

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND WORSHIPERS

**An Analysis of Nonverbal Communication Behaviors Enacted by Christian Worshipers of
Various Denominations**

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Abstract

This study seeks to determine how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices within the Christian faith. Previous studies have looked at specific elements related to music, classified the common behaviors and beliefs of denominations, and provided descriptions of nonverbal communication cues. However, no study has looked at the intersection of these factors. In order to determine how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices, a qualitative data gathering method in the form of an open-ended survey was distributed to 40 participants of a preliminary screening survey, providing 26 responses. Participants were of Nondenominational, Baptist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox denominations. Aside from finding overarching themes and commonalities between individuals of the same denomination, denominations members of diverse denominations reported differences in expressiveness, comfort, and appropriateness in enacting certain forms of nonverbal communication, willingness to explore worship beyond customary denominational tradition, and absence of particular nonverbal communication cues. Due to the limited amount of participants in this study, and the overall lack of denominational diversity represented, these findings cannot be representative of denominational norms.

Keywords: denomination, worship, nonverbal communication, music, expressiveness, norms

Chapter 1: Introduction

This document provides a proposed research study to unveil how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices.

The following information will encompass a detailed response by providing the appropriate background information, the problem, and the significance of the topic within the professional communication realm. First, this proposal will provide the necessary information surrounding the research variables: denomination, worship, and nonverbal communication. Then it will explain the current state of Christianity within the United States in regard to culture, climate, and major events. A thorough explanation of the topic will be provided, including its relevance and methodology. Next, the significance of the study will be explained. The first chapter of this document seeks to introduce the study.

Background of the study

Expression of Denomination, Worship, and Nonverbal Communication

Primarily, it is significant to provide a brief overview of the most pertinent topics this document will concern denomination, worship, and nonverbal communication. Although Christians are ultimately defined by their claim to be Christ-followers, there are a vast amount of ways one can choose to interpret and practice the teachings of the Bible. The numerous interpretations and elements of emphasis across Christianity have led to the creation of denominations.

Denominations are commonly defined as gatherings of believers within a particular religion that share similar beliefs and practices, working together to maintain that system (Rhodes, 2015, pp. 13-14). Denominations are rather recent within the history of Christianity. The most noteworthy claim to denominations began in the 1500s with Martin Luther, a German

monk's 95 theses. These 95 theses challenged the Catholic church, a predominant church group at the time. Luther's work paved the way for many other reformists and created the first major Christian movement – the Protestant Reformation. Ultimately, denominations are significant because they classify the nuances of one's faith and belief in the myriad of topics discussed in the Bible (Rhodes, 2015, pp. 13-14). Denominations have the power to shape what one thinks and how one practices their faith. Denominations can edify some methods of thinking while possibly dismissing others. One's denomination can influence their behavior both in and outside of the church. Denominations tend to separate Christians based on what divides them as opposed to what unites them. Due to this separation, it is possible that differences in worship climates have emerged. Now that an overview of denominations has been discussed, it is important to discuss worship.

Worship is a common practice across Christianity, regardless of denomination. Worship, in this context, is considered a spiritual behavior recognizing, thanking, and edifying the Lord for what He has done (Abernethy, 2006; Brown 2022; Merrill, 2000). Despite worship encompassing a variety of elements such as prayer, devotion, and lifestyle, this document will specifically focus on the corporate nature of worship within the modern-day church. In most churches and denominations, corporate worship consists of a gathering of Christians who devote an amount of time to worshipping God together through singing. However, the act of worship is riddled with a myriad of nuances due to different denominations' practices and beliefs. Worship is a quintessential aspect of the Christian faith because it connects the worshiper with God and may provide a vulnerability and authenticity that is not circulated in other climates. Similarly, corporate worship allows individuals to connect with one another on a deeper spiritual level because of the affective and emotional attitudes that are commonly present during worship

(Bayne & Nagasawa, 2006). The attitudes present during worship can be that of awe, gratitude, repentance, and surrender, as well as others. These attitudes can be portrayed through an individual's nonverbal communication in the respective worship setting. After explaining what denominations and worship are, it is noteworthy to provide background information regarding nonverbal communication.

The focus of this study is on the nonverbal characteristics demonstrated in worship with the hopes of discovering denominational influence. Nonverbal communication is the act of sending and receiving messages without the use of written or spoken words (Soukoup, 2019). Nonverbal communication consists of elements such as face and body movements (kinesics), physical distance (proxemics), touch (haptics), and eyes (oculesics), among other elements (Soukoup, 2019). All of these elements are present within the corporate worship context, but little work has been done to uncover precise nonverbal communication in a worship setting. Nonverbal communication comprises up to 93% of human communication, making it particularly critical to this discussion (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967). Within worship, nonverbal communication is salient because it may depict one's responsiveness, connection to God, and attitude of surrender, authenticity, comfort, and reverence. It may aid, amplify, or substitute the words sung in the worship song. Since an overview of various forms of expression related to this study has been stated, the current state of Christianity will be provided.

The modern state of Christianity in the United States

Across the United States, Christianity faces a rapid decline in church attendance and affiliation (Pew Research Center, 2019). Despite very limited research, it has been suggested that only four percent of Generation Z adhere to a biblical worldview (Morrow, 2018). Aside from the steady number of individuals from previous generations leaving the Christian faith, the

second-youngest generation remains the most Christ-deprived (Pew Research Center, 2019). Recently, the ex-evangelical movement has taken over popular social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. An ex-evangelical individual is disaffiliated with their religious group (Nica, 2020), in this case, Christianity. The primary argument of ex-evangelicals remains that the secular world provides a greater sense of acceptance and well-being than their religiously-affiliated communities. From a social media standpoint, these individuals often produce satirical or blatant censoring of Christian practices and beliefs through their digital content. They tend to feature individuals who are in their early 20s to mid-30s. The ex-evangelical movement may be a result of the younger generation's willingness to question religious tradition. Within the context of worship, this questioning and resistance may be related to elements such as inauthentic worship or emotionally manipulative worship practices that have gained Generation Z's attention. Lastly, in recent years, a plethora of Western megachurches and organizations have faced various scandals and drama that have caught public attention. For example, popular churches such as Hillsong Church have alleged reports of sexual misconduct and mental abuse circulating throughout their congregations (Graham, 2022). Similarly, the Southern Baptist Convention released the names of 14 individuals who had committed some act of church abuse, dating back to the 1960s (Southern Baptist Convention, 2022). These scandals can portray hypocrisy to other Christians and the unbelieving world around them.

Despite recent controversy within Christian circles, the evidence of the good news of Christ is undeniable. Riza and Yelena (2014) have found that church attendance has been linked to spiritual benefits, such as connection with God, and social benefits, such as community and friendship among believers. The church is proven to connect individuals in both the natural and spiritual realms, providing community and a sense of being known. Participation in a religious

group, such as Christianity, has been discovered to increase one's sense of well-being. The shared belief among congregants is linked to a higher quality of life for individuals (Brown et al., 2021). Although the number of Christians in the United States is declining, approximately 2.7 million individuals across the world convert to Christianity every year (World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001). Therefore, the Gospel is still prevalent, alive, working in the hearts of people, and changing lives. Millions of lost individuals are being saved and hearing the truth of the Gospel.

In terms of division, the modern Protestant church is predominately divided on the grounds of Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. Fundamentalism, at its roots, is a movement attempting to preserve order and social relations to preserve religious identity, valuing consistency and tradition within the church. The institution of these actions is highly contextually and culturally dependent (Emerson & Hartman, 2006, p. 121). Evangelicalism, however, loosely translates to "the Gospel" and focuses on the conversion of unbelievers to Christianity, activism, and an active call of the faith toward mission work and social reformation (Joustra, 2019). According to the Pew Research Center (2021), the most recent data provides that 60% of Protestants consider themselves to be evangelical, while approximately 40% do not. The differences in theology and approach display how divisive Christianity has become and serves as a possible catalyst in the differences among denominations. In recent years, denominational influence has been decreasing while Nondenominational churches are growing (Ellingson, 2009). The presence of Nondenominationalism may blur the lines between different forms of theology and modalities of thought.

It is also important to note that among the historical denominational division of churches, the Church has also been divided by its worship style. Some churches practice liturgical worship,

while others practice contemporary worship. Liturgical worship is considered a more formal style of worship, a fixed agenda of practicing worship. Typically, liturgical worship consists of the specific order in which traditional hymns are sung, prayers are prayed, scripture is read, and service is constructed. Roman Catholics, Presbyterian, Orthodox, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches tend to practice liturgical worship. Liturgical worship is often criticized for its ritualistic and repetitive nature, with no emotional or spiritual connection to God (Webber, 2007). However, others enjoy freedom from subjectivism and find the collective nature of liturgical worship beneficial (Weber & Lester, 2012). On the other hand, contemporary worship is characterized by contemporary English and contemporary issues, strategic targeting through adaptation, matching music styles of popular songs, extended singing times, generally greater expressiveness, informality, and reliance on technical equipment. Originating in the 1960s, it is considered the worship music of the modern church (Lester & Lim. 2017, pp. 3-6). Overall, this is salient to the study at hand because it is important to note how Christian culture currently presents itself, as worship is a major part of the Christian life. Worship is often one of the most noted elements of Christian culture, transformation, and ridicule, with special consideration and attention brought to church members nonverbal communication.

Problem statement

An individual's denomination plays a role in their practices and beliefs within the Christian faith (Rhodes, 2015, pp. 13-14), possibly including that of worship. Despite the influential nature of one's denomination, research fails to discuss how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices. The discovery of this information is relevant to bring greater attention to the ways Christians are divided and what factors separate different denominations. This can provide necessary information for individuals

facing the task of explaining why they subscribe to a particular denomination. The hope of this study is to encourage unity and acceptance across denominations by displaying that there is more than one way to engage in nonverbal communication during worship. This study argues that individuals should not be judged, scrutinized, or separated by the ways in which they choose to communicate nonverbally during worship. However, the study itself will only have the potential to display differences in nonverbal communication during worship. The general purpose of this study is to discover the nonverbal cues enacted by individuals of various denominations through a qualitative survey.

RQ: How do members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices within the Christian faith?

To uncover the aforementioned information, this qualitative study will use a qualitative survey containing members of diverse denominations by asking relevant questions regarding what nonverbal communication methods they exhibit during worship. Now that the problem being studied has been stated, the professional contribution of the study will be proposed.

Professional Significance

The study of how worshippers of different denominations use nonverbal communication in worship is pivotal to uncover for various reasons. Existing studies consider the meaning of worship within a particular denomination, note the role of worship leaders, provide the significance and spiritual formation of worship, and contribute to a definition of worship, among other variables (Abernethy, et al. 2015; Brown et al., 2022; Richardson, 2021; Zaluchu, 2021). Despite these findings, no existing research currently considers the intersection of denomination, worship, and nonverbal communication, making this issue worthy of study. The existing breach in research is worthy of consideration because nonverbal communication is an ever-present

phenomenon and particularly relevant in a corporate worship context. Additionally, much of the findings surrounding worship fail to unify the act of worship, leading to mixed findings that need to be settled. The only collective claim regarding worship remains that the concept itself is abstract in nature and challenging to classify (Stevenson, 2020). With the discrepancy in assertions, it is important to have a unified explanation and definition of worship and its related characteristics to increase understanding of the abstract nature of worship. Failure to consider the worth of the study leaves vital concepts without answers within an act that is extremely prominent in Christian culture. All in all, this study is particularly relevant within academia because existing studies omit the intersection of nonverbal communication, denomination, and worship and lack a proper definition of worship and its related behaviors.

Likewise, discovering how members of different denominations utilize nonverbal communication during worship is cardinal for the following reasons. Primarily, the study is salient because the role denomination plays in one's spiritual outlook is extremely overlooked. As previously stated, one's denomination shapes their beliefs and practices (Rhodes, 2015, pp. 13-14). These beliefs and practices are divisive enough to separate the body of Christ. However, current research only describes the denomination itself, not the specific nonverbal communication enacted by worshippers of diverse denominations. Not considering the effects of an individual's denomination closes the door to unveiling the significance of denominations with respect to behaviors like evangelism, prayer, communion, biblical worldview, popular culture involvement, and worship. Additionally, this study is relevant because awareness of continuity and differences across denominations' worship can help denominations understand one another better. Within any aggregation of Christians, it is probable that not all individuals subscribe to the same denomination. Thus, awareness of differences can potentially help broaden individuals'

latitude of acceptance when viewing different nonverbal communication displays during worship. The awareness of differences may help individuals appreciate worship styles other than their own and not be distracted, discouraged, or uncomfortable when worshipping alongside others. In summary, this study is salient due to many individual's dismissal of denominations' role in spiritual practices, the failure to address how members of various denominations worship differently can aid in mutual understanding and acceptance.

Similarly, this study holds immeasurable value to Christians and the secular world that surrounds them. Describing the possible differences and overlapping similarities between members of different denominations' nonverbal communication during worship may help individuals who are questioning the Christian faith. It may aid in their decision to select what denomination and affiliating characteristics they subscribe to. Thus, individuals can gain knowledge about the various ways Christians practice their faith, asserting that all Christians, all churches, and all denominations are not the same (Jones, 2022). Conversely, this study is valuable because it can be used to unite people of different denominations by displaying that, as Christ-followers, Christians have more in common than they perceive. Elements as trivial as one's potentially reserved or charismatic nonverbal communication during worship should not be used to create and amplify disunity in the Body. Collectively, this study is valuable because it can help lead an individual to determine what denomination they subscribe to, debunks the popular notion that all Christians are the same, and unite believers.

Specifically, this study may help pastors, worship leaders, other members of church leadership, as well as congregants. The study at hand can potentially describe the worship environment and the nonverbal response of congregation members through their communication. Pastors and church leadership are often saturated in responsibility during times of worship,

adhering to the needs and function of the church, preaching, or overseeing in some capacity. These responsibilities may prohibit their ability to analyze what may occur during worship. Similarly, congregants may rightfully be too absorbed in their own worship and spiritual encounter to analyze their own nonverbal communication behaviors. By asking individuals to describe their nonverbal communication during worship, they can better reflect and analyze what they do. The study of the intersection of denomination, worship, and nonverbal communication can also help connect pastors and churches of different denominations by exposing similarities that may not have been previously definitively stated. In fact, the revelation of the following information could possibly lead collections of believers from different denominations together for more collaborative worship efforts. Comprehensively, this study can help bring elements of the worship climate to the attention of church leadership, help congregants reflect upon their actions, and unite different denominations and churches.

The study of how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices calls for the testing of social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977). SLT states that individuals mirror the behavior they observe in their surroundings, particularly if such behavior is reinforced. In essence, individuals learn by observing others' behavior (Bandura, 1977). When an individual chooses to enact a behavior being modeled, the behavior is either reinforced or punished based on their actions. Social learning theory is particularly relevant to the discovery of how worshippers of various denominations use nonverbal communication in a plethora of ways. Primarily, corporate worship is a group-oriented act. All individuals within a congregation gather to collectively worship the Lord through song. Although the emphasis of worship is seemingly verbal communication due to the act of singing words and praises to the Lord, nonverbal communication is more ambiguous and possibly variant depending on the

context. For example, with reference to SLT, when joining a church, or in one's youth, a worshiper may look around during worship to survey the nonverbal communication of others. The behaviors displayed by the majority are what is reinforced, while the absence of other behaviors may be what is punished. As the individual seeks reinforcement, they may choose a singular model, like the worship leader, or a collective model across the congregation to "learn" how to worship. If one's nonverbal communication can be categorized by denomination, it reinforces the idea that individuals of particular denominations worship in a similar manner, possibly indicative of denomination. However, to determine this indefinitely, social learning theory must be tested within the scope of how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices.

On the other hand, due to the various expressions of worship across denominations, individuals who find themselves in a corporate worship setting outside of their denomination may find much of their expectations for worship violated. With these considerations, expectancy violations theory (EVT) (Burgoon, 2015) is appropriate to test. EVT explains how individuals react to violations of their perceived nonverbal norms. A communication context begins with perceived social norms and insight from previous experiences. Violations of norms and deviation of expectations lead to physiological or psychological arousal, distracting the individual from the encounter and forcing them to consider the violation (Burgoon, 2015). Not every violation is considered to be negative. Reward valence is the degree to which one finds an interaction to be beneficial or harmful and remains an important aspect to consider. In reference to denomination and worship, if an individual from a more reserved denomination is to visit and engage in worship at a more charismatic church, it can be deduced that there will be some degree of expectancy violation if that individual is unaware of the worship behavior typical in that

denomination. It is the role of the one receiving the violation to determine whether they find the violation positive or negative. To be able to determine this indefinitely, expectancy violations theory must be tested when studying how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in worship.

Overview of Methodology

This qualitative study utilized a qualitative survey to determine how worshippers of different denominations use nonverbal communication during worship. To collect diverse and informed participants, the researcher sent out a preliminary survey encompassing questions regarding denominational affiliation and valance. This introductory survey was distributed to both male and female young adults, regardless of nationality, on the campus of a large, private, Christian university in the Southeastern United States. After the preliminary survey was conducted, the researcher sent out a more detailed, qualitative survey to the individuals who met the participation criteria in the first survey and asked questions concerning nonverbal communication during worship.

