been trained will be more satisfied with those leaders a few weeks after the training.

For many intents and purposes, the primary question (although third hypothesis) asked by this study was if there was an efficacy of training of leaders on the perceptions of their followers. The Organizational Member responses ($n=36$) indicate agreement (2) or strong agreement (1) with each of the statements on the 5-point scale. While the presumed most important of these statements from an *a priori* perspective, “I have seen an increase in confidence of some of my organization’s leaders when talking to people about faith in the past few weeks,” was the weakest agreement of the group ($2.306 \pm .8886$), it was still firmly in the range of agreement (95%CI = $-.8597, .2706$). While leader confidence may not be remarkably increased, other leader characteristics were. “My organization has some leaders who have begun to talk lovingly and well about Christianity, making me want to learn more” was significantly different between members of organizations with trained leaders and those without, $t(34) = -2.344$, $p < .025$; 95%CI = $-1.2017, -.0856$. “Leaders in my organization seem to be more comfortable in talking with others about their faith over the past few weeks” was also significantly different between the trained and untrained leaders, $t(34) = -2.257$, $p < .031$, 95%CI = $-1.0158, -.0533$.

The two strongest agreement statements were: “I would encourage other leaders of organizations to participate in programs to help them talk about faith” had an overall raw score of $1.361 \pm .6825$ among all respondents, but this was still significantly different, $t(34) = -2.942$, $p < .006$, 95%CI = $-1.1128, -.2036$. “At a Christian College, leaders should be trained how to talk about faith in welcoming, encouraging ways, so that faith is used to include people, not exclude them” showed no significant differences between groups (overall mean = $1.250 \pm .5000$, 95%CI = $-.6532, .0841$). A pleasant finding was that almost all students agreed with the statement that: “I feel that my faith is encouraged at Erskine overall” (1.694 ± 1.0907 , 95%CI = $-.4453, .9762$). Finally, “I feel that student leaders encourage me to

develop my faith, even if they don't agree with me on what that faith should look like” (1.861±.8333, 95%CI=-.6903, .5521) was above mean agreement.

As a tertiary analysis, the synthetic dependent variable of FaithFear from the modified Fear Questionnaire was compared to the number of organizations a person is a member of. This relationship was also found to be significant, $F(1,31)=6.77$, $p<.014$, $\beta=-.429$, possibly indicating that students who are more fearful increase their involvement in organizations as a coping strategy.

Qualitative results

The actual role playing of these vignettes yielded moments of clarity, as well as hilarity. The students were not afraid of making fun of themselves as well as dramatizing the issues that they have seen on the campus. At times right before or after role play, the students had to comment on how they had seen such events on campus recently, or how they see them too often. A few participants did not understand until the role play was over that they had witnessed such issues, and were often surprised at their own ignorance of anything other than pure Christian love on campus, but came to recognize the veracity of other opinions and interpretations.

A few of the vignettes were especially poignant, when the head of one organization (Baptist) had to focus on her own organization's issues with students of another faith. While taking it in stride, it was eye opening as the other student in the vignette actually was of the group being discriminated against (Roman Catholic).

Vignette 6B: Org leader says that in order to be a truly good Christian, you have to only have your real Christian friends, not like those who go to a _____ church. Freshman asks if it is OK to be friends with a person of another ethnicity or sexual orientation, and Org Leader responds only if freshman wants to go to Hell with those people.



Org Leader: Well Pete, and everybody, I am just glad that you all came to BCM. Our main focus today is talking about what kind of friends we should have. And here at BCM, we believe that you should only have your Christian friends.

Freshman: huh?

Org Leader: No other friends. Christian friends rally around you. You believe the same things.

Freshman: *[raises his hand and starts waving]*

Org Leader: They think the same things. And you especially, you especially don't want to hang around with Catholic friends. *[burst of laughter]* It's just they are not Christians, they don't uplift you, they don't believe the same things... Yes Pete?

Freshman: I've got a lot of friends who aren't Christian, but... what?

Org Leader: Well, if you want to go to hell with them, you can hang out with them. Where, well, you know, if you don't want to go to hell, hang out with your Christian friends. But if you want to hang out with your gay friends, your Black friends, your Asian friends, you're all just going to go to hell together.

Freshman: What... *[tries to focus because of laughter in room]* You have to be White, middle-class Christians?

Org Leader: Basically, yeah.

Freshman: Oh, boy...

Org Leader: And if you don't have that white picket fence, or that house or that car *[a LOT more laughter in the room as male puts his arm against hers to notice the difference in complexions- she is very light skinned English descent, he is olive-skinned Italian descent]* then you are just going to go to hell.

Freshman: Oh, boy... Well, see you later. Sorry...

There was a great deal of discussion, during and after the session, focusing on how Pete was not one of “those” Catholics, which he inquired “why not?” Often the other participants cited denominational perspectives that they had been taught that only Reformed individuals are Christian, and that Catholics tended to be people they had never met, whereas Pete they knew and were friends with. This had been the sectarian differentiation alluded to by previous research that helped college students remove themselves from

denominational perspectives to the “spiritual” domain, also called “losing their religion” (Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001; Kosmin & Keysar, 2008, 2013). It was an example of the worst-case scenarios of bias expounded on by Bean (2014).

A few of the videos provided long-term amusement, not only during the role play, but for weeks or months afterwards. Some of the vignettes became so funny that there became an allowance for people to think about what they really did or did not know about some of the terms that other groups had used and never questioned.



Vignette 5: A freshman is really concerned about having sinned back in High School, so asks the Org Leader about her/his view of redemption and the possibility of grace. The Org Leader focuses on the corrupt nature of humanity since the Fall, stating that if you are not already among the Elect, you are going to Hell and it does not matter.



(In this instance, one of the participants’ partner had to leave, so she joined this vignette as an organization member)

- Freshman: You guys, I have been really upset lately because *[laughter]* I have been thinking about all this stuff I did when I was back in high school and I am just really upset with myself and I don’t know if I can forgive myself and if God will forgive me for the bad things I have done and... And, what do you guys think about that? Because, I just don’t know what to do with that.
- Org Leader: Well, I’m sorry, but from what you have just told me, you are not one of the Elect like me, and since you are a sinner and humanity has been corrupt since the Fall
- Org. Member: *[lifts right hand in a “praise wave”]* The Fall! *[laughter]*
- Org Leader: You will go to Hell.
- Org. Member: *[lifts right hand in a “praise wave”]* Hell! *[laughter]*
- Freshman: I thought that Jesus was supposed to love us no matter what, and that was like why, like the whole purpose of him...
- Org. Member: *[lifts right hand in a “praise wave”]* Hell! *[laughter]*
- Freshman: Like on the cross and everything
- Org Leader: Well, Time Out... I don’t know enough about this and enough about we are all fallen and among the elect, like, I am not educated enough in this...
- Facilitator: *You have all you need to know right there...*
- Org Leader: I am going to Hell

Org. Member: *[lifts right hand in a “praise wave”]* Hell! *[all break out in laughter]* Now I keep thinking I am Jimmy Fallon or something. *[again lifts right hand in a “praise wave”]*

That role play keep people in that group passing by each other and lifting a hand to say “Hell” to each other for several weeks, eliciting not only laughter for them, but some intense discussions and opportunities to discuss faith and how Jesus acted towards people. The long discussion that came from this vignette centered on the lack of understanding of soteriology and teleological discourse, especially in regards to denominational differentiation. Most of the statements were admissions of not knowing their own denominational perspectives and theology, and some admitted that they only repeated what parents or pastors had said, without thinking carefully about what that meant. Many questions have come forth from this project, and there is an overall sense of freedom to ask questions of each other, even if not from the “authorities.”

