Where Communication Acts Intersect the Soul

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Abstract

Body motion always contains some type of meaning; yet, this meaning depends on the context in which the body motion is expressed (Birdwhistell, 1970). There are numerous studies on *nonverbal behavior*; however, there has been little to no research conducted on the meaning behind nonverbal expressions in a *worship* context, especially the worship context of religious based, higher education academic institutions where chapel worship is mandated. Therefore, this study attempts to compare and assess the nonverbal expressions in three different, but similar worship contexts: a Baptist university, a nondenominational university, and a Presbyterian university from the south. To shed light on this issue, literature was assessed on *kinesics*, nonverbal behavior, *intergroup relations*, and *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) (*organizational identity*). An interview was conducted, and a focus group discussion was held at each participating institution. The results indicated that nonverbal behaviors in a mandated worship context are fostered not only by the person's prior worship experience, but also by the environmental cues. Ultimately, these nonverbal responses serve to reflect social and personal identity.

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As the words of Chris Tomlin's (2003) "Holy is the Lord" echo in the background, and the church congregation sings and performs the words, "we stand and lift up our hands...we bow down and worship you now," one might not think twice about standing and lifting hands, still others might give pause. One could walk into any two Christian worship/church services and notice a difference in the organization and function of the worship experience. The differences might not be striking at first observation, but occasionally the difference is astonishingly apparent. The differences could be anything from song choice and style, seating arrangement and proximity, building design and decor, lighting, use of technology, scripture reading or the lack thereof, the amount of people attending to the physical involvement of the congregation. The explanation for some of these differences are even more numerous than the actual differences. Studies on specific differences and similarities among church worship services are numerous. Despite that, when assessing nonverbal worship in an academic setting, the variables become especially interesting. Issues such as peer pressure, social expectations, diverse church backgrounds, and the type of university attended may shape an individual's nonverbal worship style.

There are many Christian university's that require students to attend chapel services on campus in order to graduate, and differences among the chapel organization and function are to be expected. As an undergraduate student at a Christian university, I visited another campus's chapel service, and at first observation noticed a striking difference in the worship environment. Specifically, I noticed a difference in the nonverbal behavior during the music portion of the chapel service.

According to Birdwhistell (1970), body motion always contains some type of meaning, and this paper attempts to explore that meaning more thoroughly. This study examines the differences in nonverbal behaviors at two Christian liberal arts university chapel services in the south: a Baptist university and a nondenominational university. Specifically, I hope to shed more light on the following questions: 1) What are specific nonverbal behaviors associated with chapel services at the Baptist institution, the nondenominational institution, and the Presbyterian institution; 2) What are specific nonverbal behaviors that are unique to each religious context and why; and 3) To what extent is *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) (*organizational identity*) reflected in the worship behavior seen at the two institutions?

In order to answer these questions, the following methods were utilized; a review of scholarly literature on the topic, an interview with a nationally recognized worship leader, a focus group interview with students from the Baptist university, a focus group interview at the nondenominational university, and focus group interview the Presbyterian university. Ultimately, the results indicated that nonverbal behaviors in worship context are found to serve as an expression of *social identity.* (See appendix for this definition, as well as the definitions of: *kinesics, nonverbal communication/nonverbal behavior, worship, chapel, demonstrative, denomination, organizational identity*.)

Literature Review

Body motion always contains some type of meaning; however, the meaning depends on the context in which the body motion is expressed. Nonverbal behavior, in any context, but especially in a worship context is worthy of consideration. There appears to be no scholarly literature specifically focused on the different types of nonverbal behavior in worship contexts.

However, there was literature pertaining to topics such as nonverbal behavior in unspecified group contexts, group interaction, group identity, and group expression as well as individual expression. Moreover, Birdwhistell (1970) believed that the motions expressed by a group represent that group's culture. Therefore, this literature review focused on four types of research; *kinesics* and *nonverbal communication, social identity theory* (SIT) (*organizational identity theory*) and *intergroup relations,* and *church denominational differences.*

Kinesics and Nonverbal Communication

Birdwhistell (1970), the father of *kinesics*, presented a methodology on how to study body motion. He explained that, in kinesics, the researcher must not assume that a simple body motion represents/communicates the same meaning among every person, in every context, and in every culture, at every age. In other words, the fact that "communicational behavior can be congruent in one setting and incongruent in another should serve as a warning against any theory of meaning which suggests that the particles carry meaning in and of themselves" (p. 179).

Birdwhistell (1970) explained that "a product of systematic social interaction, the kinesic system is a social system" (p. 193). Ultimately, he argued that body motion is a function of the social system to which the individual belongs. Since there are many factors that should be considered when studying body motion (i. e. culture, context, and the amount of humans communicating), Birdwhistell (1970) claimed that an analysis of body motion and its meaning has to be evaluated extensively in different contexts, and different cultures. In doing so, he provided the following framework: 1) body motion always contains some type of meaning; 2) body motion is patterned and subject to "systematic analysis;" 3) body motion is deeply connected to that of the the social system to which the human belongs; and 4) body motion

affects behaviors of other members of a group. In summary, Birdwhistell concluded that a researcher must first look at the context and the ideology behind the culture in which an individual communicated before assessing specific nonverbal behaviors.

Furthermore, body motion is a form of nonverbal communication (NVC). Dynel (2011) evaluated NVC in light of the Gricean philosophy of meaning. In short, Paul Grice concluded that a communicator's intention is not always conveyed explicitly, a communicator expresses meaning intentionally as well as unintentionally, and meaning interpretation depends on the context of the message as well as the receiver of the message. NVC is broadly defined as "human communication via body movement" (p. 423). In respect to Grice, Dynel further defined NVC and claimed that non-verbal action conveys as much meaning as verbalization. Ultimately, "an individual thus always communicates non-verbal meanings, whether or not consciously and intentionally, and whether or not such messages function independently or accompany verbalizations" (p. 423). Potentially the messages portrayed through NVC are dependent upon vocal features such as verbalizations, but also rely on physical features such as the environment.

Nonverbal Context

An environment can be built that dictates how people will respond within the environment. Rapoport (1982) explained that when an individual enters into a setting there are environmental and social *cues* that guide appropriate behavior. These cues are decoded through two process: *enculturation* and *acculturation* (Rapoport, 1982). Enculturation claims that there are appropriate behaviors learned at a young age for specific environments. Acculturation is the process of learning appropriate behavior in a new culture; more likely occurring at an older age. Simply put, when personally defining the appropriate behavior in a setting, an individual takes

into account previously learned expectations. Therefore, “environment...once learned...becomes a mnemonic device reminding one of appropriate behavior” (p. 67).