In conclusion, this document entails a proposed research study to uncover the usage of nonverbal communication across church members of different denominations. Background factors of the study concern expression and the current state of Christianity in the United States. The research problem is explained, as well as the professional significance of the study, asserting the intersection of nonverbal communication, denomination, and worship as an area of research that has yet to be explored. Additionally, an argument for the testing of social learning theory and expectancy violations theory was made. The author then discussed how the study is qualitative in nature, using an open-ended survey to collect data and understand individuals' experiences and perceptions.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In total, this chapter will include a synthesis of relevant, scholarly literature. It will encompass findings surrounding denominations, worship, and nonverbal communication. Theoretical literature pertaining to the study, including social learning theory and expectancy violations theory, will be provided.

Previous Research

Denominations

Within the context of this study, denominations are considered a collective group of Christians who subscribe to the same beliefs and work to actively maintain these beliefs (Rhodes, 2015). Denominations are often founded by an individual or small group of individuals who choose to emphasize or deviate from particular elements of the Christian faith (Olson et al., 2018). Denominations are pragmatic and considered in reference to the valence of various principles. Denominations objectively exist and are not merely theoretical. They have explicit, defined beliefs and ways of living. Different denominations seek to separate themselves from believers of other methods of thought and are cultural in nature (Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2022). According to Richey (2013, p. 294), denominations are created in the following ways: “plantation/founding, ethnic voluntarism, purposive missionary association, confessional order, corporate organization, and post-denominational confessionalism.”

Denominations can be separated based on the degree that they subscribe to a particular ideal (Olson et al., 2018). For example, although both Roman Catholics and the Assemblies of God churches practice communion, Roman Catholics take Jesus’ representation of His body and blood literally when consuming the elements, while Assemblies of God churches do not.

Although much discussion is contributed to what specific denominations and their beliefs hold,

very little empirical data has directly defined what a denomination is. Therefore, an extensive amount of information cannot be provided because of a lack of information. This absence brings into question why denominations, and their continual development, exist. If individuals fail to know what a denomination is, and only define and consider it by the specific and particular elements it lives by, this could display how uninformed decisions about denominations are produced and reproduced. Similarly, the vast majority of studies surrounding denominations do not reflect modern changes, displaying how the study of denominationalism has decreased in recent years. Currently, there are approximately 45,000 Christian denominations, worldwide, and over 300 of them are located in the United States (Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2022). The United States, specifically, is considered a “denominational society” where individuals particularly prescribe to a denomination (Greenley & Rossi, 1972). These classifications can be geographical, cultural, or socioeconomic (Handman & Opas, 2019).

Some individuals assert that denominations are not salient and that denominationalism is beginning to die (Richey, 2013; Taylor, 2003). The overwhelming majority of scholars and individuals who subscribe to a particular denomination would argue otherwise because of denominations’ divisive power and deep historical roots. Handman and Opas (2019) argue that denominations are inescapable. The institutionalism of denominations cannot be omitted. Even if an individual fails to prescribe to a denomination entirely, their biblical worldview is somewhat tainted by, or in alignment with, a particular denomination. As denominations are based on doctrinal disagreements and claims regarding spirituality, they are particularly important. In total, denominations are found to be especially influential overall, but matter less to the singular individual. Denominations are a means of providing resources, especially to marginalized Christians in the United States. These resources include a community, a church or building to

congregate in, and trusted individuals who, more than likely, believe the same beliefs (van der Muelen, 2018). Now that an overview of knowledge regarding denominations has been provided, it is important to discuss what specific beliefs different denominations subscribe to.

Provided is a general overview of a handful of prominent denominations within the United States. These denominations are in no way comprehensive. The denominations discussed serve as a sample of well-known denominations and are worthy of explanation due to this study.

Differentiation between Protestantism, Orthodoxy, and Catholicism

Protestantism differentiates itself from Catholicism and Orthodoxy on the grounds that Protestants believe that faith in Christ, alone, renders salvation, while Catholics believe that faith and deed render salvation. The primary difference between Orthodoxy and Protestantism is that the Orthodox believe the Holy Spirit comes exclusively from the Father, not the Father and the Son (Olson et al., 2018; Rhodes, 2015). After clarifying the differences between the three sects of Christianity, it is important to provide detail as to the theological perspectives surrounding denominational views.

Calvinism vs. Arminianism

Calvinism

Calvinism, named after the influence of French theologian John Calvin, was founded in the early 1500s and contains the following tenants: total depravity, unconditional predestination, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance (Erickson, 2013, p. 848). Total depravity means all humans are lost in sin and unable to respond to grace. Next, unconditional predestination highlights the fact that God has already elected those who will receive salvation and go to heaven or hell. It is not a matter of an individual's personal will. Limited atonement asserts that Jesus' death on the cross covered the sins of only specific people. Irresistible grace

describes that God's grace is only applied to specific people, and God overcomes individuals' resistance to obedience in due time. Perseverance means that once an individual is saved, the individual will start and continue to do good works throughout their life. In essence, "Calvinists believe that God's plan is logically prior and that human decisions and actions are a consequence" (p. 851).

Arminianism

Arminians, on the other hand, emphasize free will and assert it should be exercised, viewing the Gospel as an invitation. Arminianism has two extremes, Arminius, the founder's belief, maintained that humans are sinful and unable to do good in their own strength. On the other hand, extreme liberalism discounts the human tendency to sin and finds regeneration unnecessary (Erickson, 2013, p. 851). Those who are predestined by God He can see will accept the offer of salvation "based on the close connection in Scripture between foreknowledge and foreordination or predestination" (p. 853). Arminian's belief in free will and the ability to select their own salvation creates a greater focus on evangelical efforts in an attempt to tell those who do not know or do not believe in the Lord about the Gospel for their salvation.

Overall, concepts relating to Calvinism and Arminianism are relevant to this study because particular denominations of discussion subscribe to more Calvinistic or Arminianian theology and be used to characterize particular denominations. Similarly, participants in the study also subscribe to Calvinistic or Arminian theology, regardless of their awareness, thus shaping their beliefs and potential practices as well. Now that a background of two influential, theological perspectives has been provided, it is relevant to discuss Protestantism, one of three sects of Christianity.

Protestant Denominations

The following section will consist of information surrounding major Protestant denominations, including the Assemblies of God, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians, respectively and alphabetically. An overview of the major doctrinal beliefs and practices of each denomination, separating them from others, will be provided. Following, an approximation of practitioners according to the most recent data will be provided.

The Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God denomination is the largest of the Pentecostal denominations. The Assemblies of God were founded by former ministers and pastors who desired to unite an aggregation of local Pentecostal churches for effective preaching and missions. With an Armenian foundation, the Assemblies of God emphasize the divine inspiration of the Bible, the fall of man, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and divine healing. Individuals in the Assemblies of God practice communion and full submersion water baptism. The Assemblies of God believe baptism in the Spirit is often accompanied by speaking in tongues and believe that Spiritual gifts are for the present day. The Assemblies of God are divided into geographic districts. There is a corporate office under which missionary work is conducted. The Assemblies of God currently have a variety of seminaries, liberal arts colleges, and institutes worldwide (Olson et al., 2018; Rhodes, 2015, p. 333). According to the most recent data, the Assemblies of God have approximately 3,000,000 members nationwide (Olson et al., 2018).

Baptists

Baptists are a major Protestant denomination within the United States. Although some Baptists claim their denomination has existed since John the Baptist, this assertion is limited. Baptists divide upon whether to baptize or rebaptize infants and adults. In a general sense,

Baptists tend to believe that the Bible is the sole rule of life, Jesus is Lord, people can approach God themselves, infant baptisms are not to be performed, and salvation comes by grace through faith. Baptists celebrate communion and baptism. Baptists firmly subscribe to the belief of freedom of thought in preaching and encourage autonomy between congregations. They are considered one of the most democratic American denominations. Pastoral licensing comes from local churches. Baptists commonly form associations at the state and local levels for community purposes. Baptist conventions typically form out of the desire for fellowship and for educational, missionary, and pension purposes. Baptists have their own denominations based on these conventions, of which there are over 25, and contain over 30 sub-denominations that are independently operated (Olson et al., 2018, p. 33; Rhodes, 2015, p. 39). According to the most recent data, there are over 50,000,000 Baptists nationwide (Olson et al., 2018).

Lutherans

Lutherans, as the name states, were followers of the Protestant reformist, Martin Luther. Lutherans assert that scripture has the right to be interpreted by all readers and that the words spoken in Scripture, alone, could determine someone's eternity. Luther believed individuals were forgiven of sins on the basis of repentance. In a general sense, most Lutherans believe Christians are justified by Christ, alone, that the Bible is inspired by God, and they confess faith through three creeds of Christendom: the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian. Their worship is liturgical and altar-centered. Lutherans hold a catechism and practice communion and baptism, believing that God pours out His forgiveness through these acts. Protestantism diverged into Evangelical Lutheranism and the Reformed Church. Despite this separation, there have been historical efforts to unite Lutheranism once again. Congregations are administered by church councils. There are approximately 12 divisions of Lutherans throughout the United States, with

approximately 12,000,000 Lutherans nationwide (Olson et al., 2018, p. 132; Rhodes, 2015, p. 229).

Methodists

Originating from Oxford University, Methodists emerged from a small group of students who read the Bible and prayed. These students were known for their belief in justification before sanctification and the need to be holy, holding methodological beliefs. Methodism was popular among the lower-class citizens of England and grew. They hold Arminian theology and teach the trinity, the fall of man, free will, sanctification, judgment day, and God's grace. Methodists practice communion and baptism of adults and babies through sprinkling, not immersion. Membership is built through the confession of one's faith or a letter of transfer from another church. Individuals can become members around the age of 10 to 13, depending on their geographic location. Their leadership consists of bishops, boards, trustees, and stewards. Methodists hold quarterly and annual conferences, along with general conferences. The breadth of conferences is determined by scope. There are over 20 groups of Methodists in the United States which initially split due to issues of slavery. There are approximately 12,000,000 Methodists nationwide (Olson et al., 2018, p. 151; Rhodes, 2015, p. 285).

Presbyterians

Presbyterians are rooted in their system of church government, both past and present. Presbyterians are theologically Calvinistic, with much of their beliefs spurring from John Calvin, although he was not the founder. Presbyterians focus on the sovereignty of God, and ruling elders hold much of the power within the church. Opposed to the divine right of kings, Presbyterians created a Larger and Shorter catechism, a collection of public worship of God, a government, and a confession of faith. Presbyterians affirm that salvation occurs by grace

through faith and that faith is meant to be shared with others. Many Presbyterians believe in predestination. Presbyterians are divided into nine forms of churches within the United States, with over 1,000,000 members nationwide (Olson et al., 2018, p. 174; Rhodes, 2015, p. 369).

Catholics

The Roman Catholic Church is one of the first churches to exist. Before the Protestant Reformation, practically the entirety of the Western hemisphere was Roman Catholic. Roman Catholics believe that Catholicism can be traced back to the selection of Peter as the chief apostle and the first pope. Deeply influenced by Augustine, the office of the Roman Catholic pope, also known as the papacy, was strengthened through his philosophical and theological views. The Catholic church is known for its conversion of unbelievers, support of chivalry and the Crusades, building of educational institutions, and creating forms of art, as well as literature. Tempted by prosperity, particular individuals were swelled by corruption within the hierarchy, causing the Protestant Reformation. Collectively, although there are many nuances and manifestations of practice, Catholics believe in one God, the Trinity, creationism, the fall of man, Jesus as the redeemer of man's fall, and yielding to the pope. Catholic practices are ruled by scripture and tradition, sacraments, mass, the communion of saints, the need for grace, and an individual's eternal destination of heaven or hell. Baptism by pouring and confirmation are necessary elements to be in the Catholic church. Divorce is forbidden, and mass is mandatory for practicing Catholics, along with periods of fasting. The Roman Catholic governmental structure is highly hierarchical and authoritarian in nature with authority belonging to the Pope. There are approximately 70,000,000 Catholics in the United States alone (Olson et al., 2018, p. 200; Rhodes, 2015, p. 107).

Orthodox

Due to the social, linguistic, racial, moral, and philosophical division between the Eastern part of the world and the Western part of the world, Latins and Greeks were in conflict around 1100 A.D. The Eastern church believed that the Holy Spirit came exclusively from God, while the Western church believed that the Holy Spirit came from the Father and the Son, causing a split. The Eastern Orthodox church was guided by four patriarchs, not a single pope. The Orthodox church is divided into social groups: Greek, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Albanian, and Georgian. Orthodoxy is based on the Bible, holy tradition, as well as decrees of the seven ecumenical councils. The Orthodox have seven sacraments: baptism, anointing, communion, penance, holy orders, marriage, and holy function. Both infants and adults are baptized. Hell is denied, and Orthodox individuals believe that bread and wine are the body of Christ. Their church governments consist of deacons, priests, and bishops. Membership is based on the individual church and there are approximately 6,000,000 Orthodox in the United States (Olson et al., 2018, p. 96, 141, 183; Rhodes, 2015, p. 313).

In summary, there has been very little research conducted on what explicitly constitutes a denomination. However, it has been found that denominations are formed from a collective of believers who subscribe to the same practices and beliefs in a general sense. Denominations are a source of community and support for their affiliates. In total, there are three primary branches of denomination: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox. Now that a comprehensive overview of denominations, along with prevalent examples has been provided, it is pivotal to discuss the particular context denominationalism will be considered in – worship.

Worship

Definition and purpose

Although worship constitutes a myriad of practices, for the purposes of this study, worship will be considered through the corporate lens in reference to music and praise. Although worship is abstract in nature, it is commonly explained as a spiritual behavior that edifies God by drawing near Him in acknowledgment (Abernethy et al., 2015; Merrill, 2000; Stevenson, 2020). Cockayne and Efird (2018) believe worship provides grounds to experience God and come to know Him. Worship tends to concern the topic of worship itself and one's offering of worship to God (Stevenson, 2020). Worship is considered a Christian ritual that plays an important role in experiences of shared attention (Abernethy et al., 2015; Bayne & Nagasawa, 2006; Harkness, 2003). Saliers (2001) found four dimensions of Christian worship: the purpose is to glorify the Lord, God's glory is in direct reference to Scripture, worship is cultural, and worship invites complete involvement. Along with the four dimensions of worship, Stevenson (2020) found various elements of worship. Worship demands active engagement from both the worship leader and the observer. To be able to fully take part in worship, one must be completely involved in the process and attentive to the practice of worship. Unlike listening to a sermon, worship does not concern knowledge, exclusively (Abernethy et al., 2015). There is nothing strictly informational about worship. Although hymns and songs of praise are Scripture-based, worship is not transmitting knowledge but cultivating an experience. Religious individuals are said to spend thousands of hours singing hymns and practicing other forms of worship (Cockayne & Efird, 2018; Stevenson, 2020). It is an activity that consumes much of religious life, especially within an organized church service. The musical aspect of worship has been found to have noteworthy consequences among congregations. Specifically, participating in worship with extensive

segments of instrumentals increases attitudes toward charitable giving to evangelical institutions and missions. However, worship music that contained more words resulted in fewer acts of charity (Brown, 2013). Now that worship has been described, it is relevant to consider the expressive nature of worship.

An act of expressive engagement

Worship is considered an act of expression, and its connection to emotion cannot be denied. Sylvan (2002) and Nelson (2007) state complete devotion in worship results in a strong, emotional impact. These emotions may result in feelings such as awe, wonder (Nelson, 2007; Sylvan, 2002), fear, respect, humility, love, and admiration. These aforementioned feelings are dependent on whether the participant is fully engaged (Bayne & Nagasawa, 2006). Emotional involvement is considered consequential in worship (Smith, 2009). The connection between mind, body, and soul creates a spiritual experience for the worshiper. Aniol (2018, p. 95) states that individuals act “on the inclination of their hearts.” Worship is not something that can be methodological, factual, or overly rational and calculated in nature. Rather, it can be an act that involves one's emotions and desires. Aside from the emotional aspect of worship, it is also salient to consider the consequences of corporate worship as a collective practice.

Worship as a collective activity

Worship provides a group identity to individuals involved in worship through the portrayal of collective morals, elements of teaching, and principles associated with worship (Brown et al., 2022). Richardson (1999) views worship as a collective spiritual practice, grounding his assertion that the Bible was not addressed to an individual but to a group of believers. Corporate worship provides unity within the body of Christ. Worship is the largest aspect of forming a Christian community, according to Richardson (1999), and spirituality

largely impacts worship. Richardson argues that the focus must shift from individual attitudes and focus toward corporate attitudes and focus. True worship negates a self-focused approach and encourages awareness of others who are present and those who are absent in worship climates. This includes individuals who are worshiping within the congregation and their spiritual needs, as well as individuals who are underserved, like the poor, suffering, and neglected. Similarly, Brown et al. (2022) found that worship provides a group identity to individuals involved in worship through the portrayal of collective morals, elements of teaching, and principles associated with worship. Worship has the ability to create a collective emotional experience between those who participate. Individuals increase their intimacy with God by worshiping with others (Cockayne & Efird, 2018; Morales, 2016; Stevenson, 2020). Corporate worship is rooted in the shared experience of the activity and the act of commitment. Stevenson (2020) discovered that worship is inherently rational in nature and encouraged individuals to display certain attitudes and actions toward others. These include but are not limited to, sharing, encouraging, and kindness. Worshiping authentically and holistically can allow a worshiper to view others' "emotional landscapes" and listen to what God may be revealing in a particular moment. Cockayne and Efird (2018) assert that by taking part in a community of believers who are seeking to engage God, various aspects of God's nature are revealed that cannot be revealed alone. They argue that worshippers contribute to one another's encounter with God. Abernethy et al. (2015) found some participants struggled to be emotionally authentic when worshiping. This expressed struggle of transparency, as one participant states, may lead others to unveil their hardships as well. Lastly, when an individual considers worship, its association is often tied to the physical aspect, including one's body.