Perhaps the most influential if the role plays came with a pair discussing Christ being the focus of everything. While there was more silliness and laughter during this session than almost any other, there were also some profound insights that came out of it:



Vignette 2: The Org Leader here tries to stress the integration of Christianity into everything, even if it gets to an annoying level of making everything about Christ, even when far from appropriate. He or she might talk about the importance of glorifying Jesus through getting a tattoo or try drugs to get closer to Jesus.



Org Leader: *[frenetic with activity and with stilted pacing back and forth]* We are bout finding Jesus in everything, man. Like Jesus is in this chair, like *[passes his hands around the back of the chair caressing it]*, like this is Jesus. *[picks up cup of orange soda]* This

is Jesus... it is really, really, really cool. Alright, so what questions do you have?

Freshman: OK. So, what kind of events do you all do?

Org Leader: OK, yeah! Yeah, yeah yea! We got everything! We, we go to movies, um, like some of my best bros, they like, they go get tattoos, like, they get a Jesus on their arm, and even on their face! They are like *[lightly smacks forehead]* "Jesus is on my face!" *[room is distracted laughing hard- pauses]* And like then like, you know, I was thinking one day, like, you know what? *[long pause- points outward]* Jesus. *[another long pause- whole room is laughing hard]* So you know what? Well, don't tell anyone, *[stage whisper]* but we have this really cool thing where we get a bunch of people together and smoke some drugs and stuff and have a séance and they are going to have Jesus. And Jesus is going to appear to us, man, and it's going to be really, really cool. But it's like, don't tell anyone, 'cause it's like... it's super-secret. It's really cool.

Freshman: *[laughing hard]* Ah... I... *[cut off by Org leader]*

Org Leader: Any questions? What questions do you have?

Freshman: I, ah, so, where are the events? And...

Org Leader: *[stage-whispers]* Everywhere! *[Freshman laughs]* They are, they are there. Like, you know why clocks are round? 'Cause time *[pause]*, is Jesus.

Freshman: *[laughing hard]* I'm sorry... *[still laughing]* alright.. Ok, well, do y'all do anything else, or do y'all just have group setting things, or

Org Leader: Ok, so well,

Freshman: or, I mean like community service, or...

Org Leader: M'yes. Ok, so we provide all sorts of things... like things in general...

Freshman: Well, like what sort of things? *[laughing]*

Org Leader: Things, like stuff and things... man.

Freshman: OK, I don't know what else to ask... *[laughing hard and role-play concludes]*

In a strange aspect of a small campus, this role play session became nearly legend and changed campus vocabulary. It is now common to hear people on campus ask "why are clocks round... 'cause Jesus..." More often, this is shortened to just "'cause Jesus..." This phrase is now used at Erskine when people want to show that something does not necessarily make sense, such as during chapel when the chaplain or president makes statements that do not logically follow. Unfortunately, it is also used in classes when students don't follow an argument, but the faculty find it amusing.

Perhaps the most potent qualitative indicator of the success of this program is the set of behavioral changes seen on campus. The group of organizational who participated are still

meeting quite often. Almost every Friday a majority of them get together and talk about their organizations and help mentor each other. One week, nine of the participants had lunch together to discuss leadership in light of Psalm 40: 10-11³⁵. During this session, to which I was invited, the students spoke of a resiliency in their abilities to share the gospel with other students and the scriptural imperatives of doing so. In an emotional testimony, one of the leaders of a Baptist organization described her reaching out to a Roman Catholic student and having dialog with that student through which a real relationship and deep friendship was formed. While the administration has continued to harden their sectarian stance, students are living and proclaiming the Gospel more honestly, openly, and lovingly.

One of the student leaders who participated was a young man who had come to Erskine only to play golf. He was not a believer, and had held Christians in some contempt. A few weeks before the project began, he had a conversion experience and his nascent faith was thirsty for assurance. He had been a campus leader from sports, but after *JesusTalk*, he became an officer in the Baptist Campus Ministries, joined the North American Mission Board's Golf Ministry, and has since become president of the Student Christian Association. He has focused on asking questions of people on what they are afraid of, and begun to dialog with athletes who feel they are outside of the Erskine community for their faith or lack thereof. He and I have met early every Friday morning, and he has started meeting with several pastors to develop his faith in a loving, inclusive, and compassionate manner. I

³⁵ ¹⁰I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; * behold, I did not restrain my lips; and that, O LORD, you know. ¹¹Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance; * I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation.

received a phone call from one of these pastors asking how he could use the *JesusTalk* program for the youth and adult classes at his church.

The church and school administrative leaders with whom those students work are a key element of whether (after the *JesusTalk* program), experiences will be of growth or of loss. The more spiritual growth of students, the better the spiritual health of the entire institution. In this case, anecdotal evidence indicates that the *JesusTalk* program had an impact on lives at Erskine beyond students directly involved.

Administrators, including the newest Dean of Students and the President have had lengthy discussions with students about the program, and felt that the program might become a part of pre-orientation training for Student Life Assistants who live in the dormitories. An evangelism professor at Erskine Seminary ordered Gortner's book on evangelism for the library. Most importantly, students report dialog on campus that is tending toward inclusion instead of exclusion that is welcoming to more students, at least within the constellations of Christian denominations. There are better challenges and encouragements to students than had been before.

In the interpretation of results, specific design decisions had to be made that should be explained. The use of the leadership conceptualization of transformational leadership from Bass and Avolio (1994) was used due to the componential approach, even in spite of the limitations of this design as related to that described by van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill, and Stride (2004). Considering that van Dierendonck and colleagues thought of leadership behaviors as simultaneously incorporating aspects of both leadership and management, the data necessary for such a qualitative exploration would be difficult to

naturalistically obtain within the basic parameters of this current project, hence its status as a tertiary potential analysis.

Chapter Five: Lessons Learned and Conclusions

Leadership is a process of solving adaptive challenges, and according to Heifetz (1994), the type of leadership most important in the 21st century is adaptive, embracing the difficult, and frequently unknowable, questions that are central to our ability to thrive. The *JesusTalk* project attempted to build adaptability into the role playing scenarios and ensure that the leadership development is not static, formulaic, or “canned.”

Bennis (1994) suggests that leadership is not a formula that we can mix up, but a set of values and visions, focusing on the group aspirations and objectives. Leaders should be considered and developed in terms of vision and mission so often that nurturing the followers, which is often forgotten, becomes a central theme of effective leadership (Chaleff, 2009), especially in educational situations where leadership changes at fairly regular intervals and is loaded with interpersonal challenges.

As primal as it is to effective educational leadership, little consideration has been given to the interpersonal challenges sustained courage can create for leaders over the course of their endeavors. Changing a school or educational agency’s direction and culture can take years to accomplish. In many circumstances, we may not be able to fully complete the task during our time at the helm. It may require one or two additional leaders after us to lead the organization to the place it ultimately needs to be. (McFadden, 2014, p. 19)

McFadden (2014) describes the constant change faced in educational leadership positions, and how these rapid changes can be high-stakes and fear-inducing. Strategies and information are required for leaders, especially college students and faculty, to embrace adaptive questions and remain focused, purposeful, and resilient in the face of challenge (Roberts, 2007).

Role-playing based on vignettes has been around a long time and is flexible enough to allow for training of other leadership components beyond evangelism communication and fear reduction as demonstrated herein. From the study results, we see that there was an influence of the training on the student leaders' actions and interactions with other students, and the perceptions of influence were validated by the observations of organizational followers.

The basic ideas presented in the *JesusTalk* study for training student leaders could be incorporated into other leadership development programs, especially as concerns empowering followers and reducing personal fear of discussion and acceptance. Lack of social and religious leadership may be what Kosmin and colleagues (2001; 2008; 2013) really reflected in social terms in the ARIS surveys. Leadership development is not simply a person having a title and being shown what to do, but comprises specific components of the organizational priority set.