Rapoport (1982) claimed that behavior is dependent upon setting and “the same people behave very differently in different settings” (p. 85). Individuals behave differently in different settings because there are specific roles an individual fits in other environments. The environment serves as a reminder of “who does what, where, when, and with whom” (p. 80). In fact, “self definition can depend on context” (p. 72).

There are implicit (sometimes explicit) rules of behavior in any context. These rules become evident when behavior occurs that is not appropriate. In summary, when an individual enters a setting and does not socially identify appropriately, this often culminates into cultural disconnect or shock (Rapoport, 1982).

Social identity theory, Organizational identity, Intergroup relations

In an attempt to evaluate the meaning behind body motion expressed in social contexts, literature on social theories and group dynamics was considered. Johnson, Rudd, Neuendorf, and Jian (2010) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between worship and music preferences and used *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) as a framework. Johnson et al. used SIT to assert that “groups view themselves positively or negatively depending on how they compare with other groups” (p. 149). In this respect, people tend to define themselves in terms of social categories, not as individuals. The questions that the researchers attempted to answer were, “Does worship preference predict organizational identification? Does music preference predict worship style preference?” (p. 153).

Johnson et. al. (2010) concluded that several aspects of a worshipping organization are common: the older an organization, the less likely they are willing to change; worship preference does predict organizational identity; and music serves as a way to communicate who/what an organization is. Ultimately, SIT asserts that people define themselves by their organization, and in this study, music preference served as an expression of organizational identity.

Johnson et al. (2010) stated, "generations have often used music as a vehicle for expressing their identity primarily because music has the ability to transcend social boundaries express cultural meaning and amplify message content that oftentimes block communication" (p. 164). Hence, the final argument was that music serves to express what otherwise can not be communicated; a nonverbal expression of identity.

Scott (2007), described the connection between *Social Identity Theory* (SIT), organizational identity, and the vital role communication plays in both theories. He explained that SIT and organizational identification go hand in hand and that social and organizational identities are formed through communication processes. Scott conducted a meta-analysis of research done by experts in the areas of identification and communication in order to explain how the theories are related. Scott assessed research done by Tajfel and Turner, who are known for their work in SIT and contended that, "one's organizational membership creates a very important social identity for many individuals...organizational identification is thus a specific form of social identification where we refer to the self in terms of our organizational membership" (p. 125). Finally, Scott explained that there is a small but growing assumption that communication is an expression of social identity.

Similarly, Stets and Burke (2000) completed a meta-analysis on *Identity Theory* (IT) and *Social Identity Theory* (SIT), and discussed the overlapping connection between the two theories. Stets and Burke described how both theories conceptualize *the self*. SIT claims that people identify themselves with a certain social group and explains how one social group compares to another social group. In IT, the focus is more on how an individual relates and identifies with a role rather than a group. In this specific role, there are expectations that must be met, and "these expectations and meanings form a set of standards that guide behavior" (p. 225). Moreover, the connection between IT and SIT was characterized in the following manner: SIT describes "who one is" while IT describes "what one does." Therefore, the concepts of *action* and *being* are both crucial to one's concept of self.

To further assess the power of group identity, literature over inter-group communication was considered. Rabbie and Horwitz (1982) studied *individuality* and *membership* in the intergroup system. They conducted a meta-analysis of others' research, as well as conducted their own experiments. Specifically, they recreated an experiment done by Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flement in which participants who were strangers were randomly assigned to two groups, Blue or Green. Once in their designated groups, a winning and losing group was chosen based on the flip of a coin. When the group members were asked to "make sociometric choices of one another, winners and losers each tended to choose members of their own groups" (p. 242).

Rabbie and Horwitz (1982) conducted more experiments in order to further assess how group members identify with one another. They found that groups tend to compare themselves with out-groups and view themselves individually positively or negatively depending on the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the out-group members. Also, when subjects at a high

school (students and teachers) were asked to place themselves and another person in a group category, they were prone to place their friends in a group, but they left themselves out of a group category claiming that they were not a part of any one particular group. Hence, although individuals were clearly a part of an in-group they perceived "themselves as unaffiliated individuals" (p. 268).

Church Denominational Differences

In order to acquire information on group dynamics from a religious perspective, one piece of literature concerning church denomination proved to be particularly insightful. Dougherty, Bader, Froese, Poison, and Smith (2009) attempted to "quantify differences in religious identity and religious beliefs within a single, conservative congregation" at a Baptist church located in central Texas (p. 321). The researchers claimed that previous denominational studies focused more on the differences between denominations and ignored the possibility of internal differences among individuals within a denomination. The method in this study included a survey of individuals within the congregation who rated themselves on religious beliefs. The data indicated that the congregation appeared to be Evangelical. However, when individuals were asked to give themselves self reported identities, most of the respondents did not identify with the *Evangelical* label.

The results of their study indicated that "a shared denominational affiliation and similar religious practices were not predictive of uniformity within the congregation in religious identity" (p. 331). Ultimately, Dougherty's et al. (2009) found that researchers who study groups should be cautious of assuming homogeneity within a religious group.

Methods

Preliminary Interview

Dennis Jernigan, a nationally recognized worship leader, was interviewed on October 17, 2012. He was considered to have expertise on nonverbal behaviors in a worship context because he has been a minister of worship, writing and recording his own music, and traveling all over the world since the early 1990's. Jernigan was chosen to be interviewed, not only because of his knowledge in the area of worship, but because he is one of the few people who has a professional connection to both institutions involved in this project: a Baptist university and a nondenominational university from the south. He began working closely with student worship leaders at the nondenominational institution in the Spring of 2012; in the Spring of 2013, he began working with student worship leaders at the Baptist institution. Jernigan has also led the worship in chapel services at the Baptist institution and the nondenominational institution. In general, he responded to questions related to nonverbal acts in religious environments. For example, I asked questions such as, "How would you personally characterize a nonverbal expression in worship?" Other topics of discussion included nonverbal behaviors that he noticed when he led worship at both universities.