The emphasis on body during worship

Bodily movement is an expressive form of worship. Worship, according to Abernethy et al. (2015), is active and performative, encompassing one's entire physical and spiritual being. Zachulu (2021) argues that the church pays more attention to the meaning and elements of worship than the attitudes associated with congregants' bodies during worship. Bodily movements and acts like singing, dancing, fasting, clapping, and shouting are all elements of worship. Chomaria (2018) found that one's facial expressions and body language explain one's heart posture toward God. Worship encompasses bodily involvement as a form of language to express, show, and communicate one's physical, mental, and spiritual state. However, when discussing bodily movements during worship, it is essential to consider what some scholars and theologians would render an act of entertainment (Horne & Davies, 2006; Vondey, 2010). Exaggerated movements during worship, to some, may be considered inauthentic and attention-seeking. Despite these concerns, other researchers, such as Zaluchu (2021), assert that bodily movement during worship holds both biblical and theological rationale. Harkness (2003) states that the act of worship is offering up one's body as a living sacrifice, as stated in Scripture. While this can be seen as a service by some scholars, there is a physical, tangible aspect of sacrifice that relates to one's body. Thus, the act of sacrifice cannot be complete without, in some part, one's physical body and life. Richardson (1999) and Morales (2016) argue that, despite human self-consciousness, individuals should learn to use senses, body language, and posture in an effort to bring one's whole self to God. Although some may perceive this as a natural occurrence, there are learned and observed ways of instituting bringing oneself to God. Richardson (1999) argues that by doing this, one is able to give God all they are with complete commitment and involvement. Worship, as Morales (2016) states, cannot be separated from the

body because the soul is encapsulated in one's entire being, including its body. Similarly, Levi (2022) argues that acts of bowing down, prostration, and kneeling brings a person to engage in just and charitable behavior. Levi (2022) asserts that original Hebrew worship refers to bowing down, a posture of the body, as a servant-like movement. Bowing in worship displays God as king and brings individuals to acquire the knowledge they otherwise would not have had (Bayne & Nagasawa, 2006). Bowing surrenders one's own power and understanding, making oneself vulnerable. It puts one in the position to be surveyed by one more powerful than themselves, displaying hierarchy and trust for the superior. It is an invitation for God to take control. Knowing God, as Cueno (2016) states, is knowing how to engage Him through action. These actions can consist of singing, prostrating, and praying, which are all present in worship climates. Action and expression through engagement are pivotal aspects of worship, as displayed by empirical research. In all, bodily movements in worship are a form of nonverbal communication, which will be discussed in the following section.

Nonverbal Communication

General Overview of Nonverbal Communication

As discussed earlier, nonverbal communication is communication that does not include words, whether spoken or written, and is nonlinguistic in nature. (Soukup, 2019). Nonverbal communication can be spontaneous and symbolic (Buck, 1988) and has various functions. First, it can help provide the context in which a situation occurs. Second, it can complement verbal communication because nonverbal and verbal communication occurs simultaneously. Third, nonverbal communication can be used as a tool to help aid verbal communication, moving along the conversation or encounter. Lastly, nonverbal communication functions as an autonomous method of sending a message (Hwang, Matsumoto, & Frank, 2016). Nonverbal communication

is extremely prevalent in all communication interactions – contributing up to 93% of all information (Nikitinaitė, 2017). Nonverbal communication has been thought to impact a message sender's thought and language process and inferences collected from a receiver. Nonverbal communication sends a variety of cues that communicate explicit information without the need for words. Elements like identity, biological sex, personality traits, motivations, moods, and cultural factors can all be expressed nonverbally (Hall et al., 2019). Most domains of social life are connected to nonverbal communication. In total, nonverbal communication consists of the following aspects: kinesics, haptics, oculusics, proxemics, vocalics, physical appearance, environment, chronemics, and olfactics. Kinesics considers the face and body. Haptics concerns the act of touch. Oculics focuses on the eyes and eye movements. Proxemics considers the usage of distance and space. Vocalics examines the usage of one vocals unrelated to words. Nonverbal communication also consists of physical appearance and environmental factors. Chronemics discusses the impact of color, and olfactics describes the role of smell (Bowman, 2020). In summary, nonverbal communication is particularly impactful because when there is a disagreement between nonverbal communication and verbal communication, nonverbal signals are believed over verbal communication (Preston & Stansfield, 2008). For the purposes of this study, kinesics, haptics, oculusics, and proxemics will be discussed in detail.

Kinesics: face and body

Kinesics is centered on movement and motion through the body (Bowman, 2020). Specifically, kinesics is most commonly associated with gestures of the body (Castener et al., 2011). These gestures can be difficult for untrained individuals to separate from speech (Soukoup, 2019). Gestures can moderate one's communication, be used as a form of

interpersonal control, display an individual's present position, and also provide a surveyed response to others (Bowman, 2020; Soukup, 2019).

Illustrators are gestures that are related to speech. They are linked to words but are not the words themselves. Illustrators have various forms of use. Primarily, they can be used and related to an object. For example, signaling with your hands how wide something is. Next, it can display an individual's relationship to an object. For example, showing how close an object was to your body through hand motions. Next, illustrators can be used to punctuate a word being spoken. For example, pointing downward when saying the word "now." Lastly, gestures can be interactive and refer to a person in a dialogue setting. For example, pointing at someone when talking to them. Gestures can also constitute their own message, such as waving one's hand to signal to "come over here" (Bowman, 2020; Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Similarly, emblems, like illustrators, are gestures, but they link directly to words. Emblems are used for directions and control, to show one's current physiological or emotional state, or evaluate another's behavior (Bowman, 2020; Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

Regulators, as their title displays, are gestures that are designed to regulate and maintain a nonverbal interaction through the sending and receiving of simultaneous messages. Regulators can help signal turn-taking when speaking. For example, paying attention to elements like raised eyes, an open mouth, and a projecting chest can be indicators of one's desire to speak. On the other hand, adapters allow individuals to relieve extra energy and display arousal and awareness by using themselves, a related object, or another person (Bowman, 2020; Ekman & Friesen, 1969). For the purposes of this study, it is most important to consider the different orientations of the body. Body orientation is comprised of whether an individual has positioned their torso

toward or away from a potential conversation partner. An open-body orientation faces an individual, while a closed-body orientation is directed away from an individual (Bowman, 2020).

The last portion of kinesics concerns elements of the face. Much of one's nonverbal communication portrayed in the face concerns emotions. Faces are separated into the eyes, nose, and mouth to study the display of emotion. Specifically, affect displays are facial expressions, body movements, posture, and other factors that exemplify one's current emotions. It is human instinct to display one's basic emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, and disgust (Ekman, Sorenson, & Friesen, 1969). These can be considered pure emotions – only one emotion is shown on the face. Affect blends, however, show multiple emotions on the face. However, display rules help individuals navigate what emotional displays are appropriate and when they are appropriate in their given culture (Matsumoto, 2006). Masking occurs when an individual overrides a felt emotion with a more acceptable emotion (Batty & Taylor, 2003). Even further, neutralization is an absence of facial display of emotion (Bowman, 2020). Eye behaviors in nonverbal communication, known as oculosics, are particularly salient to human interaction and serve meaningful functions.

Kinesics is found in various previous research studies and contexts. Primarily, Castaner et al. (2011) found that newer physical education teachers were more likely to make kinesic movements and gestures when teaching than experienced teachers. However, newer teachers' paralinguistics were lower in quality and lacked depth and detail. On the other hand, when considering technological advancement, Baylor and Kim (2008) assert that the appearance of pedagogical agents, an aspect of nonverbal communication, impact learning outcomes. Nonverbal aspects such as facial expressions and gestures can reduce uncertainty, display pedagogical agents' emotions and personalities, and emphasize parts of their nonverbal message.

Similarly, when considering emotions, facial expressions have been found to positively affect students' perception and attitudinal learning, enhancing persuasion. Nikitinaitė (2017) found that nonverbal communication plays a pivotal role in the learning process, leading to greater success in learning, as well as the behaving process due to the usage of facial expressions and usage of effective and appropriate gesturing. Although kinesics has been considered in terms of education and technology, existing research fails to look at kinesics through a denominational lens. After explaining kinesics and recent studies' use of kinesics, it is important to discuss the use of haptics as a nonverbal communication element.

Haptics: touch

Haptics is the study of touch and nonverbal contact. There are a variety of meanings associated with touch, which are necessary to consider. Touch can have various meanings but is most commonly impacted by touch itself, cultural implications, the relationship between the interaction members, the area of the body touched, and the relationship of the parties. Touch has been found to have numerous benefits. Primarily, touch has been found to reduce stress, build relationships, reduce loneliness, fight depression, and lead to pleasure (Bowman, 2020). There are three classifications of touch: self-touch, other touch, and mutual touch. Touch can be structured in nature and tied to a specific action, such as hugging, kissing, poking, kicking, etc. Similarly, there are various functions of touch. Touch can serve as a cultural ritual in some countries, among greeting or leaving. Touch can be a positive affect, meaning it displays positive emotions and manifests through affection, support, inclusion, and appreciation. Control touch is used to direct or influence an individual's behavior. Task-related touch occurs when individuals engage in touching behaviors that are necessary for some part of their role. In essence, it relies on someone else's assistance. For example, getting baptized by a priest, pastor, or spiritual leader

constitutes task-related touch because one cannot baptize oneself. Touch and the general appropriateness of touch are heavily cultural and relational. Haptics, in a general sense, can be used to achieve some objective and increase the success of a request being fulfilled if done appropriately (Soukup, 2019).

Haptics can manifest itself in a variety of different ways. Across research, touch has been studied in a multitude of contexts. Okada et al. (2022) considered how a presenter's touching behaviors of an object during its explanation affect the observer's perceived feeling. Using the Japanese word "kawaii" meaning cute, Okada et al. (2022) discovered that participants who observed a robot's touch behaviors perceived a given object to be more *kawaii* and thought that the robot also felt the object was more *kawaii*. The researchers found that viewing touching behaviors intensified feelings and desire to touch, leading to an increased impression. In all, their study provides a rationale for using touch behaviors to express feelings and the intensity of perceived feelings toward specific items in presenters. From a health perspective, Thomas et al. (2021), through cross-lagged path models, analyzed nationally representative data on over 1,000 older adults. Thomas et al. (2021) found that physical touch has revealed links to lower blood pressure, higher oxytocin levels, better sleep, and reduced inflammation. Similarly, researchers found that physical touch is a potential source of social support, displaying the profound impact physical touch can have on one's physical and emotional well-being. The use of touch has also been applied to the commercial world. Maille et al. (2020) assert that individuals favor objects that are intended to be touched or held more when the objects are located on the dominant-hand side of their body or when the handles point toward their dominant-hand side. Through a lab study of 140 undergraduate students, researchers found that consumers respond more positively to ungraspable products if a haptic cue (an object that is graspable or suggestive of hand action)

is located within the same visual field as the target and is placed within an acceptable range of the viewer's dominant hand. This finding displays individuals value haptics in regard to physical comfort and instinct, translating to the ways in which haptics influence individuals' purchases. Although these studies have considered haptics in regard to feelings, health, and product design, research does not consider the use of haptics in worship from a denominational viewpoint. After discussing the more tangible nonverbal communication aspect of touch, it is important to consider the less physical elements connected to nonverbal communication, such as paralinguistics.

Paralanguage

Paralinguistics are all elements of verbal communication aside from words themselves and are embedded in verbal communication (Schueller et al., 2013). Paralinguistics include tone, volume, pitch, or the absence of the characteristics, each playing a different role in the communication context (Bowman, 2020; Soukup, 2019). Such qualities can convey one's emotions and intent in a nonverbal manner. For the purposes of this study, volume and silence will be discussed in detail. Volume is a vocal property that relates to how loud or soft one's speech is. Volume is in direct reference to the environment in which one inhabits. What may be considered very loud in one environment could be scarcely audible in a different environment. Silence is the absence of paralanguage and vocalics. Silence can have a profound communicative value. Much of nonverbal communication occurs in silence, especially when combined with other elements (Bowman, 2020). The role of physical distance when discussing nonverbal communication will be discussed in detail when considering proxemics as a theory.

Waxer and Morton (2011) considered the impact of paralinguistics on young children. Through a lab study of 40 Caucasian children, researchers found that children can judge a

speaker's feelings from content or paralanguage but struggle to make judgments when these cues conflict. This displays that the interpretation and salience of paralinguistics increases as individuals age. One's paralinguistics can be indicative of their attitude, displaying individuals learn to interpret paralinguistic behaviors as they age, especially in regard to emotion. When considering oral communication tactics for persuasion, Van Zant and Berger (2020) sought to look at the impact that paralinguistic cues held in persuasive speaking and what they communicated. Through experimental and control groups consisting of 175 total participants, researchers removed the disclosure statement from a persuasive speech. And manipulating the speaker's paralanguage. Van Zant and Berger (2020) found that paralinguistic attempts succeed because they make communicators seem more confident without undermining their perceived sincerity. Consequently, speakers' confident vocal demeanor persuades others by serving as a signal that they more strongly endorse the stance they take in their message. Considering a delivery perspective, when speakers speak louder and vary their volume during paralinguistic persuasion attempts, they signal confidence and facilitate persuasion. Despite current research featuring the learned aspects of paralinguistics and its use in persuasion, it fails to look at how paralinguistics are used as a nonverbal communication element in worship across varying denominations.

Nonverbal Communication within the broad context of Worship

Hebart (2019) argues that nonverbal communication plays an impactful role in worship, claiming in certain denominations, worship is didactic and dry. Nonverbal aspects of worship that are expressive and concern the environment are commonly forgotten. Music plays a nonverbal role in communication. Elements such as worship, along with art, impact congregants in a unique way and lead individuals to the Lord's presence in a nonverbal manner. Only

adhering to verbal communication can be risky and reliant on an individual's mentality. Visual arts and architecture play a considerable role in worship. Art brings individuals to their senses and their senses bring individuals to their Creator. Sloyan (1995) argues that by using one's nonverbal senses, one can appreciate nonverbal symbols in the Bible better. Nonverbal acts also accompany other biblical practices like prayer, baptism, and anointing. Despite current research discussing aspects of nonverbal communication in worship, it does not consider the potential of denominational differences or denominational impact.

Now that an extensive overview of denominations, worship, and nonverbal communication has been provided, it is vital to entail a more in-depth description of the theoretical literature applicable to this study.

Theoretical Literature

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) concerns how individuals learn particular behaviors. Bandura's initial research began with the Bobo Doll experiment (1961). In this study, Bandura found that children have the ability to learn social behavior through learning. Although this study specifically concerned children and the emotional behaviors associated with aggression, it paved the way for his development of social learning theory. Social learning theory stresses the importance of observing and enacting the emotions, attitudes, and behaviors of others in the learning process. These observations serve as a guide for individuals' own behavior. Individuals learn through behavioral, cognitive, and environmental influences. To fully understand one's learning, an individual must pay attention to modeled events and observer characteristics, retain information, be able to reproduce behaviors, attitudes, and emotions of others, and maintain the motivation to do so (Bandura, 1977). In essence, individuals view a

particular behavior or expression and then seek to model it based on whether it is rewarded or punished. If the consequences for modeling one's behavior are positive and contain aspects of praise and approval, the modeling is reinforced and the observer is likely to repeat the behavior in the future. However, if an individual models a behavior and the consequence is negative, leading to disapproval, the behavior will most likely not be enacted again. The concept of reward and punishment for behaviors is known as vicarious reinforcement. Bandura (1977) claims that one identifies with a person or group on the grounds that they adopt the behaviors, values, and beliefs of the person or group that is serving as a model, involving a variety of behaviors. Bandura argued that the world is a result of individuals' behavior and that individuals' behavior causes the world, labeling this assertion reciprocal determinism. Bandura (1977) argues that humans play an active role in processing information and consider the cost and benefits of their relationship with others. Although social learning theory is able to explain rather complex behaviors, it is not comprehensive. In 1986, Bandura chose to rename the theory social cognitive theory, better encompassing the way that one may have a variety of cognitive experiences with certain behavior but does not necessarily guarantee it will be reproduced. Social learning theory is not necessarily applicable in every circumstance. Rather, it is a guide to an individual's learning when there is no apparent or pre-existing role model.