Religion and secular ideologies involve an identity with and a loyalty to community, and both insist on the ultimate moral legitimacy of the authority invested in the leadership of that community (Raiser, 2013). Kantor's (2012) Leadership System is an alternative or adjunct to lines of authority and responsibility based in hierarchy and comprising at least five leader types representing differing forms of leadership: Performance, Vision, Wisdom, Citizen, and Exit Leaders. Each of these leadership types were represented in the sample set, as evidenced by their discussions.

Performance Leaders are the guardians of the company's profit statements, or in this case the academic capital and perceived value of the Erskine degree. They are ever mindful of, but not obsessed with, the short term. They lead the struggle to sustain the organization's

economic/academic viability, yet value the creative tension between short- and long-term thinking and acting.

Vision Leaders are the organization's futurists. They couple their deep faith in reason with as deep a faith in intuition. With this "double vision," they are able to challenge their own and their organization's basic premises, envisioning directions for change – economic, industrial, financial, and organizational– that few others could imagine. In this study, they related their visions of their idealized worship of God with the practical realities of Christian pluralism to see that they must lead people who share slightly different views theologically, but without denigrating those alternatives.

Wisdom Leaders are the guardians of the organization's spiritual essence, its reason for being. They can articulate "what this place is all about" and inspire others with their commitment and values. The reflections of purpose for a Christian College were, at times, painfully beautiful in the expressions of hope, nurture, and love. These individuals shared greatly with the performance leaders understanding of the academic integrity as being the value leader, but focused on how the academics glorified God.

For *Citizen Leaders*, the company itself is a product; they dedicate themselves to developing the organization and its culture. They view the organization's profit goals and people goals as inextricably linked. Focusing on structures that do and do not work, they take it upon themselves to alert the leadership team to their observations and to design appropriate structural corrections. Many of the students participating in this study were citizen leaders along with any other category. Most expressed the importance of the institution serving the students academically and spiritually, and the responsibility of the students to grow and endeavor to make the institution a better, more just and holy place.

Exit Leaders are the organization's "sanctioned iconoclasts." The unique contribution of these leaders rests in their ability to recognize and call out aspects of the organization and its performance that others lack the courage to challenge. Their focus is not to critique but to improve by constantly seeking higher and higher levels of performance and by candid self and organizational reflection. Again, many of the leaders demonstrated these qualities. While at Erskine there might be little sanction for any iconoclasts, these leaders were highly respected and able to make noise that arouses the student populace to change.

After the *JesusTalk* program, organizational leaders indicated that they felt more "in-tune" with the members of their organizations: better able to listen and respond to what the organizational members meant, and less about how the leaders would normally have understood statements to mean. Student leaders must be empowered to lead, and when they are empowered they can motivate others to follow well (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011). Since we see these results at Erskine, Chen *et al.*'s ideas are supported in the growth of these organizations and increased satisfaction of the organizational members where anxiety was alleviated.

Faith should combat anxious situations and demonstrate the necessity of courage in transformational leadership for educational institutions. The courage of transformational leadership is that what is transformed will not be what it was: known and understood. Transformational leadership can be defined as superior leadership performance occurring when leaders "broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group" (Bass, 1990, p. 21).

Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed components of transformational leadership as especially relevant to employee psychological well-being. First, they proposed that *idealized influence* is when leaders choose to do what is ethical rather than what is expedient, are guided by moral commitments to followers, and focus on the interests of the organization. Those leaders demonstrating idealized influence forego organizational pressures for short-term financial outcomes, focusing effort on the long-term health and well-being of their employees. The second trait identified was *inspirational motivation*, encouraging employees to achieve more than what was previously thought possible. Such leaders inspire employees past psychological setbacks, and strengthen those employees to tackle future difficulties. *Intellectual stimulation*, the third trait, helps employees question their own assumptions, reframe problems, and approach challenges in innovative ways. When workers are encouraged to develop personal strategies to overcome psychological and work-related setbacks, employees become more confident in protecting and developing their own well-being in positive, institutionally beneficial ways. Thinking about challenges from novel perspectives enables employees to make sense of their situations. Finally, *individual consideration* occurs when leaders attend to employees' needs for achievement and development. This consideration often is in the form of providing needed empathy, compassion, support, and guidance that influence employees' well-being. Leaders' consideration tends to foster team climates that are supportive of members' well-being, which establishes a solid basis for relationships within which employee development is more likely to occur. Fear limits development, both of those who lead and those who follow. I tried to empower the research team involved with the preliminary work of this project, thereby developing them as scholars and Christians. Hopefully, through this process they will also become better leaders themselves.

Keohane (2010) discusses the realities of not only who follows, but when and why, and when followership can be redirected to become rebellion or alternative leadership. Keohane quotes Lord Acton with “Power corrupts,” and counters with “power reveals.” Here are the realities of effective leadership, and the questions of corruption, morality, honesty, and personal involvement that often plague academic institutions like Erskine. If fear and faith are to be explored in academic settings, then the differences between nominal followers and nominal leaders must be explored further. Consideration must be given as to not only differentials between leaders and followers, but in those areas where there is less assured leadership which creates an environment of fear, where confidence is shaken and trust undermined. Like with any leadership issue, there are ebbs and flows in confidence and trust. Jankowski *et al* (2011) discussed the expression of faith, especially of dogmatic expression, in practical terms:

...individuals typically cycle through periods of intrinsic (ends) religiosity and quest religiosity, or times of spiritual dwelling and other times of spiritual seeking, throughout the course of their development (Sandage *et al.*, 2010; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Wuthnow, 1998). Persons who display this balanced form of religiosity appear to have the capacity to tolerate anxiety, tension, and doubt consistent with a questing experience while also remaining committed to and actively and intimately engaged in their relationship to Deity (Sandage *et al.*, 2010). (p. 176)

Chatters (2000) found that attending church and religious meetings fosters social support that allows a reframing of life-challenges that serves to enhance emotional well-being and psychological adaptation. Maynard, Gorsuch, and Bjorck (2001) also found that educational programs and personal experiences are important in the individual’s selection and use of religious coping strategies, indicating that organizational leaders’ training might be an essential component of students’ continued construction of relationship with God.

Moran (2007) postulated that the “public identity work” of evangelical Christian students involves both “identity revelation” and “identity authentication.” Identity revelation consists of attempts to differentiate one’s religious self from stereotypical caricatures, while identity authentication involves behaving in ways that are consistent with the identity one is endeavoring to reveal. Of course, revelation and authentication are complicated in antagonistic environments on campus where students may choose to hide their identities to avoid negative repercussions. Fearing rejection on the basis of religious identity may subsequently prove detrimental for students’ personal and social adjustment in college (Schludermann, Schludermann, Needham, & Mulenga, 2001). (Bryant, 2011, p. 16-17)

Student leaders often become a component in the overall commitment to student outcomes, whether faith or commitment to career goals (Chemers, Zurbriggen, Syed, Goza, & Bearman, 2011). From Bryant (2011), it may be concluded that leaders of campus organizations have an opportunity to provide a positive catalyst to the “public identity work” that students within their organizations are expressing and developing. Bryant further concludes that organizations and communities of faith need to be able to encourage and promote self-authorship of students as Christians. “‘Validating learners’ capacity to know,’ ‘situating learning in learners’ experience,’ and ‘mutually constructing meaning’ are practices that can exist in conjunction with helping students to understand and own the truth claims of their faith” (Bryant, 2011, p. 28).

If faith is to be developed in students, then faith development itself must be assessed. The *JesusTalk* project was advanced to consider and develop an educational leadership program that allows student leaders to develop skills of evangelism that build and strengthen faith among their peers and followers within their student organizations, but was within a small, almost homogeneous environment. In order to really make a larger impact, and ensure the veridicality of these findings, a larger and more diverse population should be studied at some point.