Focus Group

A focus group interview was held on October 25, 2012 with five students from the Baptist institution in an effort to acquire an understanding of the nonverbal behaviors at the Baptist university's chapel service from the perspective of student participants. The participants were purposefully recommended and then invited via email based on their known interest in chapel services. The criteria to be in the focus group were as follows: 1) each participant was not known

to me; 2) each participant was a self-identified Christian; 3) each participant self-identified as having a vested interest in chapel; and 4) each participant represented a distinctive role in the Baptist institution's culture. As a result of this criteria, the following students participated; one participant was involved as a worship leader at chapel; one participant was a student athlete; one participant was a member of the Campus Activities Board; one participant was a Resident Assistant; and one participant was a chapel-crew co-chair (part of a student team that helps in the chapel planning process). There was one sophomore, three juniors, and one senior. There were two females and three males. Each participant is labeled (A through E) according to the order in which they entered the discussion. At the start of the discussion, the group watched a seven minute muted video of one of the nondenominational university's chapel services. Afterward, they responded to questions pertaining to the nonverbal acts they observed in the service and how the nonverbal acts at the nondenominational institution compared to the nonverbal acts they observe at their own university's (the Baptist institution 's) chapel service. Other topics of discussion included contextual influences on nonverbal behavior and personal worship styles.

Focus Group

Another focus group discussion was held on November 6, 2012 with six students from the nondenominational university in an effort to acquire an understanding of the nonverbal behaviors at the nondenominational institution's chapel service from the perspective of student participants. There was a contact person at the nondenominational institution (involved in the international team worship) who ultimately invited the participants to be a part of the discussion. The contact person was informed of the following criteria: 1) each participant was not known to me; 2) each participant was a self-identified Christian; 3) each participant self-identified as

having a vested interest in chapel; and 4) each participant represented a distinctive role in the nondenominational institution's culture. As a result of the criteria, the following students participated; one participant was involved as a worship leader at chapel; one participant was a leader on the intramural staff; one participant served as the Director of Academic Peer Tudors; one participant was a Resident Assistant; one participant was involved in the Prayer Movement ministry on campus; and one participant was an active member of Student Government. There were two freshmen and four juniors. There were four females and two males. Each participant is labeled (A through F) according to the order in which they entered the discussion. At the start of the discussion, the group watched seven minutes of a muted video from one of the Baptist university's chapel services. Afterward, the participants responded to questions pertaining to the nonverbal acts they observed at the Baptist institution's service and how these acts compared to the nonverbal acts at the nondenominational institution's chapel service. Other topics of discussion included denominational influences on nonverbal behaviors in worship, group worship dynamics, and personal worship styles.

Data

Part one: Interview

After a few preliminary words about how Jernigan, a nationally recognized worship leader, was professionally connected to both the nondenominational institution and the Baptist institution, Jernigan was asked how he would personally characterize an outward expression of worship. In response, Jernigan said,

> An outward expression of worship can be anything from singing, to bowing ones knees, to bowing ones head, to getting on their face before the Lord, lifting their hands, dancing

> for joy, jumping up and down; any expression using the physical body I think can be pretty much demonstrated scripturally as well. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

The interviewee was then asked, "You have lead at chapel services at both institutions, what are attributes in both worship services that you noticed?" Jernigan noticed at the nondenominational university that,

> The students came in prepared to worship. They had the agenda already set in their minds [that they were coming to chapel] to worship the Lord. So when the worship began, they were already engaged, even if they didn't know the song, they were going to learn it. They were also very outwardly demonstrative in their worship. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

Jernigan noticed at the Baptist chapel service that,

> There were a handful of students [who came to chapel with an attitude expecting to worship]. Most of the students didn't know what to expect. But by the end of [chapel... the students seemed] fully engaged. That's what I experienced. So that's the difference [between the two chapel services]. The [students at the nondenominational institution] are taught very early on to come in expectation to worship, where at [the Baptist institution], maybe the kids didn't grow up in that tradition - - where they're taught [to enter a worship experience expecting to worship]. (personal communication, October, 17, 2012)

The next question was as follows: "To what extent do nonverbal behaviors serve to reflect specific religious traditions?" Jernigan answered:

> In charismatic circles, [being demonstrative/charismatic] is just accepted. Charismatics believe that if it is in scripture, they are going to [perform the act] in worship. What I always wondered, even as a little boy growing up in the Baptist church, was why the Bible talked about dancing before the Lord, but we never [danced in worship]. We never really talked about [examples of demonstrative worship in scripture growing up, or at church] because it was like the mindset was, "that was for then, we are modern people, we shouldn't have to do that." My understanding now is that God put [examples of demonstrative worship] in [the Bible] so we could enjoy him fully in this life. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

Jernigan further claimed that charismatics understand the following:

> When we worship we have to use our will. We choose to worship [God], even if we don't feel like it because he is worthy of our praise. When we worship God, we have to engage our thoughts, emotions, and we have to engage our physical body in some way. Let's think about that; if everything I am is directly focused on the Lord in worship, where does the enemy have any place to plant one of his lies? We defeat him. Worship is like a weapon in our arsenal of warfare to put down the enemy. Charismatics get this I think. Non charismatics haven't necessarily been taught this for some reason, and I think it carries over to tradition that "that was for the Bible days, this is now." Well, it was never intended to be [just for the "bible days"]. God intended it for eternity. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

Jernigan's response motivated the following question, "Could you elaborate on different denominational worship?" Jernigan replied,

> Certain denominations teach certain ways to worship, and [in] some [denominations] it is just assumed you will be very stoic and very quiet. But what we are seeing on earth today is that worship is breaking out across denominational lines. I also believe that people in their personal time at home are worshipping more. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

The final question asked was: "To what extent do nonverbal behaviors represent a social identity?" In response, Jernigan claimed that in the social setting of worship environments, participants in worship will judge the worship style of those around them whether they realize it or not. He further discussed two famous worship contexts, the Hillsong church in Australia and the Passion City Church in Atlanta, claiming that each worship context were characterized by a certain nonverbal worship style. Moreover, Jernigan concluded that "more often then not, however the leadership worships, is how people are going to worship" (personal communication, October 17, 2012).

In conclusion, Jernigan was asked if he had any other comments on expression in a worship context. Jernigan responded,

> He who has been forgiven much loves much. The greatest act of love, the greatest expression of love, is the laying down of life. And for some who have been rescued and redeemed from things we would never even have dreamed possible, they're going to go nuts in worship. That [outward expression] might be the perfect response and that may be the way they respond [in worship] every time because they can't help but think how much God loves them and how much God has done to set them free. This is why I will

> not judge somebody who is just very demonstrative. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)
>
> Jernigan continued,
>
> [Even] if I was paralyzed, because of what God's done for me, I would either breathe real hard or blink my eyes as loud as I could in worship. I'd find a way to express myself. For God so loved the world that He sat quietly and hoped everyone would just simply understand? No! For God so loved the world that He did what? He gave! Love that is not expressed is not love. (personal communication, October 17, 2012)

Focus Group at the Baptist Institution

A seven minute muted video of the worship at the nondenominational university's chapel service was shown to focus group participants at the Baptist university. After the video, they were asked to elaborate on their general impressions of the nondenominational university's chapel service.