Social learning theory has been used in a variety of research studies due to its applicable nature. In professional communication, for example, Kalil and Grant (2021), through the interpretivist paradigm, looked at how a specific pedagogy can develop computer science students as communicators in their disciplines and explored the usefulness of social learning theory as an analytical toolset and descriptive language for investigating and explaining learning events. The researchers found that social learning theory can be used to overcome challenges in

communication that many computer science students in higher education face, with special reference to curriculum and delivery issues. When considering the use of social learning theory and its impact on relationships, Johnson and Bradbury (2021) found through meta-analysis that social learning theory provides an adequate basis for behavioral interventions regarding the treatment and prevention of relationship distress, however, this approach may not be sustainable. Dyadic exchanges of behavior expressed in social learning theory may overlook other relationship predictors and provide difficulty in accounting for diverse patterns of relationship development. Finally, Yunfan et al. (2018) through a survey of 500 customers on a popular Chinese e-commerce site, looked at the role of online communication in avoiding possible restrictions on shopping websites through the lens of social learning theory. The authors asked: what is the relationship between the quality of a shopping website and online communication between sellers and buyers or among buyers? and what is the motivation toward and outcome of online communication in relation to online purchasing decisions? Collectively, the authors found that when customers sense restrictiveness of mood or task-related cues, according to social learning theory, they will look for communication channels to alleviate it, and motivations toward online communication include social learning and avoiding the information restrictions of websites. Many other studies have utilized the integration and application of social learning theory, proving it to be a useful theory for considering human behavior in relational learning aspects, both in face-to-face interactions and online. Despite the prevalent use of social learning theory in education, it has yet to be applied to worship or denominational influence. Now that social learning theory has been explained and its manifestation in other research studies has been provided, it is relevant to consider expectancy violations theory.

Expectancy Violations Theory

Expectancy violations theory explains the way individuals respond to unperceived interferences to nonverbal norms and expectations for a particular circumstance. Burgoon (1988) asserts that individuals hold particular expectations for nonverbal behaviors based on prior experiences and culturally appropriate social norms. The nonverbal norms encompass every element of nonverbal communication, including kinesics, haptics, oculosics, proxemics, vocalics, physical appearance, the environment, chronemics, and olfactics. Individuals often perceive others' behaviors before it occurs. They can be based on gender, culture, degree of trust, and the context of a situation. Violations or disturbances of these nonverbal norms create psychological or physiological arousal from the individual being violated and interfere with the message being sent and shift the focus to the violation, instead. In essence, this displays how humans are attentive to stimuli, whether it is conscious or subconscious. Meaning must be assigned to a violation and help determine whether it is positive or negative and intentional or unintentional. Violations can be both positive and negative and are entirely dependent on the recipient's view of the behavior. In her study, Burgoon (1988) found that violations were often viewed positively. Nonetheless, whether positive or negative, the violation distracts from the message. Expectancy violations have the ability to affect persuasion, attraction, and credibility. Reward valence is the degree to which an individual finds the interaction rewarding and contains more benefits. The rewarding nature of interaction may be entirely dependent on factors such as attractiveness, status, credibility, intelligence, liking, and value. On the contrary, when an individual's expectations are met, it is considered an expectancy confirmation. Violations are considered on the basis of a threat threshold with references to discomfort and a potential threat. The deeper the violation the larger the threat. Burgoon also found that when violations are ambiguous or have

various meanings, reward valence plays a more significant role. Expectancy violations theory was originally considered within the context of proxemic violations. However, Burgoon decided to apply the tenets of expectancy violations theory in a more general sense to interpersonal interactions and created interaction adaptation theory. Interaction adaptation theory considers the requirements, expectations, and desires of an individual.

Despite the theory's more recent development, many researchers are still using the original expectancy violations theory in their studies. For example, McLaughlin and Vitak (2011) researched violations of norms on social media networks and how these norms impact individuals' self-presentational and relationship goals. The researchers conducted five focus groups consisting of 26 participants, in total, at a large midwestern university. The authors found that individuals who engage in minor negative violations are ignored or hidden, while larger infractions lead to deleting content or termination of the online friendship. Negative violations from close friends lead to confrontation, while violations from acquaintances are often ignored.

Furthermore, positive violations were more likely to arise from acquaintances than close friends. Other researchers, such as Burgoon et al. (2016), sought to apply expectancy violations to artificial intelligence and decision-making. Technology has added an extra consideration in terms of the application of communication theory. The authors hypothesized that "compared to positive expectancy confirmations, positive violations are associated with more favorable communication processes" and "compared to negative expectancy confirmations, negative violations are associated with less favorable communication processes. To test their hypotheses, in a lab study with seventy Swedish undergraduate students, participants were paired with an embodied agent (EA) or with a human partner to solve a task. Embodied agent interactions evaluated positively evoked a greater sense of perceived connectedness, feelings of being

understood, and dependability than those EA interactions evaluated negatively, aligning with the researchers' hypotheses and displaying the importance of valence in expectancy violations.

Expectancy violations have also been considered in the medical field.

Through a subclinical sample of people who frequently experience pain, Kube et al. (2022) provided participants with painful thermal simulations, the temperature decreasing every trial. The experience of decreasing pain was expected in one condition and unexpected in another. Perceived pain intensity was shaped in the direction of pain expectations. The greater adjustment of expectations was consistent with a confirmation bias in pain perception. Expectation violations increased participants' ability to cope with pain one week later, suggesting some beneficial longer-term effects of expectation violations. Thus, expectancy violations have proven to not always be negative, despite their connotation. Although these studies consider expectancy violations in a digital and health-related context, no existing studies look at expectancy violations during worship as a result of denominational differences.

In conclusion, this chapter surveyed scholarly research regarding denomination, worship, and nonverbal communication and explained theoretical literature related to the study through social learning theory, expectancy violations theory, and proxemics. In total, research displays that denominations are a way of classifying individuals based on practices and beliefs and serve a variety of purposes to individuals. Denominations are numerous but can typically be classified to the degree to which they engage in specific practices while ignoring others. There are hundreds of denominations throughout the United States (Olson et al., 2018). Next, worship is a central practice within Christianity. It is often ambiguous but plays a significant spiritual, emotional, and physical role. The emphasis of worship is praising God and has attitudinal and spiritual nuances that connect congregants to God and one another. Worship is equally an act and

a feeling. Nonverbal communication consists of all communication that occurs in the absence of words. Nonverbal communication encompasses a variety of aspects. Most notably, nonverbal communication includes body movements, touch, vocalics, and physical distance, among a multitude of others (Soukup, 2019). Nonverbal communication is prevalent in a variety of contexts but for the purposes of this study, it was used in reference to both church and learning. Finally, three theories were explained in detail. Social learning theory states that individuals learn certain behaviors after observing and modeling others' behavior based on reward and punishment (Bandura, 1977). On the other hand, expectancy violations theory concerns how individuals react to violations of nonverbal communication expectations and whether or not those violations are viewed positively or negatively (Burgoon, 1988). Although previous literature and application of the aforementioned theories have been utilized in various contexts and diverse realms, all have failed to consider aspects of denominational influence on nonverbal communication. This breach provides an absence in research that is necessary to fill, aiding in complete understanding and utility of theories and research itself.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to gather and analyze the data in this study. The researcher explains the general research type used in this study, information surrounding the research context and participants, the methods used in this study, the affiliated research design procedures, and the data analysis used.

General research perspective and type

As a qualitative study, the research to be reported embodies the qualitative perspective. The methodology used uncovers findings regarding the phenomenological viewpoint, rooted in human experience and the perception of individuals. The aim of this study is to uncover meaning and understanding surrounding how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices to convey what particular nonverbal communication signals mean to congregants of different denominations. This study seeks to see how individuals experience worship because of their denomination, the nonverbal communication = used in worship, and different interpretations surrounding nonverbal communication, denomination, and worship. The study is ultimately exploratory in nature, looking to survey a group of individuals to obtain their perspective on denomination, worship, and the accompanying nonverbal displays.

Research context and participants

An online survey was distributed to students on the campus of a large, private Christian university in the southeastern region of the United States. The university has been in operation for over 50 years and has a variety of churches of different denominations in the surrounding city. The research activity took place over a two-week period within the university's spring semester. The majority of the university's students come from out-of-state, heightening the micro-cultural diversity of the student body and the numerous factors that individuals bring into

their perceptions and assertions. Participants, as previously stated, were comprised of a mix of undergraduate and graduate students from diverse fields of study representing different denominations. They ranged from 18 to 35 years old and subscribe to Christian beliefs. Convenience sampling was used to ensure participants' willingness and individual passion for the research variables being discussed, and the unique variety of possible denominations to be studied.

Collectively, participants had previous experience with denominations, as it is impossible to escape within the United States, worship, as it is a common Christian practice in practically every church in the United States, and some form of nonverbal communication, as it is impossible not to enact.

Methods

Before the primary study was enacted, a preliminary survey was given to the individuals who signed up to participate. To collect diverse and informed participants, questions regarding denominational affiliation and valence, the participants' identification of being Calvinistic or Arminian, and whether they tend to display a more charismatic or stoic presence in worship was asked. The preliminary survey yielded 40 responses, 39 of which were considered in the qualitative study due to one participant's failure to meet the criteria as a current student of the university.

Following the preliminary survey, a second, open-ended survey was conducted and distributed to the eligible participants of the preliminary survey. The survey included a total of 26 valid respondents. Two responses were negated due to the submission of a duplicate and one participant's omission of their denomination when completing the survey. By using an open-ended survey, the researcher was able to glean more carefully considered information due to the

participants' ability to reflect upon and craft their response in a written manner. This consideration may have led to a more refined, reflective, and thoughtful response than if participants were providing information verbally. Similarly, the anonymous nature of the survey allows participants to be transparent about their worship practices, expression, and denominational affiliation without fear of judgment from others or the researcher. This anonymity possibly reduced a self-serving bias within the responses.

Data collection instruments

Several instruments were used in the data collection process of an open-ended survey. Primarily, the most salient tool for the study was the researcher's personal laptop. The researcher's personal laptop held the following electronic communication elements in order to assist in the data-gathering process. First, Google Survey, an electronic survey generator, was used to create both the preliminary survey for potential participants and the open-ended survey for eligible participants. Similarly, a Word Document was used to gain consent from participants, including the purpose, process, and risks and benefits associated with the survey. Next, the researcher's institutional email was utilized to recruit individuals for the preliminary survey and contact eligible participants for the open-ended survey. Finally, Canva, a web-based graphic design platform, was used to create a digital flyer to aid in the screening process of potential participants.

Research design procedures

While gathering data, several specific procedures were used.

1. The researcher crafted an interest form, requesting participants for the study, providing the background of the study, and explaining the role of the participant of the study.

The primary step in beginning the survey process was screening potential participants.

To obtain potential participants, the researcher used a variety of recruitment methods. First, a digital flyer was sent to over 40 professors and graduate student assistants across three of the university's schools: communication, divinity, and music. Then, the researcher visited five individual classrooms and three general education courses. Two of which had approximately 15 students on average, and one of which had approximately 100. The researcher also visited a graduate-level course with approximately 10 students and a major-specific undergraduate course with approximately 30 students to recruit potential participants. Additionally, the researcher emailed eight student organizations in hopes of collecting participants

2. The researcher received a list of willing participants from the preliminary survey and determined eligibility based on the participants' responses. The responses of the preliminary survey contained demographic, denomination, nonverbal, and worship-related information. This information was gathered through a QR code and link to a Google Form. These questions were necessary to yield a diverse, informed, and knowledgeable group of participants.
3. The researcher emailed the survey to all 39 eligible participants, asking the following questions:
 1. What is your denomination?
 2. How do you behave during worship?
 3. Do you change your proxemics (physical location) by moving to the altar or the back of the auditorium? If yes, please indicate where you move to.
 4. How close are you in proxemic location (physical distance) to others during worship?
 5. What oculosic (eye) behavior do you exhibit during worship?

- a. Do you close your eyes or keep them open?
 - b. If you keep your eyes open, where do you look? The ceiling, the floor, the worship leader?
6. Do you stand or sit?
7. Do you tend to engage in kinesic behavior (facial and body movements) like swaying or rocking when worshiping?
8. What kinesic upper body postures do you exhibit in worship?
 - a. Do you tend to hold your hands during worship?
 - b. Do you raise your hands or keep them by your sides? If you raise your hands, how frequently do you raise your hands?
 - c. Do you swing your arms, extend them outward, or extend them sideways when you worship?
9. What kinesics lower body postures do you exhibit during worship?
 - a. Do you tend to walk, pace, or take steps?
 - b. Do you jump or spin during worship?
 - c. Do you kneel or sit on the floor during worship?
 - d. Have you ever lied prostrate during worship?
10. Do you find yourself engaging in vocalics by shouting or making exclamations during worship?
 - a. If so, when?
 - b. How loud are these exclamations and for how long?
11. How comfortable are you with engaging in haptics by laying hands on other congregants in prayer during worship?

- a. Are there any times during worship you feel it would be inappropriate to lay hands on someone in prayer?
 - b. Are there certain places you feel are more physically acceptable to lay hands on someone in prayer?
12. What do others around you do during worship?
13. In what way do you feel the way you currently worship is in sync with your denominational practice? To what degree?
14. What is your degree of comfort going outside any boundaries for worship that are accustomed to you as a result of your denominational practice?
15. What role does music play in your expression of worship?
4. The researcher answered questions from participants regarding the contents of the survey questions and clarified deadlines for completing the survey via email.

Explanation of data analysis strategy

To analyze the data, members of different denominations nonverbal communication was analyzed using Braun and Clark's thematic analysis through the following steps. First, survey responses were reviewed to uncover any significant or interesting ideas or concepts that emerged amid discussion within a particular denomination. Second, the survey responses were read again to determine possible denominational affiliated themes and then analyzed to see what ideas and concepts could be combined or transformed into subthemes or items of discussion. Possible themes were considered, written up, and analyzed based on validity, strength, and relevancy. After careful consideration and scrutiny, themes were concretely defined by denomination, then written.

Chapter 4: Results

Preliminary Survey Results

Before providing the results of the survey, it is necessary to offer the results of the preliminary survey in which qualitative survey participants were selected from. The survey, as previously stated, was provided through a Google Form. The selection pool consisted of 17 males (42.5%) and 23 (57.5%) females. Five (12.5%) 18-year-olds, six (15%) 19-year-olds, seven (17.5%) 20-year-olds, seven (17.5%) 21-year-olds, seven (17.5%) 22-year-olds, two (5%) 23-year-olds, two 25-year-olds (5%), one thirty-year-old (2.5%), two (5%) thirty five-year-olds, and one (2.5%) 37-year-old took the survey. 35 (87.5%) participants identified as Caucasian, one (2.5%) participant identified as African American, three (7.5%) participants identified as Biracial or Multiracial, and one participant (2.5%) identified as Asian. 27 (67.5%) participants grew up in a suburban population while 10 (25%) participants grew up in an urban population, and three (7.5%) grew up in a rural population. In terms of geographic location across the United States. 15 (37.5%) participants originated from the Northeast, two (5%) participants originated from the Southwest, five (12.5%) participants originated from the Midwest, 17 (42.5%) participants originated from the Southeast, and one (2.5%) participant originated from the West.

When considering participants' faith, 39 out of 40 participants were current students at a private, Christian university, and all 40 participants identified as Christian. When considering individual's longevity of the Christian faith, nine (22.5%) participants identified as being Christians for one to five years, four (10%) participants identified as being Christians for six to ten years, 16 (40%) participant identified as being Christians for 11 to 15 years, six participants (15%) identified as being a Christian for 16 to 20 years, three participants (7.5%) identified as being Christian for 21 to 25 years, and one participant (2.5%) identified as being a Christian for

over 25 years. 36 participants (90%) stated they attended church regularly (approximately three times a month), while four participants (10%) did not. Twenty five participants (62.5%) aligned with Arminian theology, while 15 participants (37.5%) aligned with Calvinistic theology. When answering questions surrounding participants' denominations, 23 participants (57.5%) identified as Nondenominational, 10 participants (25%) identified as Baptist, two participants (5%) identified as Roman Catholic, three participants (7.5%) identified as Pentecostal, one participant (2.5%) identified as Eastern Orthodox, and one participant (2.5%) identified as Presbyterian.

In terms of the length of denominational affiliation, 16 participants (40%) stated they were affiliated with their particular denomination for one to five years, and 24 participants (60%) stated they had been affiliated with their particular denomination for over 10 years. When considering the connection to denominational practices and beliefs, 18 participants (45%) responded that they were closely connected to their denominational practices and beliefs, 17 participants (42.5%) responded that they were moderately connected to their denominational practices and beliefs, and five participants (12.5%) responded they were loosely connected to their to denominational practices and beliefs. 36 participants (90%) believed they behaved and believed similarly to those within their denomination, but three participants (7.5%) did not. One participant explicitly stated they were "more expressive than other members of [their] congregation in musical worship."

Finally, when answering questions surrounding corporate worship, 39 participants (97.5%) stated they engaged in worship typical of Sunday morning church services regularly, while one participant (2.5%) said they only participated in special circumstances such as Christmas and Easter services. 24 participants (60%) admitted to being more physically and verbally expressive while worshipping, while 15 participants (37.5%) admitted to being more

verbally and physically reserved while worshipping. One participant was unsure of their tendencies to be expressive or reserved. When considering specific forms of expressiveness and inexpressiveness, participants who identified as less expressive in worship climates noted concern for distracting or infringing upon others in worship settings, lack of kinesic movement and physical expression of worship, emphasis on the verbal aspects of worship, reverence or contemplation, and a quiet vocal volume. Opposingly, those who identified as being more expressive in worship climates noted the raising of hands, diverse forms of movements such as bowing, jumping, swaying, bobbing, clapping, and dancing, heightened vocal volume, and speaking in tongues.