Seider (2011) found that engaging in student experiential activities, such as organizations, had a positive effect upon students' interest in, engagement with, and recognition of the real-world relevance of theology. Sorrentino (2010) found that in interfaith settings, students express a desire to have “RAM” experiences: Respectful toward the beliefs of others, being Authentic to one's own tradition, and having Meaningful interreligious interactions. While there are few interreligious interactions at a homogeneous institution like Erskine, the interdenominational views are similar in the expressed desires for meaningful discourse. Much of what we really intend by the term “meaningful discourse” depends on a common understanding of terms and an avoidance of jargon.

According to Carmy (2008), “Liberalized Protestantism, which in a secularized form passes for common therapeutic wisdom, smiles on what the German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer called ‘cheap grace.’ Cheap grace is, in other words, ‘the grace we bestow on ourselves;’ the notion that human beings are saved by divine grace and therefore no unpleasant effort to change is required. The believer has nothing to fear” (Carmy, 2008, p. 17). Grace, however, is precious and quite expensive, no matter how conservative or liberal the Christian. It costs us our arrogance and hatred, our hubris and egotism. Grace costs us our pride, while giving us the humility to change and grow and think of other people before we think of ourselves. If we retain our pride while evangelizing, we risk selling Christ as if Jesus was just another brand (Wigg-Stevenson, 2009), a problem of much modern evangelism that is not intentional, loving, and ethical (Thiessen, 2013). Since Erskine has had this problem, and the JesusTalk qualitative data shows some direct remediation of the problem set, there is great hope for students increasing their religious-political understanding towards better leadership.

Furthermore, the leaders trained in this *JesusTalk* program demonstrated an aptitude for not only comprehension, but actualization of change and growth to better lead their organizations. While there are no illusions that cheap grace is not a sub-textual theme among the participants in this study, it must be considered in terms of the overall impact on higher education leadership. Leadership on all levels should be about assurance, empowerment, and inclusion (Campbell & Campbell, 2011). Humans are made in the image of God, and as such the idea of relationship and mutual concern need to be fostered at contextually appropriate levels for leaders to lead well and in fruition of their potential, without fear and in relationship with each other and with God.

As seen by the students in this study, the process of playing out the worst-case scenarios allowed for questioning and for laughter. Laughter is a gift from God that can increase assurances of companionship among the students, especially if the laughter is loving and inclusive. Training students to be nurturing and secure in their faith empowers them to do the work of leading their organizations more securely, and to do the work of evangelism more naturally. The active empowerment of students, faculty, and staff is an essential aspect of academic leadership. The development of faith expounded upon in the focus group sessions, semi-structured interviews, one-on-one interviews, and role-playing of vignettes allowed for a more informed dialogue and better leadership of institutions to promote exactly such development. The final project, as an act of ministry, demonstrated that even small, focused training sessions carry opportunities to make an impact on the organizations which are led by those trained. The impact was one of love.

As Christians, we are taught to look at the example Christ sets in all matters, especially as He leads us. Poon (2006) describes a Johannine model of leadership as

exemplified by Christ as others-focused, using moral love as the basis for one's leading. Poon compared Christ, especially as demonstrated in John 21:1-25³⁶, to servant leadership models and posits that servant leadership begins with an *agapao* love. Poon quotes Winston (2002), "*Agapao*, as a moral love, means that today's leaders must consider the human and spiritual aspects of their employees/followers" (p.8). Jesus considers that fullness of who Peter is, for example, including his weaknesses and strengths as he is named a leader of the Jesus movement. Finally, Poon describes the theories of Fry that spiritual leadership takes the form of intrinsic motivation demonstrated through vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, and that love has the power to mitigate the destructive influence of emotions such as fear, anger, failure, and pride.

What Jesus is doing in John 21 is considering the realities of intra-personal as well as inter-personal leadership, knowing that Peter needed to develop beyond a simple follower mentality to become the rock on which a church could be founded. At the beginning of the pericopé, Peter was in a state of despair over his past leadership and the example he has set, and seemed to wish to return to his life as a fisherman. Peter, like many leaders, expected leadership skills to appear with the title or with responsibility. He did not recognize the challenges that were commensurate with his new role, nor did he realize that he was one link in a chain of leadership intended to lead the Church into the future, listening to the needs, desires, and values of the constituents.

³⁶ Especially verses 15-19 in which Jesus reinstates Peter into the communion of apostles.

Benjamin Disraeli is attributed with the statement “I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?” (Forsyth, 2009, p. 247). In this famous statement, Disraeli is focusing on the need of a leader to understand the needs, desires, and values of the constituents. Disraeli was noted for the respectful tone he maintained with most of his constituents, many of whom thought that he led with gentleness and respect, albeit with an iron backbone. It seems that many of the Erskine student organizational leaders learned Disraeli’s lesson. If such training can work at Erskine College, it should be able to work nearly anywhere.

In the act of ministry that was this project, the indigenous knowledge of student leaders had to be gauged and directed to theologically sound, respectful, and responsible goals of love and concern. The results indicated the effectiveness of the training programs, not only intrinsically and perspectively according to the student leaders themselves, but in the perspectives of those whom they lead. The training appears to decrease fears and insecurities, increase faith, and help alleviate the degree of spiritual struggle on the campus. Perhaps this training could go beyond the halls of academia to churches, helping build the ranks of people who can discuss faith and become evangelists; spreaders of the good news and fishers of humankind. College students are under many stresses, but in formative stages of their lives where the Church can strengthen them and foster a sense of belonging in the faith. The struggles of college students to find their spiritual homes are very real and examples of the struggles of all peoples, even if a bit more intensified on some campuses.

Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, and Sandage (1996) demonstrate a need for more research into psychological issues and religion, albeit primarily from the counseling perspective, because of the struggles and ambiguities in faith and in fears that so many people face. Wortmann, Park, and Edmondson (2012) found that spiritual struggle in college

students is related to both negative and positive outcomes, including greater psychological distress, poorer physical health, lower self-esteem, and more negative mood, but also greater stress-related growth and growth in religious tolerance. Experiencing loss and struggling spiritually might be creating opportunities for eventual growth and maturation.

Hauerwas (2010) presents a challenge and encouragement to students going off to college:

‘The Christian religion,’ wrote Robert Louis Wilken, ‘is inescapably ritualistic (one is received into the Church by a solemn washing with water), uncompromisingly moral (‘be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect,’ said Jesus), and unapologetically intellectual (be ready to give a ‘reason for the hope that is in you,’ in the words of 1 Peter). Like all the major religions of the world, Christianity is more than a set of devotional practices and a moral code: it is also a way of thinking about God, about human beings, about the world and history.’ (p. 49)

Let me return to Robert Wilken's observation about the ritual, moral, and intellectual life of the Christian. Don't fool yourself. Only a man or woman who has undergone a long period of spiritual discipline can reliably pray in the solitude of a hermitage. You're young. You need the regular discipline of worship, Bible reading, and Christian fellowship. Don't neglect them in college. Also, don't underestimate the moral temptations of the contemporary college scene. We cannot help but be influenced by the behavior of our friends, so choose wisely. To worship God and live faithfully are necessary conditions if you are to survive in college. But as a Christian you are called to do more than survive. You are called to use the opportunity you have been given to learn to construe the world as a creature of a God who would have us enjoy—and bask in—the love that has brought us into existence. God has given your mind good work to do. As members of the Church, we're counting on you. It won't be easy. It never has been. But I can testify that it can also be a source of joy. (p. 53)

There is joy in serving God, in understanding God's creation, and in leading all of God's people to greater love. This kind of leadership is lacking, as evidenced by the 70% of college students responding to the 2013 survey who claim to be secular profess no religion (Kosmin & Keysar, 2013). Leaders need to know and understand those whom they lead, and college students should be the leaders of choice to evangelize other students.