Participant A said that there seemed to be "a lot of student involvement on stage" and that "one person was not predominately leading" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). He also commented on the layout of the seating in the area where the service was conducted, arguing that the seating was more wide rather than deep and as a result the audience members were forced to be closer to the stage. Participant B agreed, "the audience and the stage people are on the same level...it's very group equalizing" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant C argued that the leadership on stage (the singers, choir, and band) "set the tone for the culture of worship going on." He further noticed that "the audience really connected

with [the leadership]" because the audience's nonverbal acts mirrored the leadership (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant D chimed in that the service was "really energetic" and that he does not "usually see that kind of energy" at the Baptist university (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

The participants were then asked to share specific examples of nonverbal behaviors that were revealed at the Baptist university's chapel service.

Participant C noticed that the audience as a whole "was moving like the ocean" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). Both participant C and B noticed that individuals were looking around; in general, their eyes were not closed nor were their eyes fixed on anything in particular (a screen with the words to sing, the people on stage). Participant B was surprised that most of the students at [the nondenominational institution] had their eyes open because she liked to close her eyes in worship in an attempt to focus and be fully engaged. She argued that the students at [the nondenominational institution] seemed to be more engaged with their eyes open.

Participant A claimed that there seemed to be "a lot of breathing room" in the worship area, and argued that the windows were not stain glass like at the Baptist university, so people could look outside (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant E noticed many people smiling and was surprised that the nondenominational university students actually seemed awake at the morning chapel service unlike many of the students at the Baptist university service.

Participant B noticed that the people on stage used a great deal of very open body language.

Participant A noticed that the lighting at the nondenominational institution's chapel service was bright, whereas at the Baptist institution the lights are lowered. He asked the other participants if the lighting difference in the two chapel services contributed to the fact that the nondenominational institution students seemed more awake. Participant C agreed with participant A that the brightness at the nondenominational institution contributed to the amount of energy displayed. However, participant C ultimately argued that the musical approach was the difference in alertness levels between the two chapel services. He assumed that, at the nondenominational institution, the standard for the worship service included

> Drums, bass guitar, a choir, and a praise team. Whereas at [the Baptist institution], the standard is an acoustic guitar, a box drum, and two singers. So somewhat naturally from that, there is not going to be the same amount of energy that is present at [the nondenominational institution] service. (personal communication, October 25, 2012)

Participant B noticed that there was no special worship lighting at the nondenominational institution. Participant D agreed saying that the lighting was very natural there, and claimed that natural lighting would make him feel "a bit more refreshed instead of feeling like I have to be here at chapel for this credit. Sometimes, I do wish that I could see outside [of the chapel during worship]" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant C joined the discussion over the lighting difference between the two services and claimed that colored lighting "could force a mood. If there is dim purple lighting, you're probably not going to worship the same" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant B explained that at the nondenominational institution, the students were more aware of others around them. She claimed that that is why she liked to close her eyes during

chapel worship. She felt "very vertical, very individual. I am not looking around at people. The [nondenominational university students] are very aware of everything around them" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

When the participants were asked to describe specific nonverbal behaviors associated with the Baptist institution's chapel service, participant B claimed that at the Baptist university the "body language tends to be more closed; for example, you see a lot of hands in pockets" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant E said that she was used to raising her hands in chapel and she naturally noticed those who raised their hands. She claimed that at the nondenominational university "the feel seemed more like a concert" whereas the Baptist university chapel reminded her more of her church at home "where you look around and see maybe three people with hands lifted" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant C, who often leads in worship at the Baptist university's chapel service, argued that he would not know if the audience was "into the music" if he did not hear them. He said that he often looked out into the crowd and there was not much movement aside from a few hands up, and that many people had their heads bowed in prayer.

Participant A hypothesized that engaging in worship at the chapel services at the Baptist institution is more difficult because of the structure of the seating. At the nondenominational institution, most of the students are forced to be closer to the stage. He said that he often sat in the back at the Baptist institution to observe and he noticed that it was much more difficult for him to engage from the back. Participant E agreed and said that she would often sit toward the back and when she would raise her hands in worship, she would "feel a bit awkward because no

one in the back was doing that. When I sit in the middle-front, I feel more comfortable" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant C said that he noticed that the students who majored in ministry often had their hands raised in chapel. Participant E laughed and admitted that she was a ministry major and she often raised her hands in chapel. Participant C hypothesized that people feel as though they have distinctive roles when they walk into chapel worship. Ministry majors feel they have to be a good example, whereas music majors are the ones singing the loudest and adding vocal harmony.

The next question asked was, "If you happen to glance at another worshipper, to what extent does their nonverbal worship style influence you?" Participant E said that she usually felt encouraged when she noticed someone "praising with their hands up." She equated the nonverbal act of raising one's hands to a "really devout Christian proclaiming their faith" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). Participant A agreed,

> There have been times that I'll look over and see someone who is in a reflective stance; eyes closed, hands in the central area or in their pockets, and it makes me want to be more reflective like them. It looks like [it is just] them and God and I want to join in. (personal communication, October 25, 2012)

Participant C asserted that when one person in the crowd stands in worship, usually the rest of the crowd will follow, even if they were not asked. He asserted, "maybe it is a formality, maybe it is conformity, [however], I feel like it is a corporate thing when you are standing...and more personal" when one is sitting (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant B, C, and D discussed their conjecture that the students at the nondenominational institution knew they were being filmed for a live simulcast therefore influencing their high energy level. Participant C said that now that the Baptist institution used cameras to film him leading worship, he was more aware of how he presented himself on stage. Participant C and D noted that the cameras showed the front of the crowd and the stage, and participant D wondered why the camera never "did a whole turn so that we could see the athletes sitting in the back doing their homework" (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

The participants were then asked how they came to their own personal nonverbal style of worship. Participant E said that she attended her first worship service when she was about fourteen years old. She was standing next to a girl who was in constant motion and whose hands were raised. She said that she was confused as to what was happening but she felt she had to raise her hands as well, without understanding what she was doing. Shortly after this event, she became a Christian and came to understand that the raising of hands means *praise the Lord.*

Participant B asserted that when she was growing up in church, the people who raised their "hands and stuff like that were usually the weird ones" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). The people on stage at her church were the ones who performed the arm motions and the audience consisted of people with their hands down and not much movement. She claimed that she was very self conscious in her worship style; however, she started to "get out of [her] comfort zone" whenever she adopted the worship posture of a friend. Her friend would stand with her "hands...right in front of her chest...linked really tight but open at the same time" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). She was even surprised that at the Baptist

institution the students moved as much as they did in comparison with her early worship experiences in a Baptist church. Participant B claimed that at her church,