Now that the results of the preliminary survey have been provided, the results of the qualitative survey will be stated.

Qualitative Survey Results

After the preliminary screening survey, a qualitative survey was distributed to the 39 eligible participants via email through a link to an electronic form, yielding 26 responses from five denominations. One response was excluded from the study due to the participant's failure to disclose the affiliative denomination, and another participant took the survey twice, once without stating their denomination, and once stating their denomination. Only the response stating their denomination was evaluated. In total, the study consisted of 14 Nondenominational participants, seven Baptist participants, three Pentecostal participants, one Eastern Orthodox participant, and one Roman Catholic participant.

Nine themes emerged:

1. *Theme One: Differences in Comfort in Expression During Worship*

2. *Theme Two: Differences in Willingness to Explore Forms of Worship Outside of Denominational Norms*
3. *Theme Three: Adverbs as an Indicator of Frequency and Perception of Appropriateness of Nonverbal Cues Enacted in Worship*
4. *Theme Four: Frequent Use of Comparative Language*
5. *Theme Five: The Perceived Role of Music in Expression of Worship*
6. *Theme Six: Nonverbal Communication of Patriarchal Church Participants*
7. *Theme Seven: Nonverbal Communication of Baptist Participants*
8. *Theme Eight: Nonverbal Communication of Pentecostal Participants*
9. *Theme Nine: Nonverbal Communication of Nondenominational Participants*

After providing a comprehensive list of themes, the aforementioned themes and appropriate subthemes will be explained in detail.

Theme One: Differences in Comfort in Expression

As this study included participants from a range of denominational practices, backgrounds, and theological standpoints, there was an identifiable difference between participants who enacted more charismatic worship compared to non-charismatic worship. These differences may be the result of the liturgical and contemporary worship styles possessed by a particular church or denomination and the worship norms within an individual's primary church or denomination. In general, participants who were more charismatic alluded to more contemporary styles of corporate worship. These participants were found to be more nonverbally expressive in their worship and were primarily composed of Nondenominational, Pentecostal, and more self-identified "modern" Baptist denominations. However, participants who were less charismatic engaged in more liturgical forms of worship, such as the reading of Psalms,

designated prayers and practices, and hymns. These participants were found to be less nonverbally expressive in their worship. Liturgical and less expressive nonverbal cues were primarily found amongst subdenominational Baptists, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholic participants. Overall, these findings produced two subthemes: comfort in expression as a result of a particular denomination and church and comfort in expression as a result of relationship and group size.

Subtheme One: Comfort in Expression as a Result of a Particular Denomination and Church

Particular participants found that they felt comfortable being more expressive while engaging in corporate worship within their own denominational church, even if that particular church was Nondenominational. One Nondenominational participant stated, “I am not comfortable jumping or raising my hands as much as if I were at home... it has been an adjustment for me coming here and going to a Baptist church and being surrounded by people who do not raise their hands or move much at all.” This signifies that some participants are more comfortable and worship in a more personally authentic manner when engaging in worship within their own denominational church, as opposed to other churches that may exhibit a different level of expressiveness. Correspondingly, apart from denomination, the expressiveness of a specific church was also found to play a role in participants’ comfort. Another Nondenominational participant stated, “... less expressive settings I am less comfortable with.” Thus, with some participants, comfort was not a direct result of a specific, identified denomination. Rather, comfort was derived from the expressiveness or inexpressiveness of other congregants in the setting. Participants who identified a decrease in expressive behavior were found to be less comfortable with expressive forms of nonverbal communication in worship.

Expressive forms of nonverbal communication included hand raising, jumping, dancing, clapping, swaying, bobbing, tapping of the foot or leg, laying of hands in prayer, and vocalic cues apart from singing lyrics to worship songs or hymns. Participants who identified a decrease in expressive behavior were found to display an increase in mindfulness and awareness of their own behavior during worship, signifying their lack of comfort in expressiveness. One Baptist participant noted they “avoid being in someone’s personal space when worshipping” and “don’t want to accidentally hit someone or be in someone’s space.” Another formerly Pentecostal participant stated, “I adjust to the environment so I don’t distract others...” These are potentially indicative of participants’ perception that greater expressiveness might endanger another’s personal space or time of worship, which then may threaten their personal comfort level. The same participant noted that they were only comfortable engaging in haptic behavior by laying hands on another individual during prayer “in more charismatic churches.” Again, this reinforces the idea that comfort in expressiveness and inexpressiveness is the result of worship norms within a church, possibly indicative of denomination. Only one inexpressive Baptist participant alluded to the potential discomfort felt when witnessing or engaging in more nonverbally expressive forms of nonverbal communication in worship by stating, “[going outside of customary worship boundaries] makes me feel awkward.” Aside from this one participant, the majority of other participants indicated that neither expressive nor inexpressive worship made them feel uncomfortable directly. Rather, the consideration and behavior of others dictated their expressiveness or inexpressiveness. Now that comfort in expression as a result of participants’ denomination has been provided, participants’ comfort in expression as a result of relationship and group size will be stated.

Subtheme Two: Comfort in Expression as a Result of Relationship and Group Size

When considering acts of expression within corporate worship, various participants indicated that their comfort of expression or enacting certain nonverbal cues was exclusive to the relationship between them and the individuals and environment in which the nonverbal cue was enacted. In a general sense, the majority of participants noted that they stood for at least a portion of worship and were within arms' length of other individuals, regardless of the relationship between them. However, when considering acts surrounding haptics and proxemics, participants noted that the relationship between the individuals was of increased importance. When further considering proxemics between individuals during corporate worship, a Nondenominational participant explained, "in an informal gathering of friends [they] prefer to have a lot of space around [them.]" Comparatively, a particular Baptist participant noted they were only comfortable worshipping in closer proxemic distance with individuals that they arrived at the church service with, otherwise, they preferred increased proxemic distance from other congregants during worship. Specifically, when uncovering participants' comfort with the use of haptics in prayer during a worship service, a Baptist participant noted, "I would only [lay hands on some in prayer during worship] with a close friend or someone who specifically asked for it" and was only moderately comfortable doing so. Comfort in engaging in haptic behavior during worship was exclusive to known individuals or through invitation, not spontaneous. Likewise, a Nondenominational participant noted, "it is more acceptable to lay hands on someone in prayer in more intimate settings like a small group or smaller worship time with friends/people from the church." To this participant, group size and the collective nature of knowing and being known with multiple, close individuals played a role in when haptic cues were considered acceptable during worship. This information indicates that across different denominations, the setting of the enacted nonverbal cue and the relationship between the individuals in the worship setting plays a

role in how individuals enact nonverbal communication during worship. In the same way, relationships between individuals and group size also played a role in which specific nonverbal cues participants chose to exhibit. In all, group size and relational intimacy within a group were found to play a role in the enactment of nonverbal cues across denominations.

As the comfort of expression as a result of denomination or church and relationship and group size has been explained, the differences in willingness to explore forms of worship outside of denominational norms will be provided.

Theme Two: Differences in Willingness to Explore Forms of Worship Outside of Denominational Norms

When participants were asked about their willingness to explore forms of worship outside of their perceived denominational norms, there was a range of responses. As some forms of corporate worship are more traditional and customary in nature, some might assume that more liturgical denominations and churches would display a decrease in willingness to explore diverse forms and mannerisms of worship. However, according to the responses in this study, this assertion is not necessarily accurate.

Nondenominational churches, for the purposes of clarification in nonverbal communication, were separated into two groups: expressive and less expressive. Amongst the expressive Nondenominational participants, there was a two to one ratio for willingness to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship. One expressive Nondenominational participant stated “If I feel led by the Spirit, I feel no discomfort in stepping out of my comfort zone.”

Transversely, among less expressive Nondenominational participants, there was a one-to-two-ratio for willingness to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship. Thus, from

the limited sample size in this study, more expressive Nondenominational participants are more likely to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship practices. In general, the less willing participants stated they would be “very” and “extremely” uncomfortable transcending beyond boundaries outside of their customary worship.

Similarly, Pentecostal participants exhibited a two-to-one ratio in willingness to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship practice. One Pentecostal participant noted, “I am not comfortable expanding out of comfort unless I truly feel led.”

The singular Catholic participant indicated a willingness to explore boundaries outside of customary practice but emphasized the primal importance of mass overall. The singular Eastern Orthodox participant indicated they were unwilling to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship practice to any capacity, at any time.

Lastly, Baptist participants indicated equal amounts of willingness and unwillingness to explore boundaries outside of their customary worship practice with a one-to-one ratio, indicating no particular leaning in willingness. One Baptist participant stated, “I don’t usually go outside of my boundaries. I stay pretty strict with my own practices.” However, another Baptist participant rated themselves a “9.5/10 comfort with going outside of what’s common in most Baptist churches.”

The overall lack of willingness to explore nonverbal communication cues outside of customary worship practice seemed to be heavily influenced by the actions of others and the internal desire to be “reflective,” “reverent,” and “in awe,” depicting a need to be less noticeable by others in the worship setting. These traits were more reflective of character traits of participants coming before God. Yet, those who were more willing to explore nonverbal cues outside of their customary worship noted the need for the exploration to be “prompted,” “led by

the Spirit,” “Christian,” and “Biblical.” These participants explained the exploration outside of customary worship boundaries was dependent on a catalyst and with justification.

In general, the willingness of participants was personal to each participant and inconclusive when considering denominational influence, expressiveness, and worship style. Since the valence of willingness to explore worship outside of customary denominational boundaries has been explored, the role of adverbs in perceptions of appropriateness of enactment of nonverbal cues will be explained.

Theme Three: Adverbs as an Indicator of Frequency and Perception of Appropriateness of Nonverbal Cues Enacted in Worship

Throughout participants' responses, as nonverbal communication cues can be classified and elaborated upon based on how the participant exhibits them, adverbs were used by all participants. The frequency of adverbs plays a role in determining what specific cues participants of a particular denomination may enact, as well as what cues are shared across denominations. Similarly, responses exclusively consisting of an adverb displayed polarity in participants' behavior and beliefs surrounding nonverbal communication cues in worship. This information led to the classification of two subthemes: adverbs as predecessors, reflective of frequency and adverbs as a singular statement, reflective of appropriateness. Overall, adverbs were used to describe participants' behavior during worship.

Subtheme One: Adverbs as Predecessors, Reflective of Frequency

When answering questions surrounding participants' engagement in certain nonverbal communication cues such as proxemics, kinesics, haptics, oculosics and vocalics, adverbs frequently preceded statements of action or descriptions of nonverbal cues. Similarly, when participants were asked if they engaged in a particular behavior, they often answered with an

adverb. Adverbs such as “sometimes,” “relatively,” “occasionally,” “infrequently,” “mostly,” “often,” and “rarely” were littered among responses. Commonly, these adverbs accompanied a response. When looking at the indication surrounding the adverbs used by participants in responses, they were often used to indicate the frequency of a particular behavior. For example, in statements such as “[my] hands are raised infrequently,” “[I]... occasionally go to the altar,” and “[I] sometimes dance around,” adverbs were used to describe the frequency of the occurrence of the nonverbal communication cue an individual enacted.

Subtheme Two: Adverbs as Singular Statements, Reflective of Appropriateness

However, adverbs were arguably used most powerfully as a singular statement with reference to engagement in a particular nonverbal cue. Participants’ response of “no ” to whether they exhibit a particular nonverbal cue indicates they have not something.

Participants’ use of the adverb “never” signifies that the participant only has not engaged in the nonverbal cue, but also signifies no future willingness to ever engage in that nonverbal expression, making the response more concrete. Specific participants’ use of the adverb “never” may indicate a lack of comfort, understanding, or personal perception of appropriateness with a particular nonverbal cue. It can be inferred that the lack of comfort, understanding, or personal perception of appropriateness with a particular nonverbal cue is the result of denominational practice and personal experience of the participant.

Similarly, while “yes” signifies that an individual participant enacts a certain nonverbal cue or is comfortable or willing to enact a particular nonverbal cue, the adverb “always” has a more perpetual connotation in which the participant habitually engages in the nonverbal cue. Since the enactment is habitual and continuous it can be assumed that the participant is comfortable with engaging in the cue, activity, or practice. This also designates that the enacted

behavior or expression is continuously considered appropriate in whatever denominational worship environment the participant finds themselves in.

After uncovering the dual role of adverbs as a measure of frequency and appropriateness as predecessors and stand-alone statements, it is necessary to discuss the frequent usage of comparative language amongst participants' responses.

Theme Four: The Use of Comparative Language

When referencing both nonverbal communication in a general sense and nonverbal communication during worship, many participants' referenced their own behavior, willingness, expression, and actions with reference to that of other people and other common denominational practices and behaviors. All participants, when specifically asked to compare their current worship behavior and that of their denominational practice, answered that they either aligned with their denomination or were more or less expressive than those within their denomination.

However, the most noteworthy comparisons arose when individuals answered questions that were not designed to evoke a comparative response. These comparative responses were nuanced in nature and featured setting, denomination, and individual nonverbal communication acts. One Baptist participant, when discussing individual alignment with denominational worship practices, stated, "For SBC overall, this [the worship enacted in their specific church] is more contemporary than most (since most are rural, hymnbook, traditional services)..." This participant is comparing the more contemporary style of music featured in their Southern Baptist church to that of more typical Baptist churches which appear to be more traditional in nature. The differentiation from the participant's church in comparison to other Baptist churches signifies that their church is an exception to standard worship practice within the denomination.

Although comparative language was used to compare nonverbal communication during worship within particular denominations and across churches of the same denomination, comparative language was also used between different churches of presumed or stated other denominations. Another Baptist participant noted that during worship, they “do not participate in raising hands or ‘dancing’ as some might at other churches, as [they] think worship should not call attention to [oneself].” This use of comparative language not only implies that this participant would not engage in such behavior, but also serves as a clear designator between the nonverbal communication within their church and denomination, as opposed to “other churches.”

Notably, a Nondenominational participant used comparative language not in reference to behavior, expression, comfort, or willingness, but rather as a perceived consequence of engaging in particular nonverbal communication cues. The participant stated, “I think Nondenominational[s] are less judgmental than other denominations – the way you worship is up to you and however that looks is personal and individual.” This possibly indicates that the participant feels that denominational churches judge individuals for the behavior enacted or not enacted in a worship setting, and that the judgment that comes is unjustified. This indication asserts that the personal and individual expression of worship should not be influenced by a denomination, church, or the opinion of others, according to the participant.

Lastly, comparative language was also used in reference to a participant’s “home church” or denomination from which the participant originated. As the study was conducted among college students, many participants live outside of the city and state in which the university is located. Some of these individuals attend a different church within or surrounding their hometown that, in some way, differs from that of the church they attend while at the university. The phrases “when I am at home...,” “when I came to [name of educational institution],” and

“now [while attending church in college] I attend a [denominational church]” were populated across a handful of participants’ responses. Thus, the vast majority of participants engage in some form of comparison when discussing worship norms across denominations and specific churches or environments because they attend one church while attending college and another church throughout their childhood, youth, and on university-designated breaks.

After considering the use of comparative language across different denominations, churches, and practices, the influential role of music will be discussed.

Theme Five: The Perceived Role of Music in Expression of Worship

Within this study, participants were explicitly asked to reflect upon the role music played in their personal expression of worship. As different churches and denominations enact more contemporary or more liturgical styles, including different instrumentation, lyrics, and repetitiveness, participants’ answers varied as a result of practice, specific musical modalities, and the validity of lyrics. Evaluation of this theme produced the following subthemes: the influential role of music, considerations of musicality, associations of song choice, references to musicianship, spiritual implications, and the limited role of music.

Subtheme One: The Influential Role of Music

Comprehensively, over half of the participants noted that music played a “huge,” “important,” “big,” or “large” role in their expression during worship. While some participants failed to elaborate on the way in which music played such an influential role in their expression, others provided details to supplement their assertions. Some participants noted that the role music played in regard to expressiveness was a result of their personal passion for music overall. One expressive Nondenominational participant stated, “[Music] plays an important role because [it] is very near and dear to me.” Therefore, the importance of music as a general concept has the

potential to contribute to a participant's overall expression as a result of the music-oriented nature of most forms of contemporary worship. One's personal affinity for music is considered when reflecting upon expressiveness in worship. Aside from a general liking and appreciation for music, one Baptist participant explained that the role of music in the expression of worship "plays a larger part for [them] because [they] are a worship leader and the Lord uses music to work through [them] in a different way." Although the way the Lord works in this particular participant cannot be elaborated upon, the role of music on participants in worship as a result of appreciation and role is undeniable.

Subtheme Two: Considerations of Musicality

Aside from some participants contributing to the role of music and expressiveness as a result of personal fondness and position, other participants described the role of music and its role in expressiveness as a result of musicality. Musicality, in this sense, can be considered specific musical elements related to tempo, instrumentation, song selection, and volume. All of these aforementioned factors are nonverbal elements. When considering the specific tempo of a worship song or worship set, one expressive Nondenominational participant noted they enacted an enhanced expressiveness during songs with a faster tempo, stating "I am most moved by upbeat music, but almost all forms of worship will move me in worship of the Lord." Although the overall presence of worship is recognized, the emphasis and motivating factor behind this participant's expressiveness is the tempo of the song.