The student who would be a leader needs to be trained and nurtured so that their legacy is of greater efficacy in the promotion of love, peace, and good throughout their college and the world. If love, peace, and good are increased, what will happen to harm and disrespect in the world? In 1 Peter 3 is a description of idealized followers of Christ, but this can also be a list of attributes of the best leaders:

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:13-15 (NIV)

This pericopé could well be an early admonition to be a failure-tolerant leader. Farson and Keyes (2002) describe the failure-tolerant leader as an executive who through words and deeds encourages innovation by empowering people to take risks. Failure-tolerant leaders allow for retention of self-compassion among followers, which can be especially important in learning environments. Neff, Hsieh, and Dejitterat (2005) suggest that the encouragement of self-compassion among students could be highly beneficial in learning contexts. Neff and colleagues contend that many educators struggle with the pragmatics of encouraging positive self-attitudes among their students in a way that doesn't run the risk of inadvertently encouraging narcissism and downward social comparisons, which would preclude appropriate followership. Narcissism and downward social comparisons tend to result in a lack of questions in many areas, from the leadership people follow to the bases of the theology they believe.

It has been speculated that lack of questioning is seen as a comfort to some in religious environments, and a part of the reason that some come to church, especially those

with greater fear or less knowledge. Lawler (2001) posited that those least sure of their beliefs or their knowledge base will form less beneficial affective attachments to organizations that limit inquisition into alternative interpretations of social or religious norms.

“Structural interdependencies among actors produce joint activities that, in turn, generate positive or negative emotions; these emotions are attributed to social units (relationships, networks, groups) under certain conditions, thereby producing stronger or weaker individual-to-collective ties; and the strength of those group ties determines collectively oriented behavior; such as providing unilateral benefits, expanding areas of collaboration, forgiving periodic opportunism, and staying in the relationship despite alternatives” (p. 323).

Lawler stated that “affective attachments to relations or groups will be stronger if those social units are perceived as stable and controllable sources of positive feelings from exchange; affective detachments (alienation) from relationships or groups will be stronger if these social units are perceived as stable and uncontrollable sources of negative feelings” (Lawler, 2001, p. 343).

Without leadership, evangelism is not an effective growth strategy for the building of God’s Kingdom. “The church’s witnessing capacity to grow spiritually and numerically is directly linked to the quality of the leadership that is equipping the church for service and witness” (Hewitt, 2014, p. 206).

Leadership is about more than bottom line results, just as evangelism is about more than numbers of people in pews. Both are about honest, caring, comforting relationships that glorify God, which is something many Christians should be able to agree upon.

⁴I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds. ⁵For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the

outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. 2 Corinthians 7:4-7 (NIV)

Amen.

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Appendix One: Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Date: _____ Moderator: _____
Observers: _____

Moderator: First, thank you all for coming and volunteering your time to contribute to this focus group today. We appreciate your participation. I'm not sure how many of you have ever participated or even heard of a focus group before, but this is mostly just to get your opinion on the topic. We want to make sure that we hear from everyone. I will make sure that each person will get an opportunity to speak and we all need to be able to contribute to this. Please try to be considerate and respectful of others' opinions and allow for them to have a chance to speak.

Ice Breaker: "How often do you brush your teeth?"
"What is the weirdest food craving your mother had whilst pregnant?"

Definitions:

Faith = "Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof"

Fear = "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous"

Lead Questions:

1. "Faith ends in sight" What are your thoughts on this statement?
 - a. What does sight change
 - b. Is this statement always correct
2. Some people have said that faith is the opposite of fear. Do you agree with this?
 - a. What kinds of fear might not be helped by faith
3. "Do you have the same beliefs as your parents did?"
 - a. Similarities and differences
 - b. Were you forced to go to a place of worship
4. "Are you intimidated by others prayer?"
 - a. What is it that intimidates you
 - b. What does this mean for our education system
 - c. What does this mean for our culture
5. Do you think that people with a lot of faith should be fearless?
 - a. Why should they or shouldn't they
 - b. How does faith contribute to fear?
6. If you found out information that made you question some of the core values of your faith, perhaps in how we understand scripture, or how original manuscripts were translated, how would you feel? Describe what besides fear that you might feel.
 - a. Does it depend on how faithful you are
 - b. Does it depend on the source of criticism

Closing Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our discussion concerning the faith and fear. Please remember to keep this discussion within yourselves and not share it with other people in this campus, since we might need their input as well. We greatly appreciate your participation and hope you greatly enjoy the refreshments as a thank you for your gratitude in taking time to help us. Do not hesitate to ask us any questions, comments or concerns after the meeting. If preferred, you can reach us at the email address printed on the Consent Form.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day!

Appendix Two: Focus Group Consent and Demographic Survey

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a focus group conducted by students in PY312- Experimental Methodologies under the supervision of Dr. Robert Elsner (elsner@erskine.edu, 864-379-6570). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me removed from the research records or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to develop skills in the focus group methodology, and to find out what Erskine undergraduates know and think about issues of faith and fear. The overall goal is the development of a skill-set for the students in the class, not advancement of a political or theological agenda.

If I volunteer to take part in this focus group, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Participate in discussion with other students and answer questions regarding my perspectives on faith and on fear;
- 2) Be audio-taped or videotaped as part of the group in order to maintain data integrity and validity. Photographic, audio or video recordings may be used for the following purposes: educational videos, research, and educational presentations or courses. All videotapes will remain confidential, and will not be released to any person outside of this class unless required by law.

No risk is expected but I may experience some discomfort or stress while talking or when the focus group moderator ask me questions about my views of faith and fear. I will receive no incentives for participating and answering questions except the satisfaction of working for the advancement of my peers' education.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others outside of the class without my written permission, except if it is necessary to protect my welfare (for example, if I were injured and need physician care) or if required by law.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, or thereafter by contacting the Professor at: elsner@erskine.edu or 864-379-6570.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this focus group and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____ Name of Researcher (printed) Telephone: 864-379-6570 Email: elsner@erskine.edu	_____ Signature	_____ Date
--	--------------------	---------------

_____ Name of Participant (<i>Print</i>)	_____ Signature	_____ Date
---	--------------------	---------------

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix Three: Tabulated Results of Focus Group Discussions

	Group	Individual
Question 1: “Faith ends in sight” What are your thoughts on this statement?		
Believing without physical evidence	5, 1	6, 1
Comes from within, seeing is believing	5, 4, 3	4, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3
Takes away magic	3	3
Faith in God exists	4, 2	4, 2, 3
No hard proof God exists	4, 2	2, 5, 6, 3, 1, 4, 2, 6, 7, 8
The way you approach, perception changes – can’t trust	4, 1	1, 3, 4
Not true	2	6
Faith begins when sight ends	6	5
Faith starts with being knowledgeable	6	3,5
Question 2: Some people have said that faith is the opposite of fear. Do you agree with this?		
Scared to commit all faith	5	2
Faith can mask fear, overcome it	5, 1	4, 3, 8
Is a link, faith can’t overcome fear	5, 3	5, 6
Trust	3	4
Fear is why we have faith	3, 1	1, 4, 5, 6
Fear wrath of God/but to love him	6	4, 5
Faith and fear are independent	6	6
Question 3: Do you have the same beliefs as your parents did?		
Same as parents, agree with their opinions, without support = lack of participation to church	5, 1	2, 4, 6
Don’t have enough knowledge to get into it	5	4
Same as parents, parents are more conservative	5	6
Worry in general more	5	5
None were forced to go to religious place of worship	5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 2, 4
Same basic beliefs as parents	4, 2, 6	1, 2, 6, 3, 5, 2, 4, 3,2
Parents strict on church	4, 3, 6	1, 3, 5, 1, 2, 3, 4,
Forced to go to church	2, 4	5, 6, 7
Threatened to be kicked out of house	3	4, 3, 4
Not the same as parents (atheists)	2	2
Question 4: Are you intimidated by others prayer?		
When asked to prayer in front of others	3, 1, 6	4, 7, 8, 6
People choose to then let them	5, 4, 1	3, 5, 3, 6
Group prayer intimidates me personally & moment of silence	5, 4	4, 1, 2
Question “should I be doing that?”	5	2
Reading bible accounts is intimidating	4	1
Shy in church when people prayer	3	3, 5
Shouldn’t feel uncomfortable	2, 6	3, 5, 6, 3, 4, 2
If it’s something I don’t believe in	6	6
Question 5: Do you think that people with a lot of faith should be fearless?		
Always afraid		
Believe that people are going to a better place	5, 2, 6	1, 5, 1, 3, 5, 3
Fear always present, doesn’t protect, overcomes faith	5	1, 5
People with faith should not fear, bible teaches us this	5, 4, 2	4, 3, 2, 4
Approach determines success or failure	5, 1, 6	6, 5, 5
Fear increased by seeing it, getting used to fear can help	5	3
Not human without fear	4	3, 5, 2
Respect for fear and God	4, 2	1, 2, 1, 3