> We had a couple of hands raised, but usually they did not break a certain height barrier or [one would feel] really exposed. I still feel awkward raising my hands above a certain level. There is a bubble that was trained into me by the way that my church was. I don't get to the point of being exposed in a group like that. [At my church] we weren't dancing fools or anything like that so it has been a weird culture shock [at the Baptist institution]. I feel like I am not exposed [enough]. (personal communication, October 25, 2012)

Participant A echoed Participant B and said that his church was "pretty traditional and there was not a whole lot of hands raised" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). However, while at the Baptist university he was required [for a class objective] to experience a church that "was not of the [Baptist] denomination, and not of [my own] personal ethnicity" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). For his assignment he attended what he characterized as "an integrated Jewish church [that was] predominately Jewish" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). While at the Jewish church he was exposed to worship that he had never experienced before; there was a dance team on stage and the congregation joined in the dancing. He asserted that after his experience, he was more apt to "break out of my comfort zone" and move (tap his foot or do the "official worship twist") while worshipping (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Participant C shared his surprise at some of the answers that the other participants gave to the question about personal worship styles. He credited his church youth group meetings for influencing his worship style. His youth group was characterized by a great deal of physical

motion and hand raising. He recalled a man that he looked up to as a spiritual leader who would take off his shoes and glasses as an outward expression of removing distractions. The man "would get on his knees and down on the floor; he'd move, clap and always be in motion" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). When Participant C started leading in worship, he explained that,

> Especially [during my] junior and senior year, most of the time there was at least one song where we all would just jump around the room. I remember coming to [the Baptist university] and having to get used to the fact that that wasn't a standard as much, that even hands raised and things like that was just not as much of a standard. So I definitely adapted things from there. You probably won't see me go up to lead [in chapel] and tell everyone to jump anytime soon. (personal communication, October 25, 2012)

Finally, the participants were asked if they had any other comment on worship in higher academic institutions, and only Participant A responded. He assumed that at the Baptist university, the musical approach during chapel contributed most to the "bland kind of nonverbal way of worshipping" in the Baptist institution chapel services (personal communication, October 25, 2012). He argued that if the standard for worship at the Baptist institution was a consistent high energy band like at the nondenominational institution that maybe the students nonverbal behaviors in worship would be more demonstrative.

Focus Group at the Nondenominational Institution

A seven minute muted video of the worship the Baptist university chapel service was shown to focus group participants at the nondenominational university, and the participants were asked to describe their general impressions of the Baptist institution's chapel service.

Participant A claimed that the students at the Baptist institution were engaged and some had their hands lifted. And, the students at the Baptist institution were "worshipping as much as they [felt] comfortable in that setting" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

This response encouraged the follow-up question, "What do you mean by *setting*?" Participant A responded,

> Sometimes in a setting that is more traditional, like Baptist or Methodist, the freedom to move about as much in worship is not as deemed appropriate. So, in that setting, since it is a Baptist [university], there might be a standard that [the students] feel they have to stay within. However, I did feel that they were engaged as much as they could be. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant B immediately noticed the dim lighting at the Baptist institution, claiming that subconsciously lighting can influence emotion and the nonverbal way people worship. He discussed the difference in lighting at the nondenominational institution and the Baptist institution, claiming that at the nondenominational institution, the chapel service lighting was brighter.

Participant D said, "the way the [the Baptist institution students] worshipped looked differently than it would in a more charismatic setting like here. [However], you can't gage authenticity on expression" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). Participant D noticed many of the the Baptist institution students singing and claimed that it was more of a standard to sing at the Baptist institution rather than raise hands like at the nondenominational institution.

The participants were then asked to describe specific examples of nonverbal behaviors that were revealed at the Baptist institution's chapel service. Participant A noticed the Baptist

institution students were “swaying back and forth” and Participant E noticed “some people with [their] arms folded and some with [their] hands in their pockets - which is something you don’t see much at [the nondenominational institution’s] chapel services” (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

Participant A claimed that the nondenominational institution it is mandatory to go to chapel; therefore, not everyone wants to be there and she explained this was evidenced by observing their nonverbal behavior in some of the services. Following Participant A’s comment, the participants discussed how they believe that many of the student athletes did not always want to be at chapel. Participant B said,

> My freshman year I lived on the soccer floor and we originally sat right near the front by one of the cameras. And then three or four weeks into the semester, we were moved to the back row. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant E claimed that at the nondenominational institution, chapel is “sometimes sad because they have the cameras out there and whoever [nonverbally] *worships,* they are going to be [assigned to sit] in the front” (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

Participant C stated that unlike the Baptist institution, most of the nondenominational institution’s chapel services are filmed and eventually broadcasted on television. Therefore, the services at the nondenominational institution are timed and Participant C claimed that engaging in worship can be more difficult because of the time constraints. She further explained a Sunday night worship service at the nondenominational institution that was neither filmed, nor timed, nor required for students to attend. Participant C, who has been involved with the worship at the

nondenominational institution's chapels, was then asked to discuss the worship service held on Sunday night. She stated,

> It's a little freer. There are more songs [and it is longer]. It is in a smaller room, it is more confined, more intimate, and the lights are lower. When you are on stage in chapel, you are performing. You have to keep a smile. Make sure you jump. You can't clap because of the [microphones], you have to fake clap. I feel like a lot of it is performance, but [the people on stage] are worshipping; their hearts are there. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant B hypothesized that there could be a different feel in the two chapel services because the nondenominational institution students are required to go to chapel twice a week, whereas the Baptist institution students are only required to attend 96 chapels throughout a four year period. He also claimed that chapel becomes like another class and explained,

> At this stage in life, [students] want to have some sort of freedom... When you have some sort of big brother figure telling you to be at this place, at this specific time, in this specific seat (because we all have assigned rows [in chapel] to keep attendance) subconsciously you fight it. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant D claimed that at the nondenominational institution the students on stage have to be more aware of how they appear because of the vast audience watching on television. She stated that there was,

> A lot more [demonstrative] nonverbal behavior with the worship team at the nondenominational institution. They have to put a lot more effort into what people are seeing through their television and not just what are people seeing in chapel. They want it

> to be appealing, joyful, and reflect well to people who are watching. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant A, who has been on a team that has prepared and led in chapel, claimed that the people who plan chapel and directed her band want "you to put your best foot forward" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). The bands are always well practiced and well prepared before they perform.