When considering the variance of volume within a specific worship song, another expressive Nondenominational participant explained that their vocal volume and amount of movement is reflective of the volume of the music at a given point in the worship song. "I think when the music gets louder, I tend to want to sway more or sing louder and when [the music]

gets quieter, I do not move as much,” said the participant. “Like most people, I have the tendency to raise my hands when the music gets very loud or hits the bridge of the song.” Notably, this participant transcends beyond their own personal expression of worship and explains how they believe most people surrounding them enact the same behavior and have a similar response to increased volume during a song, which could be indicative of one’s denominational norm as a result of certain musical aspects.

Subtheme Three: Associations of Song Choice

Specific song choice was also a contributing factor in the role in which music contributed to the expression of worship. Contemporary songs, Psalms, hymns, prayers, and exhortations are present within Christian corporate worship. Typically, the singing of Psalms and prayers is reserved for more liturgical worship. However, hymns are sung and adapted in both liturgical and contemporary worship. One Eastern Orthodox participant explained, “we sing Psalms and hymns and have sung prayers, but do not use instruments” when describing the role music plays in their worship. Despite the lack of instrumentation emphasizing the verbal aspects of worship and music, the act of singing is nonverbal, as it does not relate to the words themselves. This participant noted that while worshipping, they engage in acts of sitting, kneeling, standing, and rocking while chanting Psalms, making the sign of the cross, and raising their palms in prayer, indicating expressiveness. Comparably, a Pentecostal participant contributed their expressiveness to the type of songs typically sung in their church during worship, stating, “[Music plays] a big role [in expression of worship.] I believe the reason I do not worship as expressive is because my church sings hymns every Sunday.” This participant explains that the specific style of music sung plays a role in their expressiveness, indicating that if different songs were sung, they perhaps would worship in a more expressive manner. In some participants, the term expression

was equated with enjoyment and preference, as opposed to physical mannerisms. When discussing specific song choice, one Baptist participant explained, “I would typically prefer a more traditional music, such as hymns. I don’t usually enjoy contemporary music” when elaborating on the role of music in expression during worship. The specific style a song is classified as influences the feelings and behaviors of certain participants.

Subtheme Four: References to Musicianship

The musicianship and skill level of a particular musician was mentioned when considering the role music plays in participants’ expression of worship. One expressive Nondenominational participant noted the need for members of a worship team to maintain an appropriate proficiency, yet exhibit meekness while they lead a congregation into worship. “Poor musicality can be distracting,” said the participant, “overplaying can also be distracting. [The player] doesn’t need to be a pro musician, but the point of the music should be to point everyone to Jesus.” Although individual expressiveness was not mentioned by this specific participant, the expressiveness and proficiency of the worship team were considered worthy of attention and discussion.

Subtheme Five: Spiritual Implications

Just as musicianship was considered in reference to expression during worship, a fraction of participants also noted the spirituality surrounding music, worship, and expression. One expressive, Nondenominational participant, when reflecting on the role music plays in their expression of worship, failed to mention any personal acts or factors surrounding expression and instead focused on the necessity of the Holy Spirit in worship, explaining “it is important to have Spirit-led worship.” In this instance, this individual participant placed significance on the motives during worship, as opposed to the physical expression or surrounding factors such as

musicality, song type, volume, or volume. It may be assumed that this participant also feels that expression during worship should be Spirit-led, but this cannot be confirmed. Comparably, the richness in language of the worship song and the focal point of particular worship songs were found to be relevant to particular participants. One Baptist participant stated, “I prefer to sing music that is Trinitarian and Gospel-centered and music that lacks depth and is a surface-level description of Christ is harder to worship with.” It is implied that “harder to worship with” means it is more challenging for an individual to be expressive during songs that, to them, are not Trinitarian, Gospel-centered, and contain detailed descriptions of Christ. Thus, the doctrinal nuances behind the worship music itself play a role in participants' expressiveness and perceptions of music during worship.

Subtheme Six: The Limited Role of Music

Subsequently, just as the majority of participants noted that music played some role in their expression of worship, there were a handful of participants who believed that music played a very minute role in their personal expression of worship. Both participants who described the limited role of music in their expression of worship were less expressive and Nondenominational. One participant stated, “[music] helps guide but is not necessary.” Despite that, this assertion aligns with previously mentioned information about the role of music as a catalyst and guide, which is ambiguous in nature, the focus of the statement overall indicates that music is not vital to their expressiveness in worship settings. Similarly, another participant explained music plays a “small amount, a very small amount” in their expression of worship.

The previous section analyzed the themes amongst individual responses, absent of any denominational characteristics. The following section will contain analysis and information surrounding corporate denominational styles.

Nonverbal Communication of Patriarchal Church Participants

Theme One: The Overarchingly Unified Nonverbal Cues Expressed by Patriarchal

Denominations

In total, only two of the 26 available responses included individuals of Patriarchal churches. One participant identified as Catholic, and the other participant identified as Eastern Orthodox. Nonverbal communication cues enacted by both Patriarchal participants had overlapping similarities. In a general sense, both the Roman Catholic participant, as well as the Eastern Orthodox participant, referred to their worship as being “traditional” and reverent in nature. Patriarchal participants placed emphasis on group dynamics during worship, as opposed to individual acts of expression. Comprehensively, the nonverbal cues enacted by the Roman Catholic participant and the Eastern Orthodox participant can be classified into the following subthemes: change in proxemics to receive communion and close interpersonal proxemic distance, altar-centered oculosic focus, differentiation of stillness among Patriarchal participants, and the absence of vocalic cues and polarization of perceived appropriateness of haptics.

Subtheme One: Change in Proxemics to Receive Communion and Close Interpersonal Proxemic Distance

Both the Roman Catholic Participant and the Eastern Orthodox participant noted that during worship, they remain in their chosen pew and do not stray from that specific area. The only time both participants expressed any change in proxemic location was in receiving communion at the altar. In the same way, as opposed to spreading out from other individuals

during worship, or worshipping in an aggregation of people, participants noted they stood at their pews, remaining in close proxemic distance to others. The Eastern Orthodox participant stated in relation to others, they were “touching or very close,” while the Catholic participant was “right next to [other individuals], but not quite shoulder to shoulder.” Thus, the Catholic participant experienced a slight decrease in proxemic distance, as compared to the Eastern Orthodox participant.

Subtheme Two: Altar-Centered Oculestic Focus

Both the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic participant expressed altar-centered oculestic focus. The altar is a focal point in many churches, regardless of denomination. However, in the Patriarchal churches present in this study, the altar was referenced in containing the crucifix, tabernacle, priest, and deacons. Similarly, the service book or hymnal book was an overlapping recipient of gaze during worship. Both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic participant explained the only time they closed their eyes during worship was to pray.

Subtheme Three: Differentiation of Stillness Among Patriarchal Participants

In terms of kinesics, the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic participant both engaged in acts of standing, sitting, and kneeling, as customary to their respective worship traditions. While both participants expressed the ways in which they clasped or held their hands together, either at the chest or below their torso, there were differences among the upper body kinesic behavior enacted by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox participants. These differences contributed to differences in stillness during worship. While the Roman Catholic participant noted that they do not engage in rocking, swaying, tapping, or any other form of subtle bodily movement while engaging in worship, the Eastern Orthodox participant expressed greater upper body kinesic movements. When asked about the upper body postures exhibited during worship,

the Eastern Orthodox participant stated they engage in “slight swaying and rocking to aid [themselves] in long periods of standing, rocking back and forth while chanting the Psalms, [and] making the sign of the cross.” This kinesic movement contributes to the comparative decrease in stillness within the Eastern Orthodox participant as both a self-soothing and customary behavior.

Subtheme Four: The Absence of Vocalic Cues and Polarization of Perceived

Appropriateness of Haptics

Both the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic participants noted that they did not engage in any explicit form of vocalics while engaging in worship. The vocalic cues of question concerned shouting and exclamations. However, when discussing comfort in engaging in haptic behaviors during prayer, the Eastern Orthodox participant disclosed they would never be comfortable laying hands on another individual during prayer, at any time, or in any place. However, the Roman Catholic participant noted that the use of haptics in prayer would not be conducive to a typical mass service. Despite this, the participant stated that engaging in haptics during prayer while in worship was more appropriate “in prayer groups, or small groups, rather than in the full congregation.”

After providing the nonverbal communication cues exemplified by Patriarchal church participants during worship, the nonverbal cues enacted by Baptist participants will be stated.

Nonverbal Communication of Baptist Participants

Theme One: The Inconclusive State of Baptist Nonverbal Communication Cues During Worship

Baptist participants included Reformed Baptists, Southern Baptists, and nonsubdenominational Baptists. As a result of specific church practices and the integration of contemporary music in Baptist churches, as opposed to traditional hymns, Baptist participants,

overall, did not exhibit any allegiance toward a particular nonverbal communication cue or form of expression. Overall, many Baptist participants used words such as “calm,” “still,” “stand,” and “internal” to describe their behavior during worship. The evaluation of the respective information contributed to the formation of the following subthemes: stationary proxemic location and inconclusive interpersonal proximity, multiple focal points of oculosic gaze, various worship postures and the absence of abstract movement, and sparingly used vocalics and specific perceptions surrounding the use of haptics.

Subtheme One: Stationary Proxemic Location and Inconclusive Interpersonal Proximity

The overwhelming majority of Baptist participants stated they did not change their proxemic location within the sanctuary by getting closer to the altar, to the back, or to the sides of the sanctuary. Instead, these individuals chose to stay in their designated pew or seat while engaging in worship. However, when discussing proxemic distance from other individuals, Baptist participants provided mixed responses. While half of Baptist participants noted that they prefer and create some form of increased proxemic distance between themselves and other congregants, a handful of other participants noted they typically worshiped “next to” or “close beside” others. Only one participant stated that their proxemic distance between people was dependent on the particular setting they found themselves in. This participant explained in typical Sunday morning corporate worship, they experienced a decrease in proxemic distance from others, while in smaller worship settings, they preferred a greater proxemic distance from others.

Subtheme Two: Multiple Focal Points of Oculosic Gaze

No Baptist participants reported exclusively closing their eyes during worship. However, one participant noted that their eyes remained open during the entirety of worship and their gaze

was fixated upon the worship leader. More commonly, a variety of oculosic behaviors were enacted by Baptist participants. Among the oculosic gazes exhibited by Baptist participants, a handful of participants noted their gaze was balanced between looking at the worship leader and looking at the lyrics to a worship song. However, other participants noted they tended to close their eyes or look at the worship leader. Other participants alternated their oculosic behavior between closing their eyes, looking at the worship leader, and reading the lyrics to the worship song.

Subtheme Three: Various Worship Postures and the Absence of Abstract Movement

When considering the kinesic behaviors of Baptist participants, only a handful of Baptist participants stated they exclusively stood during worship. The majority of Baptist participants stated they stood, sat, bowed, and kneeled during worship, even if acts of bowing and kneeling were rare. One participant stated it is “not often” that they sit or kneel during worship but “[they] have done it in the past.” Overall, displaying that, for the most part, acts of sitting or kneeling during worship are not considered a norm, but do occur on occasion. When considering overall kinesic movement of the body, half of Baptist participants stated that they engaged in some form of swaying or rocking when engaging in worship, while a handful of other participants noted they stayed primarily still while worshipping. One Baptist participant stated they sway or rock their body on occasion during worship. The majority of Baptist participants also stated they engaged in hand raising while participating in corporate worship, however, between the participants who engaged in hand raising, fifty percent described their hand raising as frequent, while the other half described their hand raising as infrequent. A handful of participants stated they kept their hands by their sides during worship and did not raise their arms. The majority of Baptist participants stated they did not engage in any lower body kinesic movements such as

walking or pacing, jumping, or taking steps. However, a handful of Baptist participants engaged in either foot tapping or “leg bobbing.” No Baptist participants reported laying prostrate during worship.

Subtheme Four: Sparingly Used Vocalics and Specific Perceptions Surrounding the Use of Haptics

All but one Baptist participant noted that they did not engage in shouting or exclamations while engaging in worship. The one Baptist participant who did engage in vocalic expression during worship stated, “I do ad libs – short, vocal exclamations...during worship but not usually shouting.” The majority of Baptist participants reported they were comfortable with laying hands on other individuals in prayer during worship. One participant explicitly stated they were uncomfortable engaging in such haptic behavior, while another participant reported being “reasonably” comfortable with engaging in haptics. Although the overwhelming majority of Baptist participants were comfortable engaging in haptics during worship, a handful of participants noted that the level of appropriateness was dependent upon the person or the topic being prayed about, the importance of invitation, instigated by the person wishing to receive prayer, and with regard to the relationship between the person in need of prayer and the person praying. When considering the appropriateness in the location of touch, a handful of participants stated no particular place was more appropriate to touch than another, while other participants noted it was only appropriate to do so at the altar or in a group setting. One specific participant reported the only acceptable place to lay hands on someone in prayer was “if they [were] on their knees in prayer or overly emotional and appear[ed] to need support.” This assertion highlights the significance of the potential emotional and spiritual needs of the person in prayer, as opposed to a specific location or portion of the body.

Now that the nonverbal communication cues of Baptists have been explained, the nonverbal communication cues enacted by Pentecostal participations will be discussed.

Nonverbal Communication of Pentecostal Participants

Theme One: The Outlier in Presumed Pentecostal Worship Behavior

To summarize, Pentecostal participants describe their overall behavior during worship as “charismatic,” regularly referring to the role of movement in their worship, and expressing a heightened vocal volume. Two thirds of the Pentecostal participants closely aligned with typical Pentecostal practices, which will be discussed in the following sections in detail. One participant felt as though their worship style was not indicative of standard Pentecostal worship. These assertions lead to the following subthemes: unanimity in proxemic change as a result of altar calls and interpersonal closeness, uniformity in gaze behavior, diversity in kinesic expression during worship, commonality of vocalic expression, the role of discernment in the use of haptics during prayer, and specific physical and geographical locations of haptic behavior.

Subtheme One: Unanimity in Proxemic Change as a Result of Altar Calls and

Interpersonal Closeness

All Pentecostal participants noted that during worship they changed their proxemic location to go to the altar. Although each participant associated different frequency in visiting the altar, along with particular promptings such as “altar calls” and “special prayer” with their motive behind the proxemic change, the change was altar-centered in nature. Similarly, all Pentecostal participants reported that they worshiped within close proximity of other congregants. Participants used phrases such as “fairly close” or “usually close” to describe their proximity to others. It can be determined that, in general, Pentecostal participants decrease

proxemic distance between themselves and the altar for prayer and altar calls and worship in close proximity to other congregants.

Subtheme Two: Uniformity in Gaze Behavior

All Pentecostal participants expressed various locations of gaze when engaging in corporate worship. Pentecostal participants did not engage in exclusively closed or exclusively opened eye behaviors. Pentecostal participants used combined forms of oculosic behaviors by directing their gaze to the worship leaders, ceiling, and floor, as well as closing their eyes. In general, when participants' eyes were open, their gaze was predominately fixated on the worship leader or worship team. However, closing one's eyes was the most prominent form of oculosic behavior but was not used exclusively.

Subtheme Three: Diversity in Kinesic Expression During Worship

Pentecostal participants' diversity in kinesic expression greatly contrasts the uniformity in oculosic behavior and the use of proxemics during worship. The majority of Pentecostal participants expressed that they stand during corporate worship or sit/ kneel periodically, sway or rock their bodies, clasp their hands together, and raise their hands either in front of their bodies or a combination of in front of and to the side of their bodies, occasionally swinging their arms. Some participants were able to recall the estimated amount of times they raised their hands per worship song, stating, "I raise[my hands] more often than they are at my side. I raise them at least three times during each song." This specific numerical account of acts of hand raising displays the participant's self-awareness when engaging in nonverbal cues. One Pentecostal participant stated they sway their body and dance during worship, as well as walk and pace. Specifically, this participant noted they "will occasionally walk or pace if they feel the Lord urging [them] to do so, but that doesn't happen every service." This comment asserts the

behavior is relatively irregular in nature, though not uncommon. Two-thirds of Pentecostal participants noted they jumped or spun during worship. Only one Pentecostal participant admitted to having lied prostrate during worship.

Subtheme Four: Commonality of Vocalic Expression

Two-thirds of Pentecostal participants reported engaging in vocalic cues during worship, including shouts and exclamations. One Pentecostal participant stated they engaged in vocalics by “shouting during worship in celebration [depending] on the environment.” The environmental context seemingly plays a role in this particular participant’s willingness to engage in vocalics. Another participant explained that they engage in shouts or exclamations “when there’s a really powerful lyric or when the worship leader made a good point between songs, or if something hits [them] hard (lyrics, melody, drums, etc.) These can be anything from whispering..., to moderately loud..., and sometimes [they] might kind of yell...” Overall, the majority of Pentecostal participants in this study engage in vocalics cues of affirmation, agreement, or celebration while worshipping.