Fear is why we have faith	4	2, 3, 4, 5
Satan uses fear	3, 2, 6	1, 4, 5, 1, 6,
Fear of death	1, 6	6, 5
Fear can be seen as a faith	6	6, 5
Question 6: If you found out information that made you question some of the core values of your faith, perhaps in how we understand scripture, or how original manuscripts were translated, how would you feel? Describe what besides fear that you might feel.		
Life devoted believers would have problems, worldwide	5, 3	4, 3, 5, 1, 5
Look at science – evolution is already existent, builds questions	5	6
So many manuscripts it would be hard to change beliefs	4	2, 7
Absolute faith in God no matter what	4	7, 1, 2, 3
Disappointed/angry	3	4, 5
Depends on churches/popes reaction	3	1, 7
Faith without reason is stupid	2	2, 4
Depends on source	5, 2, 6	2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 2,
Respect opinion and move on	1	4, 6
Would add to my faith	1	6, 1
Denial then understanding	6	6
Key not to have blind faith	6	4

Appendix Four: *JesusTalk* Consent Form

ERSKINE

COLLEGE & SEMINARY

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled “The JesusTalk Program” (ECIRB-15-08-05) conducted by Dr. Robert Elsner from the Department of Psychology at Erskine College (864-379-6570). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to explore and increase leadership communication and understanding of evangelism. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Fill out a two-page questionnaire
- 2) Participate in group interaction sessions on two occasions while being videotaped
- 3) Fill out a second two-page questionnaire two-weeks after completing the study

No risk is expected but I may experience some discomfort or stress when acting out scenarios or when the researchers ask me questions about my faith.

As an incentive, I will receive snacks and beverages for answering questions. Even if I do not participate in the full study, I will still receive the incentives.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission, except that contained in the video recordings or if it is necessary to protect my welfare (for example, if I were injured and need physician care) or if required by law. My records of participation will be kept strictly confidential and maintained in a double-locked HIPAA-compliant data storage room. I release all claims on the video recordings and allow their use for educational or research purposes by Dr. Elsner or his designees. I release Dr. Elsner, Erskine College, and all affiliates from indemnity related to the video recordings from this study.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, by contacting the researcher at: 864-379-6570 or at elsner@erskine.edu.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Dr. Robert Elsner
Researcher

(864) 379-6570 elsner@erskine.edu

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Dr. Robert J.F. Elsner, Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, Erskine College, PO Box 338 Due West, SC 29639, USA; Telephone (864) 379-6570; E-Mail Address: elsner@erskine.edu

Appendix Five: Pre-Test Organization Leader Assessment

JesusTalk program

Please remember that all information provided here is confidential, and will be kept in a protected, de-identified database accessible only by Dr. Elsner.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: F

M

Ethnicity: _____ Denomination: _____

How long have you been a member of this denomination: _____

How often do you privately worship? _____ times per _____

How often do you publicly worship? _____ times per _____

Please answer your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
I am fluent in the theology of my denomination					
People tell me that I am a good Christian					
I have studied other religions or denominations pretty well					
I get nervous when people ask me about my faith					
I am not comfortable around people of different faiths					
I am totally secure in my faith					
I believe that all non-Christians must go to Hell					
I think I could be a professional evangelist					
I am a better Christian than most people					
I enjoy learning about other people's relationships with God					
I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly					
I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented					
I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do					
Religion and politics are inseparable for me					
A Christian college should only be for Christians					
I have never questioned my faith					
I truly believe that only people with beliefs similar to mine will go to heaven					
When I meet someone of another religion, I feel obligated to help them learn about Christianity					
My denomination encourages me to question my faith					
When I meet someone of another denomination, I feel obligated to correct their Christianity					
Atheists cannot have morals					
Since Erskine is an ARP school everyone who comes here should go to an ARP church					
People who do not go to a church like mine need to be pitied					
I believe it is my job as a Christian to respect other people's views on religion and not argue with them					

I am glad that I have friends with different beliefs than mine					
It is only the fear of hell that keeps people from doing just whatever they like					
God really does hate some people					
I know my church is right because my parents go there					
People who go to certain churches are just weird					
I find it important to let people know what church I go to					
Jesus might be more important, but Paul tells me what I really need to know					
I would be angry to find out that there are non-Christians in heaven					
I sometimes worry that people think I am not a good enough Christian					

Fear Questionnaire (FQ)

Choose a number from the scale below to show how much you would avoid each of the situations listed below because of fear or other unpleasant feelings. Then write the number you choose in the space opposite each situation.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
would not avoid it		slightly avoid it		definitely avoid it		markedly avoid it		always avoid it

1. Talking to people about religion	
2. Injections or minor surgery	
3. Eating or drinking with other people like me	
4. Hospitals	
5. Traveling alone or by bus	
6. Walking alone in busy streets	
7. Being watched or stared at	
8. Going into crowded shops	
9. Talking to people from the middle east	
10. Sight of blood	
11. Being criticized	
12. Going alone far from home	
13. Thought of injury or illness	
14. Speaking or acting to an audience	
15. Large open spaces	
16. Going to the dentist	
17. Talking about religion	
18. Being told I am wrong	
19. Being asked to listen to someone talk about another religion	
20. Listening to music from other religious traditions	

Appendix Six: Vignette descriptions

Vignettes

In the following scenes, you will act out the role of someone taking their views a bit too far. You are asked to play the role of someone that you either know or imagine who has gone too far with the views expressed in each of these scenarios. Another person in the group will play the part of a first year student/freshman, and interact with you appropriately. These are designed to be slightly over-the-top, and hopefully amusing at times. After each vignette, we will discuss better ways of approaching the situation, and how to incorporate your views into discussion without being offensive or defensive about your faith.



Session 1



Vignette 1: In this scenario, the Org Leader is talking to a freshman about not going out to a movie, and leads into avoiding listening to hip-hop and Rock music. She/he stresses the importance of being completely separate from the non-Christian world because of the weakness of humanity to temptation.



Vignette 2: The Org Leader here tries to stress the integration of Christianity into everything, even if it gets to an annoying level of making everything about Christ, even when far from appropriate. He or she might talk about the importance of glorifying Jesus through getting a tattoo or try drugs to get closer to Jesus.



Vignette 3: A first-year student is animated about the importance of the political system and ideas of US intervention in humanitarian assistance after a catastrophe. The rather passive Org Leader enforces the view that it does not matter, as long as those souls had the blessed name of Jesus on their lips, it is fine, if not, they deserve to die. We need to concentrate only on what is happening right here around us individually and locally.