When the participants were asked to describe specific nonverbal behaviors associated with the nondenominational institution's chapel service all the participants chimed in at once, "raising of hands." Participant A said that some people will dance in the aisle or the far sides of the room. Participant A and C conversed about people who dance with flags or streamers on the side aisles and participant C claimed,

> The flag people are usually older. There are some branches of charismatic churches that incorporate [this type of] worship dance as an expression of worship. [At the nondenominational university's chapel] they are allowed to be off to the side during the first main song which is typically a more upbeat song. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

The next question asked was, "If you happen to glance at another worshipper, to what extent does their nonverbal worship style influence you?"

Participant C claimed that there were times when she did not want to raise her hands in worship, but she would look at the people raising their hands next to her and it would encourage her to raise her hands as well. Participant D claimed,

> Whether I am super expressive or not, if I am in an atmosphere where all forms of expression are accepted and represented, [I am] going to feel more free to do or express my worship however I want. Whereas, if I was in a service like at the Baptist institution, I would probably still want to express however I felt I should; but there would be thoughts going on in the back of my mind like, 'no one else is raising their hands.' (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

The participants were then asked how they came to their own personal nonverbal style of worship. Participant C explained that she was raised in an environment where she was able to see many forms and expressions of worship. Therefore, growing up, she struggled with what nonverbal expressions were acceptable or right for her as an individual. Now that she is in college, she knows that when she raises her hands "it is between me and God and whatever I do, it doesn't matter to me what the person next to me [is thinking]" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

Participant E and D echoed Participant C and said that their worship style has grown and adapted to their understanding of what worship truly means. At one point in Participant E's life, he was embarrassed to raise his hands, but now, he does not care what others think about his worship style.

Participant D was also raised in an environment where she was able to see many forms and expressions of worship:

> There was a [two or three year] period when I wasn't even in a traditional church. So my worship times [then] consisted of me in my room, turning on some worship music and just worshipping [God] however [I felt] comfortable. So, when I moved back into a

> traditional church setting that kind of [worship style] stuck [with me]. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant F claimed that her worship style was aided by the way her mother worshipped in church:

> She goes crazy, jumps up and down, and is very loud. [She] screams and claps and she is crazy. I would always ask her why she did that and she would always say that it didn't matter what other people thought. She definitely helped me [realize that] it doesn't really matter what other people think. Everyone expresses themselves differently. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant B explained that he would raise his hands in church when he was around the age of 8 or 9 because he would see other people raising their hands. During that time in his life raising his hands was just a physical action. However, as he became older he learned that the raising of hands is a "method of adoration or praise" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

The participants responded to the following question: To what extent is worship behavior a learned/taught behavior? Participant C stated that nonverbal behavior in worship is,

> A learned thing, it really is. If you have never seen anyone [raise their hands in worship] before, you probably wouldn't be raising your hands. But if you have seen it, then you know that it has to mean something. So I think that definitely a part of it is learned, but eventually a person grows and [their worship style becomes] more specific to them. [To an extent] it is learned, but through time and maturity it becomes something else. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant F claimed that worship behavior is "learned, but at the same time it is self taught" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

The final question asked was: "To what extent do nonverbal behaviors represent a social identity?" The other participants agreed with Participant E who asserted, "it is a completely different atmosphere [at the nondenominational institution's chapel service] when *Souls 'A Fire* is [on stage]" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). Participant C described *Souls 'A Fire*:

> [They] are basically more of the feel of a black gospel choir. I love it. I just think it's a little strange how people change so drastically when this group comes. People jump up and down more. You see different people that normally don't jump up and down, jump up and down. The atmosphere changes so drastically. I love it, but at the same time, it kind of makes me angry. I just think, if you are going to worship, worship every time. Don't worship just because that person [or group] is on stage. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant E shared the following:

> My freshman year, during a revival one service, we had [a band] and everyone was raising their hands and worshipping like normal chapel. The next morning we had *Souls 'A Fire* up there and all the white people were just standing there looking and right when they [started playing], I remember looking over and [a] black guy got out of his row and [ran down] the aisles. (personal communication, November 6, 2012)

Participant C argued that the worship style of *Souls 'A Fire* represent a type of worship to which some of the nondenominational institution students relate due to the type of worship

style that was present in their home churches - - the churches that fostered them as they grew as Christians.

The participants continued to discuss how the nondenominational institution students worship when *Souls 'A Fire* is on stage. Participant E said that whenever a black person or *Souls 'A Fire* performs a gospel song during the offertory at the nondenominational institution's chapel "all of the black people will stand up instantly" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

Discussion

After an evaluation of the literature, the interview with D. Jernigan, and the focus group discussions, the data was assessed in order to shed light on the stated research questions: 1) What are specific nonverbal behaviors associated with chapel services at the Baptist institution and the nondenominational institution; 2) What are specific nonverbal behaviors that are unique to both religious contexts and why; and 3) To what extent is *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) (*organizational identity*) reflected in the worship behavior seen at the two institutions?

In respect to the first research question, the data revealed that many of the nondenominational university students are demonstrative in their worship, whereas many of the Baptist university students are less demonstrative. Jernigan noticed that when he led worship at the chapel service for the nondenominational institution the students were "very outwardly demonstrative" (personal communication, October 17, 2012). After watching a seven minute video of the the nondenominational institution chapel service, participants in the focus group at the Baptist institution noticed that the the nondenominational institution audience, as a whole, was in constant motion. The Baptist institution participants also noticed that the the nondenominational institution students had open eyes, were very aware of other's around them,

had high energy, and had very open body language. According to the participants in the focus group from the nondenominational institution, the specific nonverbal behaviors associated with the nondenominational institution's chapel service included; raised hands, jumping, some dancing, and a demonstrative and joyful worship team on stage.

In the worship context of chapel on the Baptist institution's campus, many of the Baptist institution students were found to be less physically demonstrative in their worship. According to the participants in the focus group from the Baptist institution, the specific nonverbal behaviors associated with the Baptist institution's chapel service included; hands in pockets, some hands raised, some heads bowed, not much movement, closed eyes, fixated gaze (not looking around), and generally closed body language. One of the Baptist university focus group participants even claimed that the worship at the Baptist institution was almost a "bland kind of nonverbal way of worshipping" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). After watching a seven minute video of the Baptist institution chapel service, participants in the focus group from the nondenominational institution noticed that at the Baptist institution, students were swaying back and forth, there were some arms folded, there were some hands raised, and some people with their hands in their pockets.