Subtheme Five: The Role of Discernment in the Use of Haptics During Prayer, and Specific Physical and Geographical Locations of Touch Behavior

All Pentecostal participants felt comfortable laying hands on other individuals in prayer during worship. However, when considering the appropriate time to engage in this act, two-thirds of participants stated that they sought the Lord and relied on the Holy Spirit when making the decision to do so. One participant expressed that the appropriateness of haptics was dependent upon the person being prayed for and their individual comfort with the use of haptics during prayer. When considering the location of haptics in prayer, all Pentecostal participants had varying opinions. One participant noted that laying hands on another individual in prayer was

exclusively appropriate while at the altar. Another participant only expressed comfort and appropriateness in laying hands on others in prayer while in charismatic churches. The other participant used physical parts of the body to describe the appropriate place to lay hands on some in prayer, noting the shoulders, head, and upper back were most typical.

After discussing the nonverbal communication cues of Pentecostal participants, the nonverbal communication cues of the final denomination of consideration within this study will be explained – Nondenominational participants.

Nonverbal Communication of Nondenominational Participants

Theme One: Differences Among Nondenominational Worship Practices

Before discussing nonverbal communication cues enacted by Nondenominational participants, it is significant to recall that for the purpose of this study, Nondenominational participants will be categorized based on expressiveness. Notably, a handful of Nondenominational participants referenced their previous denominational affiliation when stating their denomination, displaying the role their previous denomination may have played in the formation of nonverbal communication cues enacted during worship. Diverse nonverbal communication cues and overall usage of particular cues were found between expressive Nondenominational participants and less expressive Nondenominational participants, leading to the following subthemes. First, in reference to expressive Nondenominational participants: stationary and interpersonal proxemics in expressive Nondenominational participants, the oculosic focus on song lyrics among expressive Nondenominational participants, the frequency of closed eyes among expressive Nondenominational participants, and the limited use of vocalics during worship among expressive Nondenominational participants, diversity in worship posture and portrayal of kinesic expression among expressive Nondenominational participants. Then in

reference to less expressive Nondenominational participants: interpersonal and environmental proxemics among less expressive Nondenominational participants, reliance on one oculesic behavior and the absence of vocalic cues among less expressive Nondenominational participants, the reliance on standing, swaying, infrequent hand raising and fixed lower body kinesics among less expressive Nondenominational participants, and the normality of haptics among less expressive Nondenominational participants.

Expressive Nondenominational Participants

In general, expressive Nondenominational participants characterized their behavior during worship as “emotional,” stating they were “excited,” with reference to movement, hand raising, and closed eyes.

Subtheme One: Stationary and Interpersonal Proxemics in Expressive

Nondenominational Participants

Overall, the majority of expressive Nondenominational participants responded that they did not change physical location in the sanctuary when engaging in corporate worship. These participants stated that they stay at their particular seat or pew chosen before or at the beginning of the worship service starting. Contrastingly, a handful of expressive Nondenominational participants stated they altered their physical location during worship. The decision to change physical location during worship was a direct result of the perceived need for more room to engage in kinesic movement when worshipping. These individuals noted they either moved to the altar or to the very back of the sanctuary to “spread out and move around more,” as one participant stated. The frequency of change in proxemic location was not directly stated by participants.

Correspondingly, as a result of remaining in a fixated location during corporate worship, the majority of expressive Nondenominational participants noted they were within close proxemic distance of other congregants when worshipping. These participants implied that they remained in their pews or in front of their seats in the sanctuary. Some participants noted their exact distance away from other individuals, being “a foot or two away,” while others simply stated they were “next to” others or “very close” to others. As a result, participants reported there was “very little room to move around.” Consequently, due to a decrease in proxemic distance, one participant stated they, “almost rub shoulders [with others] most of the time.” Although a decrease in proxemic distance is typical of Nondenominational participants due to their fixed location during worship, one participant noted their proxemic distance was further away from others, despite not changing proxemic location within the sanctuary.

Subtheme Two: The Oculestic Focus on Song Lyrics, the Frequency of Closed Eyes, and the Limited Use of Vocalics During Worship

Keeping one’s eyes closed was considered the most predominant oculestic behavior of expressive Nondenominational participants. When participants had their eyes open during worship, the majority of participants looked at some form of screen to read lyrics. One participant noted that apart from the direction of their gaze, they also cried during worship.

Vocalics cues such as shouting, exclaiming, and whooping were found to be used only by a select few participants. These participants noted their vocalic cues were brief and of moderate volume. The overwhelming majority of expressive Nondenominational participants did not engage in vocalic cues to any capacity.

Subtheme Three: Diversity in Worship Posture and Portrayal of Kinesic Expression

A combination of postures including standing, sitting, and kneeling were found amongst all expressive Nondenominational participants. Expressive Nondenominational participants did not exclusively stand, sit, or kneel for the duration of worship but engaged in various worship postures during a worship set. Likewise, all expressive Nondenominational participants engaged in some form of upper body movement through swaying or rocking. All expressive Nondenominational participants engaged in raising hands as they worshiped, with the majority of expressive Nondenominational participants raising their hands “frequently” during worship. In specific consideration of hand raising, expressive Nondenominational participants noted they either extended their hands outward, to the side, or both outward and to the side at different times when worshipping. When discussing lower kinesics movements, such as that of the legs and feet, a handful of participants expressed their experience jumping, spinning, and walking or shifting around during worship. A very small minority of expressive Nondenominational participants stated they had previously lied prostrate during worship, despite these occasions being rare or in more intimate settings.

Now that an overview of nonverbal communication cues present in expressive Nondenominational participants has been given, the nonverbal communication cues enacted by less expressive Nondenominational participants will be provided.

Less Expressive Nondenominational Participants

Overall, less expressive Nondenominational participants described their behavior during worship as more “conservative,” with specific reference to having their “hands by their side” and “eyes closed” with “little movement.”

Subtheme One: Interpersonal and Environmental Proxemics Usage of Less Expressive Nondenominational Participants

All less expressive Nondenominational participants stated they did not change their proxemic location within the sanctuary at the commencement of worship. Instead, these participants stood in front of their respective pews and seat to engage in worship. Similarly, all less expressive Nondenominational participants reported that they were interpersonally close to others during worship, stating they stood “with,” “next to,” or “close to” others.

Subtheme Two: Reliance on One Oculestic Behavior and the Absence of Vocalic Cues

Half of less expressive Nondenominational participants stated they either completely closed their eyes during worship or held them open for the entirety of worship, displaying their reliance on only one oculestic behavior. However, the other half of less expressive Nondenominational participants noted they engaged in a mixture of gaze behaviors, focusing on the worship leader, lyrics, and altar, in addition to periodically closing their eyes. These participants primarily fixated their gaze on the worship leader or lyrics when they were unfamiliar with a particular worship song.

Across all less expressive Nondenominational participants, no vocalic cues such as shouting, whooping, or exclaiming were referenced when prompted. Likewise, elements of volume or specific styles of singing were not reported.

Subtheme Three: The Reliance on Standing, Swaying, Infrequent Hand Raising and Fixed

Lower Body Kinesics

The overwhelming majority of less expressive Nondenominational participants stated they exclusively stand during worship; however, a few participants noted that they “rarely” or “sometimes” sit or kneel during worship. Contrastingly, all less expressive Nondenominational participants stated that they rocked their bodies or swayed to some capacity during worship. Similarly, all less expressive Nondenominational participants noted that their hands typically

remain by their sides as they worship in a fixed position, rarely raised. When participants infrequently raised their hands, the majority extended their arms outward in front of them, as opposed to sideways.

Subtheme Four: The Normality of Haptics Among Less Expressive Nondenominational Participants

Overall, the results surrounding the use of haptics can be considered inconclusive amongst less expressive Nondenominational participants. Half of the less expressive Nondenominational participants expressed comfort in laying hands on another individual in prayer during worship, while the other half of participants were uncomfortable or moderately uncomfortable with doing so. When considering appropriate timing of haptics within prayer, half of the less expressive Nondenominational participants felt there was not an inappropriate time to lay hands on an individual in prayer. Two other participants indicated there was an inappropriate time to lay hands on others during prayer. Only one participant noted they would only engage in haptic behavior by laying hands on another individual during prayer if prompted by that individual. The level of appropriateness of the particular place at which haptics cues were enacted was not considered by the majority of less expressive Nondenominational participants. However, one participant noted, in reference to place, that particular body parts such as the shoulder, head, and arms, exclusively, were appropriate to engage in haptic behavior, while another participant noted the use of haptics was entirely dependent on personal relationship.

Comprehensively, now that the following themes within the study as a whole, including: differences in comfort of expression, valence in willingness to explore forms of worship outside of denominational norms, the role of adverbs in perceptions of appropriateness, frequent use of comparative language, and the influential role of music, as well as the themes across the four

represented denominational groupings have been described in great detail, a discussion of the results will be provided.

Chapter 5: Discussion

As previously mentioned, this study was conducted to explore how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices by examining specific nonverbal cues enacted during worship. This chapter will restate the research problem and review the methodology of the study, summarizing the results, and providing the necessary implications of the results.

Review of Research Problem and Research Question

As explained in Chapter 1, this study asserts that the existing research does not describe how worshippers of various denominations use nonverbal communication during worship. Uncovering this information is significant to bring a greater sense of awareness in the currently divisive state of Christianity, stating what explicit factors separate different denominations. This study can provide individuals with ramifications as to why they affiliate with a specific denomination. The hope of this study remains to encourage unity and acceptance across denominations by displaying that there are a plethora of ways to engage in nonverbal communication during worship. This study ultimately displays that individuals should not be judged, scrutinized, or separated by the ways in which they choose to communicate nonverbally during worship. However, the study itself mainly highlights the differences between denominations in worship. The general purpose of this study is to describe the nonverbal communication cues enacted by members of various denominations through a qualitative survey.

With this research problem in consideration, this study sought to answer the following question:

RQ: How do members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices within the Christian faith?

Review of Methodology

As expressed in Chapter 3, this study was a qualitative study using both a screening survey and a qualitative survey distributed to undergraduate and graduate students on the campus of a large, private, Christian university in the Southeastern region of the United States. The screening survey yielded 39 viable responses, while the qualitative survey yielded 26 viable responses. One response was disqualified from the survey due to participants' exemption of denominational affiliation in their response and another response was a duplicate, yielding the analysis of 26 responses. Participants were asked questions surrounding their usage of proxemics, oculosics, kinesics, vocalics, and haptics when in a corporate worship setting. In addition to questions surrounding nonverbal cues, participants were also asked questions surrounding other congregants' behavior during worship, whether they feel they align with their denomination during worship, their comfort in exploring boundaries outside of their customary practice, and the role music plays in the expression of worship.

Summary of Results

Though the results of this study were extremely nuanced in nature, the following elements can be considered an overview of the findings.

First, participants across denominations represented in this study exhibited differences in comfort in engaging in expressive behavior during worship. Some participants reported nonverbal cues indicating more nonverbally expressive behavior such as hand raising, swaying of the body, jumping, dancing, kneeling, sitting, lying prostrate, shouting, exclaiming, and touch-centered prayer. Other participants reported nonverbal cues of less expressive behavior, including standing, holding hands by one's sides, clasping one's hands together, folded arms, stillness, silence apart from singing along to worship sets, and discomfort with touch-centered

prayer. In general, to answer the aforementioned research question, in this limited study, members of different denominations use nonverbal communication differently in their worship practices through physical and vocal expressiveness during worship.

Next, participants exhibited differences in willingness and comfort in exploring forms of worship outside of their standard denominational practice. Overall, among the participants in this limited study, it was deduced that expressive Nondenominational, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic participants were more willing and comfortable exploring worship outside of the norms accustomed to them as a result of their denominational practice. Although it cannot be said that these denominations are more inclusive of diverse worship styles, less rigid in practice, more accepting, or more likely to encourage freedom in individual acts of worship, as opposed to other denominations, these generalizations are worthy of consideration. On the other hand, the less expressive Nondenominational participants and the Eastern Orthodox participant were less willing and comfortable exploring worship outside of the norms accustomed to them as a result of their denominational practice. Again, this cannot generalize to the entire respective denominations as a whole or be suggestive of rigidity, intolerance, or restraint – it is simply information worthy of examination. Lastly, the willingness and comfort in exploring worship outside of the customary denominational norms was inconclusive among Baptist participants, as half of Baptist participants stated they would be willing and comfortable transcending the boundaries of their denominational worship customs, while the other half of Baptist participants stated they were unwilling and uncomfortable with doing so. When considering how worshipers of diverse denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices, it can be said that, among the participants in this study, members of different denominations may exude

differences in willingness and comfort to transcend beyond customary worship standards dictated by their denomination.

Following, specific diction choices, such as the integration of adverbs, were present in participants' descriptions of behavior during worship. Within this study, adverbs were used in two ways. First, adverbs were used as predecessors before some form of descriptive language or action associated with worship behavior, comfort, experience, or belief. Often, these adverbs were used to provide supplementary information and express the frequency of a particular nonverbal cue. Secondly, adverbs were used as comprehensive responses to questions. When an adverb served as a complete response, it indicated a direct affiliation with a behavior or method of thinking. This indicated participants' perception of appropriateness of the behavior overall and was generally tailored to an individual's personal reflection, not as a result of affiliation with their denomination. This contributes to the ways in which members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices because it provides clarity surrounding the direct behaviors respondents of different denominations enact and provides the perceived appropriateness of particular nonverbal cues within certain denominational settings.

Similarly, when reflecting upon the language choice of participants when providing their responses, the use of comparative language was prevalent. Comparative language was used to compare an individual's behavior with those within their congregation, the behavior of particular churches of the same denomination, behavior present in different denominations, and behavior within the participants' current and former churches. The use of comparative language answers how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices differently by displaying how participants consider their own nonverbal communication in response to the nonverbal communication displayed by other individuals, which, commonly,

but is not always, a result of denominational affiliation. Similarly, it asserts that nonverbal communication in worship settings is not exclusively what an individual enacts or engages in, but is also what individuals do not enact or engage in. Overall, this raises the idea that denominations may not simply be practices or behaviors, but also the absence of practices and behaviors.

To continue, music played a considerable role in participants' expression of worship. While the majority of participants noted that music influenced their expression of worship, others noted it played a more minor role. Volume, song choice, musician's skill level, personal fondness of music, and involvement in worship-centric tasks were additional factors of consideration when referencing the role of music in expressiveness. These factors were discussed as contributing to the participant's nonverbal communication cues enacted during worship or as evaluative statements of others' expressiveness during worship. In all, musical elements such as dynamics and tempo, the style of songs, and the differences between liturgical and contemporary worship are often indicative or customary to particular denominations. Although the experiences of participants in this study cannot be used to classify the overall role of music in relation to expressiveness, when evaluating expressiveness in participants, the following classifications arose. Less expressive participants, such as some Baptists, less expressive Nondenominational participants, Patriarchal participants, and a fraction of Pentecostal participants participated in more liturgical forms of worship and were less expressive overall. Transversely, more expressive Nondenominational participants, some Baptist participants, and the majority of Pentecostal participants engaged in more contemporary worship and were generally more expressive. Thus, according to the participants in this study, denominational choices surrounding the worship style enacted play a role in expressiveness during worship. From this study, churches and

denominations who utilize more liturgical forms of worship were found to be less expressive, while denominations that utilized more contemporary forms of worship were found to be more expressive. Now that a summary of denominationally independent themes have been discussed, it is necessary to summarize the results of denominationally categorized themes.

Overall, the expressive Nondenominational participants in this study typically remained in the same proxemic location for the entire duration of the church services and remained in close proximity with other congregants. Typically, participants either fixed their oculesic gaze between the worship leaders or closed their eyes and rarely engaged in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or whooping. Expressive Nondenominational participants found it was appropriate to engage in haptic behaviors when praying for individuals during worship, engaged in various body postures while worshipping, swayed or rocked their bodies, frequently raised their hands, and occasionally jumped, walked, or danced during worship.

Less expressive Nondenominational participants never altered their proxemic location within the sanctuary, always remained within a close proxemic distance from others, used a wide variety of gaze behaviors of various locations, and did not engage in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or whooping. Less expressive Nondenominational participants provided mixed responses about the appropriateness of enacting haptic behaviors when praying for individuals during worship. Overall, less expressive Nondenominational participants stood during worship, engaging in some sort of swinging, and infrequently raised their hands during worship.

The Orthodox participant altered their proxemic location when engaging in worship to receive communion at the altar, kept their eyes open looking down or at various individuals and artifacts during worship, and did not engage in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or

whooping. The Eastern Orthodox participant found it was inappropriate to engage in haptic behaviors when praying for individuals during worship and portrayed different body postures during worship. This participant swayed and rocked their body during worship as a self-soothing or task-related activity.

The Roman Catholic participant altered their proxemic location when engaging in worship to receive communion at the altar, kept their eyes open, gazing upon various artifacts during worship, and did not engage in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or whooping. The Roman Catholic participant found it was appropriate to engage in haptic behaviors when praying for individuals during worship in a more intimate setting and engaged in various worship postures.

Baptist participants generally did not alter proxemic location when engaging in worship and provided mixed responses when reporting on the proxemic distance between themselves and other congregants. Baptist participants engaged in mixed gaze and oculosic behaviors, and typically did not engage in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or whooping. Baptist participants enacted various postures during worship, despite the rarity of certain postures such as bowing or kneeling, provided mixed responses as to their overall stillness during worship, generally engaged in hand raised, provided mixed responses relating to frequency, and generally did not jump, spin, or lie prostrate during worship.