Vignette 4: The Org Leader is talking about going to an off-campus party on Saturday night, where there will be drinking. She/he is talking about hooking up with a special hottie, but can't figure out how to get to church on Sunday morning after such an event. The freshman is concerned about how far to go in partying at a Christian school for fear of Hell.



Vignette 5: A freshman is really concerned about having sinned back in High School, so asks the Org Leader about her/his view of redemption and the possibility of grace. The Org Leader focuses on the corrupt nature of humanity since the Fall, stating that if you are not already among the Elect, you are going to Hell and it does not matter.



Session 2



Vignette 1B: Freshman is talking about how grateful she/he is for being funded to go on a mission trip to a cool tropical location. The Org leader reminds the freshman that it is because she/he goes to the right church that she/he received the blessing.



Vignette 2B: Org Leader is talking about how awesome it is that her/his grandmother read her/him bible stories and had her/him watch Veggie Tales when younger so that she/he is now saved. Freshman wonders if Veggie Tales will be around for her/his kids. Org leader replies that it is up to God, not her/him who will be saved, as relationship is individual and no two people will be saved the same way.



Vignette 3B: Org Leader wants to set up a new Facebook group through her/his church for evangelism, but is worried that it might not get approved by the evangelistic committee of the church. Freshman asks why she/he can't just do that her/himself. Org Leader replies that evangelism has to be guided by ordained ministers, not just done at random.



Vignette 4B: Freshman tells Org leader about trying to bring someone to Jesus at the Mall last night. Org Leader asks what church freshman attends, and freshman tells her/him that she/he does not go to one, and does not believe in organized religion as they are all cults or idolaters and about hegemonic control. Org Leader gets mad and says it is not the responsibility of a single person to try to bring people to Jesus without a church sponsoring such actions.



Vignette 5B: Org leader is preaching doom and gloom, reminding everyone that we are Totally Corrupt and Fallen, but that we are the hands and feet of the church on earth, since God does not speak directly through prophets anymore. Freshman asks why God is not present and helping us more? Org leader responds that God hates so many of these sinners that He does not always want them to be saved.



Vignette 6B: Org leader says that in order to be a truly good Christian, you have to only have your real Christian friends, not like those who go to a _____ church. Freshman asks if it is OK to be friends with a person of another ethnicity or sexual orientation, and Org Leader responds only if freshman wants to go to Hell with those people.



Vignette 7B: Freshman talks about having a deep community back home at church, with many outreach groups that made her/him feel happy. Org Leader says not to worry, that her/his church here has the best fried chicken ever, and that there are lots of great benefits of attending this church, like not having to do lots of work or even talk to other people.



Vignette 8B: Org Leader is very proud that her/his church has remained absolutely faithful to their traditions for over 100 years, with no change whatsoever. Freshman asks if they ever sing cool new hymns like the new *Amazing Grace* (*My Chains are Gone*), and if they already had great ministries like a soup kitchen or a Scout Troop. Freshman really likes new ministries and uses them to gauge personal growth. Org Leader says that such ministries are the responsibility of individuals, not the church, and that personal growth is only physical-growing taller and fatter.



Appendix Seven: email reminder for Organization Leaders to take the post-test survey



Beloved Students and Participants in the *JesusTalk* program,

I want to thank you once again for participating in the JesusTalk program. There have been some interesting findings from those preliminary data collected when you arrived. In order to assess the program, I would ask that you please fill out the following survey at your earliest convenience:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CW3MT7R>

This is not linked to your email, so if anyone in the program did not receive it, please forward this link to them. I do ask that you put your initials in the survey so that I can link data, however, and a few questions might seem redundant, such as denomination, but since some people have changed recently, this is important.

I will be drawing a name at random next Wednesday from those who participate to receive a \$15 iTunes gift card. I hope that it in some way shows the appreciation that I feel for all of your help and commitment to this project.

In Christ,

Dr. E.

Appendix Eight: Two-weeks-Post-Test Organization Leader Online

Assessment

JesusTalk program

Please remember that all information provided here is confidential. Thank you for your continued assistance in this project!

Initials: _____

Denomination: _____

How long have you been a member of this denomination: _____

How often do you privately worship? _____ times per _____

How often do you publicly worship? _____ times per _____

Please answer your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
I have thought about the vignettes from the <i>JesusTalk</i> program when talking to people about faith in the past few weeks					
The <i>JesusTalk</i> program helped me to develop a better personal communication style for evangelism					
I have been more comfortable in talking with others about their faith since participating in the <i>JesusTalk</i> program					
I would encourage other people to participate in programs like <i>JesusTalk</i> to help them talk about faith					
I am glad I participated in the <i>JesusTalk</i> program					
The <i>JesusTalk</i> program was valuable to me as a leader					
I have tried to learn more about my own denomination since participating in the <i>JesusTalk</i> program					
I am fluent in the theology of my denomination					
People tell me that I am a good Christian					
I have studied other religions or denominations pretty well					
I get nervous when people ask me about my faith					
I am not comfortable around people of different faiths					
I am totally secure in my faith					
I believe that all non-Christians must go to Hell					
I think I could be a professional evangelist					
I am a better Christian than most people					
I enjoy learning about other people's relationships with God					
I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly					
I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented					
I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do					

Religion and politics are inseparable for me					
A Christian college should only be for Christians					
I have never questioned my faith					
I truly believe that only people with beliefs similar to mine will go to heaven					
When I meet someone of another religion, I feel obligated to help them learn about Christianity					
My denomination encourages me to question my faith					
When I meet someone of another denomination, I feel obligated to correct their Christianity					
Atheists cannot have morals					
Since Erskine is an ARP school everyone who comes here should go to an ARP church					
People who do not go to a church like mine need to be pitied					
I believe it is my job as a Christian to respect other people's views on religion and not argue with them					
I am glad that I have friends with different beliefs than mine					
It is only the fear of hell that keeps people from doing just whatever they like					
God really does hate some people					
I know my church is right because my parents go there					
People who go to certain churches are just weird					
I find it important to let people know what church I go to					
Jesus might be more important, but Paul tells me what I really need to know					
I would be angry to find out that there are non-Christians in heaven					
I sometimes worry that people think I am not a good enough Christian					

Choose a number from the scale below to show how much you would avoid each of the situations listed below because of fear or other unpleasant feelings. Then write the number you choose in the space opposite each situation.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
would not avoid it		slightly avoid it		definitely avoid it		markedly avoid it		always avoid it

1. Talking to people about religion	
2. Injections or minor surgery	
3. Eating or drinking with other people like me	
4. Hospitals	
5. Traveling alone or by bus	
6. Walking alone in busy streets	
7. Being watched or stared at	
8. Going into crowded shops	
9. Talking to people from the middle east	

10. Sight of blood	
11. Being criticized	
12. Going alone far from home	
13. Thought of injury or illness	
14. Speaking or acting to an audience	
15. Large open spaces	
16. Going to the dentist	
17. Talking about religion	
18. Being told I am wrong	
19. Being asked to listen to someone talk about another religion	
20. Listening to music from other religious traditions	

Appendix Nine: Two-Weeks Post-Test Organization Member Online

Assessment

JesusTalk program

Thank you for considering participating in the JesusTalk program by completing this questionnaire. Please remember that all information provided here is confidential. Thank you for your continued assistance in this project!

Initials: _____ Year in college: Fr. So. Jr. Sr.