The participants of both focus groups did not tend to focus on the specific nonverbal behaviors because there seemed to be an understanding of the differences among the individuals without stating them explicitly. However, the participants stated the specific nonverbal behaviors associated with each chapel service when they were asked. Primarily, both focus groups concentrated on discussing why there was a difference in nonverbal behaviors at each chapel service.

Both focus groups seemed to agree that the contextual issues such as lighting and the type of music played, have an effect on nonverbal behaviors in worship; the Baptist institution lights are dim, the nondenominational institution lighting is bright, and the nondenominational institution music is more upbeat. Another issue that both focus groups discussed was the effect filming for television has on the nonverbal expressions of the nondenominational institution students. The nondenominational institution students, especially the performers on stage, must be conscious of what others are seeing.

In accordance with the performers on stage, both focus group discussions, as well as the interview with D. Jernigan claimed that the leadership on stage greatly influences the nonverbal behaviors of the worshipping participants. Focus group participants from each focus group discussion claimed, the way the worship leaders worshipped was the way that the nondenominational institution audience worshipped. This was evidenced by the fact that their nonverbal behaviors generally mirrored what the leadership was doing on stage (personal communication, October 25, 2012). The fact that the nondenominational institution students' nonverbal acts closely mirrored the leadership is supported by Jernigan's claim: "More often then not, however the leadership worships is how the people are going to worship" (personal communication, October 17, 2012).

Furthermore, the focus group discussions and interview with D. Jernigan indicated that an individual's background and understanding of what nonverbal behaviors in a worship context represent, greatly influence nonverbal worship style. Background differences predominantly have to do with the church the individual worshipped in at a younger age as well as denominational differences in worship behaviors. For example, Jernigan claimed, "the [students

at the nondenominational institution] are taught very early on to come in expectation to worship, where at the Baptist institution, maybe the kids didn't grow up in that tradition - - where they're taught [to enter a worship experience expecting to worship]" (personal communication, October, 17, 2012).

The Baptist institution focus group participants did not discuss church denominational effects on nonverbal behavior in a worship context. However, this seemed to be one of the main topics of conversation that emerged among the nondenominational institution focus group participants. D. Jernigan claimed that many of the nondenominational institution students were brought up in a demonstrative/charismatic church, whereas many of the Baptist institution students were brought up in a Baptist church. One of the nondenominational institution focus group participants argued that the Baptist institution chapel service involves a Baptist setting, and in a setting like that "the freedom to move about in worship is not as deemed appropriate" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). Another one of the nondenominational institution focus group participants claimed that the nondenominational institution chapel service was more of a demonstrative/charismatic denominational setting.

The student participants in both focus groups expressed an understanding that nonverbal behaviors in worship were learned from earlier worship experiences. Also, the data revealed that the participants who had an understanding of what certain demonstrative nonverbal behaviors (hands held high, open expression of worship) meant, they were more likely to perform the nonverbal act. For example, participant A from the Baptist institution's focus group was never demonstrative in his worship until he was exposed to a demonstrative approach to worship when he attended an 'integrated Jewish' church. After that experience, he felt comfortable being more

expressive in worship. Many of the participants from the focus groups claimed that there were times in their lives when they would raise their hands, but they did not know what it meant. The lack of understanding made them feel uncomfortable, but once they developed an understanding of what the act meant to them, they could perform the act with more ease.

Participant B, a student from the Baptist institution, argued that she did not feel comfortable being outwardly demonstrative in her worship. She asserted that, "there is a bubble that was trained into me by the way that my church was" (personal communication, October 25, 2012). Her 'bubble' referred to a confinement she felt she had to stay in. For example, she would not raise her hands past a certain point. Moreover, this 'bubble' that participant B claimed to have that restricted her worship style, supports the claim that an individual's early worship experience greatly influences nonverbal worship style.

In response to the third research question, the 'bubble' explanation, along with the literature review, the interview, and focus group discussions ultimately indicated that nonverbal behavior in a Christian university's worship context serves as an expression of *social identity* as well as *organizational identity*. Birdwhistell (1970) claimed that body motion always contains some type of meaning, body motion is patterned, body motion is deeply connected to that of the social system to which the human belongs, and body motion affects behaviors of other members of a group. Birdwhistell's claim further substantiates the *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) and *organizational identity theory* argument. SIT and organizational identity theories assert that people tend to define themselves in terms of social categories, not as individuals (Johnson, Rudd, Neuendorf, and Jian, 2010). SIT also claims that how people view themselves socially often dictates their behavior (Stets and Burke, 2000).

In *identity theory*, the focus is more on how an individual relates and identifies with a role, and not a group. In this specific role, there are expectations that must be met, and "these expectations and meanings form a set of standards that guide behavior" (Stets and Burke (2000), p. 225). In the focus group discussion at the Baptist institution, one of the participants concluded that it is often the ministry majors who sat close to the front in chapel and raised their hands. He hypothesized that the ministry majors feel they have a role they have to fulfill in a worship setting. The ministry majors feel they have to be a good example for others around them.

D. Jernigan argued, "the way people worship really does identify them with certain groups" (personal communication, October 17, 2012). Jernigan went on to discuss how a church in Australia known as *Hillsong* is going to have certain nonverbal behaviors in worship that are unique to that church simply because that is just what happens. In the nondenominational institution's focus group, participant A argued that the Baptist institution was a Baptist setting and hypothesized that in a less nonverbally or physically expressive worship context there, "might be a standard that [the students] feel they have to stay within" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

The nondenominational institution focus group discussed how a worship team known as *Souls 'A Fire* would lead worship at their chapel services and the worship atmosphere would completely change. *Souls 'A Fire,* a focus group participant explained, has "the feel of a black gospel choir" (personal communication, November 6, 2012). Another focus group participant at the nondenominational institution explained that when *Souls 'A Fire* played during an offertory, a majority of the black students stand up immediately. The black students at the

nondenominational institution, by standing up during the offertory, express how they socially identify with the worship style of *Souls 'A Fire.*

A standard of worship behavior has been shaped at both institutions. It appears that an individual tends to nonverbally mirror the majority of the identifying group. Of course there are exceptions. Nevertheless, the participants from both focus groups claimed their nonverbal worship style generally matched others around them. When asked, *to what extent a nearby worshiper's nonverbal worship style influences the experience*, participant A from the Baptist institution claimed that when he glances at someone who is reflective (head bowed, eyes closed) in their worship, he wants to be reflective as well. Participant E from the Baptist institution's focus group claimed that she felt more comfortable to raise her hands when she sat near the front at the Baptist institution's chapel service because the people around her would have their hands raised as well. Participant C at the Baptist institution claimed that when one person in the crowd stood up in worship, more than likely, the rest of the worshippers would follow suit.