Lastly, Pentecostal participants generally altered their proxemic location when engaging in worship, remained a close proxemic distance from other congregants, and simultaneously reported various locations of gaze and closed eyes during worship, regularly engaging in vocalic cues such as shouting, exclaiming, or whooping. Pentecostal participants unanimously found it appropriate to engage in haptic behaviors when praying for individuals during worship. The

majority of Pentecostal participants enacted various postures during worship, swayed or rocked their bodies, raised their hands, and jumped, danced, or spun during worship.

Now that a recollection of the results, including generalized and denomination-specific themes, have been provided, the relationship of the current study to prior research will be explained.

Relationship of the Current Study to Prior Research

As previously stated, no prior studies have looked at factors surrounding how worshippers of various denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices. As worship is difficult to define due to its abstract nature, the variety of nonverbal cues to be enacted, and the various denominational practices based on geographic location, specific church, and congregants, previous research is somewhat loosely connected to the study at hand. Due to the fact that denominations have existed for hundreds of years and have been in reference to other research variables, there are a variety of studies that discuss denominations. The study at hand examines nonverbal communication during worship. The nonverbal communication exhibited during worship can also be considered expressiveness. Although this study considered nonverbal communication (expressiveness) and its potential correlation to denomination, previous studies have considered expressiveness during worship in correlation outlook, race, and denomination. More specifically, Krause and Hayward (2012) sought to determine if a more expressive worship style is associated with life satisfaction. Moreover, Krause and Hayward (2012) found the following: Black individuals are more likely than white individuals to worship in conservative protestant congregation and attend church services more frequently. The study at hand did not seriously consider race or church attendance as a prominent factor of study. However, like Krause and Hayward (2012), the current study did look at the influence of

denomination. Interestingly, Krause and Hayward (2012) also found that Blacks and conservative Protestants are more likely than whites or conservative members of other congregations to openly express emotions during worship. This finding is especially noteworthy to the current study because it displays the comparison between denominations with reference to expressiveness during worship. There are a variety of denominational churches that are considered to be conservative protestant churches, among them the Assemblies of God, Baptists, Churches of Christ, Church of God in Christ, Nazarene, and Pentecostal. Krause and Hayward (2012) discovered emotional expression during church services, leading to congregants' belief that they worship in a cohesive congregation, feel connected to individuals as a result of this perceived cohesion, and thus, experience a greater sense of life satisfaction, overall.

In consideration of a particular music style, Quantz (2009) noted the rising tension between hymnic and contemporary music styles within Christian culture due to its foundation in popular culture music elements and the replacing of hymnic worship music with that of contemporary music. The tension discovered by Quantz (2009) is not directly studied, but is observed in the current study. While some participants noted their enjoyment of more “traditional” worship with a meeker background, others noted that they lacked expression during worship at all as a result of the hymnic music style. When considering the debate between effectiveness in worship as a result of music style, Quantz (2009) makes the following suggestions: disregarding material that no longer resonates with the believers, allow new expressions to tell the story of more traditional songs, keep music, regardless of style, centered on God and His people, affirm the timelessness of the Gospel through adaptation, perpetuate inclusivity in the act of worship, and ensure careful consideration of new worship material. Again, although the current study does not consider the detailed intricacies of hymnic and

contemporary worship, participants in the current study did make note of their experiences with both types of worship and their influence on their nonverbal communication, whether directly or indirectly. Similarly, some participants' expressiveness, overall, contributed to music and specific elements of musicality, which was referenced by Quantz (2009).

Finally, with the rise in Nondenominationalism and an overwhelming number of Nondenominational participants in the current study, Webb (2012) discovered contributing factors to the success of Nondenominational churches. In all, Webb (2012) found that, as an entity, the number of Nondenominational churches within the United States was significantly increasing. Likewise, attendance within already established Nondenominational churches was also increasing rapidly. These observations were made over a 10-year period. Similarly, Webb also found that denominational churches remained stagnant or increased in number at a much slower rate than Nondenominational churches. Fewer denominational churches were increasing in size as well. Webb (2012) found that the methods used for attracting new members and retaining membership vastly differed between denominational and Nondenominational churches within the study due to the presence of well-known pastors and multi-site locations for a particular church. In all, the greatest difference was the music programs that denominational churches, as opposed to Nondenominational churches, offered, the number of services available for congregants to attend, the Biblical foundation and cultural relevance of the sermon content, altar calls, and the invitation to accept Christ, membership of family and friends within the particular church, the average age of the congregation members, presence of a church-affiliated school, and ethnic composition of the church. Although the current study did not seek to highlight the recent numerical success of Nondenominational churches, the study does assert the

prevalence of Nondenominationalism, as half of the participants within the current study identified as being Nondenominational.

Now that the study's relation to previous research has been provided, the theoretical implications of the study will be discussed.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

Although none of the questions asked of the participants directly aligned with the claims provided by social learning theory and expectancy violations theory, participants' responses indirectly evoked central concepts and claims presented in the work of both Bandura (1977) and Burgoon (2015).

Despite no participants directly stating how they came to enact their nonverbal communication behaviors during worship, the presence of social learning theory in participants' responses is difficult to ignore. The majority of participants stated that they worshiped in a way that aligned with their denominational practice and that individuals around them during worship tend to exhibit the same behaviors as the participant, such as hand raising, stillness, posture, swaying, dancing, or jumping. Some denominations exhibited opposing or contrasting behaviors when compared to others. It is reasonable to assume that these behaviors were learned in an environment where a particular behavior was favored or "rewarded" on the grounds of normalcy and acceptance, while other behaviors may have been punished by being considered inappropriate, irreverent, or unemotional. While a handful of participants noted that they were either more or less expressive than the congregants around them during worship, these differences in expression and nonverbal communication were minor, and not divisive, in general. The similarities between participants' and other congregants' nonverbal communication in worship suggests the presence of social learning theory. Social learning theory states individuals

learn certain behaviors after observing and modeling others' behavior based on reward and punishment thus, it is probable that participants noted the nonverbal communication enacted by their fellow congregants, worship team, and pastoral staff as a model. These models, in accordance with social learning theory, showed participants how to appropriately worship within their particular church or denomination. One participant stated, "we seek to be one united body moving towards Christ and do everything as a group." The presence of unity may be a result of social learning and observation. Likewise, when asked questions about other members of their denomination, many participants stated, "we do..." or provided the name of their denomination, as opposed to their own practice or opinion, grouping them in with individuals who have potentially shaped the way in which they worship and perpetuate the nonverbal communication cues exhibited through reward and punishment. Now that many participants are away from their home church, they are separated from their models. While, over time, some nonverbal communication cues can become innate to enact, the deviation from typical nonverbal communication norms may arise as a result of a new setting, new behaviors, and new rewarded and punished behaviors in worship settings. Different norms and a deviation from previously exhibited norms may be the result of smaller differences some participants feel between themselves and those in their denomination.

On the other hand, when discussing participants' worship behavior, various implications could be traced to information provided in the expectancy violations theory. As discussed in *Theme One: Differences in Comfort of Expression, Subtheme One: Comfort in Expression as a Result of a Particular Denomination and Church*, some participants were exceedingly mindful of their own behavior and held careful consideration not to violate the expectations of others. This assertion was manifested as participants expressed concern for entering, or the potential of

entering other congregants' personal space during worship. Similarly, participants' willingness to engage in certain nonverbal cues such as kneeling, sitting, laying prostrate, raising hands, or engaging in haptic behaviors was also made in consideration of the expectations of others. Thus, some participants sought to avoid violating other's expectations by altering their own behavior to mirror those surrounding them. In general, even the potential of violating an individual or church's expectations was considered negative, which is contrary to the findings of Burgoon (2015) stating that enacted expectancy violations are typically viewed as positive. No positive expectancy violations were associated with the enactment of nonverbal communication during worship. The emphasis on avoiding expectancy violations was found in a handful of less expressive Nondenominational participants and a Pentecostal participant. Where the Pentecostal participant actually engaged in some form of behavior change to physically alter their nonverbal communication during worship, with consideration that their typical nonverbal communication would result in an expectancy violation and were reactive in nature. Less expressive Nondenominational participants' consideration of expectancy violations was merely hypothetical in nature and proactive, continuously striving to eliminate any circumstance of potential expectancy violation. Similarly, in reference to expectations, participants often noted that there were diverse expectations for worship not only in different churches, but also a result of group size and setting, reflective of *Theme One: Differences in Comfort of Expression*, *Subtheme Two: Comfort in Expression as a Result of Relationship and Group Size*. This implies that engaging in nonverbal communication typically reserved for particular settings, such as small groups, worship nights, personal worship, or worship at churches outside of one's own, would cause expectancy violations among others.

Explanation of Unanticipated Findings

Overall, when seeking to answer how worshippers of various denominations use nonverbal communication in their worship practices, unanticipated findings arose. Primarily, the comprehensive lack of elaboration and failure to attribute motives to specific nonverbal behaviors was common across respondents, leading to closed-ended answers where more detail would have been helpful. The lack of depth in participants' answers was unanticipated. Likewise, due to the inability to elaborate or clarify specific questions, some participants provided responses that the researcher simply was not asking or prompting an answer to when answering the question. For example, when participants were asked, "Are there certain places you feel are more physically acceptable to lay hands on someone in prayer?" The researcher was seeking to determine if there were certain places on an individual's body that were considered more appropriate to engage in touch behaviors. However, some participants provided responses surrounding a physical setting such as the altar or a small group.

In addition to unanticipated findings as a result of question structure, participants also divulged information surrounding their nonverbal communication during worship that were contrary to the researcher's assumptions, making them unanticipated. Primarily, the overall expensive nature of a handful of Baptist participants was unanticipated. Most notably, the majority of Baptist participants engaging in sitting, bowing, and kneeling during worship, in addition to standing, was unanticipated due to a failure to observe these kinesic postures exhibited previously. Likewise, the majority of Baptist participants engaging in acts of hand raising during worship was also anticipated for the same reason, as the researcher typically observes the opposite.

Similarly, the lack of expressiveness demonstrated by one Pentecostal participant was also unanticipated. As the researcher anticipated that, to some extent, the majority of Pentecostals would engage in either some form of upper or lower body kinesic movement during worship, one participant noted they “rarely raise [their] hands,” do not engage in any kinesic lower body movements or shifts in posture, and do not engage in any non-lyrical forms of vocalics.

Comparatively, another unanticipated finding was the decrease in expressiveness in less expressive Nondenominational participants was overall greater than that of Baptist participants. From personal observation, Nondenominational participants were collectively more expressive than Baptist participants. However, in this study, less expressive Nondenominational participants, in general, exhibited less upper and lower body kinesic movements, change in proxemic location, comfort engaging in haptics, and vocalic cues than the majority of Baptist participants.

The final unanticipated finding of this study was an overall lack of definite polarization among Protestant denominations. Due to the extremely diverse beliefs and practices surrounding different Protestant denominations, the researcher anticipated nonverbal communication enacted during worship across denominations would be diverse. However, much of the nonverbal communication enacted across Protestant denominations was inconclusive in nature, lacking polarization in regard to expressiveness, comfort, and overall nonverbal communication cue reliance.

Implications for Practice

Although a singular, very limited study cannot provide all-encompassing truths surrounding how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication in worship,

this study suggests that although members of different denominations use nonverbal communication differently, the differences are much more individualistic and church centered, as opposed to broadly generalizable. This is due to the nuance of personal experience, emphasizing that individuals of different denominations may not be as polarized as perceived.

Limitations and Delimitations

The delimitations of this study concern the sample size and geographic location. This study exclusively considered the nonverbal communication displayed, on the basis of response, of a limited selection pool due accessibility. The number of eligible participants in the preliminary and comprehensive survey cannot possibly be used to generalize each denomination represented in the study due to the various differences within an individual's belief system. It is impossible to definitively determine how members of various denominations use nonverbal communication differently in their worship based on the responses of only 26 individuals, especially when 14 of the 26 participants were Nondenominational.

Similarly, the study only represents adults at a single, Christian university in the South. The demographics only consist of young adults ages 18 to 35 due to the average age of the student population. Despite the study being open to all genders, no gender diversity was guaranteed. Similarly, as the university is private and Christian, receiving less federal funding, tuition and expenses are higher than public institutions, possibly excluding students of a lower socioeconomic status. Additionally, the southern portion of the United States is notorious for subscribing to the Baptist denomination (Newport, 2021). The influx of Baptists heavily influences the geographical, denominational climate. Similarly, the rise in Nondenominationalism amongst post-millennial generations and its overall contribution to the

lack of denominational diversity, as only five denominations were represented in this study, and only two denominations had a somewhat sufficient number of identifying participants.

The final, and possibly most influential delimitation, was the researcher's own bias as a Pentecostal Christian and inclination to favor more expressive nonverbal communication during worship.

Next, when considering the limitations of this study, various intersecting factors can be considered. The overall lack of willingness of students to participate, the inability to ask follow-up questions as a result of an anonymous survey, and the inability of participants to receive real-time clarification from the researcher when answering the survey questions can be considered limitations of the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the existing limitations and delimitations, the following suggestions serve as recommendations for future research. First, future research should integrate more specific questions to be used in the data-gathering method and ensure the ability to follow up with participants, clarify participants' responses, and discover the motives behind an individual's nonverbal communication exhibited during worship. A larger sample size composed of more diverse participants in reference to age, geographic location, denomination, and race would be helpful in seeing clearer denominational correlations within behavior practices. Using individual interviews as a data-gathering method is also suggested for future research due to the ability to ask follow-up questions and have participants physically demonstrate nonverbal communication cues so that no responses are misinterpreted. Similarly, exploring the micro cultural diversity among denominations is worthy of consideration, as culture plays an impactful role in denominational execution. Lastly, for future studies, the influence of chronemics (the use of

time) and environmental factors (such as staging, lighting, room orientation, seating, etc.) should be considered, as it plays an identifiable prominent role in worship and varies across churches.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sought to determine how members of different denominations use nonverbal communication differently in their worship practices. A qualitative data gathering method, in the form of an open-ended survey, was distributed to 40 participants of a preliminary screening survey, providing 26 responses. Participants were of Nondenominational, Baptist, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox denominations. Aside from finding overarching themes and commonalities between individuals of the same denomination, members of diverse denominations, among the participants in this study, were found to enact expressiveness, comfort, and appropriateness in particular nonverbal communication cues, willingness to explore worship beyond customary denominational tradition, and absence of particular nonverbal communication cues differently. This study provided a limited perspective of how worshippers of diverse denominations use nonverbal communication differently in their worship, and further research is necessary to fully satisfy the research question.

Appendix A

1. What is your sex?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your race?
4. What population most accurately represents the city in which you permanently reside?
5. What geographic region of the United States do you originate from?
6. Are you a current student at Liberty University?
7. Do you identify as a Christian?
8. If you identify as a Christian, how long (approximately) have you been a Christian?
9. Do you attend church regularly (approximately 3 times a month, on average)?
10. Do you feel you align with more Calvinistic or Arminian theology?
11. What is your denomination? (including Nondenominational/interdenominational)
12. How long have you been in that denomination?
13. How closely connected to your denominational practices and beliefs are you?
14. Do you feel you behave and believe similarly to those within your denomination in church settings?
15. Do you participate in corporate worship typical of Sunday morning church services?
16. Do you tend to be more physically or verbally expressive in worship or more physically or verbally reserved?
17. In what way are you physically or verbally expressive or reserved?
18. What is your name? (First and Last)
19. What is your LU email? (this will allow the researcher to contact you regarding participation in the focus group, if selected)

Appendix B

1. How do you behave during worship?
 - a. Do you stand or sit?
 - b. Do you change your proxemics (physical location) by moving to the altar or the back of the auditorium?
2. How close are you in proxemic location (physical distance) to others during worship?
3. What oculosic behavior do you exhibit during worship? Do you close your eyes or keep them open? If you keep your eyes open, where do you look? The ceiling, the floor, the worship leader?
4. Do you tend to engage in kinesic behavior like swaying or rocking when worshipping?
5. What kinesics upper body postures do you exhibit in worship?
 - a. Do you tend to hold your hands during worship?
 - b. Do you raise your hands or keep them by your sides? How frequently do you raise your hands?
 - c. Do you swing your arms, extend them outward, or extend them sideways when you worship?
6. What kinesics lower body postures do you exhibit during worship?
 - a. Do you tend to walk, pace, or take steps?
 - b. Do you jump or spin during worship?
 - c. Do you kneel or sit on the floor during worship?
 - d. Have you ever lied prostrate during worship?
7. Do you find yourself engaging in vocalics by shouting or making exclamations during worship?

- a. If so, when?
 - b. How loud are these exclamations and for how long?
8. What do others around you do during worship?
9. How comfortable are you with engaging in haptics by laying hands on other congregants in prayer during worship?
 - a. Are there any times during worship you feel it would be inappropriate to lay hands on someone in prayer?
 - b. Are there certain places you feel are more physically acceptable to lay hands on someone in prayer?
10. In what way do you feel the way you currently worship is in sync with your denominational practice? To what degree?
11. What is your degree of comfort going outside any boundaries for worship that are accustomed to you as a result of your denominational practice?
12. What role does music play in your expression of worship?

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