Please list any organizations that you are a part of at Erskine: *[open text box, up to 500 words]*

Denomination: _____

How long have you been a member of this denomination: _____

How often do you privately worship? _____ times per _____

How often do you publicly worship? _____ times per _____

Please answer your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
I have seen an increase in confidence of some of my organization's leaders when talking to people about faith in the past few weeks					
My organization has some leaders who have begun to talk lovingly and well about Christianity, making me want to learn more					
Leaders in my organization seem to be more comfortable in talking with others about their faith over the past few weeks					
I would encourage other leaders of organizations to participate in programs to help them talk about faith					
At a Christian College, leaders should be trained how to talk about faith in welcoming, encouraging ways, so that faith is used to include people, not exclude them					
I feel that my faith is encouraged at Erskine overall					
I feel that student leaders encourage me to develop my faith, even if they don't agree with me on what that faith should look like					
I am fluent in the theology of my denomination					
People tell me that I am a good Christian					
I have studied other religions or denominations pretty well					
I get nervous when people ask me about my faith					
I am not comfortable around people of different faiths					
I am totally secure in my faith					
I believe that all non-Christians must go to Hell					
I think I could be a professional evangelist					
I am a better Christian than most people					

I enjoy learning about other people's relationships with God					
I believe that my church is the only one that really reads the bible correctly					
I wish that I were in a community with lots of different religions represented					
I can communicate well about religion with people who believe differently than I do					
Religion and politics are inseparable for me					
A Christian college should only be for Christians					
I have never questioned my faith					
I truly believe that only people with beliefs similar to mine will go to heaven					
When I meet someone of another religion, I feel obligated to help them learn about Christianity					
My denomination encourages me to question my faith					
When I meet someone of another denomination, I feel obligated to correct their Christianity					
Atheists cannot have morals					
Since Erskine is an ARP school everyone who comes here should go to an ARP church					
People who do not go to a church like mine need to be pitied					
I believe it is my job as a Christian to respect other people's views on religion and not argue with them					
I am glad that I have friends with different beliefs than mine					
It is only the fear of hell that keeps people from doing just whatever they like					
God really does hate some people					
I know my church is right because my parents go there					
People who go to certain churches are just weird					
I find it important to let people know what church I go to					
Jesus might be more important, but Paul tells me what I really need to know					
I would be angry to find out that there are non-Christians in heaven					
I sometimes worry that people think I am not a good enough Christian					

Choose a number from the scale below to show how much you would avoid each of the situations listed below because of fear or other unpleasant feelings. Then write the number you choose in the space opposite each situation.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
would not avoid it		slightly avoid it		definitely avoid it		markedly avoid it		always avoid it

1. Talking to people about religion	
2. Injections or minor surgery	
3. Eating or drinking with other people like me	
4. Hospitals	
5. Traveling alone or by bus	

6. Walking alone in busy streets	
7. Being watched or stared at	
8. Going into crowded shops	
9. Talking to people from the middle east	
10. Sight of blood	
11. Being criticized	
12. Going alone far from home	
13. Thought of injury or illness	
14. Speaking or acting to an audience	
15. Large open spaces	
16. Going to the dentist	
17. Talking about religion	
18. Being told I am wrong	
19. Being asked to listen to someone talk about another religion	
20. Listening to music from other religious traditions	

Index

1

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, 3

1 Peter, 94, 95

2

2 Corinthians, 97

2 Timothy, 45

A

Academic Freedom, 7

Acts 1:8, 46

agapao, 92

Allen, 98

American Religious Identification Surveys, 1

Anglican, 19, 34

Argyris, 70, 71, 98

ARP Book of Worship, 37

Avolio, 98

B

Balkin, 98

Bass, 54, 81, 86, 87, 98, 106, 108

Bass and Avolio, 54, 81, 87

Bean, 98

Bennis, 83, 98

Bergin, 20, 99

Blase Pascal, 29

Bolen, 99

Bonhoeffer, 90

Brief, 99

Brown, 107

Brummel, 56, 99

Bryant, 89, 99

C

Calfano, 25, 99

Calvin, 99

Campbell, 91, 99

Carney, 90, 99

Castillo Nanjari, 47, 100

Chaleff, 83, 100

Chatters, 88, 100

Chemers, 89, 100

Chen, 86, 100

Christian Approval, 52, 53

Cikara, 30, 100

Citizen Leaders, 85

Constantine, 25, 100

Cox, 54, 100

D

de Visser, 18, 101

Dierendonck, 81, 109

Disraeli, 93

E

Egocentrism, 52

Ephesians, 18, 45
Erskine, iv, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 21, 23, 27, 36, 38, 39, 40,
41, 42, 69, 73, 74, 81, 84, 86, 90, 93, 110, 114, 117,
118, 125, 127, 128
Exit Leaders, 84, 86

F

Faith Insecurity, 52
Faith Security, 52
Farson, 70, 95, 101
Fear Questionnaire, 52, 55, 64, 68, 70, 75, 119
Fern, 20, 101
Finch, 56, 101
Forsyth, 93, 101

G

Gallup, 2, 101
Glückschmerz, 30, 57
Goff, 9, 102
Google+, 58
Gordon College, 4
Gortner, 49, 50, 57, 58, 59, 81, 102
Grace, 90, 122

H

Hall, 21, 108
Harris, 110
Hart, 51, 102
Hauerwas, 5, 94, 102
Haynes, 81, 109
Heifetz, 70, 83, 102

Heinz, 20, 102
Helsinki ethical guidelines, 63, 64
Hewitt, 46, 61, 96, 102
Holm, 20, 102
Hughes, 56, 103
Hyde, 20, 21, 103
hypocrisy, 34, 43

I

idealized influence, 87
individual consideration, 87
inspirational motivation, 87
Intellectual stimulation, 87

J

Jackson, 17, 103
Jankowski, 88, 103, 108
Johnson, 53, 103
Joyner, 56, 104

K

Kantor, 84, 104
Keeley, 104
Kellerman, 104
Keohane, 54, 88, 104
King, 7, 104
Kingdom, iv, 5
Kosmin, 1, 77, 104
Krueger, 20, 104, 105

L

Lännström, 105
Laufer, 17, 105
Lawler, 96, 105
Laythe, 105
Liberalized Protestantism, 90
Lindlof, 12, 106
Long, 107
Lord Acton, 88

M

Magowan, 106
Mark 4:40, 16
Matthew, 17
Matthew 14
 25-27, 17
Maynard, 88, 106
McFadden, 83, 106
MEDCOM, 8
missio dei, 46
Moltmann, 46, 106
Mount St. Mary's University, 4

N

National Register of Historic Places, 7
Neff, 95, 106
Newman, 3, 106
Niebuhr, 31, 49, 50, 57, 58, 106
Nones, 2, 94

P

Parents, 26, 115
Performance Leaders, 84
Pew Research Forum on Religion, 2, 107
Poon, 70, 91, 107
prayers, 26

R

Rabinowitz, 56, 107
Railsback, 51, 107
Raiser, 2, 84, 107
Roberts, 83, 98, 108
Robinson, 20, 103
Romans, 45, 54
Rosnow, 56, 108

S

Sandage, 88, 93, 108, 110
Schadenfreude, 30, 57, 101, 105, 107
Seider, 90, 108
self-esteem, 94
Simpson, 56, 108
Smith, 36, 42, 108
Snell, 36, 42, 108
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 9
Southern Baptist, 19, 53, 63
SurveyMonkey, 65, 66
Swatos, 19, 109

T

Tepper, 109
Thiessen, 47, 48, 57, 109
Thomas, 13, 109
Tingey, 20, 109
train-the-trainer, 44

V

van Teijlingen, 110
Van Teijlingen, 20, 21
vignette, 44, 56, 58, 59, 60, 64, 70, 120
Vision Leaders, 85

W

Walker, 110

Ware, 7, 8, 110
Warner, 41, 110
Warr, 21
Weiss, 99
Westminster Confession, 37
Wheaton College, 4
Wigg-Stevenson, 90, 110
Willig, 19, 110
Winston, 92, 110
Wisdom Leaders, 85
Worthington, 93, 110
Wortmann, 93, 111
Wu, 54, 111
Wuthnow, 88, 111



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