At the nondenominational institution, participant C claimed that there were times when she did not want to raise her hands in worship, but she would look at the person raising his/her hands next to her and it would encourage her to raise her hands as well. Participant D argued that if she attended the Baptist institution's chapel service she "would probably still want to express [myself] however I felt I should, but there would be thoughts going on in the back of my mind like, 'no one else is raising their hands.'" (personal communication, November 6, 2012).

In terms of SIT and how the theory is played out in worship contexts, this study emphasized participants reactions to their denominational environment. Chapel at both institutions are social, collegiate environments. Within both contexts, there are social restrictions

and expectations that individuals consciously or unconsciously follow. Therefore, whether individuals are socially identifying with a worship style from their early worship experiences (participant B's 'bubble' at the Baptist institution, the black students at the nondenominational institution), socially identifying with a specific role (ministry major's, "athletes in the back," *Souls 'A Fire*), socially identifying with the nonverbal worship styles of their peers around them, or socially identifying with the inexplicably stated organizational standards of nonverbal behavior, the worshippers at both institutions nonverbally express these identities.

Conclusion

There has been minimal research to date on the significance of nonverbal behaviors in a worship context. However, as Birdwhistell's (1970) research indicated, nonverbal behavior as an expression of a social identity is not a new concept. He argued that body motion is a function of the social system to which an individual belongs and always contains some type of meaning. In the social environment of the two religious based, higher education academic institutions, (a Baptist university and a nondenominational university from the south) chapel services represent captive audiences of students generated by requiring chapel attendance. In these environments, the nonverbal behaviors of students during worship revealed specific characteristics about the university represented, the individuals performing the nonverbal acts, and the individual's social identity.

Worship, in evangelical Christian circles, is generally a spiritual practice. Bible study is a spiritual practice in the same circle. In fact, Christian's disciple other Christians by teaching them the spiritual practice of bible study. However, Christians are failing to disciple other Christians in the spiritual practice of worship. This is evidenced by the fact that nonverbal behavior in

worship was not discussed in the focus group participants early church/worship experiences. Throughout this process, data revealed that the discussion about nonverbal behaviors in worship or worship style in general, is often seen as taboo. In sharing this research topic, others often became defensive. In the interview with D. Jernigan, he argued that as a young boy he attended his local Baptist church, and he was often confused as to why there were references of nonverbal worship behaviors in the Bible (dancing, raising of hands, bowing ones knees) and yet the people in his church and family never talked about them. In fact, my interview was his first formal discussion on the topic in his 20 years of ministry.

Furthermore, this research did not specifically assess the lack of metacommunication regarding nonverbal behaviors in worship. Therefore, I will conduct further research that focuses on the effects metacommunication has on an individual or group's nonverbal worship behavior. Additionally, the following question will be added to this study: *What is the role of metacommunication when assessing nonverbal behaviors in worship contexts?* Moreover, I plan to expand on the data posed in this research project by conducting a focus group interview with students at a Presbyterian college in the south. I will also conduct an interview with a minister of worship, Caleb Lester (Highland Park Baptist Park in Edmond, OK) due to his experience with each of the denominations included in this study.

Finally, one aspect of worship that researchers are unable to study is the motivation of the heart. The research conducted in this project focused on the social mores behind nonverbal behaviors in a worship context. In the end, to an evangelical Christian who regularly worships, the motivation behind nonverbal behaviors in worship is a motivation of the heart. Perhaps this

project will inspire more discussion regarding the extent to which nonverbal behavior motivates one's soul to further connect with his/her Creator.

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Appendix

Definitions

In order to clarify the direction and conceptual premise of this project, specific terms were assessed for meaning. Specifically, the following definitions were deemed as crucial: *kinesics, nonverbal communication/nonverbal behavior, worship, chapel, demonstrative, denomination, social Identity theory, organizational identity*

Kinesics, as defined by Henry Birdwhistell (1970), is the study of the way in which body movements serve as a form of nonverbal communication. This project utilized Birdwhistell's description of kinesics and focused primarily on what specific body movements, in three different worship contexts, served to communicate.

Dynel (2010) defined *nonverbal communication* (NVC) as "human communication via body movement," and NVC will be understood in the same light for this project (p. 423). Also, the term *nonverbal behavior* will serve to describe any body movement or facial expression expressed in a worship context.

Worship is understood and defined in numerous ways. However, for the purpose of this paper, worship is defined as a set aside time for evangelical Christian groups or individuals to express *praise, reverence,* or *adoration* for God. This time is generally marked by music and singing.

The nondenominational institution, the Presbyterian institution, and the Baptist institution are both private Christian liberal arts universities. As a requirement for graduation, the students at each university must attend weekly *chapel* services that are designed to instruct and encourage spiritual growth. However, the requirements for each differ in some ways. At The Baptist Institution, chapel services are held every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., with an occasional Monday and Friday service, depending on the week. The Baptist Institution students must attend 96

chapel services over a four year period in order to graduate. That is an average of twelve chapel attendances per semester. At The Nondenominational Institution, chapel services are held every Wednesday and Friday at 11:00 a.m. The The Nondenominational Institution students are required to attend every chapel service, twice a week, with two unexcused absences. That is an average of about 28 chapel services a semester. Each chapel service has a time set aside for worship at the beginning and then preceding worship a speaker will teach, generally from the Bible.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003) defined *demonstration* as "a public display of group feelings toward a person or cause" (p. 307). The dictionary briefly defined *demonstrative* as the following; "characterized or established by demonstration," "marked by display of feeling," and "inclined to display feelings openly" (p. 307). For this paper, demonstrative will be recognized in the same light. People or groups of people who are referred to as demonstrative in the following pages are people who outwardly display emotion/affection in one or more of the following ways; raising of hands, jumping up and down, dancing, clapping, bowing one's head, and sitting on bended knees.

Denomination generally refers to different branches of the Christian religion. Specifically for this project, the different branches are as follows: *Charismatic, Baptist,* and *non-denominational.* This project could not escape the notion that denomination could play a part in nonverbal behavior in a worship context. However, this paper does not aim to describe in detail the theological differences of the mentioned denominations.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) asserts that people tend to define themselves in terms of social categories, not as individuals (Johnson, Rudd, Neuendorf, and Jian, 2010). SIT also claims that where people view themselves socially often dictates their behavior (Stets and Burke, 2000).

SIT plays a vital role in an individual's *organizational identity.* Organizational identity argues that an organization provides a social circle for an individual and in turn a social identity. Similar to SIT, people tend to define themselves in terms of their organization (Scott, 2007).